

Revival 441

Chapter 441 440: Sudden Seizure

On the rooftop of a high-rise building with dozens of floors in J City.

Above the gloomy sky, a strange aqua green glow enveloped the space. Suddenly, two people appeared out of nowhere on the previously empty platform. They appeared like ghosts, silent and mysteriously unpredictable, a supernatural phenomenon that was difficult to explain with common sense.

Stumbling, a young man in a white lab coat fell to the ground.

The middle-aged man next to him, around thirty years old, now had a pale face, his breathing erratic, his whole body trembling slightly, whether from fear or from enduring some unbearable pain.

"You shouldn't have saved me," Wang Xiaoming struggled to stand up, his face twisted, staring dead at Li Jun.

Li Jun had forcibly taken him out of the laboratory.

But this was not what he had hoped for, as he had been prepared to die in the lab.

"It was an order from above, Professor Wang, your priority prevails over a laboratory," Li Jun gasped for air, weakly slumping to the ground.

To save Wang Xiaoming, he had paid a significant price.

"That decision was wrong. It's not just about a laboratory; I know the horror of what I have cultivated better than anyone. After the experiment failed, I thought about permanently sealing the Ghost Coffin, burying the coffin and that ghost forever..." Wang Xiaoming suddenly grabbed Li Jun by the collar and roared at him.

"Your behavior makes me feel incompetent, do you know that? Me being alive means more people will die. I like to weigh the value of life, because it's the best method; sacrificing a few to save the many."

"Because of this belief, the belief I thought was right, I could make many sacrifices, even kill."

"But this time, you've completely destroyed the belief I've always held. If I live, then what about those I've killed, and those I could have saved but didn't?"

Wang Xiaoming was emotionally disturbed, roaring and shrieking, feeling his own survival as a heavy sense of guilt.

"Sacrifice is only for now, but we must win the future, and that future must have you, Professor Wang."

Li Jun, while being yelled at with his collar grasped, did not get angry but spoke very seriously and earnestly, "So the decision from above was not wrong, and it was just a ghost after all."

"Even if it's classified as an S-level supernatural event, what of it? There's been at least five S-level supernatural events worldwide, and haven't most of them been resolved? Without your plan to control two ghosts, the headquarters' plan would not have lasted this long, resulting in even more deaths, and your research has made breakthrough progress."

"If the plan to crash the malevolent ghost is successful, the ghost master will officially have the means to contend with supernatural events."

"This, is the future."

"Bullshit, if the experiment were that easy to succeed, it wouldn't have been delayed until now. Do you think I'm omnipotent? I'm just an ordinary person, someone who's simply read a few books. What if this new experimental direction fails again?" Wang Xiaoming, usually calm, cursed loudly.

The reason for his emotional disturbance was not due to the emergence of an unknown-level ghost from the failed experiment, but rather because his survival had shattered the beliefs he had always held.

If he did not sacrifice himself when it was his turn, what had he become?

Hypocrite, evil-doer, schemer... it seemed no amount of bad names would be an overstatement to describe him.

"Professor Wang, you should adjust your emotions and calm down. Now is not the time to discuss this, but rather to figure out how to handle what comes next. Moreover, there's one thing I'm doubtful about. When we were in the laboratory, the Ghost Coffin was opened, and if the ghost was fully gestated and came out, it should still be in that room, as that room is specially made, and once sealed, ghosts can't escape."

Li Jun slowly stood up and said, "But that ghost was not trapped in the room, it appeared inside your work area, Professor Wang."

"What are you trying to say?" Wang Xiaoming stared at him.

"Maybe the ghost's release wasn't your mistake, Professor Wang, but rather someone deliberately set it free," Wang Jun said calmly.

He had also handled supernatural events and was capable of organizing and analyzing them.

"It doesn't matter anymore whether it's due to someone letting it out or the ghost escaping on its own. At that time, we had the chance to trap that thing in my work area. Given the lab's layered lockdown mechanism, it would be very unlikely for the ghost to leave."

Wang Xiaoming said.

The lab was built with this in mind, with dividers and lockdowns between different areas.

If a ghost was released due to an experiment or a mistake in any area, it could be immediately sealed off, preventing a failed experiment from causing a chain reaction.

Therefore, Wang Xiaoming was not worried about other test areas releasing ghosts.

"Indeed, pursuing this matter further is futile now. So what should we do next? Maybe we were lucky that the ghost couldn't get out in time while we were escaping, and it's still trapped in the laboratory," Li Jun said.

Wang Xiaoming said, "Absolutely impossible. The ghost didn't kill me the moment I entered the lab; it was waiting for us to leave. That's the only way it could follow us out."

Startled by Wang Xiaoming's words, Li Jun instinctively glanced around.

"There's no need to look. Once it left the lab, it would have its own pattern of movement, so it wouldn't follow us to City J. Right now, it's probably still lingering near the lab, or it might have already started killing," said Wang Xiaoming, his emotions slightly steadier as he stood on the rooftop of the building and looked in the direction of the lab.

"What's the closest place to the lab?"

Li Jun immediately said, "The training base."

"Then it's very likely that it has already invaded the training base."

Wang Xiaoming's gaze flickered slightly. "Previously, considering the convenience of collecting information about the ghost handlers participating in training, as well as formulating plans to tame a second ghost, the training base was not far from the lab. This gave that thing a choice of where to go, which is unexpectedly bad."

The training base housed a group of ghost handlers, some of whom were nearly in a state of resurrection as ferocious ghosts. If such a place were to be attacked, it would trigger a terrible snowball effect.

"Notify headquarters, ask them to contact everyone at the training base to prepare to escape. We'll save whoever we can."

"And have headquarters call an emergency meeting. All team leader candidates and nominators must attend. I will preside over the meeting myself."

"Okay," Li Jun nodded and immediately began to take action.

At this very moment, at the training base's shooting range.

Yang Jian was unaware that Wang Xiaoming and Li Jun had already escaped from the lab and had accidentally released an unknown level of ghost.

He was now frowning as he stared at the piece of human skin paper in his hand.

"Ghost!"

The non-standard black writing was crooked and occupied the entire piece of human skin paper. Apart from that, there was no additional information, nor did any extra writing appear.

What was this supposed to mean?

Playing tricks, or going on strike?

But just as this thought surfaced, Yang Jian suddenly sensed something and slightly lifted his head.

The restlessness in his body due to the ghost's resurgence heightened his alertness instantly.

"What's going on?"

He observed that the entire shooting range was pitch-dark, devoid of any light, as if the power had gone out. The quiet darkness was eerily unsettling.

"No, it's not a power outage."

Yang Jian's gaze sharpened as he saw that several searchlights near the shooting range were still faintly glowing.

But the brightness was too low, dim, and yellowish, inferior even to the light of a normal candle. They barely cast weak glows amidst the surrounding darkness, seeming as though they could extinguish at any moment.

This scene felt strangely familiar.

When had he encountered it before?

Yang Jian's mind flashed back to the incident in Huanggang Village.

Back then, it was similar. Due to the failed operation, the ghost from the Ghost Coffin emerged, and darkness crept in from all directions like it was about to engulf everything. He had narrowly survived by hiding in a body bag.

But before he could think further.

A tugging sensation suddenly came from the hand holding the skin paper, and the piece of human skin paper almost slipped away.

Yang Jian looked down slightly.

Without knowing when, another pair of hands had appeared on the skin paper, cold, stiff, and tightly grasping one end of the paper, pulling it back, trying to snatch the skin paper from his hands.

Chapter 442 441 Withstood the Attack

Looking at the extra pair of hands that had appeared on the human skin parchment, Yang Jian's body suddenly tensed, his eyes narrowed, and an inexplicable chill surged from the soles of his feet throughout his body.

Ghosts, were they already lurking around him?

He had to admit that his vigilance had decreased just now, because he was within the training base and perhaps because he had been pondering some issues just now, so he hadn't paid much attention to his surroundings. As a result, he hadn't detected the nearby changes until now, which would have probably led to his death if this had happened during previous paranormal encounters he had experienced.

"Does it want to snatch the human skin parchment?"

The intent of the hands reaching out from the darkness was very clear, wanting to take the human skin parchment from Yang Jian's hands.

If it weren't for his own strength, the parchment would have been snatched by those eerily appearing hands in that instant.

And now, the situation didn't seem much better.

The rigid hands were gripping the human skin parchment firmly, with a strength that was somewhat unbelievable. On the other end of these hands was a patch of thick darkness where only a vague view of two arms entering it could be seen, with no clear sight of the origin of these hands.

Perhaps it was a ghost controller, or perhaps a ghost.

But that no longer mattered now.

Yang Jian didn't have time to think; he almost instantly opened his Ghost Eye as soon as he realized what was happening.

Red light emitted from the Ghost Eye, enveloping his body and spreading towards all directions.

In any case, he had to use the Ghost Domain to protect himself first.

However, the situation didn't unfold as he usually anticipated; Yang Jian's Ghost Domain didn't spread out but instead was firmly suppressed around him, barely encompassing a ten-centimeter distance.

The red glow of the Ghost Domain could barely cover himself, and at any moment, it could be extinguished by the encroaching darkness, like a flickering candlelight.

"Completely suppressed under a layer of Ghost Domain? What in the world is this thing?" a sense of horror rose in Yang Jian's heart.

Seeing this situation, he instantly felt an unprecedented sense of urgency.

In such close contact with an unknown ghost, and with his Ghost Domain completely suppressed, any slight mishap could result in his downfall.

The gap between a ghost controller and a real ghost was still very large.

"Use Ghost Shadow."

Yang Jian's Ghost Eye ability was Ghost Domain; since a layer of Ghost Domain was suppressed, increasing the layers would not help. To suppress other fierce ghosts, Ghost Shadow was obviously more appropriate.

Immediately.

A tall Headless Ghost Shadow slowly stood up from under his feet, cold and terrifying, like a corpse standing in the darkness, causing an indescribable sense of suffocation.

The Headless Ghost Shadow now stretched out its black arms and firmly grasped the rigid hands that were holding the human skin parchment, then slowly began to tug as if trying to wrench this strange arm off.

Putting together bodies was the ability of the Headless Ghost Shadow; if it weren't for Yang Jian's concern about the revival of the fierce ghost, he could have let the Headless Ghost Shadow assemble a ghostly body made entirely of fierce ghosts.

However, this ability to suppress fierce ghosts failed at this time.

Those hands were not taken off by the Headless Ghost Shadow.

"How is this possible?" Yang Jian's eyes hardened.

To suppress the Ghost Eye and withstand the assault of the Headless Ghost Shadow, just a pair of rigid dead hands was able to accomplish this.

If these hands had attacked him instead of the human skin parchment earlier, then the result...

Unimaginable.

At this moment, the force transmitted from the hands grew stronger; no, it might no longer be appropriate to call it mere strength, but rather a terrifying sensation that he had never experienced before, as if the ghost within his body was being forcibly drawn out bit by bit.

The Headless Ghost Shadow's body was now being pulled out and gradually distorted, and the Ghost Domain emanating from the Ghost Eye was also warping.

At this moment.

A strong dizziness and feeling of weakness emerged in Yang Jian's mind.

If the Headless Ghost Shadow was drained, his body, which was already deteriorating, would be unable to sustain his life.

He could continue living now because there was a ghost within his body; thus, if the ghost were to be stripped away, most ghost controllers would die immediately, apart from certain special exceptions.

"I can't suppress this ghost thing; if this standoff continues, I'll surely die here," Yang Jian's face broke out in cold sweat, and he couldn't help thinking about giving up the human skin parchment and leaving immediately.

It seemed likely he could escape harmlessly if he gave up the parchment since the hands appeared to be aiming for it.

But without the human skin parchment, Yang Jian would have no solution when facing the revival of his own fierce ghost.

"No, I can't let a ghost get the human skin parchment so easily."

Yang Jian gritted his teeth, released one hand, and quickly untied an old grass rope from his wrist, then used the rope to bind the rigid hands that were trying to snatch the human skin parchment.

He didn't know if it would work, but he had to try.

This was all the ability he could muster; if he still couldn't counter it, he would have no choice but to give up on the human skin parchment.

As soon as the Ghost Rope left Yang Jian's hand, it began to revive.

It almost didn't need anyone's control; the old straw rope had already entwined around those arms and swiftly sank into the darkness, as if it wanted to hang up a ghost.

After its revival, the Ghost Rope indiscriminately attacked anyone nearby, including ghosts.

Now, the Ghost Rope targeted a ghost in the darkness. Before it completely lifted that ghost, Yang Jian wouldn't become the next target of the Ghost Rope.

It was this simple rule that allowed the Ghost Rope to be suppressed by Yang Jian, becoming a ghost completely under his control.

"It's working."

Yang Jian's gaze was fixed intently on those stiff palms. As the hands slowly receded, the pressure he felt also significantly decreased. It seemed that the Ghost Rope in the darkness was continuously lifting its source, causing these hands to lose strength and no longer insist on snatching the human skin parchment.

"Is three ghosts its limit?"

After suppressing the Ghost Eye, Headless Ghost Shadow, and even the Ghost Rope, this unknown ghost chose to retreat gradually.

Eventually.

The stiff hands released the human skin parchment and then disappeared into the darkness, leaving behind ten clear fingerprints on the parchment as proof of how perilous the supernatural contact had been.

"Is it leaving?"

Yang Jian observed the surrounding darkness rapidly receding. His Ghost Domain was gradually returning to normal, extending one meter, three meters, ten meters...

Soon, the darkness in the shooting range dissipated, and the nearby searchlights immediately restored their light.

The uncanny was departing from the area where he was.

But the uncanny event hadn't been without gains; something, maybe a ghost... had taken Yang Jian's Ghost Rope.

"What kind of joke is this, what on earth is going on? Has some ghost master's fierce ghost revived, or did someone intentionally create this supernatural event?" Yang Jian's face was extremely grim; he hadn't even had the chance to feel relieved that he had survived the ordeal.

Because a person came to his mind.

Wang Xiaoming.

During the day, Wang Xiaoming was dealing with him, trying to obtain the human skin parchment from him.

At night, he was attacked by a ghost, specifically targeting the parchment.

Yang Jian certainly didn't believe this was a coincidence; perhaps it was Wang Xiaoming who had sent a ghost master to steal it.

"Ah~!"

However, before he could ponder further, a desperate and fearful scream came from the darkness nearby.

"Has someone else been attacked by a ghost?"

Yang Jian looked in the direction where the sound came from.

The place was also submerged in darkness, but judging by the location, it should be where the dormitory of the training base was located—the resting place for this group of a dozen or so ghost masters.

"How can this be?"

Yang Jian's face turned pale with a sudden change upon hearing the scream.

His previous assumption was wrong.

It wasn't Wang Xiaoming sending someone to steal; if that were the case, a ghost master would only attack him and certainly not others.

In that case, what he just encountered, was it a real ghost?

Just as he was doubtful, his satellite positioning phone in his luggage bag rang.

"Yang Jian, when you hear this message, the training base you're in is in great danger. Leave there quickly and ensure your own safety. There's a ghost heading towards the training base; it might have even already invaded there."

Before he could answer the call, the urgent and panicked voice of Liu Xiaoyu came from the satellite phone.

"I repeat, ensure your safety and leave quickly. Don't you dare die."

"Forced communication indicates a time of grave crisis," Yang Jian's expression shifted.

Then, hearing that a ghost was heading towards the training base made his blood run cold.

He was right in his judgment.

A ghost was indeed lurking here, and he was very likely the first unlucky one to be attacked.

As for the others... they were probably out of luck by now.

The chances they had survived the previous attack were certainly slim.

Chapter 443 442 Death's Beginning

"What joke is this, how could a ghost suddenly appear in the training base when everything is fine?"

Yang Jian was clutching the satellite positioning phone tightly at this moment, his gloomy face slightly unsightly.

Because of the recent encounter, he had almost been killed, just not knowing why the ghost's target wasn't himself but the human skin paper in his hand, and after fending off an attack, the ghost didn't strike at him again.

Surviving was indeed mostly due to luck.

There was a slight silence on Liu Xiaoyu's side in the communication room before she pressed her voice down and said, "There's been a problem in the laboratory. Professor Wang had been conducting some kind of experiment, but today, no, around half an hour ago, a ghost of unknown terror level broke free from the laboratory, and the training base is the nearest place to it."

"So the top brass speculate that the ghost is very likely to head to the training base because that thing is very special and terrifying, which is why the order from above is that everyone at the training base must evacuate, saving every single person they can."

"Wang Xiaoming?" Yang Jian's eyebrows knitted together.

"How could he make such a mistake?"

"You can't blame Professor Wang. I heard that the laboratory had a problem while Professor Wang was away talking to you, and he's not entirely to blame. There might be some inside story."

Liu Xiaoyu said, "Now's not the time to talk about this. It's great that you're still alive. Hurry and leave the training base, this time you don't need to rescue anyone, just ensure your own safety."

Yang Jian's expression flickered slightly.

Issuing such an order, did it mean that the higher-ups knew the ghost's terror level was very high and that the ghost manipulators at the training base couldn't handle it?

But thinking of the previous situation, where it took the abilities of three ghosts to barely repel the attack of that ghost, it was indeed very dangerous.

"Wait, that failed experiment by Wang Xiaoming? The ghost breaking free, suppressing the power of my three ghosts... Damn it, that ghost couldn't have escaped from the Ghost Coffin, could it?" Yang Jian suddenly became furious.

Linking these pieces of information together, he immediately guessed what had gone wrong.

Code: Ghost Coffin Incident.

That had once been Yang Jian's nightmare, and its perilous degree was even greater than the later Hungry Ghost Incident and the Z City Incident to him at the time.

Because that ghost possessed an ability that made ghost manipulators feel desperate.

It could uncontestably suppress the power of your three ghosts.

In other words, if your controlled ghosts number less than three, facing that thing, you would be instantaneously killed without a chance to fight back.

But what made Yang Jian even more petrified was not just that, but the fact that this ability could grow.

If the ghost that suppresses three others successfully kills a ghost manipulator, it will then take the ghost from the manipulator's body, and after that, the rule changes to suppress four ghosts, and so on and so forth... Once it grows to a certain level, it will become a truly terrifying and insoluble existence.

No ghost manipulator in the whole world could withstand it.

It would be the ultimate nightmare.

"I don't know so much information, I only know this time it's very dangerous, Yang Jian, please run away quickly, don't die, I beg you." Liu Xiaoyu's voice was agitated, even with a hint of pleading.

She didn't want to see Yang Jian die at the training base.

"It's a bit late for that now, I was attacked by that ghost just now. I'm very lucky; the first person that ghost attacked was me, but now... the other ghost manipulators seem to be getting killed, and that ghost must have grown by now." Yang Jian looked in the direction of the dormitories.

The ghost eye on his forehead began twitching restlessly.

This was a very bad sign.

"What should we do?" Liu Xiaoyu didn't know what to do either.

"I still have some resources left, I should be able to make it out." Yang Jian quickly withdrew his gaze, picked up the luggage bag at his feet, and then immediately started walking out of the training base.

Now wasn't the time to worry about others.

The more people who died, the stronger that ghost's abilities might become. Once everyone in the training base was dead, he too would surely not escape death.

At this moment, in the dormitory building of the training base,

A group of people who were about to rest had already sensed that something was off around them. They still possessed the vigilance that ghost manipulators should have, but they didn't immediately realize that this was a prelude to a disaster, not until a desperate and miserable scream echoed near the dormitory building did everyone's face suddenly change.

"What's going on? Has someone been killed?"

"Damn, it can't be a supernatural event, can it?"

"The likelihood is small, it should be like the Ping'an Hotel where a ghost manipulator died due to a vengeful ghost's revival, which is a common occurrence. With over a dozen people together, it's inevitable that one or two will have issues."

"No, it's not the revival of a vengeful ghost, it must be a supernatural event."

Wang Jiang walked out from the dormitory building, his face tense and uneasy. Stepping into the corridor, he looked out into the pitch blackness, as if it was enveloped from all sides.

"I just received a call from headquarters," said someone, their face etched with fear as they put down the phone, "they told us to leave immediately, stating that a supernatural event has definitely occurred here." The gravity of the situation had been heavily emphasized during the call.

"Wang Jiang, have you seen Yang Jian?" Suddenly, Zhang Lei hurried over, urgency written across his stiff face.

"Wasn't he at the shooting range practicing? Why, didn't he come back with you?" asked Wang Jiang, puzzled.

Zhang Lei said, "He was indeed at the shooting range practicing when I left. I wanted to confirm if he had returned earlier. It seems that at this moment, Yang Jian is still at the shooting range."

"If he's there alone now, the chance of a ghost attack... is high. I'm worried something might have happened to him."

Wang Jiang exclaimed in shock, "No way,"

He understood what Zhang Lei meant. If something unexpected happened to Yang Jian, the rest of them would likely not survive either, because they wouldn't be able to fend off Yang Jian after the revival of a fierce ghost, not to mention this ghost of unknown Terror Level.

"I hope he's alright. Now is not the time to talk about this, let's figure out a way to get out of here first," said Zhang Lei and then shouted to the people in the dormitory below, "To be safe, we should gather together and leave. That way we can look out for each other."

Although panic and unease were rising in many people's hearts, since the ghost had not yet appeared and they had numbers on their side, they did not feel fear or despair.

A dozen ghost hunters gathered together, believing that there was safety in numbers and that moving as a group would be secure—at least that's what they thought.

"Okay, time waits for no one. Hurry down and we'll meet on the first floor; then we'll join forces to break out," someone responded from below.

"Okay."

Zhang Lei nodded and immediately prepared to quickly evacuate with the several ghost hunters on his floor.

However, before they could move, everyone's body simultaneously shivered and then, involuntarily, they all looked up above them.

"Thud! Thud!"

Clear and heavy footsteps sounded from the rooftop.

It was as if someone was walking across the passage on the layer above.

But everyone understood.

No one occupied the floor above them, because they were on the fifth floor, which was the top floor; beyond that was only the roof.

Someone walking on the roof?

What a joke—who would do such a thing?

Zhang Lei quickly lowered his head, then looked at the others.

Extreme tension showed in everyone's eyes; although no one spoke a word, they shared the same thought.

The ghost... had already appeared and was right on the roof.

Run!

Without any time to think, all of them started to flee quickly, and one person was even more direct, flipping over and jumping straight down from the fifth floor.

This was not a desperate gamble; the ghost hunter was confident he wouldn't die from the fall, so he aimed to get away from the dangerous area as fast as possible.

But to the surprise of the others, before the ghost hunter reached the ground, he was suspended mid-air.

An old straw rope had descended from the rooftop, snaring the ghost hunter's neck in an unfathomably sinister way, then immediately tightened.

What?

The others glanced back while fleeing and were instantly terrified.

That rope?

Zhang Lei and Wang Jiang's eyelids twitched violently.

Wasn't that rope in Yang Jian's hands? He had used it to bind Lin Shan when he was in a revived state at Ping'an Hotel.

Could it be that Yang Jian was dead?

There was no time to think any further, as at that moment, the ghost hunter locked by the Ghost Rope in mid-air was struggling desperately, trying to escape but failing miserably.

The other end of the old straw rope seemed to be held by someone, who was slowly dragging the struggling ghost hunter upwards.

"Help, help me."

His face turning a dark shade, the man stretched his hands towards the others in a difficult and desperate plea for salvation.

Chapter 444 443 The Inescapable Truth

The training base, almost shrouded in darkness.

Yang Jian stood at the entrance of the base, baggage in hand, his expression solemn and brows deeply furrowed.

"Back here again?"

He had prepared to leave and had successfully departed the training base, but after making a round outside, he found himself back at the starting point. Continuing to walk forward, there always seemed to be a training base waiting for him. All the roads within the darkness seemed to lead to the same place, as if luring him toward the location where the malevolent spirits dwelled.

"It's exactly like the situation in Huanggang Village; back then, it was a village I couldn't walk out of, but now it's a training base I can't leave. Did the ghostly thing Wang Xiaoming released fully inherit the characteristics of the ghost from Huanggang Village?"

"Moreover, this kind of ghost's domain is very special."

During his time in Huanggang Village, Yang Jian had used his Ghost Domain, but it still had no influence on Huanggang Village.

The reason was simple.

The entire Huanggang Village was part of the ghost.

So, employing the Ghost Domain was also futile in leaving.

"Unless there's a chance with a Ghost Domain of three levels or higher," Yang Jian mused, having grown through his experiences.

However, after weighing his options, he chose not to employ his own Ghost Domain.

Because it was uncertain how many layers would need to be stacked for it to work—what if it took five layers, or seven?

"Use the Ghost Candle," he decided.

After weighing his options, Yang Jian felt it was better to use the Ghost Candle. Wang Xiaoming's side could already produce them, and when external items can be used, it's better not to challenge one's limits. His life was more important than the Ghost Candle.

The preparations he had made earlier were now proving to be helpful.

He took out a red Ghost Candle and quickly lit it.

The eerie green flame flickered in the dim environment, reflecting on Yang Jian's expressionless face, casting an oddly sinister glow.

"The candle burns normally, proving there are no ghosts around... but that's only to be expected, given my current deduction that the ghost, having failed to attack me, turned to attack others instead."

"One strike per person?"

"No, that's not right. The ghost previously attacked the human skin parchment, not me. I was unharmed—that time it was because I had three ghosts on me: the Ghost Rope, the Ghost Eye, and the Headless Ghost Shadow. I reached a balance with that thing, so I wouldn't become a target."

The rules of Huanggang Village's ghostly incident weren't complicated.

Alone, one was as good as dead.

The principle was that if an individual had fewer than two ghosts, they would be attacked without any chance to fight back. Later, the ghost broke the balance it had maintained with Feng Quan and evolved into a being that required three ghosts to withstand.

Therefore, only by joining forces did Yang Jian, Feng Quan, and Zhang Han survive.

Right, they only survived, not imprisoned the ghost, because the ghost needed to return to its Ghost Coffin.

"But now... I've lost the Ghost Rope. I only have two ghosts left on me, which means that I might be attacked by that ghost next."

Realizing this, Yang Jian felt uncomfortable as if he had swallowed a fly.

If it hadn't been to save the human skin parchment, he would not have lost the Ghost Rope.

Of course, it wasn't really lost, but rather left with that ghost. If there was a chance, he could still retrieve it.

But that chance likely was exceedingly slim.

"You can't just think of the best scenario; if that ghost continues to grow, even having three ghosts might not be safe," Yang Jian consoled himself internally.

Holding the Ghost Candle, he continued to walk forward.

Although the darkness ahead was not very dense, he could see nothing beyond roughly ten meters.

As he walked, he constantly monitored the condition of the Ghost Candle in his hand.

The burning was slow, which should be enough to help him exit this eerie place.

Relieved by this thought, Yang Jian loosened up a bit.

the burning speed of the Ghost Candle served as an early warning; the closer the surrounding ghosts, the faster it would burn. If attacked, the Ghost Candle could even be instantly consumed, much like what happened last time at the Caesar Hotel in Z City.

Besides its unreliable lifespan in danger, the Ghost Candle's value was still immensely great.

At least up to this point, the Ghost Candle had never disappointed anyone.

However, although Yang Jian hadn't been attacked, the outcome left him somewhat unable to accept it.

After briskly walking for several minutes, expecting to exit the training base and leave this place, the darkness that spread before him suddenly cleared, and once again, the gates of the training base opened up before him.

He stood at the gates of the training base for the second time.

"Can I really not leave with a Ghost Candle?" Yang Jian looked at the Ghost Candle in his hand burning.

After hesitating for a moment, he chose to blow it out.

If the Ghost Candle was of no use, then keeping it lit was just a waste, and he would not squander the Ghost Candle for temporary security. Such waste was unacceptable. In critical moments, it could turn the tide.

"Should I try using a Ghost Domain of three levels or higher?" Yang Jian could only pin his hopes on the second plan for leaving.

The time for measuring was brief, scarcely less than ten seconds before he decisively sprang into action.

Because Yang Jian was very clear in his mind that the longer he delayed his departure, the more terrifying that ghost, after killing the other demon hunters, could become. At that point, if he hadn't left yet, he would undoubtedly face certain death the next time he confronted the ghost. There would be no chance for a comeback, not even with the Ghost Candle.

The Ghost Eye on his forehead was already open, displaying a particular restlessness, turning agitatedly. It was sizing up the surroundings with an eerie look as if it too feared the arrival of that ghost.

This was the first Ghost Eye, and it had opened a layer of the Ghost Domain.

He then raised a hand, and another Ghost Eye emerged on the palm. He aligned it with the Ghost Eye on his forehead.

The overlay of the two Ghost Eyes opened the second layer of the Ghost Domain.

Two layers of the Ghost Domain formed a red path that extended outward but was soon swallowed by the darkness in the distance, vanishing without a trace.

This red path couldn't traverse the darkness with the eyes in tow.

This was within Yang Jian's estimation range. He raised another hand, and the third Ghost Eye appeared.

At the same time, the third layer of the Ghost Domain was activated.

Originally, it was by utilizing the three layers of the Ghost Domain, coalescing them into a straight line, that he managed to pass through the Hungry Ghost's Ghost Domain and locked it away.

The opening of this third layer of the Ghost Domain signified some sort of transformation.

A red path originated from Yang Jian, cutting through the darkness in the distance and stretching beyond sight.

However, his vision didn't open up.

Within the view of the third layer of the Ghost Domain, Yang Jian didn't see the outside scenery, only a black wall obstructing the front of his Ghost Domain.

"The three layers of the Ghost Domain don't work either?" he thought, his heart sinking.

The thing he feared most was happening.

"Let's try the fourth layer of the Ghost Domain," Yang Jian grew tense in an instant.

The consequence of stacking Ghost Domains this way, although powerful, was that it greatly stimulated the awakening of malevolent ghosts. However, his Ghost Eyes had already reached nine, teetering on the edge of full revival. He had managed to suppress it forcibly with the Headless Ghost Shadow previously.

But if the Ghost Eyes were to fully awaken—

At the same level, the Headless Ghost Shadow wouldn't be able to contain the Ghost Eyes.

He had this premonition.

It was for this reason that Yang Jian rarely recklessly tapped into the power of the Ghost Eyes, because that was too dangerous.

But now, there was no choice.

The ghosts were growing, the terror was continuing. If he couldn't get out, he would be even more helpless than he had been back in Huanggang Village.

The fourth Ghost Eye appeared.

Behind Yang Jian's head.

The Ghost Eye at the back of his head rolled within his flesh, its eyeball rotating into the flesh, aligning through his brain with the Ghost Eye on his forehead.

Flesh and blood couldn't impede the power of the Ghost Domain.

The fourth layer of the Ghost Domain opened.

This was the first time Yang Jian had activated the Ghost Domain to such a level.

As expected—

Something awful happened.

His entire body felt as though it was being ripped apart, excruciating pain enveloped him, and the Ghost Eyes began to stir uncontrollably.

"I can't keep this up for too long, I must resolve this immediately," he gritted his teeth, feeling that his Headless Ghost Shadow could still suppress it for a while, and thus, he opened the fourth layer of the Ghost Domain during this brief window.

All the surrounding darkness vanished from his sight.

No house, no ground, no buildings were left, only a dim expanse remained.

And at the end of the Ghost Domain, the black wall that had been obstructing Yang Jian's exit lost its original color and revealed its true form.

It was... an old wooden board.

This aged wooden board was blocking Yang Jian's fourth layer of the Ghost Domain, preventing his passage.

And it seemed familiar.

Like a coffin board.

"How can this be?" Yang Jian immediately closed his Ghost Eyes, feeling somewhat weak, nearly collapsing to the ground, disbelief written across his face.

"Am I... inside a Ghost Coffin?"

That was the real reason he couldn't leave despite holding the Ghost Candle.

Chapter 445 444: Everyone's Horror

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Despite the risk of ghosts' eyes possibly reviving, Yang Jian explored the depths of the fourth layer of Ghost Domain and reached the end of this darkness.

The range covered by the darkness wasn't extensive, limited only to the training base and its immediate surroundings. However, from his exploration just now, it gave Yang Jian a bone-chilling sensation.

At the end of the darkness lay old wooden planks.

He wouldn't mistake their appearance—they were a Ghost Coffin.

Having personally sent the Ghost Coffin out of Huanggang Village, Yang Jian had a very vivid memory of it.

"I'm inside this Ghost Coffin now? How is that possible."

Behind the horror and unease was a bewildering sense of astonishment.

Wasn't the Ghost Coffin supposed to be in Wang Xiaoming's laboratory at this time? And the ghost inside the coffin had been successfully turned into a Coffin Nail by Wang Xiaoming, a thing that could suppress three ghosts. So, what was this ghost?

The same ability?

"No, that's not it," Yang Jian's expression grew increasingly solemn.

"This isn't the ghost from Huanggang Village. The ghost from Huanggang Village only ran out from the Ghost Coffin and then returned to it. I've always thought that the ghost in the coffin and the Ghost Coffin were two separate things, but from the information I have now, it's very possible that the Ghost Coffin and its ghost are one entity."

The real ghost might actually be the Ghost Coffin itself.

This could also explain why the exorcists wouldn't worry about the ferocious ghost reviving after lying in the Ghost Coffin.

If the coffin is a ghost, lying in it would mean entering the body of a ghost, and with the Terror Level of the Ghost Coffin, it could naturally suppress the ghost in your body perfectly, and might even produce some unexpected effects.

So, this might just be the real truth.

Yang Jian's gaze flickered as various speculations surged in his mind. He tried to piece together the whole process, looking for clues that might help him escape the training base.

"We need to confirm this immediately."

Without delay, he contacted Liu Xiaoyu using his satellite positioning phone.

"The situation at the training base is worse than we imagined. This incident is intricately connected to the original Ghost Coffin incident. Help me verify whether the Ghost Coffin is still in the lab."

"Okay, I'll inquire about it right away," Liu Xiaoyu replied immediately.

Yang Jian then quickly picked up another phone to make a second call, this time to Li Yao.

"Hello, Li Yao, it's me, Yang Jian."

A sexy woman's voice came from the other end of the line: "Hehe, Yang Jian? What's up? You've only been at the training base for a few days, and you're already eager to call me? Do you miss me? Guess what I'm doing right now?"

"I'm taking a bath; want me to send you some selfies?"

Yang Jian immediately cut her off: "There's a problem with Wang Xiaoming's laboratory. Ghosts have invaded the training base. It happened very suddenly, and you might not have received any news about it yet, but you will soon. Right now, I need you to send my mom back to Dachang City as quickly as possible. Someone named Jiang Yan will take charge once she gets there. After I hang up the phone, I'll send you the number."

"What?"

At this news, Li Yao's voice suddenly rose a few pitches, filled with a hint of shock.

A supernatural event in J city?

This was a very bad sign, and Li Yao clearly understood what the emergence of such an event really meant.

But there was no time for her to ask more. She responded immediately: "Okay, don't worry; I'll definitely arrange for your mother to get back to Dachang City, and ensure that nothing goes wrong. How about you? Are you in any danger over there?"

"Nothing for now, but I can't guarantee it going forward. You can pay attention to the situation here from the headquarters. I can't say more because I'll be taking other actions after this call. I won't call you again after this, and you shouldn't contact me unless this is over," Yang Jian said.

He had to prepare for the worst-case scenario.

If the severity of this incident exceeded expectations, he might very well die here, but at the very least, he must ensure that his mother could leave safely. With Jiang Yan taking care of her, he was somewhat relieved.

So this was like making arrangements for the aftermath in advance.

After ending the call, Yang Jian's face had a slightly grim expression. He didn't continue towards the outside of the training base but instead quickly headed back inside.

If he couldn't leave this damned place, then the next consideration should be survival.

To survive, he needed to ensure he wouldn't end up alone.

And he also had to ensure that the other exorcists weren't killed.

Because every death would allow that ghost to grow stronger.

Even if Yang Jian didn't want to save them, he still had to take the risk and figure out a way to gather them together for a group survival strategy.

Soon.

Yang Jian's figure disappeared into the darkness; he was heading in the direction of the dormitory building. It was very likely already invaded by ghosts, but at the same time, the other exorcists were also nearby.

But if those people together did not understand the pattern, they would all be killed by the ghost, one by one.

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Perhaps the headquarters had already informed them of the pattern, but by this time, it was already late; maybe the situation wouldn't allow them to gather together as they wished.

Under the shadow of fear, many foolish things can be done.

It was during Yang Jian's operation.

At the headquarters, in a large conference room.

Wang Xiaoming, Li Jun, Vice Minister Cao Yanhua, Chen Yi who was responsible for overseeing J city's ghost tamers, as well as Guo Fan, Zong Shan, Feng Quan, and others had all arrived. Moreover, as the incident unfolded, an increasing number of ghost tamers were hurrying to the headquarters overnight to attend the emergency meeting.

But Wang Xiaoming couldn't wait for everyone to be present; he slowly stood up and began to recount the key points of this paranormal incident.

"This paranormal incident is the result of my experiment's failure. Speaking of responsibility and consequences at this time is pointless; I'll provide an explanation later, so please let me finish first. Those not present can join via a phone conference through satellite positioning on their mobile phones."

"Is it that urgent?" Chen Yi asked, his expression slightly warm with anger. "Professor Wang, it seems this incident is no small matter."

"Don't rush to speak; let Professor Wang continue," said the Vice Minister, Cao Yanhua, gesturing for others to be quiet with a wave of his hand.

Wang Xiaoming said, "This matter started with the Ghost Coffin incident. You can look up the details of the Ghost Coffin incident in the archives later; the headquarters is preparing them. What I need to discuss is what happened afterward. The existence of the Ghost Coffin made me see the viability of a person turning into a ghost while retaining their sanity."

"Had the experiment succeeded, it would have had an unprecedented impact, but, unfortunately, I failed."

"The first ghost bred by the Ghost Coffin was successfully dealt with by me. I thought this would increase the experiment's chance of success. Therefore, after making some preparations, I conducted a bold attempt to turn ghost tamers into real ghosts while still maintaining their consciousness."

"The subject of the experiment was Wei Jing."

Wang Xiaoming launched the slideshow, and an image of a personal file appeared before everyone.

Many people's faces tightened slightly at the sight of this person named Wei Jing.

"Him?"

Wei Jing, one of the earliest ghost tamers, had resolved numerous paranormal events and had made considerable accomplishments during the initial outbreak of paranormal activities; he was a veteran international ghost tamer.

But unfortunately,

The earliest batch of tamers was also the first to face the problem of ghost resurgence.

At that time, the strategy to control two ghosts was not mature, and the success rate was quite low.

Thus, Wei Jing failed to control a second ghost.

But due to certain special emergency measures, Wei Jing didn't die from the ghost's resurgence and was instead suppressed, barely surviving in a half-dead state.

"So you're saying Wei Jing has now fully resurged as a ghost and invaded the training base?" Zong Shan asked.

Wang Xiaoming nodded, "If nothing else, that should be the case. What I'm worried about is not that, but the special nature of the Ghost Coffin. If Wei Jing, having failed to turn into a ghost, has inherited the abilities of the Ghost Coffin, no, or rather he has become a part of the Ghost Coffin, then the consequences could be quite dreadful."

The person experimented upon is not important.

What mattered was the ghost bred by the Ghost Coffin, which was a cause for Wang Xiaoming's concern.

"Talk about Wei Jing's, no, that ghost's abilities now," someone asked.

Others also looked towards Wang Xiaoming.

The Ghost Coffin incident's archives had been sealed, and they had no privilege to access them, so they were unaware of the true story behind the incident; but now, this secret file would be revealed, and there would be no more secrets.

"The ghost from the Ghost Coffin can suppress the abilities of three ghosts within a ghost tamer's body, which means, anyone controlling fewer than three ghosts would simply be a regular person in front of that ghost," said Wang Xiaoming.

"What?"

"Damn, you're joking, right?"

"Can't be."

For a moment, a series of shocked exclamations filled the conference room.

However, Wang Xiaoming hadn't finished speaking. He continued slowly, "This ability to suppress other ghosts can grow. If this ghost kills a ghost tamer and takes the ghosts from their body, then the number of ghosts it can suppress would grow from three to four... What the limit is, I'm not sure."

As he spoke, many eyes widened, their expressions filling with dread.

The whole conference room fell silent.

If this was already making them feel hopeless, Wang Xiaoming's third statement plunged them into the abyss, "Currently, the training base has been attacked, and it's highly likely that there have been casualties already. So, this ghost has already begun growing, and after the paranormal event at the training base is over, the ghost's abilities will..."

"Stop talking," someone who couldn't bear this terrifying and desperate reality hastily stood up, his teeth clenched in anger.

If he continued, believe it or not, some would cry right in front of you.

Who could stand such news?

Wang Xiaoming chose to be silent, and he slowly sat down.

Because he had already shared the necessary information, and there wasn't much else to say.