

Revival 501

Chapter 501 New Method

Everyone seemed familiar with the name Li Leping, but upon closer consideration, they couldn't quite place who it was.

Without a concrete image forming in their minds, they were unable to recognize his identity, so when he spoke up, they were initially puzzled, but a chill went through them when they saw the nameplate in front of his desk.

Was he that occult investigator with the forgettable appearance, Li Leping?

Upon closer inspection, the man was indeed unremarkable, the kind that, even if he wasn't an occult investigator, would be the easiest to forget on a busy street.

And yet, Li Leping's analysis was incredibly accurate.

His conclusion from the data was correct, the Ghost Envoy was not a single ghost, but a Ghost Domain, which took the form of a coffin, hence also called the Ghost Coffin.

This was the true nature of this supernatural incident.

The proposal he offered, which only suggested containment from the outside, was remarkably consistent with the conclusions drawn by Yang Jian and Wang Xiaoming.

It was clear that not everyone sitting here was slacking; there were a few cunning individuals hidden among them. Regardless of whether the ghost under Li Leping's control was terrifying or not, his analytical skills were sufficient for him to survive in most supernatural events.

"Impressive analytical skills, has he been focusing on the data on the screen all this time?" Yang Jian had not paid much attention to the person sitting by his side.

This was an occult investigator with very little presence.

"A good conclusion."

At this moment, Wang Xiaoming praised emotionlessly, "I discovered the source of the Ghost Envoy after I encountered this supernatural event, but by that time it's often too late, because people have already entered the Ghost Domain and cannot get out, only to be exhausted to death there by the endlessly resetting Ghost Envoy. Currently, only a certain brawling kid can enter and exit this Ghost Domain."

A certain brawling kid?

Is he talking about me?

Yang Jian then glanced at Wang Xiaoming; it seemed he was quite displeased with his own reckless behavior to the point of mocking himself now.

"So, what's your plan, Professor Wang?" Li Leping didn't continue to express his opinion but asked seriously.

Cao Yanhua breathed a sigh of relief when the meeting's focus returned to the main topic.

It seemed that Old Qin could still maintain control of the situation; otherwise, it would be very easy to have a clash that could spiral out of control. Previously, Gao Zhiqiang had been killed by Yang Jian in just a few minutes; such incidents absolutely could not happen again.

Wang Xiaoming slowly began to speak, "Because the source of the Ghost Envoy is the Ghost Domain, to imprison the Ghost Envoy, the Ghost Domain must also be contained. By the current situation, it's impossible for headquarters—or even the whole world—to imprison an area spanning several kilometers."

"However, I've researched the Ghost Coffin and noticed a peculiar issue; why can such a small coffin contain such a large Ghost Domain?"

"It's suppression; domains suppress each other."

The one who spoke was Li Jun, his face stern; "If two ghosts with their own domains appear together and both form domains, one of the ghost's domains will definitely be suppressed. If the gap is substantial, the other ghost may not even be able to form a domain. I've encountered such a situation before."

His code name is Ghost Flame.

He is also able to form a domain and hence has the right to speak on this matter.

"So, the success rate of using the Coffin Nail is not high, because no one can ensure that it can secure a domain," Wang Xiaoming said.

Jang Shangbai's face darkened, Professor Wang's statement virtually condemned his plan to irrelevance, making it almost impossible to use again.

And the Coffin Nail would no longer be within reach.

"So, Professor Wang, is your plan to use another domain to suppress the domain of the Ghost Envoy, thereby limiting its activity to the smallest possible area, small enough to fit into a box?" Li Leping immediately caught on to what Wang Xiaoming was about to say.

Wang Xiaoming followed, "That is the only viable plan. The question now is where do we find something that can suppress the Ghost Envoy's domain?"

"Almost impossible to find."

Li Leping mused for a moment, "The Ghost Envoy itself has the ability to suppress other ghosts. This is an unsolvable deadlock."

"To deal with the ghost of the Ghost Envoy, there is no need to approach; just passing by on the road would do, and if it fails, the impact isn't significant. At least, that thing would be resolved by the Ghost Envoy. If successful, then the Ghost Envoy could be dealt with. The killing pattern of that ghost should have already been limited, and while still very dangerous, is at least easier to deal with than the Ghost Envoy," Wang Xiaoming said slowly.

"The collision of two S-class supernatural incidents is highly likely to resolve one."

Hearing this, Cao Yang was slightly surprised and said, "No way, you want to lure that ghost to J City?"

He understood Wang Xiaoming's intention.

To lure the ghost from that previous S-Class supernatural incident to J City, use its Ghost Domain to suppress the Ghost Envoy, and then deal with the Ghost Envoy.

If they failed.

At the very least, the S-Class ghost would take out the Ghost Envoy, which would be tantamount to resolving a major event.

"Professor Wang, your idea is too crazy. It's better to try taking out the Coffin Nail than risking it. If things go south, the consequences are unimaginable," Jang Shangbai said seriously.

"I know, but if we have to release a ghost anyway, it might as well be the one from outside to give it a try. At least it hasn't been contained, whereas the Hungry Ghost, if contained, the consequences of failure could be withstood," Wang Xiaoming said.

Although Yang Jian understood this, he was somewhat confused.

Since he had not been part of the headquarters for long, he was not very familiar with past major events and hadn't reviewed the relevant files, as some of them were highly confidential at headquarters and not accessible to ordinary ghost handlers. Only when one reached a certain level would they begin to reveal the files bit by bit.

"Wang Xiaoming wants to lure the ghost from that S-Class supernatural event?" he asked Feng Quan next to him.

Feng Quan was somewhat surprised and said, "Brother Tui, you don't know?"

"What are you saying? I haven't been on the job for long. Naturally, I don't know much about the major events from before, and my level has only recently been raised. I haven't had time to look at the newly decrypted files. Is it strange that I don't know?" Yang Jian said.

"That's true; I overlooked that."

Feng Quan smiled and said, "It was an S-Class supernatural event that occurred abroad, referred to in the files as the Art Gallery Incident, but that's the translated name from the foreign files. You know, foreigners always have such low standards when naming things. If you didn't know any better, you'd think it was some art gallery murder case, completely unrelated to anything supernatural. Headquarters here calls it more directly—the Haunted Painting Incident."

The Haunted Painting Incident?

Yang Jian's expression changed, "Can you tell me more about it?"

"There's not much to tell, just that a ghost emerged from a painting and went on an indiscriminate killing spree. It seems like everyone who saw the painting ended up being targeted by the ghost, although this is just conjecture. But indeed, those who died had all visited that gallery," Feng Quan said, shaking his head.

"But the trouble started when we realized that a lot of foreigners had visited that art gallery. By the time we reacted, the ghost had killed far too many people."

Yang Jian asked, "How many people died?"

"More than in Dachang City."

Feng Quan grinned, "Because the deaths were so widespread, it was difficult to keep track, but no one dares to hang paintings at home anymore since then. It seems that ghost might appear in any given

painting, although this is inferred after the fact and not entirely certain. Even if it is true, that ghost can't enter paintings anymore."

"Why?" Yang Jian asked.

Feng Quan replied, "At the cost of completely annihilating a team of ghost handlers, someone left a candlestick made of gold on the ghost's body. Although they couldn't contain the ghost, if it has something like gold on it, it's unlikely that it can enter paintings to kill anymore."

"That's about all I know, the rest is unclear to me, as it's from the foreign files and there's a high probability that they've hidden key information. So just have a look at them, but don't take that file too seriously. However, I still don't quite understand the headquarters' decision at that time. That thing was killing abroad, and yet the headquarters inexplicably supported it with a Ghost Candle. We're not even able to handle our own issues here."

As he continued, Feng Quan seemed once again puzzled.

It was that thing...

Yang Jian didn't listen too carefully to Feng Quan's following words but fell into deep thought when he heard about the gold candlestick.

Because Yang Jian remembered what that ghost they spoke of really was.

Back when he was in Dachang City, staying at Jiang Yan's apartment, he had seen a ghost wandering through Dachang City, hidden within a Ghost Domain.

He had been lucky at that time and wasn't drawn into that Ghost Domain.

Otherwise, he figured he would have been dead for sure.

"So that thing is the source of the S-Class supernatural incident, codenamed Haunted Painting?" Yang Jian pondered.

Wang Xiaoming's plan was to lure that ghost over, using the one in the Haunted Painting to suppress the Ghost Envoy, and if that failed, to use the Ghost Envoy to take care of the Haunted Painting.

Considering carefully, this was indeed playing with fire.

Chapter 502 The Foundation of the Headquarters

The meeting's agenda was roughly discussed and established.

Jang Shangbai's Coffin Nail plan was temporarily shelved, and Professor Wang's ghost painting scheme is currently being employed. However, this is but one of several options. Cao Yanhua hopes that others will continue to come up with alternative plans, even if only as a backup, so that there won't be a lack of response in case an issue arises.

However, the specific implementation of the plan wasn't discussed at the meeting. It is expected that the think tank at headquarters will provide satisfactory answers, and there's no need for others to worry about it.

But even the best plans require someone to execute them.

It is anticipated that a few unlucky ghost controllers will be assigned tasks in the future.

Yang Jian is very confident that this time, he definitely won't be one of them, because if headquarters were to assign him again, that would be outright bullying.

The meeting neared its end around noon.

"The first meeting will end here for today, but the matter is not yet concluded. Following normal proceedings, there will be a second meeting tomorrow; I hope everyone will be prepared." Cao Yanhua checked the time before declaring the temporary adjournment of the meeting.

But in the end, he called out specific names with a stern criticism: "Before we end the meeting, I must deliver a severe reprimand to Yang Jian."

"Yang Jian fought with Gao Zhiqiang in the rest area, directly causing the resurrection of Gao's fierce ghost, resulting in the loss of a top-tier ghost controller for the headquarters. This is an unforgivable grave mistake. If it were normal circumstances, he would certainly face severe punishment."

As he spoke, Cao Yanhua looked visibly angry.

"The moment has come," Yang Jian glanced at Feng Quan beside him.

It was just as he'd said; he was indeed being singled out for criticism.

But this was merely a formality. Those who were clever knew that the headquarters couldn't actually do anything to Yang Jian; it was merely Cao Yanhua's personal performance to salvage some face for the headquarters and also to let others know that they could still suppress Yang Jian and that they should not act rashly.

"Is this Yang Jian really just a hothead? Surely he must be aware of this," someone thought to themselves.

If Yang Jian were provoked now and decided to kill Cao Yanhua, that would be interesting.

Clearly,

they were disappointed.

Yang Jian sat still, without the confrontational attitude he had earlier with Jang Shangbai and the others, as if he hadn't heard Cao Yanhua's accusations and criticism at all.

After criticizing for a while, Cao Yanhua then added, "Although the consequences of Yang Jian's actions were extremely severe and had a very negative impact, he also prevented Gao Zhiqiang from bullying a female switchboard operator at headquarters. His actions were just and maintained peace within the headquarters..."

"Therefore, the punishment for Yang Jian this time will be a halving of his salary and gold quota, along with one demerit; this will not set a precedent."

"What? Just a fine and a demerit?" Jang Shangbai's face darkened upon hearing this punishment.

To merely go through the motions, at least some measure should be taken. What does a fine amount to? Are ghost controllers short on money? Moreover, a demerit has no effect on Yang Jian, who is already nominated for team leader and is expected to be elected. Whether he is demerited or not is irrelevant. Cao Yanhua's way of handling the punishment might as well have been three cups of penalty wine.

Perhaps that could have at least gotten Yang Jian drunk, forcing him to sleep off a hangover for a day and suffer with a headache all night.

Gao Zhiqiang really died in vain.

How unjust.

Jang Shangbai sighed internally.

A promising ghost controller died just because he couldn't control his temper, killed outright by Yang Jian at headquarters, without anyone even crying foul. What's more, Gao wasn't really at fault; at most, it would have been a verbal warning under normal circumstances, with no serious consequences.

He knew that headquarters also didn't want Gao Zhiqiang to die, but by the time they could have intervened, it was already too late. Yang Jian was both ruthless and decisive, and he had already killed the man.

With the person dead, headquarters couldn't very well impose a severe punishment on another top-tier ghost controller, could they?

Moreover, since the other person had acted on the side of justice, if headquarters severely punished Yang Jian for this, they might drive away a top-tier ghost controller and also indirectly tell everyone that it's justifiable to err and wrong to help.

Once that precedent was set, the implications would be far-reaching.

Cao Yanhua couldn't possibly be that foolish, which is why he had to handle it this way.

"Is Yang Jian really just a hothead?" At this point, feeling constrained, Jang Shangbai started to doubt whether Yang Jian had already taken this into account previously.

If that were true, then the guy was indeed frightening.

"Alright, meeting adjourned, and Yang Jian, stay behind for a moment," Cao Yanhua added after the meeting was over.

Yang Jian's expression changed slightly, he probably understood the purpose of Cao Yanhua wanting to see him alone.

"Brother Tui, what does headquarters want to discuss with you alone? They're not trying to poach you, are they?" Feng Quan asked curiously by his side.

Yang Jian glanced at him and said, "Can't you think on the bright side? Maybe they want to reward me."

"You killed someone at the headquarters and almost got in a fight during the meeting. Do you really think they would reward you? I don't buy it," Feng Quan shook his head.

"That's not necessarily so."

Feng Quan said, "Then you just wait and see. I'm leaving first. Contact me if anything comes up. I should be in J city for the next few days."

"Got it," Yang Jian nodded.

Soon after, one by one, the others left, leaving only Cao Yanhua, Wang Xiaoming, and an old man named Old Qin.

"Yang Jian, do you know why I asked you to stay behind?" Cao Yanhua began asking once the others had left.

Yang Jian said, "Isn't it for overtime pay?"

Cao Yanhua twitched the corners of his mouth at this and said, "You remember that quite well. But that's just one of the things. There's something more important that I want to discuss with you alone. However, this isn't the place to talk. Follow me, we can talk while we walk."

After finishing his sentence, he gestured and then pointed to a compact service vehicle parked nearby.

"Sure thing. As long as the deputy minister doesn't renege, I'm open to discussing any matter," Yang Jian said indifferently.

Very soon.

The four of them got into the car, which was driven by a staff member and slowly left the area.

On the way, Cao Yanhua said, "Actually, I shouldn't be discussing this with you at this time, but I fear you might misunderstand if I notify you at the last minute. So, after some thought, I've decided to discuss it with you now. Of course, you can disagree. The headquarters is just making a suggestion, and won't force you to decide."

"The way you're talking makes it sound like you're about to sell me out," Yang Jian commented while looking at him. "Usually when people say they won't force you, it often means there's no choice, right? Professor Wang."

Wang Xiaoming stayed silent, once again pretending to be a wooden figure.

Cao Yanhua continued, "This is a decision I've made, and it has nothing to do with the others. Since you don't like beating around the bush, I'll come straight to the point. The truth is, the headquarters hopes you will give up on the team leader selection and refuse the position."

Upon hearing this, Yang Jian frowned slightly: "Why's that?"

"I can't say, but if you agree, the headquarters will compensate you, and I believe you will be satisfied," Cao Yanhua said.

"I've heard that the team leader selection is really just a struggle for influence, that each team leader represents a different set of interests, and some people have already been preselected. So, does that make me—the powerless and non-influential high school student—a candidate to be sacrificed?" Yang Jian countered.

Cao Yanhua seriously said, "No, if you insist on being part of the team leader plan, with your resume you would certainly become a team leader. It's just that you're not suitable for the position. However, you do have a point, behind every team leader there indeed are intertwined interests, but that's not the most important thing. It's about balance."

"The headquarters need team leaders to stabilize situations, whether it's supernatural incidents, folklore spirit-manipulators, or local public safety—all require their assistance, and only top-notch spirit-manipulators can manage that... You definitely meet the criteria, but there are others who fit even better. If you step down, the one to replace you will be Li Jun."

Yang Jian waved his hand and said, "I don't understand stuff about situations or suitability. If you want me to step down, that's fine, but what's your offer?"

He wasn't particularly eager to become a team leader. Although there might be more power and resources as a team leader, it came with its own share of troubles. If he could get some tangible benefits, he wouldn't care about dropping out of the team leader program, and even leaving the headquarters wouldn't matter.

"If you agree, that's enough. As for your requests, the headquarters will try to accommodate them," Cao Yanhua stated. "I'm going to take you to another place next."

Yang Jian's gaze flickered, but he said nothing, simply sitting in the car as he watched it drive towards the headquarters' air-raid shelter, descending deeper into the ground as if heading towards its depths.

Taking the opportunity, he turned to Old Qin next to him and asked, "How old are you, sir? It's quite rare to see a spirit-manipulator of your age."

Old Qin simply smiled and chose not to respond.

"If you want to ask something, you can ask me directly. Old Qin's identity is special, and there are things he can't disclose," Wang Xiaoming finally spoke up.

"You really can be annoying," Yang Jian remarked. "You probably know what I want to inquire about. Well then, I'll just come out with it. How much do you know about the Republic of China Era?"

He didn't believe that with Wang Xiaoming's status and access to information, he couldn't touch upon some of the past details.

As expected.

Wang Xiaoming didn't feel surprised at all, only calm, "It seems you've also noticed, which kind of surprises me, so you want to ask Old Qin, since he's from that era."

"Have you done research on this topic?" Yang Jian asked.

"Just another research topic, but I'm not the one following up on this project, after all, archaeology is not my strong suit," Wang Xiaoming said. "However, I do know a bit from the research, but due to confidentiality, there are some things I can't reveal to you."

"At my level, I shouldn't be completely in the dark, should I?" Yang Jian said.

Wang Xiaoming fell silent for a moment, then continued, "Let's start with the Ghost Coffin I've been studying recently. Setting aside its supernatural qualities, based on the craftsmanship, shape, and technique, it's not from modern times, it should adhere to the coffin style of the Republic of China Period. I've studied the styles of some strange artifacts, and without a doubt, everything points to that era, which is the Republic of China Period you just mentioned."

"You should be familiar with this photograph."

All of a sudden, he took out his phone, flipped to a photograph, and handed it to Yang Jian.

The photo was very familiar, taken through a glass window. In the picture was an old man wearing a changshan, his body covered with livor mortis, his eyes lifeless, his expression numb, exuding an unusual eeriness all over.

"It's the photo I saw before on an online forum, this old man is... the Door Knocking Ghost," Yang Jian's face turned solemn.

He also had this photo stored in his phone, but getting this photo was not a difficult task for headquarters.

"I've collected some photographs that have captured ghosts," Wang Xiaoming said as he took back his phone. "This is the image known as the Door Knocking Ghost, you should be very familiar with it, but what I wanted you to see was not the appearance of the Door Knocking Ghost, but this ghost's style of dress."

Yang Jian said, "You mean to say that the Door Knocking Ghost is also an old man from the Republic of China Period?"

"Clearly."

Wang Xiaoming said, "This black long-sleeved clothing is the style of that era. There is a lot of similar evidence, but most of it points to the same period. However, I'm not very interested in that era, so I haven't spent much time researching it."

"What? You know the possible origin of the ghost resurgence, yet you're not delving deeper into it?" Yang Jian was astonished.

"Because it's not necessary,"

Wang Xiaoming said, "It's just one answer, but it won't change the outcome, so I haven't wasted time on it. However, Professor Bai is more interested in this matter. He's a historian, a literary scholar, and he's been following up on this."

Yang Jian said, "Haven't you thought that knowing the truth might completely solve the current supernatural events?"

"I've thought about it, but it's not realistic. For example, ghosts already appeared during the Republic of China Era, and ghost handlers emerged as well. But from the looks of the current situation, it's quite

clear that people from that era failed. Although I don't know what methods they used to temporarily deal with all the supernatural events, that's not important. What's important is that we should respond to the increasingly frequent supernatural events happening today," Wang Xiaoming said earnestly.

"I won't consider the past, only the future. You should do the same. Finding the answer is not very meaningful. Solving the problem is the urgent matter at hand."

"This guy..." On hearing Wang Xiaoming say this, Yang Jian felt an impulse to jump up and punch him.

It was clear that understanding the truth was possible, yet Wang Xiaoming had no interest at all.

"If there truly were ghost handlers during the Republic of China Period, they couldn't have all disappeared. There must be remnants."

Yang Jian said, "Finding them might reveal the truth. You might not be interested, but I am."

Wang Xiaoming then said, "That's true, but unfortunately, Old Qin isn't your target."

"Why?"

"He was indeed born in the Republic of China Era, but he's an orphan, without parents or relatives, not even a name. He only knows that he was adopted by a family with the surname Qin. Unfortunately, that family died when he was five years old, and Old Qin doesn't even know the names of his foster parents,

only their surname. So he never entered the circle of ghost handlers of the Republic of China Era," Wang Xiaoming said.

Old Qin, standing by, chuckled, "In such chaotic times, it was good enough to survive, let alone worry about such specifics."

Yang Jian's heart suddenly sank.

If that was the case, then the clues and answers were cut off here.

However, Wang Xiaoming then added, "But what makes Old Qin different from other ghost handlers is that he's a natural-born ghost handler."

"What do you mean?" Yang Jian asked, looking toward him again.

"It means that Old Qin was a ghost handler while still in his mother's womb. He's an anomaly among ghost handlers; the ghost within his body has already fused with him and is in a state of perpetual standstill. If you find it difficult to understand, you might as well directly consider Old Qin to be a ghost," Wang Xiaoming explained.

His voice echoed down the deep corridor, empty of anyone else, but the information revealed left Yang Jian astonished.

"How is that possible?" Yang Jian almost jumped to his feet at that moment.

A natural ghost tamer?

Apart from ghosts since in the womb?

His own existence might as well be that of a ghost.

Wang Xiaoming said, "Nothing's impossible, if it can cause fierce ghosts to crash. Accomplishing this shouldn't be difficult, right? However, I suspect that Old Qin's mother must have used some special method while pregnant with him, causing the ghost to crash within the fetus. As long as it doesn't revive, the newborn would be a natural ghost tamer. Of course, there's also the risk of failure, which would result in a ghost fetus."

"Of course, this is just my wishful speculation. Maybe he is a unique, irreplicable case, but I must admit, this method of mastering fierce ghosts is perfect. I was inspired by Old Qin and started my research because I believe his existence points in a direction," he continued.

Yang Jian stared at him and asked, "So you bred the terrifying beings known as Ghost Envoys?"

"Experiments carry risks, especially with uncontrollable dangerous elements like ghosts. But if successful, I could use the Ghost Coffin to breed more ghost tamers like Old Qin, and ultimately, I could put an end to all supernatural incidents," Wang Xiaoming said slowly.

So this was the true reason he was desperate to obtain the Ghost Coffin.

There's no denying that Wang Xiaoming's vision was far-reaching, his ambitions grand. If he succeeded, he truly could influence global trends, no wonder the headquarters regarded him as a national treasure.

"You've bitten off more than you can chew," Yang Jian said, his face stern.

"The Ghost Envoy has become everyone's nightmare," he continued.

"No, that's just a temporary danger. The Ghost Envoy can be dealt with eventually, but hope for the future is what's most important. After the Ghost Coffin experiment failed, I found a new direction—thanks to you. You should continue our previous deal. I need that thing, and in exchange, you can take something from here, I won't let you down," Wang Xiaoming said, shifting his gaze toward the human skin scroll in Yang Jian's hand.

Of course, he still didn't know about the existence of the human skin scroll, only that Yang Jian possessed something exceedingly unique, presumably capable of providing terrifying information.

It would be useful to him.

"Take something here?" At that moment, Yang Jian realized he had arrived at an underground base by car.

"What is this place?" he asked.

Cao Yanhua said, "A prison, a place to store some special items."

Seeing this, Yang Jian's expression changed: "Are the successfully imprisoned ghosts kept here?"

"No, just some special items that aren't too dangerous. The actual location for imprisoning ghosts is a secret within a secret. Even I don't know it. This is as far as my authority can reach. As promised, because you've made significant contributions by saving Professor Wang and a group of ghost tamers from the Ghost Envoy incident, I'll allow you to take one item from here. That was what I promised you before. But if you're willing to give up your captain position, I'll allow you to take two items. And if you agree to complete that trade with Professor Wang, I'll let you take three," Cao Yanhua said seriously, allowing Yang Jian to take up to three items in an unprecedented move by headquarters. Other ghost tamers wouldn't even know the secrets of this place, let alone have the right to request. They would be outright denied.

From this, one could imagine how valuable Yang Jian was to headquarters.

Special and peculiar objects?

Yang Jian's gaze flickered, immediately thinking of items like the Ghost Cabinet, human skin scroll, and Coffin Nail.

Indeed, the headquarters also collected such items.

Yet Cao Yanhua had kept them well hidden. If the situation hadn't been worsening, he probably wouldn't have allowed these items to be disclosed.

After all, peculiar objects always came with some unknown and terrifying risk.

"I'll take you to see," Cao Yanhua said, exiting the car.

Now Yang Jian understood why Old Qin had come along.

Probably Cao Yanhua was worried Yang Jian might get greedy and ransack the place.

Now with Old Qin around, Yang Jian wouldn't dare make a move. Although he had a rough idea of Old Qin's physical condition, he knew nothing about his knowledge of ghosts.

But Yang Jian believed that Old Qin was not someone he could currently confront.

Without enough confidence, why would headquarters only send Old Qin?

Of course, Yang Jian had no plans to ransack the place—infuriating everyone was the last thing he'd do.

"What might be the paranormal objects collected by headquarters?" he wondered with heightened curiosity.

Chapter 503 The 500th Chapter: Peculiar Items

The location where supernatural objects were stored was deep beneath headquarters, carved out of an underground base. The narrow and profound passages were oppressive and stuffy, with faint lights flickering on the thick concrete walls, barely illuminating the path ahead.

The surrounding silence was eerily unsettling, with only the footsteps of their small group echoing about, and the air here seemed somewhat turbid, making it difficult to breathe smoothly.

If an ordinary person were to stay here for an extended period, they would surely suffocate from lack of oxygen.

As Cao Yanhua walked, he said, "Actually, according to me, some things should be sealed away forever, never to reappear in this world. The presence of these objects only leads to greater problems, but now the biggest issue isn't these anymore. So, taking you here today is quite unprecedented."

Yang Jian remained silent, simply following with a composed expression.

Soon.

Alongside the passage ahead, a series of small rooms appeared, each bearing a number such as 001, 002, and so on, leading to a turning point in the distant corridor.

"We're here, this is where the supernatural items are stored. This is the first room; you can come and see. If you need detailed information, you can ask me or Professor Wang." Cao Yanhua stopped at the entrance of the first small room.

The room's door was made of steel, thick and sturdy. There was a small window at the top of the door, and through the pale yellow glass, the interior could be glimpsed.

The room was a small single, its area probably only around five square meters, with a very ordinary table in the middle.

"How about giving me a file? I can read through it quicker," Yang Jian said as he walked over.

Cao Yanhua replied, "Files can cause problems; people will not. If the person who knows about the files runs into trouble, then they are most likely dead. In such a case, these items would be sealed away forever."

"Oh, why is that?" Yang Jian asked, slightly puzzled.

"If even those who know about the files can't survive, it means the situation has completely spiraled out of control. Therefore, these items must be sealed away and prevented from being leaked at all costs," Cao Yanhua said with firm conviction.

"Vice Minister, your thinking is quite peculiar," Yang Jian said with a smile. He then walked up to the door, placed his hand on the cold steel, and peered through the pale yellow glass into the room.

On the table inside the small room sat an old-fashioned camera that didn't seem to be a modern product; it was probably several decades old since its paint had already begun to peel off, making it look dirty and old, like a piece of junk salvaged from a garbage heap. It was hard to believe such a thing could still function properly.

"What is this thing?" Yang Jian's hand slowly came down.

He realized he could not breach this door; clearly, the door's exterior was made of steel, and it must contain a layer of Gold inside, blocking any supernatural powers.

"Ghost Camera," Cao Yanhua responded slowly.

"What's it used for?" Yang Jian inquired.

Cao Yanhua recounted briefly, "Taking pictures."

Yang Jian looked at him with a peculiar expression, "Why do I feel like you're messing with me? Aren't all cameras used for taking pictures? I'm asking what's different about this camera compared to ordinary ones."

"This device is capable of photographing ghosts. If this camera successfully captures a ghost, it can imprison the ghost within the photograph," Cao Yanhua continued.

"The previous owner of the Ghost Camera was a photographer. He succeeded in photographing a ghost, which then vanished, and the camera spat out a photo. What was depicted in that photo was precisely the appearance of the ghost, hence it has the ability to contain ghosts," Cao Yanhua went on to elaborate.

Yang Jian's gaze shifted slightly, "Such an important tool not being utilized by ghost controllers to resolve supernatural incidents, but instead kept here, must have some terrifying side effects, right?"

The ability to imprison ghosts upon capturing them seemed even more powerful than Coffin Nail. If it were as Cao Yanhua described, this device should be used to photograph Ghost Envoys and incarcerate them within photos.

However, headquarters had not done so.

Therefore, clearly there was a problem with the Ghost Camera.

"Yes, the Ghost Camera can indeed contain ghosts when used correctly, but there are two prerequisites. The first one is that it must capture the ghost's entire form; that is, the ghost's entire body has to be photographed. If an arm or a leg is missing, the Ghost Camera won't be able to complete the containment," Cao Yanhua explained.

Yang Jian asked again, "And the second condition?"

"During the shooting process, the camera will flash, and there's a risk that the flash will go out of control. Once it does, the user will be trapped inside the photo," Cao Yanhua explained.

Upon hearing this, Yang Jian laughed. "So, holding this camera is like gambling with a fierce ghost? But if that's all there is to it, this Ghost Camera wouldn't be sealed away. After all, sacrificing a few ordinary people to imprison a fierce ghost seems worthwhile. There must be other dangers."

"Indeed there are, but I don't know much about them. I only know that every time a photo is taken, the lens is obscured by some eerie things. Sometimes, a non-existent hand is captured; other times, a second shadow appears; sometimes the photo comes out blurred as if something is interfering with the shot," Cao Yanhua said.

Cao Yanhua glanced at the camera in the room: "I fear it could be a potential horror, and considering the low success rate of capturing a ghost's full body, it wasn't approved for use. However, sometimes, if you're lucky, it could turn the tide of battle, as even ordinary people can use it."

"The odds you talk about don't seem very high, otherwise, it would have been used long ago," Yang Jian remarked.

"That's why I put it in Room One, because if there's really no other way, I would allow its use," Cao Yanhua said. "It's a last resort."

"I'll continue to look at the others," said Yang Jian.

With that, he moved on to the next room.

Still, the Ghost Camera indeed tempted him. If he ever faced an unsolvable fierce ghost, instead of waiting to die, he might as well give the camera a shot. If he could successfully capture the ghost's full body and avoid the dangers of the flash going out of control, then he could survive.

It was like having an ace in the hole.

But being new here, he felt he needed to look around more; Yang Jian thought what he needed was something to keep him safe, not put him in danger. After all, if you frequently walk by the river, it's hard to keep your shoes dry; gambling with your life too often, you're bound to fail at some point, so staying safe was especially important.

He had reached the second room.

Yang Jian peered through the small glass window and saw what was inside.

It was a small, delicate wooden box that he couldn't identify at first glance.

"What's that box?" Yang Jian asked.

"Eight-Tone Music Box."

Cao Yanhua answered casually, familiar with the information: "Once opened, music will play from inside. As long as the music is playing, the person holding the Eight-Tone Music Box is guaranteed not to die, even in the presence of the most horrifying ghosts. This has been tested, and others have used it before."

"Similar to the Ghost Candle?" Yang Jian asked.

"Not quite. The Ghost Candle only prevents you from being attacked by ghosts, but the Eight-Tone Music Box doesn't guarantee you won't be attacked; it just guarantees you won't die. Plus, it lasts an incredibly long time; the limit hasn't been tested, but it can definitely keep you safe for several days," Cao Yanhua explained.

Yang Jian narrowed his eyes, "An Eight-Tone Music Box that guarantees you won't die? What's the risk?"

Supernatural items all come with some risks; some are controllable, others are not, just like the Ghost Mirror in his home that can resurrect the dead, but at a great cost—it requires releasing a fierce ghost. This risk isn't borne by himself, so it's tolerable, but something like the Ghost Camera, that's troublesome; if things go wrong, he could die.

"We don't know yet."

Cao Yanhua pondered for a moment: "All we know is that people who have used the Eight-Tone Music Box to prolong their lives, including ghost controllers, have all died. Their causes of death were very strange. Despite attempts by headquarters to save the last ghost controller who used the Eight-Tone Music Box, they all failed. This thing carries an incomprehensible curse, and considering how easily it can lead to death, it was sealed away."

"How can it be used in combination with the Ghost Camera?" Yang Jian squinted.

The immortality granted by the Eight-Tone Music Box could offset the Ghost Camera's side effects. It was a solution with no escape in the short term, though one might still be killed by the curse of the Eight-Tone Music Box afterwards. But at least, for the moment, it could keep him alive.

At this point, Wang Xiaoming spoke up: "I've considered such a combination, so headquarters placed these two items in Rooms One and Two. If they're to be activated, it's best to do so together; at least we can ensure the successful imprisonment of a fierce ghost at the expense of one person."

"Yes, these two items can be lifesavers in critical times, even turning the situation around," Cao Yanhua nodded.

"Let me continue to look at the other items," Yang Jian decided, and moved on.

Chapter 504 The Choice of Items

Yang Jian felt that headquarters was still being too cautious. Although many of the objects stored here had potential dangers and terrors, if properly utilized, they could provide ghost handlers with hope for survival.

Instead of worrying about losing control and being sealed here, it would be better to actively make use of them.

He had come into contact with the Ghost Mirror, Ghost Cabinet, and even the Ghost Rope and human skin paper. These dangerous items had brought him a lot of trouble and peril, but they also allowed him to survive up to this point.

If it weren't for these supernatural items, Yang Jian would have died long ago.

However, headquarters seemed to have come to its senses now and decided to utilize these things, and Yang Jian seemed to have become the first beneficiary.

Of course, Yang Jian was well aware that Cao Yanhua's initiative to allow him access to these things must have other motives. As for what those were, he didn't care. As long as he could obtain some objects that could save his life, that was all that mattered. After all, only by staying alive did anything have meaning. If he died, everything would be in vain.

"Aren't you afraid that one day someone will come and loot everything all at once if you put all the stuff together?" Suddenly, Yang Jian, who had been walking forward, asked.

Cao Yanhua countered, "With your ability, unimpeded, how many doors could you open and how many items could you take in the shortest time possible? With the response time of headquarters, within ten minutes this place would be completely sealed off, no one would be able to get out, including ghost handlers with access to the Ghost Domain."

Yang Jian's gaze flickered, and he immediately understood Cao Yanhua's point.

Headquarters had deliberately placed each supernatural item in a separate room. If someone invaded this place and wanted to take the items inside, they would have to open one door at a time, taking one

item at a time, which would be too inefficient. It would be good if they could take one item in five minutes.

By the time the intruder succeeded, headquarters would most likely have apprehended them.

Indeed, these security concerns were not for Yang Jian to worry about; there were people who considered these matters more comprehensively than he did.

"What is that?" Yang Jian pointed at a gold box inside a room.

He couldn't see exactly what was inside it.

Cao Yanhua glanced over, "If I remember correctly, that room contains the Corpse Wrapping Cloth employed for wrapping corpses. However, it can be used on ghosts to completely suppress their movements. So far, there have been no failures, but it requires a bit of time."

"Something like the Ghost Rope?"

Yang Jian pondered for a moment, "But it seems rather underwhelming. Wrapping a powerful ghost takes time, but a ghost will not give you that time. While you are wrapping a ghost with the Corpse Wrapping Cloth, it's likely already killed you several times over, wait... it seems there are some ghosts that don't move much."

Suddenly, he remembered the tall, rotting corpse in Caesar Hotel in Z City.

That ghost held a rusty firewood knife, able to kill by stepping into a footprint, but its flaw was that it needed to stand still.

If he could wrap that corpse with the Corpse Wrapping Cloth in that time, might it be easily apprehended?

"I'll continue to look around," Yang Jian thought to himself, but he did not choose the Corpse Wrapping Cloth.

There were few opportunities to use this item, and it was not even comparable to the Ghost Rope. Its only advantage was that it could exert absolute suppression, immobilizing any formidable ghost it wrapped.

Cao Yanhua said, "It doesn't matter. There's plenty of time for you to browse around here today, but only for today. This is an exception I'm making for you and also a reward from headquarters. So, you need to seize this opportunity. Should you miss this chance, there won't be another one, and some items you might never be able to see again afterward."

In the face of Yang Jian, a meritorious servant, he was willing to spend some time and patience, having Wang Xiaoming and Old Qin accompany him.

Usually, they were very busy people who did not have the time to wander around aimlessly with just Yang Jian.

However, even the best treatment is fought for; no one gives special care without reason.

The Ghost Camera, Eight-Tone Music Box, Corpse Wrapping Cloth, human skin lantern, Corpse Banner... Yang Jian encountered many bizarre items. Although he was not interested in most of them, they broadened his horizons, letting him discover many inconceivable things and contributing to his growth.

Besides that, Yang Jian deeply felt the profound heritage of headquarters.

For a ghost handler, owning one supernatural item was already quite remarkable, but there were so many gathered here. He had to admit, the power of headquarters was indeed great, not something one or two inflated ghost handlers could contend with.

The reason headquarters usually seemed timid was probably just in the interest of the bigger picture.

If they really needed to deal with one or two disobedient ghost handlers, Yang Jian believed that headquarters could do it quite easily without relying on others. Merely relying on these eerie items stored here, most top ghost handlers would not be able to withstand it, because some items indeed were quite terrifying.

"This is..." Yang Jian's gaze suddenly shifted, and he stopped in front of a small room's door.

Through the glass window, he saw a door standing in the room inside.

It was an old wooden door.

The door was single-winged, painted red, and what caught the eye was the door was wrapped in chains. The chains were custom-made, forged from gold. It seemed that the people from headquarters did not wish for this door to be opened.

Yang Jian took notice of this door because its paint and style slightly resembled that of... the Ghost Cabinet.

"This is an extremely dangerous item."

Cao Yanhua immediately came over and said solemnly, "It's named the Ghost Gate in the archives. Though it's just a wooden door, fierce ghosts come out when it's opened. The other side seems to be connected to a terrifying Ghost Domain. To confine it originally cost many lives. Hence, for safety concerns, it's forbidden to apply for its use."

As if to prove Cao Yanhua's words,

Yang Jian saw the old wooden door inside that room shaking violently. The doorknob was being twisted by something, as if there was something behind the door trying to open it and come out.

But the chains wrapped around the door were preventing it from opening, although it still occasionally cracked open due to the violent shaking.

Behind the narrow door gap was darkness and coldness, emitting a deep eeriness.

"Don't worry, the ghosts will only come out if the door is fully opened. If it's only a crack or halfway opened, the ghosts won't come out, so even though it seems noisy at times, it's actually very safe." Cao Yanhua said, "After seeing so much, have you decided what you want to take?"

"Continuing to look further isn't very meaningful, because everything beyond this Ghost Gate is extremely dangerous. The potential uses are far outweighed by the risks they bring, and I believe you wouldn't be too interested."

Feeling that it was about time, he wanted Yang Jian to make a decision.

If he took one item, that would be his personal reward.

If he took two items, it would mean Yang Jian had given up his position as team leader.

If he took three items, it would prove Yang Jian was willing to go through with the trade with Wang Xiaoming.

It was a free choice.

The headquarters had no intention of forcing anything, which also aligned with the proposition Wang Xiaoming had previously suggested, to offer substantial benefits.

Cao Yanhua had also raised the stakes to the maximum, allowing Yang Jian to freely choose from the numerous sealed paranormal artifacts. There was nothing more valuable than this, and if this couldn't satisfy Yang Jian, then he had nothing more to say.

But when compared to securing a top ghost handler, none of these seemed to matter much.

"You have to give me some time to think it over, right? How about we stop here for today, and I'll give you a response in a few days?" Yang Jian considered for a moment and then proposed.

When in doubt, think it over for a few days.

Cao Yanhua was slightly stunned, seemingly not expecting Yang Jian to delay his decision for a few days as his temperament would usually have led to an immediate decision.

"That's fine, but you can't come here personally next time. Once you've made your choice, I will arrange for someone to deliver the items to you."

"I don't mind, but if you want me to give up the race for team leader, you'll need to exchange something from headquarters," Yang Jian's gaze flickered.

"What is it?"

Yang Jian stared intently at Cao Yanhua and said, "I want my Coffin Nail back. Back in Dachang City, I gave the Hungry Ghost to the headquarters, and I gave them the Coffin Nail as well. If the headquarters intends to deal with the Hungry Ghost, I must reclaim the Coffin Nail; it absolutely cannot fall into the hands of Jang Shangbai. This guy seems brainless, wishful thinking, believing that the Coffin Nail can resolve the Ghost Envoy issue, but his real purpose isn't the Ghost Envoy at all, it's for the Coffin Nail."

"Once the Coffin Nail lands in the hands of someone within the circle of friends, I'm really worried they will take me down."

"So, is that why you're opposed to Jang Shangbai's plan?" Cao Yanhua asked.

"Isn't a matter concerning my life and death reason enough?" Yang Jian replied.

Cao Yanhua pondered and said, "If you've thought of this, so have I, which is why I've never agreed to Jang Shangbai's plan. If it really comes down to choosing an executor for the plan, I would only pick Li Jun, not him. However, I can understand why you want the Coffin Nail back, since it was you who found it."

"But you've said before, the Hungry Ghost must not be disturbed, and reclaiming the Coffin Nail would carry certain risks."

Yang Jian replied, "The risk is for you to consider, not my business. The risks I've taken to fight for the team leader position are not small either. Surely you can't expect me to just give up because of one word? Of course, headquarters can also decline, I don't really care."

"You do have a point," Cao Yanhua nodded, not opposing Yang Jian's perspective.

"Let's put that aside for the moment as it requires some thought. What about the trade with Professor Wang, how are you considering that?"

With that, he abruptly shifted the conversation to the final topic.

The human skin paper?

Yang Jian's expression became somewhat grave.

In his hands, this thing was a potential danger as well. However, at critical moments, the human skin paper could save one's life.

And he also had the Ghost Cabinet in his possession. If these two items could complement each other, it would greatly aid his survival.

"I refuse," Yang Jian thought for a moment and decided that it was not yet time to let go of the item.

"Is that so? That's a pity," Cao Yanhua lamented.

As expected, Yang Jian was not easy to negotiate with.

Wang Xiaoming, however, seemed to have anticipated this outcome and held up a finger, saying, "One Ghost Candle, let me have contact with it for half an hour. I don't need to take possession of it, but I do need to understand what it really is."

Yang Jian looked at him closely.

What was this Wang Xiaoming scheming?

Dealing with someone so intelligent always meant guarding against being outmaneuvered.

"The red one?"

Yang Jian hesitated for a moment, but still felt the trade could proceed. Since he had already decided not to trade it away, there was no need to guard the secret so fiercely. Moreover, this secret was not so secret to Wang Xiaoming.

Given this, it would be better to satisfy his curiosity and gain some advantage in the process.

"Of course," Wang Xiaoming replied.

"Fine, half an hour it is," Yang Jian nodded in agreement.

Chapter 505 Touch

Half an hour's borrowing in exchange for a Ghost Candle was clearly a profitable deal for Yang Jian.

He could sense Wang Xiaoming's strong desire to research the human skin parchment, and if he continued to guard such an item like a miser guarding his wealth, revealing not a hint of information, then once Wang Xiaoming's research hit a roadblock, he might well turn his attention to Yang Jian himself.

And to be honest, Yang Jian didn't need to keep the human skin parchment; he was willing to trade it for the right price.

But not now.

He still needed the information the parchment provided as it was his key to understanding some unknown horrors.

It could help increase his chances of survival.

At Yang Jian's level, the supernatural events he encountered were no longer trivial matters; each one was nearly insoluble, and a single misstep could be fatal.

Despite the parchment's eerie nature, filled with terrifying traps between the lines, sometimes when one's life was on the line, what matter were these concerns?

"You want to study the item in my possession, and I'm not opposed to it. As with all the supernatural items here, the one I have also poses a risk, but this risk comes from the information it provides, not direct harm. If you do nothing, you won't be affected," Yang Jian said.

After speaking, Yang Jian took out a small box he carried with him.

The box was made of Gold, which could effectively block supernatural influences.

He had never let down his guard against the human skin parchment.

"We should have Old Qin check it first."

Cao Yanhua stepped forward at this moment, blocking Wang Xiaoming's path, as he didn't allow Wang Xiaoming to directly contact unknown supernatural items.

After all, Wang Xiaoming was just an ordinary person, and any minor anomaly could potentially lead to his death.

"It's fine."

Wang Xiaoming spoke up: "The Gold box should just be a precaution, and Yang Jian just said that there isn't any harm in direct contact with the item. Since he has already tried it himself, I don't need to take extra precautions."

"Isn't that right, Yang Jian?"

"At least it's not dangerous in my hands, but I can't be sure it's completely harmless. It's very special, but you only have half an hour," Yang Jian said, passing the box over.

After receiving the box, Wang Xiaoming slowly said, "You can start timing now. If you have time, you might want to reconsider the captaincy proposal the deputy minister mentioned earlier."

"I'm firm in my decision, no need to think it over," Yang Jian said.

Wang Xiaoming stopped talking and focused on the Gold box, opening it immediately under Cao Yanhua's watchful eye, without any hesitation.

Inside was a stack of yellowed, aged papers.

They looked like deliberately antiqued parchment scrolls, but Wang Xiaoming knew they weren't made of sheepskin, for sheepskin wasn't this soft or thin, and the texture of the leather didn't match.

It was human skin.

Wang Xiaoming confirmed the material of the item almost instantly.

Indeed, it was no ordinary item; this was a piece of human skin parchment.

A Hungry Ghost's skin, perhaps? Similar to the human skin lantern here?

Several supernatural items related to human skin immediately came to mind for Wang Xiaoming, including a fierce ghost controlled by a Ghost Conman that was also linked to human skin.

Although he only had half an hour, he wasn't the least bit impatient and now took out the human skin parchment.

"How do I use this?" Instead of trying to figure it out by himself, he directly asked Yang Jian, the owner.

After all, Yang Jian was the most knowledgeable about this object's existence.

"You're already using it," Yang Jian said.

Wang Xiaoming's eyes flickered: "A contact-based supernatural item, then? You mentioned the dangerous information earlier... I think I can guess the general function of this item."

Quickly.

The human skin parchment, which had been blank, now eerily began to reveal writing. The appearance of the script was methodical, as if an invisible person were holding a pen and meticulously writing on the parchment. The black lettering was not neat, somewhat crooked, but it didn't hinder reading by a normal person.

"My name is Yang Jian, and by the time you read this sentence, I will have already died..."

The first sentence stopped abruptly here.

Then it began to fade away in a strange manner as if someone was quickly erasing it, and soon all the writing vanished again.

New writing took its place and appeared before Wang Xiaoming: "My name is Wang Xiaoming, and if you're reading this sentence, then it means that the experiment has already failed..."

"Hmm?"

Wang Xiaoming's calm face twitched slightly, as if some message revealed by the parchment had touched him.

Yang Jian couldn't see the writing on the parchment, but he guessed that the parchment must be revealing some very useful information clues to Wang Xiaoming, trying to lure him in. It was a terrible trap composed of information, within which lay some horrifying purpose of the parchment.

Those who are new to the parchment are the most easily influenced.

But once you have your guard up, it gets much better, provided that you don't do anything according to the guidance on it.

Every step guided by the parchment could be a trap, and when these traps are linked together, they will ultimately achieve the parchment's purpose.

Yang Jian now rarely relied on the parchment, only considering the guidance on it under special circumstances.

Wang Xiaoming seemed captivated by the content, his gaze fixed on the parchment as his own figure kept emerging.

Yang Jian only glanced at it briefly but, somewhat surprisingly, the parchment was already filled with dense writing at this moment, as if a massive amount of information had been revealed—something that had never happened before during the time he had the parchment, which had never actively disclosed so much information.

The most information it ever disclosed was in Z City, when the method of hanging in front of the Ghost Mirror was revealed.

Aside from that time, it never happened again; only when the parchment itself felt threatened would it passively present some information guidance.

"Is the parchment trying to persuade Wang Xiaoming to trust it? If so, that's interesting."

Yang Jian thought to himself, "With Wang Xiaoming's intelligence, the likelihood of him being duped by the parchment is very low unless the information contains tremendous value that Wang Xiaoming is reluctant to pass up. But I will prevent that from happening. I won't let the parchment stay in Wang Xiaoming's hands."

He had always felt that the parchment had some scheming nature, and if it fell into Wang Xiaoming's hands, who knew what Wang Xiaoming, with his character, would be willing to endure.

However, half an hour was still a long time.

Yang Jian didn't keep his attention on Wang Xiaoming all the time, after all, a man staring at another man could easily be misunderstood.

"Vice Minister, with the sudden Ghost Envoy incident in J City, my schedule has been completely disrupted. I was thinking, if there's nothing particularly important, could I return to Dachang City sooner? After all, Dachang City is without a leader now, and if the vacancy lasts too long, who will be responsible if something goes wrong?"

At this moment, Cao Yanhua pondered for a moment and said, "The Captain's Plan is underway, haven't you considered staying in J City for a few more days?"

"Is presence required for the Captain's Plan? Isn't it just about casting a vote?" Yang Jian asked.

"As the hero of the last event in Dachang City, we haven't rewarded you yet. After this is over, you can return to Dachang City," Cao Yanhua said.

Yang Jian replied, "I think it's better for me to keep a low profile. After all, my trip to J City has offended quite a few people. Let's forget about the reward. Later, I'll take Gao Zhiqiang's ghost with me. Consider that my reward."

Cao Yanhua's expression shifted.

Unexpectedly, Yang Jian was still eyeing the ghost known as 'Ghost Conman' at a time like this, but since the matter had come to an end, he didn't want to complicate things and thought it best to grant Yang Jian's request.

Indeed, it's difficult to convince people if merits go unrewarded, and Yang Jian's request wasn't too excessive.

Of course, the most important thing was that even if Cao Yanhua refused, it's doubtful that the headquarters could retrieve Gao Zhiqiang's ghost. Who knows where Yang Jian had hidden the box before.

"Then let's do this: Wait until the headquarters' operation is over, and you can return to Dachang City on your own. I've also approved your request regarding Gao Zhiqiang's matter," Cao Yanhua said.

"However, the Ghost Envoy incident isn't over yet. If you intend to use the Ghost Painting event, there's a certain risk during this period. Not just for you, but everyone else too, must stay in J City for a while," he continued.

"The last Hungry Ghost incident in Dachang City occurred due to insufficient support. I hope you'll consider this carefully at this critical juncture. Of course, if something happens in Dachang City, I can approve your return."

From his words, enough exorcists needed to stay for now to observe for a while. To avoid being short-handed in the event of an unexpected incident.

"When will the Ghost Envoy incident be over?" Yang Jian inquired.

"The plan is to take action within the next three days at the latest, and we aim to wrap it up within seven days," Cao Yanhua replied.

Upon considering it, Yang Jian said, "In that case, I'll stay for another seven days. I hope everything goes smoothly."

"Of course, no one wants chaos to ensue," Cao Yanhua responded.

"However, I won't participate in the next operation," Yang Jian made clear in advance.

"That's fine. I'll arrange for someone else for the next operation," Cao Yanhua replied. "After all, you need to rest too. Would you like me to grant some leave to Liu Xiaoyu and have her accompany you around?"

Yang Jian wondered, "If I need to rest, why would you grant leave to Liu Xiaoyu? Isn't that just making things more troublesome for me?"

"Uh..." Cao Yanhua looked at Yang Jian with a peculiar expression.

But seeing Yang Jian frowning and looking puzzled, it seemed he genuinely didn't grasp the implication.

He really was a problematic young man; exorcists do have their quirks.

