

Revival 416

Chapter 416 The Remaining Clues

"Speaking of this bottle, no, it should be called a soul bottle. To speak of this soul bottle, it all started with a friend I knew, about three days ago..."

Wan Delu sat on the sofa, was silent for a good while, organized his thoughts, and calmed his emotions before he began to talk about the origins of that special bottle.

Yang Jian sat calmly on the side, listening.

But he soon thought of something, waved his hand, and said, "Wait a minute, I almost forgot something."

Wan Delu was startled and looked at him.

At this moment, Yang Jian's ghost eye eerily opened and swept over the entire presidential suite. When his ghost eye closed, a pile of various electronic components had appeared on the coffee table in front of him.

"Earlier, Liu Xiaoyu did remind me that even the computers at my home could be hacked, let alone now that I've come to J City and been arranged to rest in a special place. Some methods of surveillance are inevitable. Speaking here, I guess there are hardly any secrets at all."

He shook his head slightly.

These surveillance devices were hidden in particularly secret places, completely undetectable unless scanned by the Ghost Domain.

"These are listening devices?" Wan Delu's eyes widened, "This is too much."

"Let's not talk about that, continue with your story," Yang Jian said.

Wan Delu nodded and carefully recounted his experience from three days prior.

The specifics weren't too complicated; it was because he had become fascinated with antique collecting in recent years, so he had gotten to know a friend who dealt in antiques.

Three days ago, Wan Delu and his friend went to Antique Street in a town because his friend had heard that a batch of genuine and rare antiques had suddenly appeared on the street. This piqued his interest, prompting him to specifically go there to make purchases.

"So you're saying you bought this thing at an Antique Street?" Yang Jian pointed at the bottle.

"Yes, that's right. I spent thirty thousand on this bottle, and other antiques were even more expensive, some one hundred thousand, some two hundred thousand..." Wan Delu nodded.

Yang Jian's eyes flickered, "Can you find out the origin of this bottle? I need to know its specific history before it was sold."

"Actually, I had my friend inquire about it. According to a store owner on Antique Street, the batch of antiques came from a nearby village. It seems a villager found a trove of antiques buried beneath their ancestral home during demolition and sold them at the town's Antique Street due to a need for money."

"My friend and I went later and missed the best opportunity to buy. We could only purchase at a higher price from those who had already acquired them."

Yang Jian tapped the coffee table and said, "I need information about that batch of antiques, especially bottles, jars, and the like with lids. If any, have your friend purchase all of them; money is not an issue."

"No need for Brother Tui to spend on such a small amount. I'll call my friend to make another trip and buy all the antiques that meet the criteria on Antique Street." Wan Delu patted his chest, a confident smile on his face.

As the CEO of a listed company, he certainly had the funds.

Besides, it wasn't a matter of being stingy with money now. If this matter wasn't resolved, he feared his life might be on the line.

"After finding the antiques, you don't need to bring them to me. Smash them immediately without opening the lids."

Yang Jian pointed at the bottle beside him and said, "If there's a layer of Gold inside, then it's what I'm looking for. These special bottles are one of a kind, easy to identify, and you know what's inside."

"Understood, understood," Wan Delu couldn't help the cold sweat that broke out on his forehead.

Just one soul bottle had caused such a stir; if there were more of these bottles, the town might face a serious problem.

Heaven knows what would happen if a few clueless people opened the bottles and released the ghosts inside.

Immediately, he picked up the phone to urgently contact his antique friend.

"From this situation, it seems they are ghosts that were once confined by a ghost manipulating practitioner and have now been dug up by some ignorant folks, only to be sold as antiques. How dramatic, the original practitioner must have anticipated this, which is why he hid a Gold-made bottle inside a pottery one."

"Thinking this unremarkable bottle wouldn't attract attention, not expecting that it would still be dug up and sold by future generations."

Yang Jian slightly shook his head, feeling that the original practitioner hadn't thought far enough ahead.

But they couldn't be blamed, being able to do this much was already commendable.

If it were Yang Jian himself, if he were to die now, the ghosts he kept on the fifth floor of his house might also be discovered.

Could he blame his current self for not dealing with them?

No.

Because the death of a ghost manipulating practitioner could be sudden, and no one could prepare for their own demise in advance. Being able to hide these dangerous items in an underground chamber was already quite good.

As for those practitioners who could calmly prepare for their own passing, there was only one kind.

...

It was the existence at the pinnacle who had overcome the resurgence of fierce ghosts and had walked the path of controlling them for a long time.

"So it seems, the creator of this Soul Bottle and the owner of the Republic Era Ancient House in the Guanjiang Residential Complex must have been from the same era, and judging from these arrangements, the level of terror of the ancient house's owner must far exceed that of the Soul Bottle's owner."

Yang Jian's eyes flickered.

The reason he made this judgment was because one could deduce as much from what both parties had left behind.

The owner of the Soul Bottle had only trapped the ghost in a bottle made of gold, a method similar to what Yang Jian was doing now and consistent with mainstream practices.

But the owner of that Republic Era Ancient House seemed to have trapped the ghosts inside the Ghost Mirror.

Previously, Yang Jian had suspected that the ancient house owner left behind the Ghost Mirror and the Ghost Cabinet, so why hadn't they left behind any other imprisoned ghosts?

Now, Yang Jian was more convinced than ever.

That ancient house owner must have closed the ghosts inside the Ghost Mirror.

Using ghosts to constrain ghosts.

This method was obviously more skillful.

Thinking of the densely packed ghosts inside that Ghost Mirror, Yang Jian felt a chill run down his spine.

If that was indeed the case, one could only imagine how terrifying the owner of that ancient house must have been.

However, Yang Jian then felt an inexplicable bitterness.

Such a top figure had in the end left behind nothing more than a dilapidated ancient house and deemed it necessary to prepare three rooms for future generations to hold the Ghost Mirror and the Ghost Cabinet... to cope with the possibility of fierce ghosts rising again.

It showed that even the most superior ghost controllers ultimately fell before ghosts.

At this thought, Yang Jian couldn't help but foresee his own eventual fate.

Exactly like it is now.

The instincts of the fierce ghosts had already begun to influence his own thinking, and if this situation didn't improve, although he wouldn't die from the resurgence of ghosts, his thoughts would succumb to the instincts of the fierce ghosts.

Without thought, was he still himself?

He would be nothing but a fierce ghost walking in the city.

At that moment, Wan Delu was on the phone with his friend, shouting loudly, "I don't care what method you use, or how much money you have to spend, but you must purchase all the antiques that meet the criteria on that street, remember all of them, and especially find out which village's ancestral home is being demolished."

"Especially the antiques from that ancient house, they are the priority for acquisition, whether it costs a million, ten million, or even a hundred million. You have to get them for me."

"Exaggerating? Not at all. My life hangs on those bottles and jars now. If we can't find them, I'm done for. Don't worry, I won't shortchange you if you take care of this."

"And one more thing, remember, don't open those bottles. Once found, store them well; I will have someone over to collect them."

"That's all, I'm hanging up now. What? I wasn't kidnapped. I'm doing fine in J city. Remember, don't open those bottles, no reason, unless you want to die."

Wan Delu reiterated his concerns over and over before finally hanging up the phone.

"Brother Tui, I've made the arrangements. We should see some results in about ten days or so."

"Very good," Yang Jian nodded. "You'll be safe after this is taken care of."

He didn't want to achieve his goals through the headquarters' channels, otherwise he wouldn't need to make any purchases; he could just blockade the street and conduct a door-to-door search. Finding the source wouldn't be difficult.

"That's as it should be, after all, I owe it to Brother Tui for the brave rescue," Wan Delu said with a sheepish laugh.

Yang Jian added, "You can move around in J city for now, but you are not allowed to leave. The rules must still be observed. Don't even think about running away. Otherwise, not only will Chen Yi not let you off the hook, but I won't either."

"Understood, understood," Wan Delu hurriedly nodded.

He didn't dare run away.

If he fled, he would likely become a national fugitive, and being caught would mean certain execution.

"Let's end things here for today. I'm going to rest now. You can do as you please," Yang Jian said as he stood up, ready to return to his room to rest.

Although he didn't need sleep to stay awake for long periods, considering the busy time to come, it was better to have some rest to keep up his energy.

Chapter 417 Gunshots in the Night

Night.

The nightscape outside J City was dazzling.

Yang Jian was resting, but he dared not really fall asleep. Although this was J City, he still felt it necessary to remain alert.

All the lights in the guest room were turned off, leaving it somewhat dark.

Yang Jian sat on the sofa, propping up his head slightly and opening his eyes to look down at the enchanting night view outside the floor-to-ceiling windows.

It was beautiful.

And very quiet.

This made him feel relaxed and comfortable because the prosperity and bustle outside told him that this place was safe, that there were no supernatural events occurring.

So, at some point, Yang Jian began to like bustling scenes, but did not wish to be a part of the crowd, because he was an outlier. He shunned the masses, and of course, the masses would shun him.

Watching from a distance, thinking calmly, hidden in the darkness, that was pretty good.

Sitting there silently, Yang Jian was resting like a lone wolf.

The light from the neon signs outside shone through, flashing quickly inside the room, creating a particularly clear shadow.

This shadow stretched long behind Yang Jian, eerily reflected on the wall behind him.

Even as the outside light faded, the shadow remained, and no matter how one looked at it, the shadow was always missing a head, creating a strange sense of imperfection.

And within Yang Jian's own flesh, strands of crimson lurked, emitting a faint red glow, vaguely visible in the darkness.

It was as if there were nine red spots branded on his body, inescapable, like the curse of an Evil Ghost, accompanying him always.

The one who controlled two ghosts was actually at his own limit.

The Eye of the Ghost was on the verge of awakening, and the Headless Ghost Shadow had fully revived, except it was just currently in a state of deadlock.

But the instincts of a ghost remained.

Once instinct overcame his consciousness, that would be the moment Yang Jian completely turned into a fierce ghost.

As the quiet time passed bit by bit, Yang Jian, half-asleep and half-awake, felt as if his life was slowly slipping away.

However, he didn't know how long had passed.

Maybe it was an hour, maybe two or three hours.

At some moment in the deep night, the tranquility was suddenly shattered by a sound.

"Bang!"

A loud gunshot seemed to ring out in a certain floor of the Ping'an Hotel, followed after a moment by the sound of alarms going off.

Yang Jian, drifting in a light sleep, slowly opened his eyes.

He picked up his mobile phone to check the time and saw it was only a quarter past three in the morning, still several hours before dawn.

"Only a little past three?" he squinted his eyes and decided to continue resting.

A gunshot and alarms outside had nothing to do with him. He wasn't responsible for Ping'an Grand Hotel; let those who should worry, worry. He had been busy enough yesterday and didn't want to be involved in anything else, even if a fire broke out it shouldn't disturb his rest.

After all, he couldn't burn to death.

However, sometimes you can't ignore things just because you want to.

Five minutes later, his satellite-positioned phone was forcibly connected.

It was still Qin Meirou's voice, "Yang Jian, are you there?"

"Can I not talk?" Yang Jian stayed silent for a while before speaking up.

"Are you currently at the Ping'an Grand Hotel?" Qin Meirou asked.

Yang Jian replied, "I'm sleeping. Let's talk about this tomorrow if it's important."

Hearing his tone, Qin Meirou quickly said, "Then you must have heard the gunshot at the Ping'an Grand Hotel. This time it's not a supernatural event. A ghost controller has had a mental breakdown, shot and killed a hotel staff member, and is currently in a highly dangerous state, potentially ready to commit more crimes at any moment."

"Oh, a ghost controller had a mental breakdown?" Yang Jian's eyes flickered slightly, "Must be unable to withstand the torment of a fierce ghost's revival, right?"

Sleeping at night is when ghost controllers are most vulnerable and the symptoms of fierce ghost revival become increasingly apparent.

He had experienced this acutely himself, indeed enough to drive one mad.

"Could you help deal with it?" Qin Meirou hesitated for a moment before asking.

"If it were a normal person shooting and hurting others, I would definitely be happy to help out, but with a ghost controller committing the crime... let Chen Yi handle it," Yang Jian said. "I don't want to get involved in this matter. After all, I came to J City for training, not to work."

"The Ping'an Hotel isn't within Chen Yi's jurisdiction; it falls under Gao Ming's. But Gao Ming isn't on duty right now, so he won't take action. I think you could resolve this minor issue quickest if you're willing to help at the hotel. If we wait for headquarters to arrange it, it will take at least half an hour for someone specialized to get there," said Qin Meirou.

A slight twitch formed at the corner of Yang Jian's mouth.

Trying to rope me into doing free labor again?

There are so many in charge, why is it always me? Could it be that I've intervened too many times before, making headquarters think I'm easy to boss around?

Yang Jian scoffed immediately, "Chen Yi won't handle it because it's not his jurisdiction, and Gao Ming won't because he's not within working hours, so I have to handle it? Don't I have any clout with the guys at headquarters? Am I the one to be saddled with all the thankless tasks? Or is someone displeased with me after Zhao Jianguo's resignation, purposely making things difficult for me?"

"If you want my help, I can do it for ten Ghost Candles, I'll get to work right away. Isn't it just risking my neck? If you're willing to pay the price on your end, I can put in the effort on mine. It can't be free labor again, right? Even overtime work pays, and surely I can't be worse off than someone with a regular job," Yang Jian said.

"Sorry," Qin Meirou muttered, then hung up the call.

At that moment, Yang Jian's expression darkened slightly.

He felt that ever since Zhao Jianguo resigned, and with the start of the team leader plan, there had been some serious issues with many of headquarters' arrangements.

The top-tier ghost masters seemed to have disappeared.

No, not disappeared, they just stopped working.

Someone like him, who lacked timely intelligence, was getting pulled in for muscle often, commandeered whenever possible.

If Zhao Jianguo were still here, this definitely wouldn't be happening. Zhao Jianguo knew his limits—he didn't ask for Yang Jian's support last time during the Z City incident because Yang Jian had just dealt with the supernatural bus case, so out of consideration, he didn't make the request. It was Yang Jian who volunteered to go to Z City in the end.

But now.

The airplane supernatural incident had just concluded, the Soul Bottle issue had just been resolved, and here he was, being assigned once again.

"Now I have to admit that Zhao Kaiming was right back in Dachang City; nobody wants to see a nobody like me rise up, even if I did solve an S-class supernatural incident."

Yang Jian stood up, looking down at the city outside: "So what, am I being suppressed subtly?"

This kind of subtle suppression wasn't deliberate, but rather a result of some ghost masters not wanting to work; naturally, their tasks started falling onto others, growing more numerous over time.

The so-called 'the greater your ability, the greater your responsibility' is nonsense.

In reality, the greater your ability, the smaller your responsibility.

Then, he remembered what Zong Shan had said at the airport before.

To become a team leader, achievements and experience weren't enough; you also needed sufficient clout.

What Yang Jian was lacking now was exactly that clout.

"I remember Tong Qian and Feng Quan are also in J City now, along with that ghost forum's Lin Luomei... and Xiong Wenwen," Yang Jian mused, his gaze shifting slightly.

Working everywhere hadn't been without its rewards; he had also made acquaintances with a bunch of people.

It's just that some of them didn't know he had this underlying influence.

"Bang!"

At that moment, gunshots rang out again. This time it wasn't just one shot but several bursts of gunfire.

The mentally disturbed ghost master from before seemed to have met retaliation.

Then, there was a knock at his front door.

This time, the door opened on its own before Yang Jian could answer it.

Standing at the dim doorway was Zhang Lei, who had looked stiff during the day, now staring at him with a slightly odd smile, "Yang Jian, there's been trouble, you know about it, right?"

"What does that have to do with me?" Yang Jian turned around.

"I've been assigned by the higher-ups to handle it, and I thought I'd let you know on my way there," Zhang Lei responded.

Yang Jian said, "There's no need; if you're willing to deal with it, then go ahead."

So after I refused, they arranged for Zhang Lei to handle it?

Indeed.

It's not that nobody's dealing with the situation.

"I think it's still better to say it, because just now, that ghost master showed signs of revival... and the situation has begun to affect the surroundings," said Zhang Lei.

"Looks like I'll need to find a new place to stay for a while," Yang Jian said slowly.

With his oddly cheerful expression somewhat reined in, Zhang Lei replied, "I'd really appreciate it if you could come over and take a look. I can handle it, but having one more person keep an eye on things would give me a bit more confidence."

Upon hearing these words, Yang Jian paused for a moment.

Chapter 418 The Unexpected Revival

The ringing within Ping'an Hotel immediately alarmed people on every floor.

Although not many guests were staying, even the hotel's customer service staff greatly outnumbered the guests, each guest's identity was extraordinary and deserved to be treated with serious caution.

But the more people there are, the more likely something is bound to happen.

Especially since these individuals were extremely dangerous and unstable special residents.

At this moment.

Inside a certain floor of the hotel.

This area was blocked off by security personnel; in the dimly lit corridor lay several injured people, blood flowing from their wounds and gradually staining the surrounding ground red, agonized moans and faint wails echoing around.

However, facing those with severe injuries, no one dared to easily step foot onto this floor.

The trails of blood dragged across the floor were a clear warning to others that someone on this floor did not want others to get close.

"Who the hell is causing trouble in the middle of the night, making so much noise that I can't sleep at all, damn it, can't they keep it down?"

"Hey, maybe another one has gone mad, with the evil ghost resurgence approaching, a mental breakdown isn't strange."

"Going insane here? It's practically suicide, don't they realize where this is? This is J city, who knows how many Ghost Masters are here, just wait for headquarters to send someone and this will be resolved, at this critical moment it's like throwing a life away."

"Who was it that acted this time, does anyone know?"

In a restaurant on a nearby floor, Ghost Masters from all over had gathered, easily a dozen or more. Unable to rest easy with such commotion in the hotel, they had been gathered together by the hotel's arrangement for easier management.

"The guy's name is Lin Shan, a college student from somewhere, pretty stupid. When he first became a Ghost Master, he thought he had superpowers and abused them early on, trying to play the hero chasing the school beauty like in urban tales, only to have an evil ghost resurgence in less than two months. Luckily the idiot did one smart thing, he joined headquarters."

"Although he didn't become a leader, considering the shortage of manpower and that this guy might have some important value, headquarters allowed him to come to J city to deal with the evil ghost resurgence."

A young man with a slightly grim expression sat in the dining chair, toying with a wine glass in his hand.

"Oh, how do you know so much?" someone curiously asked.

"Of course I do, Lin Shan was my classmate."

The person sneered, "I've disliked him for a long time. The guy abused the powers of the evil ghost too much, which is why his Terror Level is higher than mine, and I've suffered at his hands."

Two Ghost Masters coming from the same school was indeed a rare occurrence.

Others cast glances their way; this person seemed to have a sizable conflict with that troublemaker Lin Shan.

"What kind of person do you guys think headquarters will send to handle this? I heard Ghost Eye Yang Jian checked into the hotel today, will they ask him to step in?" someone else murmured.

At the mention of this name, everyone present, without exception, showed a subtle change in expression.

The man who had resolved an S-level supernatural incident, Dachang City's person in charge, Yang Jian?

Although most had never met Yang Jian, as Ghost Masters who had experienced supernatural incidents, just surviving C-level and B-level incidents had been touch and go, and they were still somewhat traumatized. Thus, they could scarcely imagine that someone in this world could solve an S-level supernatural incident.

Were such ghosts really something a Ghost Master could handle?

And that wasn't all, many had seen Yang Jian's file.

Apart from that Hungry Ghost incident, he had also resolved the Huanggang Village Ghost Coffin case, the Ghost Shadow incident, the ballooning human heads in Z city, and even wiped out an entire Ghost Masters club.

Every single record in the file was spine-chilling to read.

"Indeed, Yang Jian is frighteningly powerful, but his arrival in J city today probably means he's reaching his limit. Headquarters considering this probably won't have him deal with more incidents. Besides, Lin Shan is a bit special. If they really insist on pushing Ghost Eye Yang Jian into this, he might actually fall here. Perhaps he could handle it in the end, but whether he'll die due to an evil ghost resurgence is unknown."

The previously commenting young man spoke calmly.

"Shit, if someone like that dies due to an evil ghost resurgence, wouldn't the rest of us end up being buried with him?" someone exclaimed with a start.

The more powerful the Ghost Master who dies, the more formidable the ghost they become, which is a devastating blow to others.

And just as they were discussing, the lighting in the restaurant suddenly dimmed as if the electrical circuit had been affected by something.

Hmm?

This abrupt change made everybody's eyelids twitch.

Something was off.

They immediately realized that the situation was quite bad.

"Drip! Drip! Drip!"

A sound of dripping water echoed in the suddenly quiet living room.

"Look above your heads," someone suddenly exclaimed in shock.

At that moment, everyone looked up to see the ceiling oozing blood, as if it were seeping through, with droplets already beginning to fall. The air around them seemed to become damp and cold, uncomfortable to breathe, as if trapped in a sealed container, creating an suffocating feeling.

"This is bad," the previously composed young man froze for a second.

"What's bad?" someone asked.

"Lin Shan couldn't possibly have the ability to affect this floor unless... his limit has been reached."

An evil ghost resurgence?

The very thing everyone feared most, was it about to happen?

"Quick, get out of here," someone urged in a rush.

They had no desire to be involuntarily caught in a man-made supernatural event.

Quickly, many people fled as if escaping for their lives.

And at this moment, in a certain floor.

The lights were all out, darkness enveloping the chilly surroundings, and the air was filled with dampness. Droplets of water continuously formed on the nearby walls, and the air reeked of mildew.

In the depths of the source, within a guest room.

A man, his complexion pale and swollen, was sitting in a chair with his head slightly lowered. Nearby, two security personnel and a female waitress lay in a pool of blood, their bodies cold and lifeless.

"If I can't live on, neither can others. Everyone must die, all must be buried with me..."

A barely audible murmur arose, carrying a hysterical madness, as though an Evil Ghost was whispering, chilling to the bone.

His name was Lin Shan.

Twenty-three years old, he was a university student.

He was like everyone else, studying and living normally, until one day, he accidentally fell into a pond on campus and was knocked unconscious.

When he woke up and left the hospital, he found his body was not normal anymore.

It felt as if his stomach was filled with water that he couldn't stop throwing up, no matter how much he tried. Initially frightened and uneasy, he soon discovered he could control the water he vomited.

Thinking he had gained some superpower, he began to use it recklessly, believing he had reached the pinnacle of life.

However, he quickly noticed that the water he was spewing out was becoming increasingly wrong.

It started clear, then turned murky, and finally, terrifying... as the most recent episode had seen him vomit out a swollen, ghastly white arm.

In the past, he had also expelled many other things, such as hair, fingers... broken teeth.

But then came tonight.

Lin Shan despairingly realized that he could no longer control his vomiting. The water in his belly seemed to churn violently, as if everything was about to be expelled today.

A vengeful spirit's resurgence?

He had gone through several ordeals and was no longer the naive student he once was. Through certain channels, he found out about his condition and what exactly was inside him.

It was a ghost.

He didn't want to die, but reality was out of his control.

So, he began to crazily seek revenge on everyone else. He felt instead of dying such a desperate death alone, it was better to drag everyone down with him.

After all, they didn't save him...

"Ugh!"

After a brief silence, Lin Shan suddenly bent over and threw up again.

He felt something lodged in his throat that wanted to come out, and water noises gurgled in his stomach as if waves were rolling inside.

But Lin Shan couldn't vomit it out.

His throat was too narrow, and the object in his stomach seemed too large, obstructing its release.

However, he had no control over it anymore.

Despite being unable to vomit, whatever was in his throat was relentlessly trying to force its way out, with astonishing strength as if it intended to tear him apart.

"Ahh~!"

Lin Shan's neck swelled to the thickness of a thigh; he lay on the ground in agony, writhing and wailing.

At that moment, it seemed like water was seeping out from all of his pores.

Foul-smelling, turbid, as if something was rotting in the water, it was nauseating just to catch a whiff of it.

"Whoosh..."

Time passed until finally, Lin Shan's mouth burst open, forced apart by the object in his throat, a flood of putrid water from his belly gushed out.

And in the middle of the filth, a human head with swollen skin and signs of advanced decay lay silently.

This head had half of its face damaged; eyes and teeth were missing, but the remaining half bore a strange expression, looking at the Lin Shan lying beside it.

"Wah~!"

He was still vomiting, as if some gate had completely opened, as though all the things he had never vomited before were now meant to be purged.

Without a doubt.

This ghost master named Lin Shan was in the throes of a Hungry Ghost's resurgence.

Once he finished expelling the ghost inside him, he would die, and the ghost would be completely awakened.

By then, this would no longer be a personal conflict but a terrifying paranormal event.

Meanwhile.

Zhang Lei's expression stiff, he was hurriedly taking the elevator to this floor.

Beside him, Yang Jian stood impassively, silent and unmoved.

He was originally unwilling to involve himself in this matter, but Shen Liang had sent notice that resolving this with three Ghost Candles would count as an extra merit.

Of course, these weren't the red Ghost Candles, but the white ones. Worth much less.

But considering his resources were now exhausted, Yang Jian had still decided to make the trip.

He was not alone.

Zhang Lei planned to take action as well.

Chapter 419 The Water that Drowned People

Inside the elevator.

Zhang Lei looked at Yang Jian with a stiff expression.

Although he didn't know why Yang Jian had suddenly agreed to come along with him, having such a person by his side gave him some confidence.

At the very least, the mission wouldn't fail, and if an accident really did occur, Yang Jian's intervention would make things much easier for him.

"After the gunshots stopped, the building's security and service personnel also withdrew. It seems that the situation has escalated, so we must be prepared to face ghosts rather than people later on," he said.

Yang Jian paid no attention to Zhang Lei's gaze and spoke to himself.

Since he had agreed to this journey, he had to be on high alert.

"You're so certain even before we've reached Lin Shan's room?" Zhang Lei asked with a hint of confusion.

"Just a judgment based on some intelligence information," Yang Jian replied calmly.

Shen Liang's personal phone call, as well as the reward of three Ghost Candles, and Zhang Lei also being part of the operation. Anyone with a brain could tell that headquarters wanted to resolve the issue caused by Lin Shan quickly.

And the order from headquarters was simple.

To completely resolve the incident and not let its influence spread further.

As for whether Lin Shan was alive or dead, not a word was mentioned.

In other words, if Lin Shan was alive, that would be preferable, but if he happened to be killed, that wouldn't matter either. Within the scope of tacit approval, resolving the issue took precedence.

"You don't need to go to such extremes," Yang Jian suddenly said.

"What?" Zhang Lei responded, somewhat taken aback.

Yang Jian continued, "If the cost of dealing with Lin Shan is too high, then choose to give up. Don't be desperate. This is City J, and headquarters won't ignore the situation. I've heard there are as many as three international exorcists stationed here, not to mention some special personnel. So, we need to measure our actions carefully."

"Work is important, but your own life is more important. Surviving is what counts as impressive. If you die, it amounts to nothing."

"..." Zhang Lei was somewhat surprised, as he hadn't expected Yang Jian to think this way.

But on second thought, he realized it made sense.

If he were to forcefully handle the situation while not in good condition, not only could he die, but the situation could also become even more complicated.

With so many exorcists in City J, it would be best to collaborate when facing supernatural events. This way, risks could be shared, and the issue could be handled easily without putting all the responsibility on one or two individuals.

Ding!

The elevator's chime sounded, and the doors opened.

"We're here." Zhang Lei's stiff face took on a grave hue.

The troubled exorcist was on this floor.

"Why aren't you moving?" He stepped out only to realize that Yang Jian was still inside the elevator, seemingly with no intention to act just yet.

Yang Jian spoke, "What's the rush? Going out a few seconds earlier won't solve the situation, and staying inside a few seconds longer might save your life. Let's first observe the surroundings and see what the situation is like before we act."

Zhang Lei instantly stiffened in his steps upon hearing this.

Although he had always been cautious, he hadn't thought it through this much.

At that moment, Yang Jian took a brief glance outside the elevator.

The situation didn't look good.

The corridor was shrouded in darkness; some lights had already gone out, while others seemed to flicker due to a short circuit, crackling and intermittently going on and off. The walls and the ground were covered with damp patches, like the muggy days of the south, everything wet and moist.

Every so often drops of water would fall from above.

A foul, rotten stench pervaded the air.

"Indeed, the environment around has already been affected. Lin Shan is very likely already dead," Yang Jian's eyes narrowed slightly.

If so, that truly made this a full-blown paranormal incident, and he was reluctant to get involved.

But as long as Lin Shan was still alive and conscious, and the malevolent ghost hadn't fully revived, the whole situation was much more manageable.

Dealing with a person and dealing with a ghost are not the same thing.

"Do you have any good ideas?" Zhang Lei inquired.

Yang Jian glanced at the shallow layer of water on the floor, "No, but since we're here, it's naturally better to go and see for ourselves. Let's find out if Lin Shan has truly been resurrected as a vengeful

ghost. After confirming the situation, we can plan our next steps. Until then, self-preservation is our priority."

His shadow gradually disappeared, withdrawing back into his body.

It was as if a layer of black shadow shrouded him, blurring his figure, as if to merge into the surrounding dim environment.

He covered himself with the Headless Ghost Shadow, like putting on a Ghost Cloth, which in most cases could fend off some ghostly attacks and avoid sudden death.

"Let's go."

Yang Jian stepped out of the elevator, his foot not touching the water on the ground but instead swept aside by the shadow under his feet, leaving a clear space.

He felt the severe water seepage on this floor was definitely not normal. If there were ghosts involved, they had to be related to this, so he did not want to touch the water.

The further they walked, the darker it became ahead, and the walls became increasingly damp. The water on the ground also grew more abundant.

Previously, when only small damp spots were on the ground, now there was a layer of water two to three centimeters thick, and the further forward they went, the thicker the water accumulated. At the same time, a rotten, fishy smell became denser in the air.

Zhang Lei, brave and confident, walked ahead, not afraid to step into the water. It wasn't clear whether he relied on Yang Jian being behind or whether he had enough confidence in himself to handle the situation.

The two advanced through the dim corridor, neither hastening nor slowing, as most of their attention was on staying alert to their surroundings.

However, everything seemed very calm.

Although the surrounding environment was eerie, nothing strange had happened, at least for the time being; no paranormal activity had appeared.

Yang Jian slightly frowned.

He thought he might have assumed the worst. Perhaps... Lin Shan was still alive.

Otherwise, it wouldn't be possible to have walked this long without encountering a vengeful ghost's resurgence.

"Lin Shan's room is just up ahead."

At the last turn, Zhang Lei stopped. About ten meters ahead, a door was ajar, with several bullet holes in it, and it seemed as if water was seeping through the gap.

Behind that door seemed to be the source of it all.

However, the water on the corridor leading up to this last stretch was knee-high, strangely pooling together without seeping down to the lower floors.

"I advise against going any further. I think it's better to take a detour, like from above or from the adjoining room," Yang Jian said after giving Zhang Lei a glance.

It was obvious that something was not right ahead.

Zhang Lei's stiff expression twitched slightly; he too thought the suggestion sensible. The distance ahead might seem manageable, but the excessive water, and its strangeness indeed warranted a detour.

"Wait, listen, is there a sound coming from Lin Shan's room?" Suddenly, Zhang Lei, his face altering, pressed the issue.

Yang Jian heard it too.

From the semi-open door of the room ahead, a low murmur of a man could be faintly heard, like a madman talking to himself or a dying person groaning in pain.

"He's not dead," Zhang Lei said, slightly taken aback.

"It seems so, but even if he's not dead, he's close to it. Given the circumstances, it's not far from a vengeful ghost's resurrection," Yang Jian said. "Maybe he's already on the verge of resurrection, or perhaps..."

"In that case, we should act now, before he resurrects as a vengeful ghost," Zhang Lei said and immediately took action. He didn't follow Yang Jian's advice to make a detour; instead, he stepped straight into the water and quickly headed toward Lin Shan's room.

Yang Jian frowned slightly.

Too young.

This Zhang Lei was too young.

Some ghosts deliberately set traps to lure you in. Maybe Lin Shan was already dead, and this sound was produced by a ghost.

As if to validate Yang Jian's speculation,

Zhang Lei only took a few steps forward when his expression suddenly changed. Something seemed to grab his foot, and in an instant, he stumbled, lost his balance, and fell into the water.

"Gurgle~!"

Before he could call for help, he was submerged in the water as if plunging into a bottomless pool, and in an instant, water barely half a meter deep engulfed him.

A living person just vanished before Yang Jian's eyes, leaving only ripples echoing on the water's surface.

"Shen Liang, Zhang Lei is down, Lin Shan has been resurrected as a vengeful ghost. I've determined this is a paranormal event, so... you'll have to pay more," Yang Jian murmured as he took out his satellite-positioning phone and dialed Shen Liang's number.

Chapter 420 The Corpse That Floated to the Surface

When Shen Liang received this call from Yang Jian, he almost spewed out a mouthful of blood.

What?

Lin Shan, the fierce ghost, has been resurrected, and Zhang Lei is down?

A case that was originally just an ordinary criminal matter suddenly transformed into a supernatural event, and what's more, a spirit controller had died. Once this happened, the incident was escalated; it didn't just go up by a level or two. If this turned out to be true, the entire J city would be shaken.

Since the level of the supernatural event couldn't be confirmed, it had to be handled with the highest standard.

But if they really did so, Shen Liang, the team leader, would immediately have to resign to take responsibility, and the outcome wouldn't be any better than Zhao Jianguo's.

"Yang Jian, what kind of joke is this? Lin Shan, the fierce ghost, resurrected? Is this even true? I've seen his file and I've had some interactions with him. His limit couldn't possibly be reached so soon, there should be at least ten days or so left," Shen Liang said anxiously, even with a touch of panic and unease.

Yang Jian said, "No one can be sure when they will be resurrected by a fierce ghost. You estimated the time of Lin Shan's resurrection? Captain Shen, wake up. Maybe that guy was deceiving you? If he was about to die, any reasonable person wouldn't reveal it, because once they do, they lose their value for treatment."

"Furthermore, there are significant gaps in Lin Shan's file, especially concerning his relationship with the fierce ghost. Although every ghost controller hides some of their power information to a greater or lesser degree, the total absence in his file is clearly a big issue."

"But even so, it's impossible for Zhang Lei to go down so quickly. Wasn't he with you?" Shen Liang said, grinding his teeth.

If Lin Shan really died, that outcome would still be within the acceptable range.

But if Zhang Lei also went down, then things would become problematic. A minor incident causing the demise of two ghost controllers was a responsibility he couldn't bear.

"It was an accident."

Yang Jian said calmly, "There was a stretch of water in the corridor leading to Lin Shan's room that looked unusual. I advised against wading through it, but he heard Lin Shan's voice from the room and thought he had not resurrected yet, which he saw as an opportunity, so he hurried through."

"The result was a bit unexpected; the water, less than half a meter high, engulfed him, and just like that, he vanished right before my eyes."

"Under such circumstances, how could I save him?"

Hearing this, Shen Liang indeed had no grounds to blame Yang Jian for anything wrong. If a supernatural event truly occurred, anything could happen, and no spirit controller could guarantee their survival.

"Can you solve this issue?" Shen Liang said, gritting his teeth, as if he was bitterly carving flesh from himself.

Although he hadn't interacted with Yang Jian for long, his impression of Zhao Jianguo's former subordinate was profound.

Yang Jian was very capable.

Since becoming a spirit controller, he had resolved many supernatural events and had never failed even once.

Yang Jian said, "I was somewhat confident when facing Lin Shan, who hadn't died yet, but if I now have to deal with adding in Zhang Lei, that's hard to say."

"Maybe Zhang Lei isn't dead yet, his situation is quite unique and he is not easily killed by ghosts. Investigate it further. Look, if you resolve this matter, I will give you five Ghost Candles; that's my final offer, it's all the resources I can offer right now," Shen Liang said, teeth clenched.

"I don't care about the process, I just need this matter resolved, even if you have to take down the entire building. This is J city, we absolutely cannot let a supernatural event spiral out of control."

"Captain Shen, you really are struggling. White Ghost Candles are rarely useful for me; those things are dangerous, not something you can just casually light up. So the difference between three and five isn't that big. How about this, give me three Ghost Candles and add the quota for controlling a second ghost from Lin Shan to me. Given his condition, he won't be using it anyway," Yang Jian suggested offhandedly.

Shen Liang wanted to say, "Doesn't Yang Jian have a quota in his hand?"

It was then he remembered that the guy had given the quota for controlling the second ghost to a ghost controller on the paranormal forum.

"Okay, I agree," Shen Liang said.

"I've recorded the call, so don't think about backing out," Yang Jian said.

Shen Liang said, "I guarantee I won't back out, but please make sure you handle Lin Shan's matter."

"I can't guarantee anything, I can only say I'll do my best," Yang Jian said. As he spoke, he suddenly noticed a chain of bubbles rising from the water-logged corridor ahead.

The stagnant water churned, and a massive shadow appeared in the water.

The shadow resembled a person.

"There's a situation here, won't talk more, hanging up. You'll have to use the satellite positioning phone for further contact; I'm not sure if your phones are waterproof," Yang Jian hung up the private phone, hung the satellite positioning phone on his chest, and kept the call active.

In the previously calm waters, suddenly a person surfaced without a ripple.

They must have been dead, half-submerged in the water, back facing up, face down, curled slightly, motionless, and somewhat stiff.

"It's not Zhang Lei, it's the hotel waitress from earlier," Yang Jian's gaze slightly hardened.

It was a female corpse, dressed in the hotel waitress's uniform, looking like she hadn't been dead for long, her skin still retaining some color, not swollen or rotted from the water.

But this corpse's arrival was strange.

Given the depth of the water, if there were a corpse floating here, it should have been noticed no matter what; he wasn't so blind as to miss it.

"The most urgent thing right now is to confirm whether Lin Shan is dead or not. If he's dead and the fierce ghost has indeed revived, I really shouldn't go for Shen Liang's payment. After all, my condition has already become a problem, and circumstances don't allow me to use the power of the fierce ghost for extended periods, plus there's Zhang Lei, whose fate is unknown."

Yang Jian weighed the pros and cons in his heart while considering his next move.

However, just then, the situation suddenly changed.

The body that had been floating on the water suddenly moved, and following a noise of water breaking, the body was violently flipped over by a hand.

A head emerged from the water, gasping for air.

"Damn, that was close to the end for me," Zhang Lei gasped for breath, his already pallid face now even more dreadful.

His codename was Ghost Eater, and although he was not as infamous as Ghost Eye Yang Jian, his name was nonetheless formidable. He had nearly been drowned in this small ditch.

Yang Jian was slightly surprised, "You actually came back; I thought you were beyond saving. Just now I was reporting to headquarters, telling them to get ready."

"You're right, it's very dangerous here. I paid a price to break free. This Lin Shan is indeed no simple matter. In the situation just now, anyone else would have died, definitely no chance to come back alive." Zhang Lei's face showed traces of fear as if he had just faced something incredibly terrifying.

"It's good that you're not dead. If you had died, it wouldn't just be a simple matter of a fierce ghost reviving," Yang Jian said.

Even though it was his first meeting with Zhang Lei, as a normal person, no one wished to witness other Ghost Eaters die before their eyes.

Zhang Lei nodded; he struggled to stand up from the accumulated water at this moment.

As he stood up, only then did Yang Jian see that the female corpse that had surfaced and been pushed away by him was now clutching Zhang Lei's arm with one rigid hand. Despite being a corpse, it never let go, as though it wanted to drag Zhang Lei into the depths of the water before them.

"A Ghost Slave?" Yang Jian's expression shifted slightly.

Because, judging from the timeline, it was certain that the female server had died first, followed by Zhang Lei's encounter with the fierce ghost.

How could a female server who had turned into a corpse grab onto Zhang Lei who fell into the water afterwards?

So this drowned female corpse had still become a new type of paranormal phenomenon.

However, just as Zhang Lei was about to stand up by bending over, his complexion changed; his body fell downwards, almost toppling back into the water had he not promptly supported himself against the nearby wall.

"Damn it."

His eyes narrowed slightly, and when he looked down, he saw that his legs submerged in the water were firmly grasped by several soaked, somewhat pale, rigid hands. The strength was surprisingly formidable, and his body seemed to be caught in quicksand, slowly sinking downwards.

In just a moment, the water had risen above his knees.

"These things want to pull me into the water, Yang Jian, I can't recklessly use my powers on these things, otherwise, I will die" he suddenly lifted his head, looking at Yang Jian not far away with a hint of panic.

Zhang Lei was keenly aware that it was futile to deal with many ghosts, for they were not the root cause.

So if the stalemate continued, he would either die to a resurrected fierce ghost, or be submerged by the water and drown alive in it.

"Don't worry, you won't die," Yang Jian now opened his Ghost Eye.

An eerie eye appeared on his body, enveloping him in a faint red glow.

Through the Ghost Eye, he saw what was beneath the water.

The water that seemed less than half a meter high was actually bottomless, much like a Hell Abyss, and inside were densely packed floating corpses.

Some bodies were recently deceased, while others had been dead for a long time, their forms grotesquely swollen from soaking in the water. Some corpses were highly decomposed, their skin rotten away in the water, leaving only a ghastly and ruined frame.

Yet, it was these corpses that clung tightly to Zhang Lei's legs, rendering him immobile.

With so many bodies entangling Zhang Lei, it was no wonder he couldn't extricate himself from this small area of accumulated water.

"How many people has that Lin Shan killed with the power of fierce ghosts?"

Yang Jian, with a heavy heart, confirmed the situation and planned to act, first to get Zhang Lei out of there,

He covered the surrounding area with Ghost Domain, about one meter in radius, then strode forward.

The water ahead didn't hinder him; while it seemed as if he were walking in water, in reality, there was no direct contact.

Having no contact with this water, the soaked corpses within it didn't react at all, didn't attack him proactively, and continued to attack only Zhang Lei.

Zhang Lei struggled against his restraints, but couldn't prevent his body from continuing to sink.

Now the water had risen above his chest, and he could feel several icy corpses pressing down on him, like carrying several cold iron blocks while jumping into a lake.

That feeling made wanting to survive futile.

"Yang Jian, hurry," Zhang Lei reached out, urgently calling for help.

"What's the rush, I have it under control," Yang Jian, already by his side, grabbed his arm.

At that moment, he felt as if there was a massive rock hanging from Zhang Lei's body, giving him the sensation that he too might be dragged out of the Ghost Domain and into the water.

But just this was still not enough.

Yang Jian's Ghost Shadow extended from beneath his feet into the water.

The corpses entwining Zhang Lei immediately trembled bizarrely, then simultaneously released him. They then floated to the surface one after another, lifelessly, no longer pulling Zhang Lei downwards.

"Splash!"

Zhang Lei was pulled out of the water, his body marked with palm prints and remnants of rotting hair and skin.

The surface of the water, previously clear, was now dominated by the corpses that had floated up.

"The ghost hasn't appeared yet?" Yang Jian didn't care about the now freed Zhang Lei but focused on those bodies.

He had intended to use Zhang Lei as bait to lure out the ghost from the water.

This was the best approach because he dared not venture into that area of water.

But the ghost did not appear, and none of those bodies was the ghost.

"Under such circumstances, if the ghost hasn't shown up yet, then there's only one possibility, the ghost isn't in the water at all, but in..." Yang Jian immediately cast his gaze towards the partially closed door not far away.

The ghost was in the room.

With Lin Shan.

His guess was correct.

Shortly after,

a swollen hand, soaked by water, reached out from behind that half-open door, resting on the doorframe, slowly pushing the door open.

From inside the room, came the sound of trickling water.