

Revival 446

Chapter 446 Code

The atmosphere in the large conference room at headquarters was very somber.

Almost all of the ghost hunters had fallen into silence, their foreheads furrowed and looking distinctly uneasy. Because if this paranormal event caused too much harm, they'd likely have no choice but to face it, even if they were reluctant.

But... according to what Wang Xiaoming had said, they simply couldn't withstand it.

To begin with, they had no way to contain the power of the three ghosts, and if it grew even a little, it would be formidable; no one could stand against that entity.

"Speaking of the Ghost Coffin incident, Feng Quan, you and Yang Jian were the ones who resolved it at the time, weren't you? What method did you use to succeed?" Suddenly, after a long moment of furrowed contemplation, Deputy Minister Cao Yanhua's gaze fixed on Feng Quan, who was sitting not far away.

Feng Quan was also considered one of the veteran international ghost hunters at headquarters.

He had been nominated for the team leader plan this time as well.

Feng Quan gave a wry smile and shook his head: "We couldn't resolve it. It's true that I was the first to come into contact with the Ghost Coffin incident, but in my eyes, that ghost was an insurmountable entity. Even later A-class paranormal events that emerged, like the Ghost Door Knocker incident, the Ferocious Ghost Road incident, the Terrifying Museum incident... none of them were as severe as that one."

"The fact that I survived was due to good luck, rather than my own ability."

"But you had successfully contained that ghost once? You must have some experience to share," said Chen Yi, one of the leaders of J City, in a deep voice.

"Experience? Indeed, there is some. That ghost escaped from the Ghost Coffin, and its capabilities were, just as Professor Wang described. If you don't have three ghosts of your own, you're certain to die if you're alone. However, the ghost doesn't judge based on the number of people; instead, there must be no fewer than three ghosts in an area."

Feng Quan said: "The range of this judgment is about the size of a normal room, I suppose. If there's a second ghost hunter in this room, a third ghost hunter would also meet the condition, so we must operate as a team to deal with this ghost."

"In that case, there's still some hope," said several previously despairing people, their eyes lighting up.

As long as there's a chance, it could be managed.

"No, don't oversimplify it, that's just the ghost's killing pattern, but it has other traits," Feng Quan continued, his eyes showing a glint of reflection; "The second trait is the most despair-inducing one."

"That ghost cannot be contained. To be precise, it can be, but after containment, the ghost will continue to appear, taking on a different identity, a different method, right beside you."

"At the time, Yang Jian, another ghost hunter, and I managed to withstand the first wave of attacks and successfully contained the ghost, then the second wave of attacks came, and it appeared again... as if it could restart indefinitely until it kills you all, without exception."

"Damn, that's twisted. This Ghost Coffin incident was only classified as a B-class paranormal event, but in my opinion, it's already an S-class by now. It's a miracle you few survived back then; no wonder Yang Jian is so strong, able to resolve the Hungry Ghost incident. It seems these skills were honed through experience," exclaimed a ghost hunter named Cao Yang.

Back then, Yang Jian had experienced the Ghost Coffin incident alongside Feng Quan, which truly was baffling.

Deep down, anyone here randomly picked to go into Huanggang Village likely wouldn't stand a chance.

"Talking about it is useless, we already know the ghost's killing pattern and capabilities, what's left is the issue of containment, so let's come up with a strategy. Everyone present is among the top in Asia; we are the only ones who can handle this. Minister Cao, what do you think?" said a young man in a suit, knocking on the table with a steely gaze.

"Jiang Shangbai, do you have any good suggestions?" Cao Yanhua asked. Though he was a deputy minister, all present were the top figures from headquarters, so his tone was very polite.

"I do have a suggestion indeed, but I wonder if Professor Wang would agree," said the young man named Jiang Shangbai, as his gaze shifted slightly.

Wang Xiaoming, his head slightly lowered and looking somewhat disheartened, now looked up and said, "You might as well speak."

"Extract the Coffin Nail, assemble a top-notch team, led by me, to devise an action plan, and try to defeat that ghost," stated Jiang Shangbai assertively, his words filled with intense confidence.

The Coffin Nail?

Others in the room couldn't help but change their expressions slightly upon hearing this.

They knew what those three words implied.

It was something that restrained the Hungry Ghost, very special and very eerie.

"This is indeed a method. That thing has dealt with the Hungry Ghost, it will mostly likely be able to deal with this ghost too," nodded Zong Shan. "Professor Wang, what do you think?"

Wang Xiaoming didn't answer directly, but instead said: "The first wave of attacks could be solved with the Coffin Nail, but what about the second wave? And even if you resolve this, has the ghost already grown to the point where the Coffin Nail can no longer suppress it? Besides, how can we ensure that the Hungry Ghost won't break free and escape when we extract the Coffin Nail?"

"Don't forget that dossier; the Hungry Ghost is suspected of having the ability to reset time, so the risk of extracting the Coffin Nail is extremely high."

"That's why we need to devise a plan," Jiang Shangbai said.

"I refuse," Wang Xiaoming said slowly: "We can't afford the cost of a second S-class paranormal event erupting. Moreover, that ghost was created by me. To some extent, it is more fearsome than an ordinary ghost."

"What do you mean?" Deputy Minister Cao Yanhua asked.

Wang Xiaoming's gaze fell again: "Although currently it seems to act on a malevolent ghost's instincts, it is suspected of possessing Wei Jing's intelligence. This is a special kind of abnormality, the result of a human and paranormal collision, except the result is the ghost prevailing, overpowering Wei Jing. If it were the other way around, with Wei Jing controlling the ghost, then my experiment would have been a success."

"However, I cannot be certain that my judgment is definitely correct, but if possible, it would be better to treat it as Wei Jing dealing with it, the resurrected ghost of Wei Jing, considering him a ghost manipulator controlled by ghosts."

"Wei Jing is an international ghost manipulator, and he has a lot of experience. If the ghost has acquired part of Wei Jing's intelligence, then the danger level of this situation needs to be escalated," Chen Yi said with an extremely ugly expression, even feeling an urge to burst into anger.

Because this was a man-made special event, and it had escalated to such a terrifying degree.

Wang Xiaoming said, "Considering that this ghost is currently seizing other ghosts to grow, and especially targets ghost manipulators, and is suspected of having part of the intelligence of international ghost manipulator Wei Jing, I am defining this event as S-rank, codenamed: Ghost Envoy. I trust there are no objections."

"Ghost Envoy, huh?" Someone grinned and said, "Indeed very fitting for the situation, as this ghost can even capture other ghosts. To some extent, it really is like a Ghost Envoy."

As the meeting continued, Liu Xiaoyu suddenly rushed into the meeting room.

"You can't go in, an emergency meeting is in progress, what is the matter..." A security guard tried to stop her.

Liu Xiaoyu shouted, "Professor Wang, Yang Jian is now trapped at the training base, and he hopes you can help him confirm something; the situation is very urgent, he's hoping you can lend a hand?"

"Yang Jian? He wasn't able to escape? Then he's as good as dead, it's possible to give up on him now, his chances of survival are incredibly slim," Jang Shangbai glanced and sneered.

They had already learned of the ghost's abilities, and it seemed that the notorious Ghost Eye Yang Jian was going to meet his downfall this time.

"What are you saying? Jang Shangbai, Yang Jian is not dead yet and you're talking about giving up, what do you mean by that?" Feng Quan slammed the table and stood up, shouting angrily.

"Exactly what it sounds like, I'm just stating a fact. Rescue efforts at this point would be too late, who knows how many ghost manipulators that ghost has already killed?" Jang Shangbai snorted lightly, "And as you said before, even after that ghost was captured, there were second and third attacks. In this situation, without a complete plan, anyone who goes is as good as dead."

"Jang Shangbai, what skill is there in making snide remarks at such a time? Don't forget, you previously proposed using the Coffin Nail, which was also handed over by Yang Jian," Cao Yang said with a light smile, "Looking down on others, yet relying on their action plans, that's not called skill."

"Cao Yang? What, is there something wrong with speaking the truth now?"

Cao Yang didn't reply, just smiled.

Indeed, it wasn't wise to offend the circle of friends; there was no need to quarrel with these people.

At that moment, Wang Xiaoming stood up and said, "I will provide Yang Jian with all the help he needs and hope he can survive. Let me communicate with Yang Jian."

"Professor Wang?"

Jang Shangbai's face twitched slightly; he had never imagined that Wang Xiaoming would step forward to respond to Yang Jian.

This was completely illogical.

Everyone knew that Yang Jian had personally killed Wang Xiaoming's younger brother Wang Xiaoqiang, the grudge of a murdered brother lay between them, and now he was actually going to save his enemy?

"Professor Wang, this is a dead-end situation, and I suppose you can't think of any good solutions," Jang Shangbai spoke, intending to curry favor with Wang Xiaoming and simultaneously hoping that Yang Jian, a potential candidate for the team leader, would die in this paranormal event.

Unexpectedly, Yang Jian had good relationships; so many people were speaking up for him.

"Yang Jian is worth saving, his value is greater than yours," Wang Xiaoming said slowly, then walked out with Liu Xiaoyu.

Being evaluated like that in front of so many people, Jang Shangbai's face grew somewhat ferocious.

Everyone knew that Professor Wang liked to assess a person's value, seeing worth in those who had a necessity to live. For those without value, if they happened to die accidentally, he wouldn't even spare them a glance.

"Value greater than mine? What a joke," he muttered to himself in rage.

Soon.

In the training base, Yang Jian stopped in his tracks under the dormitory building.

Because the communication was reconnected.

"This is Wang Xiaoming. Ask whatever questions you have, but under the current situation, you have to give up on external assistance, as I haven't yet devised a perfect solution to this paranormal event," Wang Xiaoming cut straight to the chase.

Yang Jian immediately smiled, "I once asked you if, should I fall into trouble, there would be anyone to rescue me. You said there would be. Now, it seems your words don't count for much, Professor Wang."

"You know the reason why, and I don't want to explain, but I hope you can survive," Wang Xiaoming said.

"Help me investigate the current status of the Ghost Coffin," Yang Jian went straight to the point, "As quickly as possible."

"Alright," Wang Xiaoming immediately agreed.

A simple answer, but both understood the other's value. Now was not the time for empty talk.

Wang Xiaoming wanted to save Yang Jian because human skin paper was still in his possession, and the next step in his research required it.

And Yang Jian needed him to confirm the status of the Ghost Coffin.

If there was any chance of surviving, it had to be related to the Ghost Coffin.

Chapter 447 Competing with a Fierce Ghost

Although Yang Jian had Wang Xiaoming confirm the situation with the Ghost Coffin, danger still lurked around him. The most urgent matter was to find a way to survive this paranormal event.

As for imprisoning that malicious ghost, he hadn't given it a thought.

He had experienced the Ghost Coffin incident in Huanggang Village before and had imprisoned that ghost. However, what followed was a second attack by a vicious ghost that led to despair.

If this ghost was indeed the Ghost Coffin, then it surely possessed the same characteristics.

Therefore, confronting that ghost head-on would be the most foolish decision.

"All I need is to figure out how to survive and escape from here. With my current condition, fighting this ghost is akin to courting death," Yang Jian decided on his next course of action.

Looking at the dormitory building being eroded by darkness, the unease in his heart intensified.

Because the real ghost was lurking somewhere in this very dormitory building.

The visibility was not good.

If it were just an ordinary person, it would be like groping around in the dark, seeing nothing at all, nearly as blind as when one's eyes are open—you wouldn't know even if the ghost was standing in front of you.

But ghost eyes were significantly better.

They could clearly see things within five meters, barely make out a silhouette beyond that distance—a person or a building could be recognized, but beyond ten meters, nothing could be made out at all. Even if a strong flashlight was turned on, it would hardly be effective, only a bit like a glow stick in darkness.

The power of the malevolent ghost created the Ghost Domain, exerting an absolute suppression.

Everyone was like prey that had walked into the world of ghosts, waiting for their inevitable hunting fate.

Yang Jian took a deep breath, moving closer to the dormitory building with anxiety and extreme caution.

He did not wish to be too close to that ghost.

But he couldn't just watch other ghost hunters get hunted down and let that ghost grow to a point of absolute terror.

To survive, he had to fight.

After all, the pattern of killings was clear now. The rest was how you managed to live through it.

"Currently, I only have two ghosts with me, which means I am also in a vulnerable position just like everyone else. As I approach this ghost, I am just as likely to be targeted and killed. But at least for now,

that ghost doesn't appear within my sight, which means it likely doesn't possess the ability to split itself and can only target one person at a time."

"That's a good thing, so during this time, I must find the other ghost hunters as quickly as possible to increase the number of ghosts on my side; otherwise, this might indeed be the end for me here."

Upon entering the danger zone, Yang Jian exhibited no hesitation or fear.

Instead, he moved quickly towards the dormitory building, not in a straight line, but in a curve, intentionally making a round around the vicinity.

He believed inside the dormitory building to be the most dangerous area and did not want to step inside. If the ghost was in there, then the other ghost hunters would definitely notice it and would normally try to escape from the building.

But due to the encompassing darkness and the loss of visibility and direction, Yang Jian guessed that there must be people wandering near the dormitory, lost.

Sure enough, his guess was right.

In his ghost eye vision, Yang Jian soon spotted a faint light five meters away.

Like a spark.

Although too faint to see clearly, in the dense darkness, the recognition was still quite high.

With caution, he quickly approached.

A human silhouette emerged in the darkness.

But Yang Jian did not immediately rejoice, because the human silhouette could very well be a ghost, not a person.

It was not until he carefully approached within five meters that the silhouette finally became clear.

It was a person, a somewhat attractive woman, but Yang Jian did not recognize her. He recalled that among the ten or so ghost hunters present during Professor Bai's lecture during the day, there was indeed such a person. He did not have a complete impression of her, but he had seen her a few times unintentionally.

"Good, as long as she is a ghost hunter, that will do," Yang Jian sighed in relief.

His vigilance and caution had led him to the first ghost hunter, increasing his number of ghosts.

"Who—who's there?"

The rapid footsteps approaching in the darkness made Huang Ziya, who was lost near the dormitory building, tremble violently, her body breaking out in goosebumps as a sense of inexplicable terror flooded her.

She could not see clearly what was making the sound, only knowing that a "person" was closing in on her.

It could be another ghost hunter; it could be a real ghost.

"It's me, Yang Jian," came a deliberately lowered voice from the darkness.

Yang Jian?

The Ghost Eye Yang Jian?

Hearing that name, Huang Ziya, who wasn't particularly mentally resilient, nearly burst into tears.

"You, how are you here?" However, her rationality as a ghost controller steadied her emotions.

"Just like you, I got dragged into this man-made paranormal incident. Now's not the time for explanations. If you want to live, follow me. If you keep wandering around here, you will only be waiting to die. That ghost will target you soon." Yang Jian didn't rush closer, but instead spoke as he walked over.

This would allow her to lower her guard so she wouldn't attack him suddenly, using the ghosts' powers out of fear.

Under extreme tension, it's easy for one to react excessively.

Yang Jian had personal experience with this.

"I don't want to die, please help me get out." The woman named Huang Ziya said with fear and trembling in her voice.

"I'll do my best."

Yang Jian walked over, grabbed her hand, and placed it on his shoulder: "Lean on my shoulder, and follow me. Don't let go all of a sudden thinking to escape on your own under any circumstances. This ghost is very special. The only chance we have to survive is if all ghost controllers gather together. Alone, you'll surely die."

"I understand, I've dealt with paranormal incidents too, trivial ones, but I still know the rules," Huang Ziya, reassured by the warmth from Yang Jian's shoulder, felt her fear lessen.

"Just don't be a dead weight." Yang Jian replied, then continued towards the direction of the dormitory building.

In his eyes, he couldn't see the situation of the dorm building at all, only the silhouette of a large building standing stark against the darkness.

And the sphere of ghosts was once again absolutely suppressed.

So he had to move forward blindly and somehow figure out a way to gather all the scattered ghost controllers in the dorm building.

"Do you have a satellite-positioned phone? If so, contact headquarters and see if we can determine the location of the others by phone." Yang Jing thought of a pretty good method.

"I can use mutual positioning to determine locations," Huang Ziya said from behind.

"No use, you can't rely on that kind of positioning, it's too prone to accidents. It's possible that when the ghost appears, some people don't have their phones with them, or maybe someone was killed by the ghost and their phone was lost. Rashly positioning might lead us into danger, so we can only confirm the location through calls, which can eliminate most of the potential dangers," Yang Jian said.

He needed to concentrate on his surroundings, so he couldn't do this task, and this Huang Ziya was quite suitable since she was currently blind anyways.

Swiftly,

Huang Ziya behind him began communicating with headquarters.

But such a response would be slow.

Yang Jian couldn't wait for headquarters to report locations, so he had to keep moving.

He arrived right under the dormitory building.

His expression immediately turned solemn.

Because he saw bloodstains on the ground.

The rich, scarlet blood was smeared across the ground, and it wasn't even clotted yet, with fragments of corpses lingering beside it.

"A ghost controller has been killed," Yang Jian said. Although he had been prepared for this, he still harbored a sliver of hope that the other ghost controllers wouldn't die so quickly.

But cruel reality shattered that bit of hope.

"Counting the Ghost Rope I lost and this killed ghost controller, the ghost can now suppress at least five ghosts, and on my side, including the person behind me, we only have three. Even if I can release one more in an emergency, we can at most muster four."

"We're still isolated and possibly targeted for killing," Yang Jian thought with increasing urgency.

It felt like he was racing against the malicious ghost, seeing whether it could kill faster, or if he could gather these scattered ghost controllers quicker.

If the race was lost,

even if Yang Jian assembled a group of ghost controllers, it would be futile. He would still be isolated and doomed to be killed.

Therefore, time was of the essence.

Without hesitation, he went up the stairwell of the building.

The stairs within the darkness exuded an indescribable sense of oppression, with faint echoes of footsteps resounding in the silent stairwell.

Not his own, nor Huang Ziya's behind him, but those of an unknown presence.

Yet, Yang Jian hadn't stepped into this perilous dorm building unprepared.

In his hand was a Ghost Candle that had barely burned at all. If he encountered an attack or even saw that ghost, he wouldn't hesitate to light it.

But not yet, as he couldn't be sure how long he needed to stay here. The small amount of resources he had could only be used in critical moments, and wasting them carelessly could squander his chance to survive.

Chapter 448 Advancing in the Dark

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Yang Jian wasn't certain how many ghost hunters were still alive inside this dormitory building; after all, since the incident unfolded, others might have already dispersed and fled the area, possibly even without enough time to receive notifications from headquarters, let alone knowing the ghost's pattern of killing.

But this was the place most steeped in darkness, which meant that both the ghosts and other ghost hunters were here.

Yang Jian could only take the risk of entering, for if he couldn't accomplish his objective on this trip, an unsolvable supernatural event awaited him.

This was an unprecedented horror; should the ghost continue to grow stronger, the outcome would be despairing.

There was no escape, no confronting it, no possibility of containment.

Even with knowledge of the pattern, there would still be no way out.

With this thought, his pace grew even more urgent.

"Bang!"

Yang Jian kicked open the door of a dormitory room with brute force, taking a quick glance inside.

Desolate, not a single person in sight.

But he didn't stop his search efforts there, instead proceeding to the next dorm room to look for any possibly isolated ghost hunters.

The second dorm room was empty, and the door to the third was ajar. There were belongings of a ghost hunter inside, yet it was still devoid of people—presumably evacuated by someone with a quick reaction.

Yang Jian felt a sinking feeling in his heart.

Once away from the dormitory building, even if not immediately fatal, it was as good as dead because the ghost would not spare an isolated target. Only by staying together was there a chance to survive.

But the real challenge lay in how to gather everyone together in a short span of time.

This was the Ghost Domain. Under the control of a ghost, most ghost hunters simply could not see through the darkness and were likely to get lost.

He kicked open the last door on the floor.

Suddenly, Yang Jian saw someone sitting in the furthest corner of the dorm room, hugging their knees. Although their expression was somewhat calm, it still betrayed a sense of unease and panic.

Especially when the door was kicked open, the person was startled enough to cover their mouth.

"I'm Yang Jian. You're one of the ghost hunters from this group, right? There's no time to explain, follow me immediately," Yang Jian said upon seeing the person, feeling a sense of relief.

As long as they were alive, it was good.

"You're Yang Jian? What in the world is happening outside? I woke up and felt something was off around me. There must be a supernatural event occurring here," the person said, first startled, then relieved, asking earnestly.

Yang Jian approached and said, "Yes, a supernatural event has taken place. If you want to stay alive, don't remain here, or the ghost will come to kill you soon."

"Do you know the ghost's pattern of killing? If not, staying quiet and still like me is the safest option. If I can just get through this period, I will survive once the ghost moves on," the person explained, evidently having their own strategy for survival.

And it was indeed a very sound approach.

In most supernatural events, if people stay calm and motionless, pretending to be statues, they have a high chance of avoiding being selected as targets by ghosts.

Their chance to live is much greater than those who run around and scream.

"That ghost targets people who are alone. Your method is practically akin to courting death. I don't want to waste any more time explaining; follow me right now. I have to find the others," Yang Jian said as he reached the person's side, immediately grabbing and pulling them up.

Then he placed their hand on his other shoulder.

"Don't let go of my hand. I can see clearly here, and I'll lead the way."

"Okay, okay," the person responded, clearly beginning to panic, no longer insisting on staying put. They immediately followed Yang Jian out of the dormitory building.

Those appointed to train here were ghost hunters with certain potential. Most knew to measure their actions.

"Yang Jian, there's news. A ghost hunter named Qian Yi on the third floor is exiting through another safe passage and has now made it back to the first floor," suddenly Huang Ziya whispered.

"Who?" the other person exclaimed, startled.

They couldn't see the surroundings clearly and only realized there was another person beside them when they heard the voice.

"I'm Huang Ziya, one of the trainees this term, just like you. Yang Jian found me, and now he wants us to gather together," Huang Ziya explained.

Yang Jian said, "Good, tell him to turn around and go back upstairs. I'll meet him at the opposite safe passage."

The dormitory building was not small; in fact, it was quite large.

Though recently constructed, perhaps taking practicality into account, its scale was much larger than typical dorm buildings. There were eight exits for safety alone and the stairways were also much wider than those in ordinary buildings.

This was entirely for safety reasons so that everyone could evacuate in the shortest possible time in an emergency.

The downside, however, was that the spacious interiors made it difficult for people to find their way out quickly in the dark.

Despite being able to see the path ahead clearly, Yang Jian, because he needed to keep an eye on the surroundings and lead the two behind him, couldn't run recklessly through the dormitory building and could only move quickly forward.

Counting this person,

Currently, the number of ghosts on our side is four, but under special circumstances, this number can become five because Yang Jian still has a captured ghost in his possession, which can be released and suppressed in a critical moment.

However, the ghost inside the dormitory building can suppress at least five to start with.

Therefore, the three of us are still isolated.

At this moment.

The fourth floor of the dormitory building.

Due to the previous shroud of darkness, the events happened too suddenly, the abrupt invasion of ghosts and the prior murder of an exorcist as they watched helplessly, had caused the remaining people to start moving somewhat hesitantly.

Everybody was effectively blind, unless they moved along by touching the walls; otherwise, taking a single turn in here and they would probably lose all sense of direction.

There was nothing that could be used to identify one's bearings.

And with the presence of ghosts, some people had already dared not to act carelessly, as nobody knew whether they would encounter paranormal events if they continued forward.

"Damn it, didn't we tell the people on the fourth floor to wait here for us to meet up? How come we got here and they're gone?" In the dark corridor, four exorcists gathered together, groping their way forward along the wall.

The darkness seemed to even block out their voices, and the lead, Zhang Lei, had shouted loudly too.

The sound echoed in the pitch-black dormitory, yet there was not a single response to be heard, the silence was almost suffocating.

"Maybe they've already left. Under these circumstances, it's unlikely they would continue to wait for us here. We should think of a way to get out of this dormitory building sooner rather than later. After all, you saw it too... the ghost is on the top floor, and by now it has probably already entered the dorm from the top floor, maybe on the fifth floor, or maybe waiting for us on the first floor," Wang Jiang said from behind, having met up with him, followed by the other two exorcists.

"So in other words, whether we stay put here or try to leave, there is immense danger either way."

Not knowing the ghost's location, they didn't even have a direction to run.

"According to the information from headquarters, the ghost will target individuals who are alone to kill. It's only by sticking together that there's a chance to survive. They can't be so stupid as to have scattered before meeting up, right?"

Zhang Lei's voice came through the darkness.

If they left the dormitory building, their chances of coming together would be even slimmer. The training base was so large, and there were only a dozen or so people participating in the training this time. How to find them once they've scattered?

Only by gathering everyone to leave was the sole way to survive.

Although the ghost was in this dormitory building, any somewhat experienced exorcist knew very well that without understanding the pattern, trying to escape might just lead to dying even faster.

"That being said, we know this, but others might not. Some of them are newbies without satellite positioning phones, and it's unlikely the headquarters could reach them with regular phones. Besides, some people don't even have their phones with them. I think at least nearly half of the people didn't get this message," said Zhang Lei.

"Even if they got the message, it might be too late. The information from the headquarters came in two steps. The first step was to get us to leave the training base immediately, and only in the second step did they tell us about the ghost's killing pattern. There was an interval between the two, which can be deadly," Wang Jiang's voice was especially grave. "This would cause most people to scatter after hearing the first message, and by the time they hear the second, it would be too late."

"Fuck, headquarters doesn't usually set us up like this," someone cursed.

Zhang Lei said, "You can't blame the headquarters, everything happened too suddenly. By the time we received the call, the ghost had already arrived. Headquarters surely needed some time to confirm the ghost's data, files, patterns, and the like. By the time they briefed us, we'd already missed the optimal window. Luckily, I had the foresight to call you guys to leave together."

At that time, his consideration was that having more people meant more strength, and even in the face of a ghost, they could put up a fight.

The chances of surviving together were significantly higher, no matter what.

That's why they got off to a good start, initially gathering four exorcists right from the start.

Unfortunately, those who were originally supposed to meet up on the fourth floor were nowhere to be seen.

If these two groups had managed to meet up, there would have been at least seven or eight exorcists, greatly increasing their survival ability.

"If we still can't find those who were on the fourth floor earlier, then we'll head to the third floor and search through each level before we leave here," Zhang Lei said.

"Alright, let's do that."

"Wait, there's a new message from headquarters."

Wang Jiang, listening to Zhang Lei's satellite phone, suddenly became somewhat elated: "Headquarters says Yang Jian isn't dead, and he's currently leading people up from the first floor. They want us to meet up with him."

"Really? That's great. Let's first get to the emergency passage and tell Yang Jian to meet up in the hallway," Zhang Lei replied, also relieved.

Once the two groups met up and the number of people increased, the probability of survival would be even greater.

However, just as Zhang Lei picked up the pace.

Before long, he abruptly halted his footsteps, his already tense face turning to one of horror in the dark environment.

While moving forward and exploring, he had touched a hand on the wall.

This hand was ice cold and stiff, slightly bent, making one feel a chill to the bone with just a touch, instantly causing his hairs to stand on end.

Like being electrically shocked, Zhang Lei jerkily pulled back, and the darkness ahead was eerily quiet, as if some horrifying thing was standing there, blocking his path forward.

"Quick, retreat, the ghost is up ahead."

A suppressed low growl instantly made everyone shudder.

Chapter 449 Wrong Choice

Zhang Lei's words exploded in the dark environment, igniting everyone's fear.

A ghost just ahead?

Although many had not mentioned it before, everyone's greatest worry was that in such a situation with no visibility, as they groped forward in the dark, would they unknowingly find themselves beside the ghost?

Despite their concerns, everyone still harbored a hope for luck, believing they wouldn't be so unfortunate as to encounter it.

However, the cruel reality told them that luck simply did not exist.

The worst-case scenario still happened.

They encountered a real ghost on the fourth floor of the dormitory, and what was ridiculous was that it wasn't the ghost that found them, but they who had found the ghost.

"Run!"

The only thought in everyone's mind was to flee.

With hardly any hesitation, they turned and ran. From the moment Zhang Lei spoke the warning to the start of their action, no more than three seconds elapsed. They had discussed it before: in the face of danger, no one should hesitate, just save whoever could be saved.

Because this ghost was an unsolvable presence, at best, the ghost busters were only slightly better off than ordinary people, but not by much.

A series of frantic footsteps echoed through the dark corridor.

The four ghost busters turned and fled, sprinting through the dark environment, eager to quickly distance themselves from the terror that had melted into the darkness behind them.

Zhang Lei, too, turned with a pale face and fled.

He had already learned a lot of information about this ghost from headquarters. It was precisely because he understood that he didn't attempt to capture this ghost together with the others.

This thing simply couldn't be imprisoned.

Even if you succeeded once, what awaited you was the second wave of the ghost's attack, the third wave, until its target was killed.

They ran for their lives, fear looming from behind. Every person's heart raced, and they all knew clearly that if the ghost targeted them, death awaited with no chance of struggle. The ghosts you could control were insignificant compared to a paranormal entity of this level.

"Damn it, how could we be so unlucky, with the ghost waiting right in front for us? This time, who will it attack? Me, or that guy called Wang Jiang, or the other two?" Zhang Lei sprinted, shaking with fear. Although he was breathing heavily, he didn't give up thinking.

This was his experience with dealing with paranormal incidents: never lose your sanity, no matter how terrifying the situation.

"It should choose me as the target, after all, I was closest to the ghost, and it was also me who touched it just now..." Zhang Lei's face was covered in cold sweat. He felt lost.

He didn't know where he was anymore.

The dormitory building was large, the corridors spacious. While directions could be easily distinguished with vision, in this dark environment, the very spaciousness became an obstacle.

"Bang!"

Zhang Lei seemed to have hit the corner of a wall, his head buzzing, and he fell to the ground.

"This is the intersection we passed before." He felt blood trickling from his nose, but he didn't care about that and roughly determined his location through the intersection.

However, when he quickly struggled to get up, he suddenly found the surroundings eerily quiet.

He could previously hear the sound of others' footsteps as they fled, but now there was silence.

"Have we separated?" Zhang Lei gritted his teeth. He couldn't worry about so much now and immediately walked to the right.

There were safety exits on both sides. He decided to head for the safety exit on the right, which should allow him to meet up with Yang Jian on the second floor.

As long as he left this floor, Zhang Lei felt he should be safe.

If the ghost was on this floor and wanted to go to the third, it would need some time.

Although the ghost was insoluble, its attacks were one by one, with not a very high efficiency in killing.

Zhang Lei believed that as long as he was not chosen as the first target by the ferocious ghost, he had enough confidence to meet up with Yang Jian downstairs and escape this deadly crisis.

"Wait, something's not right."

After running for a while, he noticed something abnormal.

Why hadn't he been attacked yet, when he had clearly touched the ghost's hand, almost certain the ghost was right in front of him?

Not only had he not been attacked, but it seemed none of the others had been either.

After all, when the ghost chose a target, someone among those close by would have the misfortune of being picked.

"Could it be that what I touched was not the ghost? Could it have been one of the ghost busters? No, that's impossible. There were only a few of us on this floor—nobody would be so foolish to run upstairs instead of out. It must have been the ghost, but the ghost didn't immediately attack us... Damn it, I made the wrong judgment."

Suddenly, Zhang Lei realized what was amiss and gritted his teeth in frustration.

He was right to have encountered the ghost, but the four of them hadn't satisfied the ghost's conditions for killing, that's why they were unharmed.

In other words, the four of them weren't isolated at that moment.

But, that wasn't right either.

Four people, each controlling one ghost: at most, that was four ghosts. But the information from headquarters suggested that the ghost could suppress at least five, and the number would only increase, not decrease.

Five is certainly more than four, a problem even kindergarten kids wouldn't get wrong.

"No, that's not it, our side adds up to not four, but six ghosts." Zhang Lei remembered his special situation.

He had once consumed two ghosts while dealing with supernatural events.

Although the ghosts had been devoured, they had not died or vanished, but likely still resided within his own body, merely suppressed by another ghost he possessed. However, even in a state of suppression, those two ghosts still counted.

Therefore, it was correct to say that Zhang Lei alone contained three ghosts.

The result was: six to five.

They had, just a moment ago, been in no position of vulnerability; even if they had encountered a ghost head-on, they wouldn't have been killed.

But now, it was too late for regrets.

The group had scattered in their panic and flight.

"Damn it," Zhang Lei was consumed with remorse at this moment and wished he could slap himself.

He had personally squandered their chance of survival, pushing everyone, including himself, onto a path of certain death.

But regret was useless now, for he couldn't bring these people together again. All he could do was to try to find Yang Jian and join him to avoid being singled out and killed by the ghost.

This was not just for his sake, but also for the others'.

If Zhang Lei died,

the ghost would grow to an extremely formidable level, making confrontation even more difficult.

Run!

Clenching his teeth and unable to worry about anything else, Zhang Lei sprinted towards the stairwell.

Nothing terrifying happened around him.

He was lucky; the ghost hadn't targeted him.

But he wasn't the only one who was alone.

Within the dark, ominous dormitory building, a spirit manipulator who had initially accompanied Zhang Lei and Wang Jiang was now lost.

Truth be told, being "lost" wasn't quite accurate; he could determine his general location. He should be on the balcony of the dormitory building. If he continued left or right, he would find the staircase and could make his way out.

However, what terrified him at the moment was the realization that he seemed to be alone.

The surrounding silence was dreadfully oppressive, without a single sound. He tried calling out to the side, calling "Zhang Lei, Wang Jiang," but no one responded.

Clearly, he had been left behind.

The ghost was on this floor, and being alone in this situation could be fatal.

He could only pray he wouldn't become the vengeful spirit's first target. If he moved quickly enough, he should be able to reach the second floor and meet with the ghost-eyed Yang Jian, as they had planned previously.

There was still hope for him to survive.

With this thought, the spirit manipulator quickly sprang into action.

But the moment he turned around, he sharply felt as if someone had appeared out of thin air behind him in the darkness. A pair of cold, stiff hands grabbed his arms, preventing his advance.

"How can this be..." The spirit manipulator was engulfed in fear, his heart seemingly stopping in that instant.

"Let go of me, let go now."

A sharp pain erupted from his body. He felt the cold, stiff hands forcefully probing into his sides, ripping through his skin, crushing his bones, and fumbling inside his body, as though searching for traces of a ghost within him.

He began to struggle violently, screaming frenziedly in his attempt to escape.

But it was futile.

Right then, he was no different from a regular person, with the ghost within him completely suppressed and silent, and his own body fragile to the point of defenselessness.

A moment later,

the spirit manipulator coughed up blood, his body convulsing, no longer having the strength to struggle. Simultaneously, something was forcibly removed from him by those hands shrouded in darkness.

Heavy footsteps continued to echo in the darkness.

The ghost headed towards the stairwell on the right.

At this moment, the ghost possessed six.

One might not seem like a large number, but it was enough to drive anyone to despair.

Where the ghost had been, a mutilated body hung from the balcony, dripping blood that flowed in the darkness, staining a patch of the surrounding area red. More blood trickled down the walls of the fourth floor. On the body, the spirit manipulator's mouth was still faintly bubbling with blood.

The vestiges of life, in the midst of darkness, gradually extinguished.

"Has someone died?"

At the second-floor stairwell, Yang Jian witnessed the dripping, dripping of fresh blood from the balcony corridor. His expression was particularly grave, as this was not from the first body, but must belong to the second spirit manipulator's blood.

This meant another person had been isolated and killed by the ghost.

The ghost possessed six from the outset. If he didn't meet with the others soon, and if the ghost targeted them, they were all doomed.

Chapter 450 failed to rendezvous

"Why hasn't that guy named Qian Yi come over yet?" Yang Jian stood at the staircase waiting, looking down.

There was not a single person on the first floor.

According to the previous phone call, a ghost controller named Qian Yi should have already walked over from the first floor by now. Under normal circumstances, they would have already met up.

But something was wrong; he, Huang Ziya, and another ghost controller had not yet waited for the person named Qian Yi.

"I'm not sure either," came the slightly anxious voice of Huang Ziya from behind him.

Yang Jian frowned deeply, "Hasn't the headquarters sent any messages?"

"Headquarters said they can't contact Qian Yi anymore." Huang Ziya held Yang Jian's satellite positioning phone to communicate, but the result was that there was no response from Qian Yi's side.

"It seems that the person named Qian Yi turned off the communication on purpose."

Turned off the communication on purpose?

Yang Jian frowned, "What kind of joke is this? At a time like this, he turns off the communication, let the headquarters directly locate his position. The ghost is wandering around in the dorm building; at this critical moment, he pulls this move?"

"Okay, alright," Huang Ziya behind him contacted headquarters again to ask for help with the location.

"Yang Jian, what do we do now? We can't continue waiting here for that Qian Yi, right? The ghost could appear at any time." The other ghost controller, although his tone was relatively calm, betrayed a sense of unease and fear.

After all, the three of them were still isolated at this time.

If the ghost found them, death was certain.

No one could remain calm under such a threat of death, not even Yang Jian, who was also quite anxious.

"Let's go to the third floor; we've already made contact with Zhang Lei. He said there are a total of four ghost controllers gathered together, heading this way. This is good news. If we can meet up with them, our chances of surviving this time would be very high," Yang Jian decided to start heading towards the third floor.

Honestly, he was reluctant to go deeper into the dorm building.

Because the higher they went, the closer they might be to the ghost's location. Additionally, Zhang Lei had said they were coming to meet up, but so far no one had been seen.

This was a very bad sign.

Combined with the blood he had seen dripping down from the fourth floor balcony before, Zhang Lei and his people might have already been attacked.

However, even so, they could not retreat.

After all, this was a supernatural event that could easily lead to the annihilation of everyone involved—the only way out was to meet up with others and increase their own ghost controller numbers to withstand the assault of the malevolent ghost.

Beyond that, there were no other options.

He looked up the stairs cautiously.

Yang Jian could see the situation in the corridor clearly.

It was very quiet, and it seemed normal—at least there was no immediate danger.

Just as he continued to walk upstairs, Huang Ziya behind him relayed the message: "We've located Qian Yi's position. He... is moving rapidly toward the entrance of the training base. He's fleeing from here."

Hearing this, Yang Jian, who was cautiously walking upstairs, suddenly stopped in his tracks, then his expression turned ice cold, "He tells us to meet up here, but he runs off to the outside of the training base? Is this guy using us as bait, trying to leave us in the dorm building closest to the ghost to hold it off and buy himself some safe survival time, and then take advantage of this time to leave?"

In an instant, he understood Qian Yi's actions.

"Why would he do something like that?" Huang Ziya, shocked by Yang Jian's deduction, exclaimed.

Yang Jian said, "Why not? Isn't that also the arrangement from headquarters? To let as many as possible escape. Perhaps he believes he has a way to escape this Ghost Domain. After all, as a ghost controller, he does have some abilities."

"I have nothing against him leaving; after all, one less person leaving is also good for me. At least those who get away won't die at the hands of the ghost. But to deliberately make a phone call to leave us in the dormitory closest to the ghost, trying to use our lives to buy time—that, I cannot tolerate," he said coldly, angry at Qian Yi's actions, which reminded him of a past experience.

Because of Qian Yi, Yang Jian's time had been delayed. Although it was not long, every second was critical at the moment. The ghost lingering here was growing all the time, and being a step later could lead to the death of another ghost controller, while the number of controllers in the training base was fixed.

Once the number of people killed by the ghost exceeded half, this game could almost be said to be over.

"Yang Jian, although Qian Yi's actions indeed make one angry, maybe he has a way to leave the Ghost Domain. Shouldn't we make a call to confirm? If he really can, maybe it's an opportunity," the other ghost controller said in a low voice from behind.

...

Clearly, he didn't care much about grudges when faced with life and death.

Yang Jian sneered, "He probably doesn't even know what the true nature of the Ghost Domain is. Thinks he can leave this place? He'll never manage that in his lifetime. Believes that being a bit clever will keep him alive? Little does he know, by doing so, he's simply thrown away his last chance of survival."

"I just hope he doesn't die too quickly because if the ghosts don't kill him, I will--by my own hand."

The statement was harsh and cold, sending shivers down one's spine.

Without a doubt, if Qian Yi happened to survive and was found by Yang Jian, his end would be extremely grim.

How could someone who has survived numerous supernatural incidents be one of the kind, good people?

While speaking—

The third floor was reached.

At this moment, Yang Jian's gaze shifted slightly. He saw someone holding the staircase handrail, rushing down from the fourth floor, and soon they met on the third floor.

But that person didn't see Yang Jian and was even unaware of someone being in front of him, continuing to hurry downstairs.

How could Yang Jian let him just run downstairs and escape? He immediately reached out to grab him: "Wang Jiang, it's me."

He immediately revealed his identity.

Wang Jiang, suddenly grabbed by someone out of the darkness, almost instinctively tried to break free, but upon hearing Yang Jian's voice, he shuddered and immediately stopped in his tracks.

"Yang Jian, is it really you?" His voice was slightly breathless, clearly having just experienced a dangerous flight.

"Why are you alone? Where are Zhang Lei and the others? Didn't you say over the phone that there were four of you? All the way up here, I only saw you heading downstairs," Yang Jian immediately asked.

Based on the timing, he should have already met up with Zhang Lei, Wang Jiang, and the other four.

Had everything gone smoothly, Yang Jian could have gathered Qian Yi along with these four people, which would have nearly made up half of the group. With such numbers, they could have triumphed in this deadly competition,

But who could have foreseen such a drastic change in events?

Qian Yi had fled, and of Zhang Lei and Wang Jiang's group, only one had been gathered.

"We were initially meeting with the group on the fourth floor before trying to meet up with you. But then the people on the fourth floor disappeared. They either left early or hid themselves. In any case, we couldn't find them. Later, Zhang Lei led us in the dark and we encountered a ghost midway," Wang Jiang said, his voice trembling. Recalling what had happened, he didn't even know how he had made it here.

"So, a ghost attacked you?" Yang Jian asked.

"No, I don't know. All I know is that Zhang Lei yelled at us to run, and we turned and fled," Wang Jiang replied.

"Come back with me," Yang Jian's expression changed slightly as he hurried to the fourth floor.

"What? The ghost is on the fourth floor, and we're going back?" Wang Jiang exclaimed in terror.

Yang Jian said, "Running is a dead end. Right now, the ghost likely hasn't killed too many people, but as it continues, we will stand no chance. We must find a way to gather the few people left. Do you want to fight for your life now or resign yourself to a desperate death later?"

"Our only chance is now. Choose wrong, and it's death—there won't be a second opportunity for you to choose. You've encountered supernatural events before; you know the pattern of ghost killings. Do I really need to spell it out for you?" he said, his voice growing into a growl.

"I, I understand. I'll go back to the fourth floor with you," Wang Jiang said.

The other two didn't speak; they tacitly agreed with Yang Jian's course of action because it was the correct strategy. Although risky, it was their only chance at survival.

As for running, maybe they could survive now, but they would definitely die later.

Moreover, Ghost Eye Yang Jian was trustworthy. After all, he had dealt with an S-level paranormal event, so he couldn't possibly make a foolish decision.

The group made their way to the fourth floor, determined to find Zhang Lei and the remaining two ghost controllers.

Even though Yang Jian's numbers had increased by one, the crisis was still present.

The ghost was still killing, and its next target might be among their group.

Because Yang Jian's group was still in a vulnerable, isolated state.