

Revival 496

Chapter 496

Yang Jian felt the changes in himself.

The ghost part remained unaffected, but the human part had changed under the influence of Gao Zhiqiang's Ghost Shadow.

The deterioration of his body had improved, and he even became healthier than before.

However, when Yang Jian attempted to control the ghost, his expression changed subtly.

He felt another consciousness within his body, a bizarre presence, as if another person had entered his thoughts. Although this new thought remained silent, it was distinctly present. At the same time, the original ghost in his body seemed to be reviving—not quite a revival, but more like it was being repelled by him.

"So that's how it is..."

Yang Jian's eyes flickered as he gradually understood the nature of this ghost, "This ghost isn't failing to revive; it's reviving in a different way. It seems to be merging with the human consciousness bit by bit, until eventually, the human personality disappears and is completely replaced by the ghost. Perhaps it can retain the way of thinking it had when alive, but its essence has turned into a ghost."

"I can't control this ghost because there are other ghosts inside my body. Gao Zhiqiang's ghost can't affect the Ghost Eye, Ghost Shadow, or Ghost Hand, so it has become my subconscious resisting these three ghosts. I could forcibly control it for a while, but if I do it for a long time, the balance will definitely fail."

For a ghost controller, the most crucial aspect when controlling more than two ghosts is balance.

Once that balance fails, it means the fierce ghosts revive, and the controller isn't far from death.

Yang Jian could use this ghost for self-deception, thinking it wouldn't revive, but the instincts were still there. Even if this ghost didn't revive, the other ghosts in the body would also awaken due to the loss of balance.

"Indeed, I was too wishful in my thinking. Ghosts are not something that can be easily controlled," Yang Jian recalled the initial period when he first controlled the Ghost Eye.

Back then, he was almost daily tormented by the revival of fierce ghosts.

After that, the situation became a bit better when he controlled Ghost Shadow, but it only delayed the fierce ghosts' revival. Only after the incident with the Ghost Mirror did controlling the malfunctioning Headless Ghost Shadow temporarily solve the problem of the fierce ghosts' revival.

But then came the deterioration of his body, and the balance was broken again.

Yang Jian, using the Coffin Nail made by Wang Xiaoqiang and the Ghost Hand, regained balance and thus survived to this day.

Each success was not random but had its reasons.

"If I can't control it, then its value to me has diminished greatly," he thought with a hint of regret.

This ghost couldn't be controlled by a ghost controller, only by ordinary people. Although its abilities were peculiar and frightening, they were limited. After Yang Jian acquired it, he could only occasionally restore his body to prevent it from deteriorating further.

But this value was not significant for him.

Because he had been inspired.

As long as a ghost's ability could change reality, not just this ghost, any ghost could repair the body.

"Did you fail?"

Wang Xiaoming noticed his expression and asked calmly.

He wasn't asking if Yang Jian had controlled Gao Zhiqiang's ghost but whether he had learned the secret of the fierce ghosts' revival.

Yang Jian came back to his senses and said, "It's not a failure, just an inspiration. But for now, I still can't do what you're thinking of."

"Is it a lack of ability?" Wang Xiaoming pondered.

Indeed, such an almost unsolvable revival ability had so far only appeared in S-class supernatural events. The revivals of the Hungry Ghost and Ghost Envoy were all despair-inducing. Yang Jian was still no match for an S-class supernatural event; it was understandable that he couldn't revive. However, the direction was correct.

"Let's not talk about that for now, let's confine Gao Zhiqiang first," Deputy Minister Cao Yanhua said urgently, and then immediately instructed the staff to prepare a gold container.

Soon, a gold box large enough to confine a person was wheeled over on a cart.

Yang Jian was holding the body of the ghost, and although it had the appearance of Gao Zhiqiang, he knew very well that this ghost did not have a physical form—it was just a consciousness, a purely mental existence, a ghost. It could be Gao Zhiqiang now, or if Wang Xiaoming controlled it, it would become Wang Xiaoming.

But only his hand could grasp this ghost because it did not exist in reality but rather in the deep Ghost Domain, invisible to ordinary people and even ghost controllers.

"Minister, since I've confined this ghost, I should be the one to handle it," Yang Jian said seriously at this moment.

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Although he couldn't control it, this ghost still had significant value and was worth collecting. He couldn't guarantee when it might be useful in the future.

"Yang Jian, this is unacceptable. Although Gao Zhiqiang died due to the resurgence of a fierce ghost, you must not forget, it was your fight with Gao Zhiqiang that provoked this scene. Your actions are tantamount to directly killing a ghost manipulator from the headquarters. If Gao Zhiqiang hadn't erred first, I would hold you accountable,"

Cao Yanhua said sternly, "If you insist on taking Gao Zhiqiang's ghost, how should I explain this to the others? What if, in the future, top-ranking ghost manipulators covet someone else's ghost and cause such a scene? Wouldn't that lead to chaos? I hope you will follow the arrangements and not be too stubborn in your ways."

Upon hearing this, Yang Jian couldn't help but quickly calculate his options in his mind.

As expected.

Taking away Gao Zhiqiang's ghost would be easy, but removing it would be very difficult.

This was the headquarters after all, and the resistance he would face was considerable. Moreover, he couldn't resort to force; with at least a dozen top ghost manipulators watching, if he started a fight, he doubted he could even escape.

But, to fall out with the headquarters over a single ghost was obviously foolish.

"What if I apply to manipulate this ghost?"

Yang Jian then used a legitimate excuse, "This ghost can help me recover my body; I need it."

Ghost manipulators with merits could apply to the headquarters to manipulate a second or even a third ghost. Although Yang Jian had never used such rights, his merits had long qualified him.

Cao Yanhua sighed in relief upon hearing this, hoping that Yang Jian, the young man, wouldn't act impulsively. He immediately said, "That requires following procedures. As long as the procedures are met, the headquarters will agree. But before then, Gao Zhiqiang's ghost must be handed over to the headquarters for processing, and I will consider your needs as a priority."

This was a compromise.

After all, Yang Jian's value was undeniable, and the headquarters could not simply disregard it.

"Can you guarantee this ghost won't end up in someone else's hands?" Yang Jian asked calmly.

"I can't guarantee that, but I can ensure that this ghost won't end up with a ghost manipulator ranked below you," said Cao Yanhua.

Yang Jian squinted at Cao Yanhua.

It had to be said, this deputy director was indeed slick, offering not a single promise, just an ambiguous answer, and yet he intended to reclaim Gao Zhiqiang's ghost.

Yang Jian knew, however, that this incident was quite serious, and the headquarters wouldn't allow him to just brazenly kill Gao Zhiqiang and take his ghost, even if Gao Zhiqiang was in the wrong first.

"I understand. The ghost will stay with the headquarters. However, I've chosen the place to store this ghost for the deputy director. Whenever the procedures are completed, that's when I'll come to take it away," Yang Jian said, as he placed Gao Zhiqiang into the Gold box and sealed it with a light pat.

The box immediately disappeared from sight.

"You..." Cao Yanhua was about to speak to stop him.

But Yang Jian just pointed to the ground beneath their feet.

Suddenly, Cao Yanhua fell silent.

This scene seemed familiar; it was after the conclusion of the Hungry Ghost incident at the temporary meeting center in Dachang City.

Yang Jian had put a ghost manipulator named Lin Long in a box and transported it 10,000 meters underground using the Ghost Domain.

At such a depth, not even Li Jun's Ghost Domain could retrieve it.

"This is also headquarters, and I can assure you it's safe and secure, Deputy Director, you can rest easy," Yang Jian said.

He temporarily stored Gao Zhiqiang's ghost here and would later apply and go through the proper procedure. If his application failed, he could secretly retrieve it someday without anyone noticing.

"This Yang Jian really has guts," someone grumbled to themselves.

He didn't even care for the deputy director's face, daring to retain Gao Zhiqiang's ghost in front of so many people.

But then again, a man who had tackled an S-class supernatural event lacked neither courage nor the audacity.

Yang Jian wasn't afraid of ghosts, much less people. If the scene wasn't bolstered by so many people, Cao Yanhua's words might as well have been flatulence; the current world's restraint on ghost manipulators was too weak. Even the headquarters was more about collaboration than about issuing pure commands from high to low.

Chapter 497 The Elderly from the Republic of China Period

Cao Yanhua had nothing to say after being outmaneuvered by Yang Jian, who indeed kept the ghost at headquarters, helped detain it, and even agreed to apply for proper authorization afterwards.

Although it was excessive, it did not cross the bottom line of what headquarters could tolerate.

And just the day before yesterday, he had made a significant contribution. If they dealt with him too harshly now, it would only dishearten other ghost controllers.

"This Yang Jian is indeed growing very fast, not only in handling supernatural incidents but also in judging situations... Right, without clear judgment, he couldn't have handled those terrifying cases," Cao Yanhua thought bitterly, feeling a conflict so intense it was almost like spitting blood.

Sometimes he even thought how nice it would have been if Zhao Jianguo hadn't recruited Yang Jian into the headquarters in the first place.

But as soon as this thought emerged, he dismissed it.

No one is perfect, and one shouldn't erase someone else's merits for a few mistakes. Although Yang Jian is good at causing trouble, he's equally good at handling it.

"Let's put an end to this matter. Call a meeting in ten minutes," Cao Yanhua said with a grimace after a long pause.

Soon after, he turned and left.

Seeing the matter settled, others gradually dispersed, some leaving and others returning to the rest room.

"That old man is dangerous," Yang Jian said, watching Cao Yanhua and the others leave. His gaze rested on an old man wearing a grey coat, full of age spots, leaning on a cane.

The Ghost Eye constantly avoided the old man, trying to keep the figure of that old man out of its sight.

As a result, the Ghost Eye on Yang Jian's forehead kept swiveling left and right.

At first, he couldn't tell which person in the crowd was dangerous, but as they dispersed when leaving, he could tell.

Since that old man left with Cao Yanhua and other staff members, not with other ghost controllers, he was easy to identify.

"What, you're also interested in that not-dead-yet old guy?"

At that moment, Cao Yang came over with a bit of a smile and spoke.

Yang Jian gave him a look. He knew this person.

He had seen him previously in Dachang City, and Cao Yang was also among the support personnel during the Ghost Envoy incident.

Moreover, he had survived the Ghost Envoy incident.

From Dachang City to the present, this Cao Yang had been living well, which certainly made him very special. If he were an ordinary ghost controller, he would have been in a grave long ago; still being alive and recruited into headquarters was evidence enough of his extraordinariness.

"Cao Yang, do you know that old man?" Yang Jian asked.

"Not personally, but I know he's very special. A senior I knew before I joined had met him. Oh right, you know him too, his name is Wei Jing. Yes, the guy whose experiment failed and now has been taken over by the Ghost Coffin, currently known as the Ghost Envoy. Wei Jing wasn't very capable before, but after dying, he suddenly became strong, which is really bad luck," Cao Yang said.

Yang Jian's expression shifted slightly, "Are you saying he's lived a very long time?"

If Wei Jing was among the first batch of ghost controllers to join the headquarters, then Cao Yang would be of the second batch, around the same time as Feng Quan, followed by Zhou Zheng and Tong Qian in the third batch, and himself, Zhang Lei, and Wang Jiang in the fourth.

If that old man preceded Wei Jing, that meant he had lived for at least three years or more.

For a ghost controller to live beyond three years would be quite rare, considering there was no scheme to control a second ghost back then, and surviving as a ghost controller was very difficult.

Cao Yang said, "I don't know much about that old man's files; they must be top secret, and he is rarely seen at headquarters, only showing up under special circumstances. For instance, he appeared during the Hungry Ghost incident. The only bit of information I have was inadvertently picked up from Wei Jing, who wasn't too loose-lipped when he was alive, keeping tight-lipped security."

"If it's inconvenient to share, you don't have to," Yang Jian said. "I wouldn't spend a lot of money to dig up such information; I was just curious and asked."

Cao Yang cracked a smile, "You helped me out during the Ghost Envoy incident, so I'll tell you for free. It was about two years ago, I overheard Wei Jing mentioning offhand that an old man was about to

celebrate his hundredth birthday. Think about it, there are no old people in headquarters, we short-lived ghosts can't live for many years, let alone celebrate a hundredth birthday, and even the director is only in his fifties."

"So I guess, that birthday celebrating old man is him."

With that, his gaze followed the direction where the old man had left.

"He became a ghost controller in his nineties? That's incredibly unlucky. To have lived until now is not easy; to become a ghost controller in old age, and the headquarters actually has the heart to let a centenarian hobble with a cane to handle supernatural incidents? I need to start reassessing headquarters," Yang Jian remarked.

But after reflecting, he suddenly hesitated, because a frightening speculation unwittingly flashed through his mind, which he firmly grasped and let explode like a thunderclap.

...

Wait a minute.

A hundred years old?

If I calculate backwards, that means this elderly person was born during the... Republic of China period.

This is someone from the Republic of China who has lived to the present day.

"No way, a ghost master from the Republic of China period?" Yang Jian's mind buzzed with the information he had pieced together.

It was as if lost fragments of information had been activated.

The underground crypt of Hongfa Temple in Dachang City, which confines a towering dark shadow of a ghost, was built during the Republic of China period.

Outside the city, within the Guanjiang Residential Complex, sits that ancient house from the Republic of China period.

Inside the nearly collapsing ancient house, there actually lay terrifying objects like the Ghost Mirror and the Ghost Cabinet, and he even found notes from ghost masters of the Republic of China period there.

They were written in traditional characters, proof that a group of people from the Republic of China period were dealing with ghosts in the same way the current ghost masters do.

Moreover, the Wande Group's CEO, whom he had met on the plane, Mr. Wan Delu, had mentioned he acquired a soul bottle that was reportedly salvaged from a demolition of an ancient house from the Republic of China period.

Yang Jian had thought that the era had ended, and the ghost masters had all perished, leaving no useful information behind. He hadn't expected to meet a centenarian today.

It seemed like a ghost master who had survived from the Republic of China period.

Of course, this was just speculation.

Because it was also possible that this elderly person was just an ordinary person who survived from the Republic of China period, only becoming a ghost master later on.

If it were the latter, then Yang Jian could only be very disappointed.

But if it were the former, that would be terrifying.

A ghost master who had lived for dozens, even hundreds of years, knew exactly what that implied.

Even if he wasn't a ghost master from the Republic of China period, as a person from that era, he could still follow this clue and find certain truths.

"That's it, that's it, why did I start with the assumption that the ghost masters from the Republic of China period had completely lost touch with the present? If someone from that era had solved the problem of the vengeful ghosts' resurgence, and with a life long enough, it's entirely possible to live from that time to this... Although centenarians are rare, they certainly exist."

Yang Jian couldn't help but mutter to himself.

The incident with Gao Zhiqiang seemed trivial compared to what was happening now.

Since becoming a ghost master and having seen vengeful ghosts appearing in the world, his heart yearned for a truth.

Why do ghosts appear?

Why hadn't they appeared before, and what was the reason for their absence? Was it because the previous ghost masters had dealt with them? If so, how had the previous ghost masters resolved it?

The truth meant hope; having hope meant that it wasn't all darkness ahead.

"Yang Jian, what are you thinking about? You don't look well. Is there something wrong with you?" At this moment, Cao Yang, seeing Yang Jian lost in thought with an ever-changing facial expression, couldn't help but step back several paces, wary.

He feared that something had gone wrong with Yang Jian, lest the resurgence of a vengeful ghost turn him into a terrifying paranormal event.

"I am pondering some things," Yang Jian suddenly snapped back to reality, struggling slightly to pull himself out of his train of thought. "I have some questions and need to talk to that elderly person alone."

"Then you'll need to request permission from Cao Yanhua. I can't help with that. And there's a meeting about to start, so get yourself ready and come over soon," said Cao Yang with a shrug before turning to leave.

Yang Jian didn't continue to ask Cao Yang for details, because Cao Yang didn't know the situation either, assuming Jiang merely had an interest in this dangerous old man, when in fact his concerns lay elsewhere.

"I must find an opportunity to ask, and I need to do it fast," he thought silently.

Chapter 498 Headquarters Meeting

"Hey, everyone has left, what are you still doing standing here? The meeting is about to start."

Just as Yang Jian was lost in thought.

Suddenly, a woman's voice came from behind him, a voice so familiar that even without turning around, Yang Jian could recognize that Liu Xiaoyu had appeared.

He snapped back to reality and turned to look at her, saying, "You've recovered quite fast. How does it feel to be attacked by a ghost manipulator for the first time?"

Liu Xiaoyu, who had clearly just come out of the room, had been staying indoors. Though she was there, she remembered everything that happened clearly. It was just that at that time, she was under the influence of a malevolent ghost, so she could not resist, but that didn't mean she was without any awareness.

"It feels terrible."

Her beautiful brows knitted together. "I felt like a marionette, completely at the mercy of Gao Zhiqiang. And what's most terrifying is that I knew what I was doing, and I was complicit throughout the whole process. That's horrible, considering that just a moment before I was desperately resisting, and the next moment, I was like a completely different person."

"I'm still me, but it was as if my personality had been twisted and changed. Now I have this unbelievable feeling, and I can't understand why I acted that way at that time."

"It's good that you can talk about it like this," Yang Jian nodded and said.

Liu Xiaoyu's face puffed up with anger. "What do you mean 'good'? I was almost bullied by that Gao Zhiqiang, and here you are saying 'good'? Can't you show me some sympathy, comfort me a bit? After all, I am still a girl."

Yang Jian, however, said earnestly, "Having such an experience is indeed a good thing for you. At least you understand how desperate and helpless ordinary people are in the face of ghosts. Luckily, the one

who made a move today was Gao Zhiqiang. If he had been a ghost, you would already be dead by now, with no chance of surviving."

"But you have only experienced this once, and moreover, someone came to your rescue. Many people who deal with supernatural incidents are not as lucky as you are. Most of them are alone, facing various terrifying and complex supernatural incidents. You've been with me for so long; you know what I've been through. Now you probably understand some of my feelings."

Liu Xiaoyu paused for a moment, then lowered her head in thought.

What Yang Jian said did make sense. People who have never experienced supernatural incidents can never understand that kind of despair, as if hell itself were upon them.

As a former operator at the headquarters, Liu Xiaoyu realized that she had indeed been too presumptuous.

If it were her, after one such incident, she would never want to go through it a second time because you can't be sure that you would be lucky enough to survive a second one.

At that moment, Liu Xiaoyu also understood why Yang Jian had previously tried to avoid supernatural incidents.

Escaping danger and despair is something everyone understands. No one should be blamed for it. After all, those taking risks are not you, and you can easily talk about being righteous and just.

"You... are right." After much contemplation, Liu Xiaoyu quietly uttered these words without knowing what else to say.

Yang Jian said, "There's no right or wrong, only differences in perspective. When you become the victim, you naturally think I'm right."

"But I still want to thank you," Liu Xiaoyu said, looking up at him with a complex expression.

"Thank me for what?"

Yang Jian said, "I didn't save you. Gao Zhiqiang wasn't planning to kill you; he just wanted to play with you. I killed him because he affected me. That's all."

"It's about time for the meeting. Today's meeting should be very important, and after that, I have a lot of things to deal with. Don't randomly assign me any missions."

"You're falsely accusing me; I never randomly assigned you any tasks. The previous missions were all assigned by those higher up," Liu Xiaoyu said, puffing up her cheeks, a slightly aggrieved expression on her face.

Yang Jian said, "Same difference. Anyway, if there is a mission, push it off to someone else. I want to spend a few years in Dachang City in peace, not keen on dying so soon. And my death wouldn't be good for you either. The next ghost manipulator may not be as easy to talk to as I am."

"I got it. I'll try my best to push off any tasks for you," Liu Xiaoyu said.

"That's right. Which way to the meeting room? Lead the way," Yang Jian said.

Liu Xiaoyu said, "It's over there, follow me."

This headquarters meeting was extremely important, not just because of the Ghost Envoy incident, but also because the Captain Plan was getting underway, and several potential captains had already arrived in J City. Now that most of the top ghost manipulators were gathered, every move they made could affect the trends in various regions of Asia.

The location of the meeting was in an air-raid shelter within the headquarters.

This was a base established within the hollowed out depths of a mountain, and the entire base contained nothing: just a massive round table and several dozen chairs.

There were no security personnel inside, no communication devices, and not even any staff members; everything was simplified to the bare essentials.

"This is it. I can only bring you here. The content of this meeting is classified, and I don't have the authority to sit in," Liu Xiaoyu said.

"Okay, I know." Yang Jian walked forward alone.

At this time, the meeting was about to begin, and quite a few people were already seated at the conference table.

Some of them he recognized, such as Jang Shangbai, Feng Quan, Cao Yang, Li Jun, Chen Yi, Guo Fan... and others he did not know but had seen before, during the scuffle with Gao Zhiqiang, belonging to ghost manipulators from other rest areas.

However, it was clear that not everyone regarded this meeting with equal seriousness.

Someone was leaning on the table, yawning and playing with a paper frog.

Someone else had put their feet up on the table and was sleeping in their chair.

And yet another person was resting their head on their hand, looking around curiously.

"Has the 'Ghost Eye' Yang Jian arrived?"

The arrival of Yang Jian drew the gaze of many; the scene of him personally taking down Gao Zhiqiang had been witnessed by all. Coupled with the resolution of an S-level paranormal event and surviving the Ghost Envoy incident, his reputation was significant, making him somewhat of a celebrity in their circle and easy to notice.

There were nameplates in front of each chair on the table, with each person's name written on them.

The seating, it appeared, had already been arranged; it was not disorderly.

Yang Jian's seat was next to Feng Quan. This arrangement seemed to be a consideration by headquarters of their previous partnership, having survived the Huanggang Village incident and the Z City incident together.

"Brother Tui, as fierce as ever," Feng Quan managed to squeeze a faint smile onto his pallid, lifeless face, which resembled dead skin.

Sitting beside him, Yang Jian could smell the scent of rotting earth and felt a constant invasion of damp, cold air.

It was quite unpleasant.

If Yang Jian hadn't been certain that Feng Quan was alive, he might have doubted whether the person sitting next to him was a human or a ghost.

Feng Quan was the first person in charge of Dachang City and had become a ghost manipulator even before Zhou Zheng, who had died in the school. The degree of erosion by the fierce ghost in him was extremely deep; underneath that layer of skin, there was likely no flesh or bones left, all filled with grave soil.

This level of erosion was irreversible, even with the ghosts at Yang Jian's disposal from Gao Zhiqiang.

"Fierceness my ass. I almost got screwed coming to Dachang City this time. The thing on the plane was alright, just a minor C-level incident, but the ordeal at the training base was a nightmare," Yang Jian complained, shaking his head.

Feng Quan replied, "You can't say that. I was also assigned tasks recently; it's not just you who's busy. But some things really can't be done without you. Plus, just now, I heard that you took out Gao Zhiqiang in the rest area?"

"He overplayed his hand and killed himself; I can't be completely blamed for it. Who told him he couldn't hold out before I even went all out? I just ended up cleaning up his mess. But this has brought a lot of trouble; I'm expecting to be disciplined at the meeting later," Yang Jian said.

"It's only right that you be disciplined. You have to maintain appearances for the sake of it, otherwise headquarters loses face, right? But that's all it would be, a walk-through. With your significant merits, it'll just be a matter of a few drinks as punishment. If it gets too noisy later, just treat it like a fart. Listen and then go back, and it'll be as if nothing happened," Feng Quan said with a laugh.

"You make a good point," Yang Jian said. "Is this all the people? Aren't there more?"

He then ceased their private chatter and glanced over the individuals sitting around the table.

The enormous round table was occupied by just over twenty ghost manipulators. Including himself, the number did not even reach thirty.

"The list has more than these. The headquarters cannot possibly summon all the top ghost manipulators from across the country to J City. There are other branches that are as important as headquarters and require people in charge. Of course, the number of qualified people won't be high, so we can say that we are currently Asia's top ghost manipulators," said a stranger sitting next to him.

Yang Jian looked at this person, who seemed very ordinary, like a normal human, at least with no severe bodily degeneration. However, what was terrifying was that after this person left his field of vision, Yang Jian could no longer recall what he looked like.

He knew there was such a person, yet he couldn't recall his appearance.

"Li Leping." Yang Jian glanced at the name tag on his desk, which bore his name.

There was something eerie about this man.

He could only think this in his heart.

A person whose face couldn't be remembered, even able to influence a spirit medium, was terrifying.

Yang Jian didn't feel as if he had been invaded by the supernatural, nor did he sense any problems with his thinking, yet this Zhang Liping's name was the only thing in his mind, without a face to accompany it.

He wanted to check Zhang Liping's file again.

But after thinking about it, he decided against it.

For a spirit medium at this level, files and what they represented didn't mean much anymore. The supernatural phenomena they each encountered, the secrets they hid, none of these would be recorded. Even if he saw them, it wouldn't be of much use.

Just like his own files, Ghost Eye Yang Jian.

Yet, there was no information about anything else.

"It's normal that you don't recognize me, but I would like to get to know you. The name 'Ghost Eye Yang Jian' is one I've heard quite often." Li Leping said, "I was also present during the incident with Gao Zhiqiang just now. If you don't mind, may I be so bold as to ask, the way you control spirits doesn't seem to be the method of the headquarters, does it?"

Yang Jian's gaze flickered slightly.

Li Leping continued, "Sorry, I have a pursuit in this matter and was curious to ask. If it's inconvenient to share, let's just drop it."

"It happened by coincidence and luck; I indeed don't use the method of the headquarters," Yang Jian replied.

There was nothing secretive about this; a scrutinous person could easily investigate and figure it out.

He hadn't been to J city even once, yet he had already controlled three ghosts. Even a fool could guess that he surely possessed some special method for controlling fierce spirits.

He described it as coincidence and luck to dispel any unrealistic thoughts others might have, to avoid them harboring any designs on him.

After all, only Wang Xiaoming had speculated the existence of the human skin talisman; no one else was aware that such a special supernatural object existed in the world.

"Coincidence and luck? Hehe, indeed, surviving is all about coincidence and luck; I feel the same way." Li Leping smiled and didn't continue with this sensitive topic.

"Yang Jian, I have something to say to you before the meeting starts."

Just then, someone not far away knocked on the desk, and the wooden desk emitted a crisp metallic sound.

The one tapping on the desk was Jang Shangbai, who was frowning as he looked over.

"What do you want to say?" Yang Jian's gaze met his.

"Did you take down Gao Zhiqiang today?" Jang Shangbai asked.

Yang Jian smiled, "You aren't surnamed Gao, so why concern yourself with it so much?"

Jang Shangbai's face darkened as he said, "Gao Zhiqiang is part of the circle of friends; it's difficult for you to just take him out over a matter concerning a woman and not have to explain to the circle. If you don't know what the three words 'circle of friends' mean, I suggest you ask Feng Quan beside you about it."

"Circle of friends?"

Yang Jian's smile faded and his gaze sharpened; this was the second time he had heard the term "circle of friends."

The first time was in Ping'an Hotel when Li Yao mentioned it.

Now he was hearing it from Jang Shangbai's mouth.

"Do I have to ask for permission from some dog-shit 'Friends Circle' before I take him down? Explain myself? Ha, Do I need to explain myself to some power that just popped out of nowhere?"

Yang Jian also banged his fist on the table and responded assertively, "Do you really think I am a three-year-old child? Using this trick to scare me, if anyone from the Friends Circle dares to cause trouble, I'll take them down right now. I'll turn the Friends Circle into a circle of the dead. I've fought off S-level ghosts, so if you don't believe me, you can try me."

"You can control the Hungry Ghost because of that Coffin Nail, right? Without that thing, you could have been trapped and died in Dachang City." Someone dissatisfied with Yang Jian's attitude suddenly retorted.

Yang Jian sneered, "Who told you there's only one Coffin Nail?"

That person's eyes flickered and he immediately shut his mouth.

The information revealed by this statement was significant; if Yang Jian possessed a second Coffin Nail, everyone present had to weigh their own capabilities once more.

"Jiang Shangbai, you're saying this at a time like this. Are you one of the Friends Circle?" Yang Jian ignored the troublemaker and stared at Jiang Shangbai.

Jiang Shangbai's face fluctuated, his gaze particularly somber. He was indeed a member of the Friends Circle, but after witnessing Yang Jian forcefully invade the Ghost Envoy's Ghost Domain, and now his strong demeanor along with the terrible implication of his recent statement...

He found himself in a dilemma.

Admitting his affiliation with the Friends Circle here might provoke Yang Jian to leap over and kill him on the spot, mightn't it?

Although the likelihood was small.

But don't forget, Gao Zhiqiang had only died not long ago.

Yang Jian had already set a precedent at headquarters by taking down a ghost controller. He didn't want to be the second example.

If it were before, Jiang Shangbai might have felt somewhat confident, even somewhat superior, after all, he controlled three ghosts.

But Yang Jian had also controlled three ghosts.

He held no advantage against him, only disadvantages.

"No need to invite trouble over this matter," Despite his ominous silence, Jiang Shangbai kept his mouth shut, not engaging with Yang Jian's comment.

Seeing no response, Yang Jian withdrew his gaze.

But he had almost confirmed that Jiang Shangbai was indeed from the Friends Circle. The man was just not the impulsive type, wary of a face-off right then and there, and thus he held back his anger.

"If Jiang Shangbai really dares to stand up for Gao Zhiqiang, I'll take him down today," Yang Jian muttered, his eyes slightly narrowed, emanating a dangerous aura.

Some people, when hurt, naturally wouldn't dare to pop their heads up again, because then they'd have to consider the risk of getting taken down if they did.

Weakness only invites greater trouble.

Yang Jian has always believed in this.

Of course, he wouldn't go looking for trouble either, because making enemies everywhere would only lead to a faster death.

Time slowly ticked by.

Most of the participants had arrived for the meeting.

But the meeting had not started.

Deputy Minister Cao Yanhua, Professor Wang Xiaoming, and that person suspected to be from the Republic of China Period—none of these key figures had shown up, seemingly delayed by something.

However, most people around the conference table were very quiet, each doing their own thing, showing no sign of impatience. Those who wanted to sleep slept, those who wanted to play with their phones played, some folded paper frogs, and there were even female ghost controllers touching up their makeup.

This lackadaisical, undisciplined sight made one wonder just what these people did for a living.

Who would have thought that this group of people, seemingly nonchalant, could determine the life and death of countless others, and even impact the global situation.

Chapter 499 Not One Normal

The atmosphere around the conference table was somewhat oppressive.

No one knew whether it was because of Yang Jian, or because some people already knew that the Captaincy Plan was underway, and certain individuals were potential rivals, or perhaps ghost controllers are inherently wary of their own kind, lacking trust in one another.

The conflict between Yang Jian and Jang Shangbai had subsided and did not lead to more trouble because of Gao Zhiqiang's issue.

Resting his head on his hand, he glanced at the others, intentionally or not.

Yang Jian was acutely aware of the importance of these people. As long as he remained alive, he would inevitably have to deal with them, so getting to know them in advance was necessary.

"Not a single one of them is normal," he said to himself.

After observing for a while, he concluded this in his mind.

Some sat upright and proper, appearing normal, yet their bodies were stiff, their breath icy-cold, devoid of the slightest trace of life, no different from a corpse.

One was playing with a paper frog, but upon closer inspection, the paper used for the origami frog was actually joss paper burned for the dead.

Another was applying makeup, yet the colors in the makeup box were so vividly eerie, and underneath the strong fragrance of perfume, there was a hint of the stench of decay.

One person was hunched over, playing with a phone, and while they held it in their hands, a small, unseen hand crept out of the palm to help tap the screen.

...

Of course, even Yang Jian wasn't normal. A ghostly eye on his forehead looked around everywhere, its red glow revealing a bizarre gaze, utterly at odds with him, almost as if a ferocious ghost was spying on the others.

Time ticked away slowly.

Actually, the meeting could have started normally, but it was delayed due to some disputes.

Outside the meeting venue, on the road.

Cao Yanhua and Wang Xiaoming were walking together, discussing something by the looks of it.

"Although this meeting is mainly about discussing the aftermath of the Ghost Envoy incident, the shortlist for the Captaincy Plan will also be announced during this meeting, as was agreed upon earlier," said Wang Xiaoming.

"That's right, it's part of the later agenda. Professor Wang, are you interested in this matter? I remember you've already used up your recommendation spot," Cao Yanhua responded.

The headquarters rewarded Wang Xiaoming with a nomination for the Captaincy Plan in recognition of his contributions. This spot was significant, as anyone fitting the profile had a high probability of being selected for the Captaincy Plan.

It was expected that Wang Xiaoming would use it on Li Jun, but it was surprisingly given to Yang Jian instead.

This was beyond many people's expectations.

"I plan to change the nominee at the last minute," Wang Xiaoming said calmly.

Cao Yanhua was taken aback for a moment, "Such a last-minute change doesn't seem like your style, Professor Wang."

"I know, but certain matters have given me a greater insight," said Wang Xiaoming slowly. "Believe me, this last-minute change is very important."

Cao Yanhua pondered for a moment then said, "So you mean... "

"I'm revoking Yang Jian's captain qualification and, as originally planned, will pass his spot to Li Jun," stated Wang Xiaoming seriously.

"That won't do."

Cao Yanhua immediately rejected the idea, "Yang Jian becoming a nominee for the Captaincy Plan is no longer something you can change, Professor Wang. His achievements and his influence in the ghost controller circle are significant. If he can't become a captain, it's not just a simple replacement of a person; it would bring about much deeper implications."

"Furthermore, we must consider Yang Jian's personal feelings. If solving an Unsolvables Level paranormal event is not enough to become a captain, then would he resign from his current position? I've heard that people from the paranormal forum have been in contact with him; they've spoken with Ye Zhen, the forum's administrator, and there are others in his social circle trying to publicly relate with him. Some people behind Shen Liang have also had some private interactions with him, or else the substitute doll wouldn't have ended up in Yang Jian's hands."

Although he didn't quite like the unruly and stubborn Yang Jian, strategically speaking, it was beneficial for the headquarters to have Yang Jian as a captain.

Personal emotions should not affect the interests of the headquarters, and Cao Yanhua was conscious of that.

"I understand, but I know that Yang Jian is not someone who cares about power or status; what he values more are tangible benefits. Removing him is unlikely to provoke any strong resentful emotions, provided the compensation is adequate - I am confident in that," Wang Xiaoming explained.

"Moreover, I have more important matters for which I need Yang Jian. Actually, I had considered many people before, but unfortunately, none of the current candidates for the Captaincy Plan fully meets my criteria, with the exception of him... he still has great potential for growth. If he were to become a captain, given Yang Jian's nature, he'll probably just settle down in Dachang City, which is what I don't wish to see," he concluded.

"Nurturing him is a good thing; he can at least solve the special incidents of a region, and also reduce the chances of him causing trouble."

Cao Yanhua said, "If you can only use this reason in certain places, you can't convince me. I can make unlimited concessions in terms of research, but when it comes to the situation at hand, I need to be more rigorous. Here's the deal, it's about a three-minute walk from here to the conference center. Professor Wang, you have three minutes. If you can't find a legitimate and convincing reason within these three minutes, I can only apologize."

He had some speculations, thinking that Wang Xiaoming was taking this opportunity to take revenge on Yang Jian, after all, Yang Jian was the one who personally took down his brother Wang Xiaoqiang.

Therefore, he had to consider matters concerning Yang Jian even more carefully.

If, because of some personal grudge, they lost a top ghost manipulator, it would be a huge loss for headquarters.

"Alright, three minutes then." Wang Xiaoming's eyes flickered; for him, ten seconds was enough to craft a perfect reason and excuse.

Time quickly passed.

Three minutes later.

Cao Yanhua, Wang Xiaoming, along with several accompanying staff members, and the old man leaning on a walking stick finally arrived at the conference center.

They arrived?

The tedious waiting time was finally over.

Many people perked up, their gazes lingering on Cao Yanhua, the deputy minister who convened this meeting.

But Yang Jian's gaze was constantly fixed on the centenarian leaning on the walking stick.

From the nameplate on the table, they could see that the old man's surname was Qin, called Old Qin.

This was likely a title; his real name was kept hidden, and of course, even the surname could be false, because with modern means, just knowing the name and appearance, and spending some effort and time, one could find lots of information and clues.

That's why cellphone signals were blocked during this conference, and photography and recording were prohibited.

"It seems I'll have to find an opportunity to contact this Old Qin after the conference," Yang Jian thought to himself.

Some questions couldn't be asked face-to-face.

"Is everyone present? Good. Because this matter is very urgent, I'm going to skip the useless pleasantries. This meeting will be led by me, the deputy minister, with Professor Wang assisting."

After the other attendees took their seats, Cao Yanhua glanced around, nodded, and said, "The main topic of the meeting is to discuss how to resolve the S-class paranormal incident coded as Ghost Envoy, located in the outskirts of J City near the experimental base. The incident occurred quite unexpectedly and led to the deaths of a large number of new recruits who were attending training at the base. Here, I want to specifically commend Yang Jian, because his presence at the training base at that time enabled the successful rescue of four ghost manipulators, as well as some surviving staff members, and he prevented the malevolent spirit coded as Ghost Envoy from continuing to grow. This is a remarkable accomplishment."

"However, I believe many are still not well-informed about the Ghost Envoy incident due to its suddenness and the secret nature of the special event; thus, we can only explain it now, on the fly. Please, go ahead and start the slideshow,"

Shortly after, the staff turned on the projector.

A massive picture appeared on the screen with descriptions of the Ghost Coffin, information about Wei Jing, as well as origins of the Ghost Envoy incident.

Yang Jian wasn't interested in such explanations; he was involved from start to finish in the whole incident, and no one knew the details of the Ghost Envoy incident better than he did. However, he was still willing to listen to the headquarters' perspective, after all, there wasn't just one think tank behind headquarters analyzing and dealing with the case.

Cao Yanhua explained the origins and the entire course of the Ghost Envoy incident bit by bit.

About the killing patterns of the Ghost Envoy, some particularities of the Ghost Coffin.

The others were silent, just listening quietly.

For top ghost manipulators, they all had one thing in common: they cared greatly about information and intelligence gathering. In dealing with paranormal incidents, any detail or oversight could be life or death.

So they took it seriously.

After all, no one could be sure who would be assigned to handle the Ghost Envoy incident next.

If someone wanted to act arrogant, show off, and disdain to listen, then sorry, such people would already be dead and absolutely unable to participate in this meeting.

When the others heard that the Ghost Envoy had the ability to suppress other ghosts mindlessly, their faces turned dark.

What kind of joke is this?

To directly suppress other ghosts and render the ghost manipulators as ordinary people?

That's just too bullying.

When they heard that the rule of the Ghost Envoys was to kill ghost controllers who were alone, many people breathed a sigh of relief. Knowing the rule allowed them to avoid it, which was a precondition for ensuring safety.

Then Cao Yanhua explained the reason why being alone meant certain death.

"Within a certain range, the number of ghosts must be greater than the current number of ghosts the Ghost Envoys control, otherwise even hundreds of people together would be of no use. That's why this matter only has the possibility of being countered through the collective action of ghost controllers," Cao Yanhua pointed at the data chart on the screen.

"This range, after discussion and verification by headquarters, is currently a safe distance of twenty planes, about the size of one room."

"Deputy Minister, may I ask how many ghosts that Ghost Envoy code-named 'thing' currently has?" someone asked seriously.

Wang Xiaoming spoke up, "Not clear."

"How could it not be clear, didn't you participate in this event before?" someone else exclaimed in surprise and doubt.

"Because during the process of participation, people died, and not just one. The number of ghosts changed, making it very difficult to estimate correctly. But from the few surviving ghost controllers at the training base, we know that at that time, the Ghost Envoy could suppress... 9 ghosts."

Wang Xiaoming paused here, glanced at Yang Jian, and continued, "If we add in those who died later in supernatural events, then the Ghost Envoy currently has at least 16."

"Professor Wang, are you serious? This Ghost Envoy can now unsolvably suppress at least sixteen ghosts?"

"How can we deal with this? To avoid being alone, we'd need to prepare to gather eight ghost controllers together. Has it really become that terrifying?"

"Based on the data, yes, give this thing some time, and it could completely destroy a nation's population. Even ghost controllers can't stop it. We're simply not on the same level as this thing."

"To be honest, hearing this, I really don't want to be involved in this supernatural event. I'd rather continue sleeping."

The information about the Ghost Envoys wasn't finished, yet fear and unrest had already begun to spread around the conference table.

Unsolvable suppression, alone meant certain death.

With these two conditions laid out, it was enough to massacre a group of ghost controllers, and this was under the premise of knowing the rules. If they didn't know, they really would have no chance at all. They wouldn't even know why they died.

"If that were all, it might be fine, but Minister Cao hasn't yet mentioned two more of the Ghost Envoy's abilities. You'll know what an 'Unsolvable Level' supernatural event really is once those are revealed," Cao Yang said with a smile at this point.

"Indeed, these two conditions are just the Ghost Envoy's patterns of killing, but it also possesses two extremely horrifying properties of its own," Cao Yanhua said with an especially grave expression as he continued to advance the slides. An image shrouded in darkness appeared before everyone's eyes.

"This Ghost Envoy code-named 'creature' has a Ghost Domain, and as long as it is within the Ghost Domain, the Ghost Envoy cannot be imprisoned or subdued."

"What if it's successfully imprisoned during that period?" Li Leping, who sat near Yang Jian, asked.

This question also spoke to what others wanted to know, as they wanted to understand why the Ghost Envoy couldn't be imprisoned.

"If it is imprisoned, then the Ghost Envoy would reset and begin the next round of attacks, and it could reset a second time, a third time, a fourth time... until everyone within the Ghost Domain was killed. It wouldn't stop otherwise," Wang Xiaoming explained to everyone.

Unsolvable suppression, alone meant certain death, impossible to imprison, infinite restarting.

Each characteristic of the ghost that was revealed was like a heavy hammer, pounding heavily on each person's heart.

It seemed to strangle all hope, leaving nothing but endless fear and despair that could not be resisted.

"Haha, this isn't a supernatural event, it's a death mission. Whoever goes dies, and a single person doesn't even have the chance to embrace death. You'd need to form groups, and if you're wiped out again, the Ghost Envoy continues to grow, and then there will be no more playing later," someone shook their head and chuckled bitterly.

A chill ran through many people's hearts.

What this person said made sense. If group actions still ended in failure, it was unimaginable how the Ghost Envoy would grow.

"Why continue this discussion? It's impossible to imprison, and it keeps restarting. We can't handle this at all. Indeed, if we really move on it, it's a case of whoever goes dies."

"Although not many have died yet, this event truly qualifies as an S-level supernatural event. To tell the truth, just us here trying to deal with it probably doesn't stand much of a chance."

"Right now, I don't want to think about anything, just want to go home and sleep."

Indeed.

The terror caused by the Ghost Envoy made everyone uneasy, and a negative, evasive mood spread across the conference table.

No one dared to face such a supernatural event.

Even those who were qualified to be candidates for the team captain plan were not up to the task.

If it can't be done, it can't be done. It's not something that can be achieved by just shouting a few encouraging words and acting recklessly. Without a viable plan, going ahead would mean certain death.

"Quiet down."

At this moment, Cao Yanhua slapped the table, "I know this event is very difficult, which is why we need to discuss it. Moreover, the Ghost Envoy issue cannot be delayed and must be resolved as soon as possible. If left unattended, the consequences will be catastrophic. Today, the top ghost hunters in our country are here. If we can't handle it, it means the supernatural events will spiral completely out of control."

"So, I implore everyone to come up with a plan. Whatever the cost, as long as head office can bear it, it's worth it."

He believed that the ghost hunters attending the meeting today must have some secrets, no matter how deeply hidden. But now, the head office had to exert some pressure and make them come forward.

Without solving the Ghost Envoy problem, many things will be meaningless.

Because the Ghost Envoy is in the outskirts of J City.

Once it wanders into the city and a region falls under the shadow of the Ghost Domain, the supernatural incident will be exposed prematurely.

Before many preparations are completed, this absolutely cannot be allowed to happen.

Silence, oppression.

All were silent.

Because they could sense the determination of the head office. If this issue wasn't resolved, they reckoned nobody would get off lightly.

The Deputy Minister was playing good cop, bad cop.

"Since Deputy Minister, you've put it that way, then I'll speak frankly. My proposal remains the same as before—extract the Coffin Nail embedded in the Hungry Ghost. I'll lead the team and directly tackle the Ghost Envoy. Didn't the Hungry Ghost in Dachang City also possess the ability to restart but was still restricted?"

The one to break the silence was Jiang Shangbai, who presented his plan that he firmly believed could succeed.

Hm?

Jiang Shangbai's words attracted the attention of many.

It turned out there was a feasible plan, which made things much easier.

"The plan indeed has a certain degree of feasibility, but it is a rather risky move. The head office cannot afford the risk of failure," Cao Yanhua hesitated before speaking gravely.

"This is the best plan we have. If we had listened to me before, then Professor Wang's action would not have resulted in the loss of several ghost hunters," Jiang Shangbai said.

Wang Xiaoming heard this, kept silent, and did not retort.

His failed action gave him no right to speak. Although Jiang Shangbai's plan had flaws, it indeed had a chance of success. He would not comment before a failure occurred.

"Since Jiang Shangbai has a plan, let's just go ahead with that. It's better than just sitting here waiting," someone said carelessly.

"Solving it with special artifacts that have subdued the Hungry Ghost indeed has a possibility of restricting the Ghost Envoy. The success rate is not small, and as long as it is well executed, there's no worry of the Hungry Ghost getting out of control. I agree with this plan."

"I have no objections either."

Many nodded in agreement.

Because they didn't want to take risks, it was best if someone was willing to step forward.

Yang Jian actually didn't care too much about how they discussed the plan, for he already had a detainment strategy in his mind, although he didn't know if it was feasible at the moment.

But when he heard Jiang Shangbai was going to target the Hungry Ghost, he suddenly stood up.

"I disagree," Yang Jian said firmly and loudly.

"Targeting the Hungry Ghost? You call this a plan? Let's not talk about whether it will solve the Ghost Envoy issue, even if it could, who's going to deal with the Hungry Ghost then?"

Chapter 500 Mediation

A meeting that seemed like a normal discussion on how to solve the Ghost Envoy incident, was in fact full of ulterior motives.

Deputy Minister Cao Yanhua desperately wanted the incident resolved, but he also didn't want to involve the Hungry Ghost because he had been in charge of the Dachang City case before. Although the incident had been dealt with at that time, from Professor Wang's report, the danger level of that ghost was definitely not lower than that of the Ghost Envoy.

In fact, the threat it posed to ordinary people was far greater than the current Ghost Envoy, so he had never agreed to Jang Shangbai's presumptuous plan.

However, for other spirit controllers, whether the Hungry Ghost would lose control was not important. They all hoped the Ghost Envoy incident would not involve them, and now Jang Shangbai, eager to take action, had proposed a viable plan.

No matter the consequences, they would blindly support it first.

If the plan succeeded, then everyone would be pleased.

If it failed, the worst-case scenario would be going back to square one and continuing the discussion on how to resolve the Ghost Envoy incident, since it wouldn't entail any loss for them anyway.

There were not a few who watched with detached interest.

The only one who stood up against this plan was Yang Jian.

"Yang Jian, you oppose Jang Shangbai's plan, so what are your reasons?" Cao Yanhua pondered for a moment before asking seriously.

Yang Jian said, "The Hungry Ghost was constrained and imprisoned by me. My judgment is the reason. If headquarters decides to implement Jang Shangbai's plan, then I have nothing to say. But correspondingly, I will choose to resign and will not voluntarily involve myself in any supernatural events. Although I can't influence the headquarters' decision, I can make my own choices."

He couldn't bother to explain.

Because he knew explanations were useless. Jang Shangbai wanted to take this opportunity to make merit, and others wanted to stay out of the Ghost Envoy incident with a purpose in mind.

Were the so-called reasons really important?

What Yang Jian could do was withdraw and no longer care about what followed.

Because Jang Shangbai's plan carried significant risks. Once the Hungry Ghost went out of control and the containment of the Ghost Envoy failed, City J would face two S-class supernatural events, and by then, he would surely be dragged into it again.

Rather than that, it was better to resign directly and retire to Dachang City. He didn't want to die here, cleaning up other people's messes.

Having only just resolved the resurrection of a fierce ghost and regained his health, he wanted to live a few more years, consider getting married and having children... At the very least, leave offspring behind, lest he become extinct in the future.

Many people looked at Yang Jian with surprise upon hearing his words.

It seemed they hadn't expected Yang Jian to talk about resigning directly because of Jang Shangbai's proposal.

But from Yang Jian's attitude and tone, it wasn't hard to deduce that the Hungry Ghost incident in Dachang City was likely an Unsolvable Level supernatural event. Otherwise, Yang Jian, the Ghost Eye, wouldn't be so resistant.

"Yang Jian, don't be impulsive. Now is the time to discuss the plan. Sit down and calm down first," Cao Yanhua immediately tried to mediate.

He dared not continue on this topic, lest Yang Jian really got angry, resigned, and went home for good.

But Jang Shangbai thought differently and said with a light smile, "Yang Jian, I know you have your considerations, but don't forget that the Hungry Ghost is already imprisoned. As long as we are well-prepared, we can take the Coffin Nail without any cost. After all, it's a great waste to keep such a special item in a box with a ghost, don't you think, Deputy Minister?"

Cao Yanhua hesitated. Although he thought it made sense, at this moment, he wasn't too willing to get involved in the dispute between the two men, so he said, "The plan is not yet mature. As Yang Jian said, the risk is great. Let's shelf it for now and continue discussing other plans."

However, Yang Jian ignored Cao Yanhua's peacemaking and stared at Jang Shangbai, "If you want the Coffin Nail, go get it. But I want to make one thing clear in advance: if something goes wrong, you deal with it yourself, and if by then you want to slip away, I absolutely won't let you go."

Jang Shangbai's face darkened: "Yang Jian, you think you have a hold over me?"

"Yes, I do have a hold over you. If you disagree, try me," Yang Jian replied without backing down, a faint red light emanating from the ghost eye on his forehead.

Jang Shangbai stood up in alarm, not daring to face Yang Jian's Ghost Eye.

A couple of days ago, he had personally witnessed Yang Jian's Ghost Eye make real things vanish. If it suddenly aimed at him like that, it could end up killing someone.

"Yang Jian, restrain yourself. This is not a place for brawling. We are here to decide the fate of a city," said a somewhat effeminate man next to Jang Shangbai, his eyes shifting as he spoke earnestly.

"Yang Jian, don't be too arrogant. There are many here who can deal with you. Don't think just because you luckily handled one S-class supernatural event you can act without restraint. We are giving you face by not wanting to embarrass you here. If a real fight breaks out, do you think you'll come out on top?"

"Heh, children will be children, always ready to fight whenever there's a disagreement. What era are we living in that you still prefer to solve problems with violence? Isn't it better to live peacefully? Why the need to constantly prove your presence? If it weren't for the trouble the fierce ghost resurrection caused some of us, do you think you'd have the right to speak here?"

More than one person backed Jang Shangbai, and soon several ghost tamers were warning him with a tone full of caution.

Without a doubt, these people were all from their circle of friends.

They had been ghost tamers for longer than Yang Jian, and had encountered more than him.

A young man who had left his hometown and only been a ghost tamer for half a year, although capable, was merely that.

Once he affected their interests, they didn't care who he was; if he needed to be eliminated, then that was what they'd do.

However, they had barely finished speaking,

when Yang Jian, without uttering a second word, fiercely grabbed the chair behind him and hurled it at the third ghost tamer who had spoken.

With his strength, coupled with the heavy solid wood chair, this throw was enough to kill an ordinary person on the spot, but considering his opponent was a ghost tamer, he didn't even think about holding back and used his full power.

"Bang!"

A loud crash followed as the hefty chair hit the ghost tamer's head accurately and then heavily fell to the ground, splitting into pieces.

The man's head caved in badly, his neck twisted at a weird angle, yet he showed no signs of pain, merely looking at Yang Jian with an expression of disbelief, seemingly astonished that Yang Jian dared to actually strike.

The others froze at the sight of this.

"Yang Jian, it seems like you really aren't afraid to die," the man said through clenched teeth as he forcefully stood up.

His head was still crooked, as if his spine was broken, now awkwardly resting against his shoulder, a peculiar sight; yet it seemed to have no effect on him, and he moved as if nothing was wrong.

"You threaten me with abilities, not words. I haven't lost a fight since I was born. A bunch of self-important fools, if you think you've lived enough, then make a move now. Let's see if I can take all of you

down at once today. Since the day I became a ghost tamer, I never thought I'd live that long. Rather than dealing with ghosts, I find dealing with you lot somewhat easier."

Yang Jian's face was calm, showing no fear; when he acted, there was not a hint of hesitation.

It seemed like he really could take on three or four of the top ghost tamers, including Jang Shangbai, all by himself.

In all honesty, Yang Jian didn't have much confidence.

But he could not afford to lose momentum. With the circle of friends holding at least four seats at the conference table, since he had already killed Gao Zhiqiang and offended the circle, he had to show sufficient strength, only then could he deter others.

If he showed any weakness or fear, he believed that his situation would become ten times more difficult.

Dangerous, violent, and crazy was Yang Jian's way of survival.

Only by presenting himself as a fearsome existence would no one dare to mess with him.

After all, he was not yet twenty years old and had been a ghost tamer for less than half a year. His network, friends, and allies were still unformed, not matching up to these long-standing forces.

"This guy really is a madman..." Jang Shangbai's face darkened.

He now felt that his earlier decision was correct; Yang Jian really could not be lightly offended. Once provoked, this guy would blithely disregard consequences and context, ready to attack. It was utterly futile to reason with such a person.

Confronted with Yang Jian's icy stare,

the ghost tamer with the skewed head really wanted to respond forcefully but, even as his lips moved, he couldn't find the words.

He was scared.

Because he believed his own judgment, that if he uttered a word in response, it would bring upon him a frenzied assault from Yang Jian.

It felt like walking down the street, getting smacked in the face without a clue, and then being asked: "What are you looking at?"

If you dare say, "Yeah, looking at you, what about it?"

The other person would immediately draw a knife.

Thus, he didn't dare take up the challenge.

"Don't rely on having more people; if it really comes to a fight, I'm standing with Brother Tui."

...

Feng Quan, at this moment, saw that tensions were high and that a fight seemed imminent, he immediately stood up to show his support for Yang Jian.

"Although everyone is quite impulsive about this matter, if it really comes to a fight, I still hope you can calm down a bit," said Li Jun, standing up with a grave expression. He believed that Yang Jian was far more important than just a few friends in a circle. He also had great admiration for how Yang Jian had single-handedly resolved the incident in Dachang City.

So, at this time, he needed to back him up.

"Feng Quan, Li Jun?" Jang Shangbai's face darkened even more.

These two were both significant figures. Li Jun, not to mention, always took responsibility for protecting Professor Wang, and his position and trust at headquarters needed no explaining.

Feng Quan was even more special as the first leader of Dachang City and one of the headquarters' original spirit tamers. He had survived to this day without dying, and his seniority and generation were well worth respect.

"You people from your circle are meddling too much. Yang Jian was not wrong just now. Whose plan, their responsibility. If the Coffin Nail is removed and something goes wrong, Jang Shangbai will have to take full responsibility. Yang Jian's reminder is not out of self-interest; he is also thinking about the bigger picture. Therefore, I also disagree with the plan to take out the Coffin Nail," Cao Yang replied lazily, and at this moment, he too stood up.

"Taking someone else's achievement to do your own thing without considering the risk of failure, success is yours, but we have to clean up your mess if it fails—what a cheap deal. Jang Shangbai, you may be smart, but I am not stupid."

Cao Yang?

Jang Shangbai had not expected that Cao Yang, who was temperamental and usually arrogant, would take Yang Jian's side.

When had Yang Jian gained such influence?

"I also think Yang Jian's concerns are necessary. Although I did not participate in the Hungry Ghost event, just the fact that a Ghost Domain shrouded the whole city, cutting off all support, is enough to

show that this entity is no less terrifying than a Ghost Envoy. Once things go out of control, no one will be able to take responsibility," Zong Shan thought for a moment, then verbally expressed his stance without standing up.

After all, Yang Jian had not agreed to his suggestion of teaming up at the airport, so this verbal gesture was already quite good.

Seeing that Feng Quan, Li Jun, Cao Yang, and Zong Shan—four of the top spirit tamers—had made their positions clear, not only did Jang Shangbai look displeased, but the other spirit tamers in the circle also had ugly expressions.

The person who had his head bashed in by a chair was even more startled and silently relieved.

It was good that he had restrained himself from retaliating earlier.

Otherwise, if a real fight had broken out, and these people came to support, it was indeed possible that all his people could have ended up staying here permanently.

Four against four.

All eight people at the conference table stood up, each making clear their stance and attitude.

The atmosphere was heated, with the sense that a fight could break out at any moment.

But for others, this matter seemed to have nothing to do with them.

Those who were playing with paper frogs continued with their paper frogs.

Those who were yawning kept yawning.

The one sitting up straight remained in the same position, still as a corpse which didn't move an inch. If it weren't for the fact that their eyeballs could still move, others might really think that Cao Yanhua had brought in an actual corpse to make up numbers.

As for Cao Yanhua, who tried to mediate, he didn't dare to persuade them now, knowing it would be futile.

He might have the authority of a deputy minister but lacked the capacity of a spirit tamer. As an ordinary person, he was already doing well to preside over the meeting under such pressure. Anyone else with weaker mental strength would likely have been scared into resigning and going home.

Wang Xiaoming, looking as if he had retreated into his shell, also had no intention of intervening, offering help only with information during normal discussions.

He would not give any critical suggestions.

"Alright, that's enough, sit down," someone said when the impasse showed no signs of easing.

Suddenly, Old Qin, with a face full of liver spots, tapped his cane, issuing an aged voice.

No sooner had he spoken than all eight at the same moment, almost instinctively, sat down.

Their bodies made the motion without their even realizing it.

...

...

"Hmm?"

When Yang Jian realized what was happening, he abruptly turned to look at Old Qin.

What just happened?

Had his thinking been influenced by a ghost's ability, or had his body been controlled?

Just one sentence had affected him, and the ghost inside his body didn't resist at all.

"Wait... my stool." Yang Jian then discovered that he was sitting on a solid wood stool underneath him.

Hadn't he thrown this stool away earlier?

Looking around, the broken pieces of stool had vanished.

Not just him, everyone else was similarly staring at Old Qin as if they had seen a ghost.

One sentence that affects everyone's actions, is this something a ghost controller can do?

"This old man is very mysterious," Jang Shangbai frowned deeply, wary of Old Qin.

He had never seen Old Qin handle a supernatural event, yet there had always been a saying within headquarters that the number one ghost controller of J City was Old Qin.

It was precisely because of his presence that J City had never truly suffered a full-blown supernatural event.

This was unimaginable for a large city.

Because, as things stood, all major cities had more or less experienced supernatural events, and J City should be no exception.

"Let's continue the meeting, let's end the argument here, and give this old man some face," Old Qin then spoke slowly.

Everyone kept quiet as if even the ghosts within them had calmed down.

"Could he be a ghost controller from the Republic of China Period?" Yang Jian's eyes flickered, "This old man is indeed very special, an outlier among outliers."

Since the old man had intervened to mediate, he didn't continue the earlier dispute; after all, what needed to be said had been said, and the rest was up to headquarters to decide.

He had made up his mind that if Jang Shangbai's plan were to be used, then he would resign.

But before that, he still needed to find Cao Yanhua to reimburse the previous expenses and overtime pay for this Ghost Envoy incident...

"Cough cough."

Cao Yanhua coughed awkwardly twice at this time, "So let's continue with the previous topic, Jang Shangbai's plan will not be considered for the time being, unless it's absolutely necessary, so I hope everyone can think of other solutions."

"We've clarified the ghost's patterns and method of killing, so I believe none of you will let me down, therefore let's continue discussing plans to detain the Ghost Envoys."

Everyone expected the discussion to hit a dead end, but someone immediately put forward a concept.

"It's useless, to deal with this ghost we must not detain it internally, once we fall into the Ghost Envoy's Ghost Domain, there's only death, so if we are to detain it, we must start from the outside, only then can we prevent the Ghost Envoy from restarting continuously," said Li Leping, who was sitting next to Yang Jian and whose face he couldn't quite remember.

"The so-called Ghost Envoy, I've reviewed so much data, I can conclude that it's not just one ghost, to be precise it is an entire Ghost Domain, and the Ghost Domain is the ghost."

"To solve the problem with the Ghost Envoy, we need to detain the entire Ghost Domain, has anyone else in the headquarters dealt with similar supernatural events? Anyone with experience, please share your thoughts."

Huh?

Upon hearing this, everyone looked again at Li Leping.

Then, a strange thought entered their minds.

Who is this person?

He seems familiar, but I don't recognize him.