

Revival 506

Chapter 506

"Time's up."

Half an hour passed quickly, and Yang Jian took note of the time. As soon as it was up, he immediately spoke up.

It wasn't that he cared about one or two minutes, what he cared about was that the longer Wang Xiaoming researched, the more reliant he would become on the people-skin paper. Once he felt that the benefits brought by the people-skin paper far outweighed the cost, there was a chance that Wang Xiaoming would forcefully keep it, regardless of the consequences.

His words brought Wang Xiaoming, who was sitting not far away on the ground, back to his senses. He looked up and then said, "The method you use to control the fierce ghosts came from this?"

"What did it tell you?" Yang Jian asked.

"Everything I wanted to know."

Wang Xiaoming slowly closed the people-skin paper: "It's indeed very special. I've never encountered a supernatural item like this people-skin paper."

"But right now I can't be certain whether the information on it is true or not. This will take some time to verify."

"So what do you mean?" Yang Jian asked.

Wang Xiaoming stood up and neatly folded the people-skin paper, putting it back into the box: "I don't need anything. I just need to wait patiently, and time will tell me the whole truth."

Yang Jian's gaze flickered slightly, and from his ambiguous words, it wasn't difficult to infer that this guy had obtained an enormous amount of information from the people-skin paper.

After all, the dense writings that previously covered the people-skin paper were the best proof.

Since the people-skin paper tried to convince Wang Xiaoming, it would inevitably reveal plenty, and valuable, intelligence, a point Yang Jian was very sure of.

"But now, my need for it is no longer that strong, the direction is already clear, and just that is enough. If I continue to follow the guidance of the information on it, perhaps I will also fall into its trap, and that is not allowed to happen, so this is enough."

After Wang Xiaoming finished speaking, he threw the box containing the people-skin paper over.

"It seems you've also developed a wariness of it," Yang Jian said with a light smile after catching it.

"Not wariness, but fear, fear of the future."

Wang Xiaoming's face was expressionless, hiding his emotions very well.

"Since that's the case, then this trade is considered complete. I think it's getting late now, and I should be leaving," Yang Jian said.

Wang Xiaoming did not speak.

Cao Yanhua, standing nearby, immediately said, "You're not allowed to leave J city within a week. If you want to leave after that, you have to report to the headquarters. Everything else I can tolerate."

"I understand. And don't forget about my overtime fees, deputy director. Send the items to the Ping'an Hotel where I'm staying within three days. As for this place... which item I will take from here will be decided after I think it over and notify the deputy director," Yang Jian said.

He did not linger any longer.

He did not like this repressive and gloomy environment, so as soon as he finished his business, Yang Jian left immediately.

Cao Yanhua frowned deeply as he saw Yang Jian leave: "He wants to use the condition of recovering Coffin Nail in exchange for giving up competing for the team leader position, which presents us with a difficult problem."

Although Yang Jian promised to give up becoming the team leader, the condition was quite harsh.

Extracting Coffin Nail carried huge risks.

That was evident as Yang Jian did not allow Jang Shangbai's plan at the previous meeting, which showed his concern, and therefore proposing such a condition seemed to be an implicit rejection.

"I think it is a fair exchange," Wang Xiaoming calmly said. "He resolved an S-level supernatural event, so the headquarters naturally have to offer something of corresponding value. However, it seems like the headquarters got a better deal because, after all, Coffin Nail was originally discovered by him. It's understandable that he wouldn't want the item to end up in others' hands."

"Yang Jian's previous concerns were normal. If the people from the friend circle got it, it might lead to very bad consequences," Cao Yanhua said with a wry smile. "Of course I know that. After all, we can't let the friend circle dominate everything. Otherwise, why would I have allowed Yang Jian and Jang Shangbai to start their argument during the meeting? Even though it left him in a weaker position for a while, he's the only one who dared to oppose the people from the friend circle, which is why I think Yang Jian is very suitable to be the team leader."

"If he becomes the team leader, it could play a very important role in maintaining the strategic balance."

"Let's drop this topic. You didn't have any problems after touching that people-skin paper a while ago, did you?" Cao Yanhua abruptly changed the subject and asked.

Wang Xiaoming replied, "No problems, just a bit tired. Remembering a large amount of information in a short time is quite draining."

"Then you should go back and rest early. I still need to get back to work," Cao Yanhua said.

"Mhm."

Soon, the group of people left the scene.

However, Cao Yanhua was somewhat concerned. Which supernatural item would Yang Jian take from here?

After all, if certain items were taken away, they could be very dangerous. He hoped that Yang Jian's choice would be conservative.

Yang Jian didn't stay in the headquarters' rest area. After leaving there, he also left the headquarters, because the following actions had nothing to do with him. He had some matters of his own to attend to. However, when leaving the headquarters, he took a box with him.

That box contained the ghost of Gao Zhiqiang.

Since he had already reached an understanding with Cao Yanhua, it was natural that this thing could not be left here.

In the afternoon.

Yang Jian had already returned to his room at the Ping'an Hotel alone.

He quickly found some paper and a pen and began to record the information about the paranormal items he had come across while at headquarters. Although he had forgotten a lot of things, he still remembered some key items. Although it was just a rough idea, it was enough.

Several months ago, Yang Jian had started to build his own supernatural archives.

Backing up the events and some important items he came across, so that he could review them in his spare time, could increase his chances of survival.

Because Yang Jian also felt that supernatural events were related in certain ways, although the information he had was limited, which made his findings scarce.

As the most direct proof.

It was the incident in Z city.

The owner of the blood-stained old newspaper— the ghost that could manipulate memories—was looking for Ghost Face. It just so happened that Tong Qian's Ghost Face, as well as the Ghost Face he obtained on the haunted bus, were its targets.

This event was stopped by him, preventing the ghost from obtaining Ghost Face.

But supernatural events were not just one or two incidents.

He thwarted one ghost from obtaining its piece of the puzzle, while others might not necessarily be able to stop them.

So in the end, the number of ghosts finding their puzzle pieces would increase, and the consequence would be the continuous escalation of supernatural events.

And moreover... Yang Jian touched his forehead.

His own ghost eye was also part of the fierce ghost puzzle. Would the tall, dark shadow nailed to the tree by the Coffin Nail come one day seeking this piece of the puzzle?

Although he had temporarily solved the problem of the fierce ghost's resurrection and the deterioration of his body, the sense of urgency in Yang Jian's heart never relaxed. He couldn't stop. Only by staying ahead of the ghosts could he survive. Once he stopped, the only outcome would be despair and death. It was a road of no return.

The day ended quickly.

But that evening, at the very top floor of Ping'an Tower, a small meeting was convened.

People in the circle knew that Ping'an Tower was funded by a group of capitalists from the friends' circle. While its purpose was to accommodate the family members of spirit wardens at headquarters, it also served as a regular meeting place for some in the friends' circle.

"What? So much happened at the daytime meeting at headquarters? Gao Zhiqiang was actually killed by that Yang Jian right there in the headquarters?" At the start of the friends' circle meeting, someone was shocked after hearing the news.

"Damn it, the Captain's plan had just started, and we lost someone important in a confused mess, right on our side. And that was a very important person. Someone dared to take action in the headquarters, and no one stopped this behavior? There should have been quite a few of us there at the time, right?" someone complained, puffing on a cigarette.

"How could you stop a conflict that ended within a few minutes? And who would dare to stop? That guy is Ghost Eye Yang Jian. The Ghost Envoy incident a few days ago was handled by him personally. He fished out Wang Xiaoming, Li Jun, Feng Quan, and a bunch of others. Yang Jian of today is no longer some naive kid from the countryside. I had a confrontation with him at the meeting table, and he was ready to jump over and finish me off."

At the meeting table, Jang Shangbai was also in a bad mood, his face dark the entire time.

After all, he had a belly full of anger that he wasn't able to vent out during the day.

"How did the headquarters deal with this matter? Killing a spirit warden within headquarters, Cao Yanhua couldn't just say nothing, could he?" asked a slightly overweight middle-aged man in a suit, frowning.

"What else could they do but give him a penalty of three drinks? Since he had just made a merit, punishing Yang Jian at that time would be killing the man's heart, wouldn't it?" said Jang Shangbai. "Gao Zhiqiang died for nothing."

"I think Cao Yanhua wants to use this Yang Jian to suppress our friends' circle." The middle-aged man spoke with a grave voice while smoking, "He wants to balance the powers, and Yang Jian is a good knife in his hand—an impulsive young man with little wit, Cao Yanhua will surely make use of him."

"Perhaps."

Jang Shangbai said, "But whether he's impulsive or not I don't know. What I do know is that he poses a great threat, and a lot of people supported him when I had a confrontation with him: Li Jun, Feng Quan, Cao Yang, and that Zong Shan."

"Zong Shan? Shen Liang's person?" someone exclaimed softly.

"Yes."

"This complicates things. It seems they all tacitly agree with Yang Jian's rise, trying to curry favor. It's a signal, and this proves that Yang Jian must be one of the candidates considered in the Captain's plan."

Beside the meeting table.

The tall and attractive woman, Li Yao, was keeping a tense face while paying attention to the contents being discussed at the meeting table.

She also didn't expect that these big shots from the friends' circle would convene a meeting specifically to discuss Yang Jian's affairs. But it seemed that it wasn't a good thing; instead, it was a dangerous sign.

Everything discussed in the meeting proved that Yang Jian had become a menace to the friends' circle and was hindering their interests.

Chapter 507 Conservative Choice

The meeting among friends wasn't going smoothly, and the atmosphere was somewhat oppressive.

Many people at the conference table remained silent, frowning and smoking, giving the spacious meeting room a smoky haze.

"Hey, a greenhorn who popped up from nowhere, got lucky resolving an S-class supernatural incident, and now with a bit of capital, thinks he can run amok without regard for us. He should remember that when we were dealing with supernatural incidents, this Yang Jian was still drinking milk in school," said a man of slight stature but strong build, breaking the silence with a sneer, "Rather than waiting for him to get promoted by Cao Yanhua to team leader, we might as well knock him down now, to prevent future competition for resources with our circle. I have a plan: let's kidnap his mother first, then lure out Yang Jian and take him down together."

"He Tianxiong, be rational, don't always resort to violence or tipping over tables. Yang Jian is capable of that too."

Someone rapped on the conference table and said in a deep voice, "This is reality, not a gang brawl in a movie. Kidnapping Yang Jian's mother? Is that your idea of a plan? The threat isn't his mother; it's Yang Jian himself. What good will it do to kill someone else's relative? It will only make things worse."

"Besides, if you harm someone's family, they will do the same to yours. Then not only will he lose his whole family, but we will too. I've looked into Yang Jian's profile; he had access to the Ghost Domain from the start, just like Li Jun. These are the types that could wipe out an entire city's population in minutes if they go hard. Humans killing humans is much more efficient than ghosts killing humans."

"President Fei, I have another plan. Yang Jian definitely wouldn't dare. If he really does it, we could join forces with a few from Cao Yanhua's headquarters to deal with him. As for the relatives issue, we can arrange things in advance," He Tianxiong said earnestly.

The middle-aged man known as President Fei couldn't help but cover his forehead, feeling a headache coming on.

Dealing with such people was truly draining, yet they could become ghost controllers and survive until now, which was nothing short of a miracle.

"Let's not forget that Yang Jian still has that ace up his sleeve – the revival of the evil ghost," Jang Shangbai stated grimly. "Once it's resurrected, it will definitely be an S-class supernatural event. Who would handle it then?"

What worried him the most was that Yang Jian was exploring the most terrifying ability of an evil ghost – reboot. While alive, Yang Jian might not be able to do it, but if he died, he most certainly would, and at that time, the threat level would be no less than that of the Ghost Envoy incident.

At the end of the day, what gave the circle of friends such a headache was the severe threat Yang Jian posed; they couldn't take him out lightly. If they flipped the table, everyone would be done for.

Yet if they didn't deal with Yang Jian, he would become a potential enemy in the future, especially now that Gao Zhiqiang was already dead by his hand. This was tantamount to slapping the face of everyone in the circle of friends indirectly. If they didn't make a stand, their future interests and status could be compromised.

Someone asserted at this moment, "Although He Tianxiong's words are crude, the logic is solid. Yang Jian has not yet become team leader, so the threat is just him alone. Once he becomes the leader, it will not just be about one person, but a team, a power base—especially one that headquarters intends to support. With the influx of resources, it will affect our survival."

"After all, resources are finite. Headquarters can't solve every ghost controller's evil ghost revival issue; some will be abandoned. Do any of you want to simply hand over your chances of survival to someone else?"

A chill went down the spines of many people present.

These words got to the crux of the matter.

Positions and power weren't the most important things; survival was, especially concerning the revival of evil ghosts.

"Li Yao, you've had contact with Yang Jian, do you think there's still a chance to win him over?" suddenly, the middle-aged man known as President Fei turned to ask Li Yao standing to the side.

Li Yao paused momentarily.

President Fei spoke solemnly; "Last time we made the mistake of underestimating his status and value. Perhaps, had we offered enough at that time, we could've recruited him. Is there still a chance for remedy now?"

"I haven't tried, so I don't know," Li Yao replied.

"Give it a try. Find a time to make contact with him, and we'll discuss the detailed conditions and inform you afterward," President Fei stated.

Jang Shangbai noted, "Just trying to persuade Yang Jian with words will be nearly futile. This man won't be swayed unless he sees tangible benefits, no matter how eloquently others speak."

"Let's make an attempt. It would be ideal if he could join our circle of friends," said President Fei. "If he decides not to join, then we'll discuss how to deal with him. If we really have to confront him, it's clear that a few of us discussing won't be enough to make a decision. We'll need the board's approval."

Obviously,

Regarding Yang Jian's existence, those in the circle of friends weren't ready to act rashly as his significance had already demanded their attention. But now, he had entered their radar.

Flying under their notice would be an impossible task from now on.

"Let's conclude today's meeting. Li Yao, make contact with Yang Jian as soon as possible and write a report. He has become our next target. His actions have already disrupted my plan to secure the Coffin Nail and took the opportunity to knock out Gao Zhiqiang. If we let him become the team leader, we would appear too incompetent. Therefore, we must reach a resolution before the Ghost Envoy incident concludes," Jang Shangbai stated seriously.

"Alright, I'll go to Ping'an Hotel tomorrow to make contact with him and try to lobby him," said Li Yao.

Although she said this, she had already decided to disclose the content of the meeting to Yang Jian completely, to warn him of his current predicament and ensure that he wasn't left in the dark.

"Very well, then let's adjourn," Jang Shangbai nodded.

With the end of the temporary meeting of the Ping'an Tower friends circle,

Back at the hotel,

Yang Jian had also finished recording some very valuable information obtained from Cao Yanhua.

He looked at the notebook in his hand, pondered, and began to consider which supernatural item it would be better for him to take.

In other words, which supernatural item would be more advantageous for him.

"Although the Ghost Camera is very eerie and can help detain Evil Ghosts, it is not essential. Moreover, there's the risk of it malfunctioning. What if I end up trapping myself in a photograph? That would be self-sabotage. Not worth considering," Yang Jian decided as he saw the information on the first supernatural item in the notebook and immediately shook his head in refusal.

The second item was the Eight-Tone Music Box.

Cao Yanhua said that as long as one held and opened the Eight-Tone Music Box, they could ensure their safety from being killed, but all users, or ghost tamers who used the box, ended up dying miserably.

It seemed to be an unbreakable curse from an Evil Ghost.

"This is even more potent than the Corpse Doll or Ghost Candle for saving one's life. In the face of truly unsolvable terrifying events, Ghost Candle just wouldn't hold up, and Corpse Doll only provides temporary safety. On the other hand, the Eight-Tone Music Box can ensure the user's survival for a long time, and though the consequences are dreadful, in such moments, one probably can't afford to worry too much."

Yang Jian felt the Eight-Tone Music Box could be a backup option.

"Human Skin Lantern? This one has flaws—the Ghost Flame inside was taken by Wang Xiaoming, creating the ghost tamer Li Jun. Otherwise, the Human Skin Lantern would also have been a solid choice." He slightly shook his head as he looked at the notes about the Human Skin Lantern.

If the Human Skin Lantern had no flaws, then the person carrying the lantern would be enveloped by a green flame emanating from it, which was equivalent to Li Jun's Ghost Domain, capable of isolating certain terrifying supernatural phenomena.

In other words, the Human Skin Lantern was a supernatural item that could create a Ghost Domain without any cost of use, and even ordinary people could handle it with almost no price to pay.

But such a perfect object had been ruined by Wang Xiaoming.

However, Wang Xiaoming could not be blamed for this; after all, compared to a supernatural item, a ghost tamer with a Ghost Domain was somewhat more valuable.

"Corpse Wrapping Cloth... this one can be a backup option," Yang Jian marked another check in his notebook.

He could use this thing to detain the ghost at Caesar Hotel in City Z because once the Corpse Wrapping Cloth wrapped a ghost, it could create absolute suppression. This advantage was crystal clear and could replace the Ghost Rope he had lost. He wouldn't even need to carry Gold with him anymore.

"Corpse Banner? This one's out, too dangerous. I don't see any benefits," Yang Jian skipped another option.

He had seen a lot of supernatural items and remembered quite a few. Although some items were of great value, he wouldn't choose them because he believed that what fit his needs was most important. This would compensate for his weaknesses and increase his chances of survival.

So in the end, Yang Jian's gaze settled on just two items.

The Eight-Tone Music Box and the Corpse Wrapping Cloth.

The former was a secret card for critical moments of safety; the latter could indirectly replace the Ghost Rope and could also help him deal with some terrifying Evil Ghosts that he couldn't handle.

Yang Jian squinted his eyes, his finger lightly brushing over the notebook as he thought.

There was no time to think about which item to take while at headquarters, but he had time here.

"The Corpse Wrapping Cloth suits my needs better. The Eight-Tone Music Box is too perilous—what if I end up cursed to death after using it? Wouldn't it be as if there's no difference between using it and not?"

After some consideration, Yang Jian leaned towards the seemingly less valuable Corpse Wrapping Cloth.

Because while it might appear of little value to others, he had always been fixated on the Firewood Knife in the hands of that ghost at Caesar Hotel in City Z. However, to seize the knife, he would need something to restrict the ghost.

Xiong Wenwen had foreseen that the Firewood Knife held by the ghost could sever Ghost Rope.

Being able to cut through Ghost Rope meant it could cause harm to ghosts.

This was an unprecedented discovery.

Moreover, Yang Jian had developed a considerable apprehension of that ghost. Previously in City Z, after the ghost stepped on the footprint of Xiong Wenwen and took a swipe, it almost completely depleted an entire Ghost Candle. Had they not discovered the pattern in time, all of them would have been killed by the ghost right there, even if they had managed to escape the hotel, because their footprints remained inside, and the ghost would inevitably step on them while roaming sooner or later.

Chapter 508 Li Yao's Intelligence

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Yang Jian didn't get much sleep last night because there had been too many things happening lately, and he had much to think about and judge.

For him, a high school student with little life experience, this was somewhat challenging, because some matters couldn't simply be handled according to one's character, such as the headquarters' conflict, Cao Yanhua's suggestion, and assessing the situation...

These were not things his teachers at school would teach, and this place was not a school.

He wasn't clear whether some choices were right or wrong, all Yang Jian could do was to always ensure his personal interests before making any decision.

"Losing is a blessing" is a saying to comfort others.

For people like Yang Jian, taking a loss could lead to death, or even a settling of accounts.

This wasn't child's play, but a game of survival.

Morning.

A phone call woke Yang Jian from a deep sleep.

It was his personal phone; his last one had been damaged by himself, but he had plenty of spares, just needing to change the SIM card to continue using one. With his current financial situation, he could afford it.

"Hello, is this Yang Jian?" The voice on the other end was that of a middle-aged man, polite and somewhat restrained.

Yang Jian couldn't recognize the voice. He glanced at the caller ID and immediately remembered the man he had met on the plane to J city.

Named Wan Delu, president of the Wande Group, he got involved because of the paranormal incident on the plane.

"Is that you, President Wan? What's the matter?" Yang Jian asked.

Wan Delu's voice came through the phone, "Hehe, Brother Tui really is a big shot who forgets things easily, eh? Last time, didn't you ask me to investigate that antique? Well, I've spent quite a bit of effort

these past few days, contacted quite a few people, and finally have some findings. When would you be free to meet and have a meal?"

"The soul bottle matter?" Yang Jian's spirits lifted slightly; he remembered the significantly important matter.

"Come to Ping'an Grand Hotel to find me, you've been here before so I won't repeat the address."

"Alright, should I head over now?" Wan Delu asked.

Yang Jian said, "Sure, I have time today, you can come over anytime, but don't make me wait too long."

"Don't worry, Brother Tui, I won't take long to arrive, please wait a moment," Wan Delu said with enthusiasm and utmost politeness.

"Then let's leave it at that for now, contact me if there's anything," Yang Jian said and hung up the phone.

"The other ghost in the soul bottles? It seems like something left behind from an old house from the Republic of China Period," he turned and looked at the gold bottle on the nightstand.

The bottle was empty.

The ghost inside had escaped, and up to now, Yang Jian hadn't found any trace of it.

But as the only gain, Yang Jian had taken one hand from the ghost and managed to attach it to himself through the Ghost Shadow.

Of course, this attachment was not something he was willing to see; it was the instinct of the Headless Ghost Shadow that prevailed, causing a loss of control over the Ghost Shadow, and this loss of control caused him to lose one of his hands. To a certain extent, Yang Jian's body was becoming more and more like a real ghost.

The only relief was that he still had his sanity.

"But speaking of which, I haven't truly explored the abilities of this Ghost Hand. I only know that it can stay hidden within the Ghost Domain, invisible to ordinary people. Beyond that, it seems able to control someone else's hand, just don't know how to wield this power yet," Yang Jian mused.

He hadn't fully utilized this third hand of his, nor deeply excavated its capabilities.

After all, he hadn't had it under his control for long, and lately, he didn't have the time to experiment.

Just like when he first harnessed the Ghost Eye, some abilities could only be unearthed through constant trial and weren't things one could control proficiently upon first capture.

Since Wan Delu was coming, Yang Jian decided not to go to the headquarters to pressure Cao Yanhua for his salary today.

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He got up, took a shower, and looked at his reflection in the mirror – the healthy complexion and muscular build. Although the dark shadow at his feet exuded a chilly aura that was quite uncomfortable, Yang Jian felt that he might be in the best condition of his life.

He just didn't know how long this state would last.

The Headless Ghost Shadow's ability must also have its limits. Once the ghost's erosion of the body became severe, it would be difficult to restore himself using the Ghost Conman's power.

"Ding-dong!"

Suddenly, the doorbell outside the room rang.

"Wan Delu is here already? That guy really is attentive."

Yang Jian paused for a moment. It hadn't even been fifteen minutes, had it?

He got dressed and left the bathroom. When he opened the door, however, he saw that it wasn't Wan Delu who had rung the doorbell, but a woman. She was tall, wearing sunglasses, and looked like a magazine cover girl – very beautiful.

Li Yao?

Yang Jian's eyes narrowed. He had met this woman before, but what struck him most deeply was not her appearance or figure, but the fact that he had altered her memory with a bloodied old newspaper.

"Why are you here?" His tone was cold, even a bit wary.

"Don't be so tense, the people in our circle won't find out about our relationship," Li Yao said, taking off her sunglasses with a grin, then walked over and hooked her arm around Yang Jian's; "Haven't seen me in days, did you miss me?"

Yang Jian's expression shifted slightly. He was still struggling to adapt to Li Yao's enthusiasm.

After all, not only had they been strangers before, but also strangers with hostility. Such a sudden change was not easily accepted.

But this showed just how terrifying the influence of ghosts could be.

"I've been busy with some stuff lately, no time to miss you. Since you're here, come in," Yang Jian reasoned briefly. He couldn't turn her away after all; how else could their charade with Li Yao continue?

Smiling, Li Yao said, "I know what you've been busy with. You're dealing with the circle's issues, right? You personally took care of Gao Zhiqiang at the headquarters and almost clashed with Jang Shangbai at the conference table. It nearly escalated into a full-blown fight. If it weren't for the people at headquarters holding things back, it might have gotten out of hand."

Just as Yang Jian sat down, her revelation startled him. "Your news is really timely. That was confidential information from just yesterday, and you know about it today?"

What happened at headquarters generally didn't leak to the outside, especially not such unfavorable news.

Li Yao cuddled up to Yang Jian, wrapping her arms around his neck and perching on his lap like a child begging for affection. She teased in a sweet voice, "Aren't you going to praise me? Maybe I even know some more important stuff."

"What more important stuff?" Yang Jian asked, keeping his gaze steady on her.

"Kiss me, and I'll tell you," Li Yao tilted her face up, giggling.

Yang Jian replied, "It's fine if you don't tell. I'm not very interested."

Li Yao seemed to fear that Yang Jian would get angry. She quickly relented, "Okay, okay, I was just joking. How could I not tell you about something so important? I skipped work especially to come here today, I didn't even have time for breakfast. You're going to have to treat me to a good meal later."

Towards the end, her voice became sugary sweet, almost nauseatingly so, like a clingy little demon.

Yang Jian remained unmoved, simply watching her calmly.

Li Yao leaned in closer and whispered, "Just last night, a few people from the circle held an emergency meeting because of you to discuss how to deal with you."

"Oh? So they've decided to take me down?" Yang Jian narrowed his eyes. He wasn't particularly surprised by the news.

"There was a Ghost Master named Ma Tianxiong who proposed such a plan, but the others, especially Jang Shangbai, vetoed it. He thinks you are too dangerous and doesn't want to flip the table unless absolutely necessary," Li Yao whispered this information into Yang Jian's ear.

She didn't dare speak loudly for fear of being overheard. Even though Yang Jian had gotten rid of the bugs last time, who knows if any had been installed during his absence.

Yang Jian let out a cold laugh, "It's not that they don't want to flip the table, but that they dare not, because they know I also have the capability to flip it. If I were just a bit weaker, they probably would have made a move last night."

It seemed that the Ghost Coffin incident had revealed his abilities to Jang Shangbai, thus deterring him.

Chapter 509 Carry a Message

The news brought by Li Yao was indeed very important.

Yang Jian had not expected the reaction of the people in his social circle to be so swift; they had called an overnight meeting to discuss how to deal with him. And although the proposal to knock him out had been rejected, it was a dangerous sign that, if not nipped in the bud, could lead to a crisis for him.

"Jang Shangbai really does fear you," Li Yao suddenly burst out laughing: "He thinks that using people from the circle to take you down would come at a great cost, and besides..." with a snicker, "he also thinks you're mad. Spending so much energy to take down a madman just isn't worth it."

"Your performance at headquarters was indeed very good, making people think you were just a hothead. The potential threat you posed was not as great as imagined; otherwise, the content of this circle's meeting would have had to change."

Yang Jian shook his head slightly, "You're wrong, their dread of me is not because they think I'm just a hothead, but because they know my counterattack would be extremely vicious, and I have the ability to cause them unbearable losses. Cost is the key to everything; if they could afford it, even if I were a lunatic, they would take me out without hesitation."

"But having said that, since those guys in the circle aren't considering dealing with me now, they must have other plans. Why not talk about it?"

Li Yao said with a light laugh, "Your judgement is sharp, which is a great strength of yours. The people in the circle do have other plans for you, but not malicious ones. They're goodwill attempts to recruit you, hoping to get you to join the circle."

"Join? Let's hear the terms," Yang Jian said, "I'm not cheap, can the circle afford my price?"

Li Yao held up two fingers, "Twenty billion. Just join the circle and they give you twenty billion."

"Twenty billion?"

Upon hearing this number, Yang Jian didn't show any reaction; instead, he just slightly shook his head with a smile, carrying a hint of mockery, "Frankly, before I came to J city, I had already fixed my financial issues. Although not a lot, it's more than enough for my family for several generations. The rest is just a number, meaningless."

In the past, he indeed needed money because he was struggling to survive and needed to secure funds for his family's future.

"If the circle's only offer is this, then I think there is no point in discussing further. After all, I would be the one to lose the most by truly joining the circle, and headquarters is unlikely to allow another

captain's position to the circle, right? Moreover, my personal resources and achievements will be diminished due to the existence of the circle."

"Don't forget, these things are related to life and death matters later on."

Li Yao thought for a moment, "But there are benefits, right? At least having a power to rely on means not having to face so many dangers."

"Are you speaking on behalf of the circle?" Yang Jian's gaze flickered.

"No, you misunderstand. I'm simply more concerned about your personal safety. It's most important that you stay alive." Li Yao immediately clarified, "The circle has too much power, and I'm worried about your safety if things with them go sour. Rather than watching the situation worsen, it's better to stop here and make peace with a handshake."

"In the business world, there are no permanent enemies. The clash between you and the circle has cost both sides— they've lost a member, and you've felt the pressure from the circle, haven't you? I believe Jang Shangbai does not want to flip the table, and neither do you."

"I'll repeat myself, it all depends on what price the circle is willing to pay. Moreover, your idea is wrong. For ordinary people, having backing or a force to rely on is great, but for people like us, we can't rely on anyone but ourselves."

Yang Jian stared at her, "Because no one else can save you, only you can save yourself, so this isn't a business deal. Besides, joining the circle would mean losing everything from headquarters. That loss is

personal, yet the circle loses nothing. This move would suppress and restrict me, so joining them would be more of a shackle than a support."

"Of course, if they're willing to pay enough, I might consider giving up my position at headquarters, but obviously, that price can't be measured in money."

Li Yao was slightly taken aback.

She had not expected Yang Jian's perspective to be like this, but after pondering, it made sense. After all, those who control spirits are not ordinary people, and using common values to judge them was wrong.

"Unfortunately, they didn't offer any other price." In the end, Li Yao shook her head with some regret.

"They didn't offer, because they are unwilling to part with more. I don't believe a circle like them cannot produce anything else," Yang Jian said, looking at her, "This also shows that their attempt to recruit me is a temporary measure. After all, it's a crucial moment for selecting new captains. If they let me join the circle now, causing me to lose the captain's position, then they wouldn't have to pay anything to suppress me. Once the captaincy is settled and implemented, my threat decreases, and that's probably when I'd pay the price – either be replaced or sidelined within the circle, either way, there's no good ending."

"But with my temper, when it comes to that point, I definitely won't accept it quietly. I'll flip the table."

"So why should I wait until everything is settled before flipping the table? Better now than later. Do they really think I'm a naive kid, to be fobbed off with a lollipop?"

"You actually analyzed so much? I really hadn't thought that far," Li Yao said, somewhat astonished.

If it was as Yang Jian had said, then those people in the circle were exceedingly cunning, practically setting a trap for Yang Jian to fall into.

Pointing to his head, Yang Jian said, "After dealing with some sneaky and incredibly smart beings, you have to pick up a few tricks. I may lack social experience, but I'm not stupid. Think things through and you can always clear things up. Besides, if there's anything I can't figure out, don't I have your help?"

"I'm not as complicated as you think," Li Yao said with a smile.

Yang Jian gave a slight smile and said nothing; he did not need Li Yao to analyze anything for him, just bringing him intelligence was enough.

This time, the memory tampering had obviously been very successful.

"So what are you going to say to the people from the Friend Circle?" Li Yao suddenly asked, "They've sent me to do PR for you, I should at least take a message back, right?"

Yang Jian said, "Tell them, I'd consider joining the Friend Circle, but only after I become team leader. And at that time, I want thirty percent of the Friend Circle's shares."

He stretched out three fingers with a hint of mockery.

Li Yao burst into laughter, "You're really asking for the moon here, and moreover, we have to wait until you're team leader before you join. Won't the Friend Circle just watch you grow bigger by then?"

"That's their problem to consider, not mine. And pass on another message, warn them that if they want to take revenge for Gao Zhiqiang, they can just come at me. I'm just worried they won't be able to handle it," Yang Jian said with a cold face.

"Isn't it bad to make such a direct threat? Shouldn't we be a bit more hypocritical? Say something like let's both take a step back temporarily?" Li Yao blinked and felt she was being rather reckless.

Yang Jian cocked his head and looked at her, "If I said something like that, they'd probably suspect I'm up to something behind their backs. A reckless warning like this is more in line with my style. That said, words are just words. You'll need to help me keep an eye on the Friend Circle's movements. The moment they decide to make a move on me, notify me immediately. I'll strike first and deal with them."

"Right, get me another copy of the Friend Circle's membership information, the more detailed the better."

"Alright, I'll compile the information and give it to you in a few days."

Li Yao nodded, then voiced her concerns, "But do we really need to burn our bridges? That doesn't seem cost-effective. There could still be a chance to reconcile. After all, things haven't escalated too severely. I'm really worried about your safety."

"Reconciling or not isn't up to me; it's up to them. If they really want to take me down, how can I reconcile?" Yang Jian shook his head slightly, "You don't need to worry about my safety, just make sure you're not discovered."

"The meeting is about done, you better head back first."

"Hey, I took a day off just for this, and you're just sending me back like that?" Li Yao said, a touch of grievance in her voice.

Yang Jian replied, "I have other matters later, I've made an appointment."

"With whom? It's not with that cute operator of yours, is it?" Li Yao asked.

"You sure know a lot, but you're overthinking it. It's not Liu Xiaoyu, it's a friend. It's my personal affair, don't ask too much," Yang Jian replied.

"I don't believe you," Li Yao pouted.

Seeing her act spoiled and stubborn, Yang Jian felt a headache coming on. If he hadn't been afraid of being discovered, he would have altered Li Yao's entire personality when he modified her memory.

Playing love games of all things.

Now Li Yao acted like a girlfriend whenever they met.

"Brother Tui, the door isn't locked... uh, did I come at a bad time?"

Just then, the door was pushed open, and Wan Delu, who had been scheduled to meet earlier, stood there looking somewhat embarrassedly at Yang Jian and Li Yao on the sofa.

"No, you've come at just the right time," Yang Jian spoke up.

If Wan Delu hadn't arrived, who knows how much longer Li Yao would have clung on to him, possibly even forcing him to capitulate.

"You really did make an appointment?"

Li Yao looked somewhat astonished at this, then stood up regretfully, emanating a reluctance to leave, "Well, I'll come see you another time then. We should keep our relationship a secret. It's best if you remind your friend not to spread rumors. There are people from the Friend Circle in this hotel. If I didn't

have a legitimate excuse, I wouldn't have dared to come in contact with you directly. If the people from the Friend Circle found out, it could cost me my life."

"Don't worry, nothing will happen. I'll take care of it," Yang Jian assured her.

"Okay."

Li Yao nodded her head, then quickly put on sunglasses and hurried off with a sexy stride.

Wan Delu quickly stepped aside, giving a polite smile, not daring to meddle in such matters.

Chapter 510 A Photo from Five Years Ago

Wan Delu was much more restrained this time when he came to meet Yang Jian than he had been on the plane last time when he was still the boss of a listed company, the president of a group. In terms of status and position, he was considered a cut above the rest, so his tone and confidence were stronger. Even after encountering people from the Supernatural Circle, he didn't feel anything special; at most, he thought these people just had certain privileges.

But in the past few days, he had not only investigated the antique incident from last time but also focused on researching spirit tamers, especially in Dachang City and Yang Jian; they were the main focus.

He had spent a lot of money and used many connections, but the truth he found had filled Wan Delu with increasing trepidation and unease.

It turned out that supernatural incidents were occurring frequently all over the world, and the last event in Dachang City was not a simple chemical leak but a haunting. The information about this had gone viral on the internet, and the more it spread, the more bizarre it became, making it difficult for people to distinguish truth from rumors.

But undeniably, Yang Jian had a role in that event.

After learning some truth, Wan Delu found it very hard to remain calm; his personal experience and investigation had left him increasingly alarmed and unsettled.

"Let's hear it, do you have any news about the thing I asked you to investigate last time?" Yang Jian signaled for Wan Delu to sit down and then directly got to the point.

There was no room for pleasantries or small talk.

Wan Delu appeared a bit nervous at the moment and then, organizing his words, he said, "I've already thoroughly investigated the antique matter from last time. This is the related information I've managed to collect for now; please, have a look."

After saying this, he took out a file bag and placed it on the table.

Yang Jian picked it up and began to look through it.

The file contained information and photos showing that the antiques were acquired from an Antique Street in Zhong'an City, but their origins were from a town outside Zhong'an City called Ling Town.

Near Ling Town, there was an ancestral house belonging to a family with the last name Luo that was built during the Republic of China period. Since it had been unoccupied for a long time, the descendants planned to rebuild on the original site.

Thus, a basement was unearthed, and the antiques were discovered there.

The information was accurate; Yang Jian even saw photos of the old mansion, taken by someone in the past with a low-resolution camera, which were somewhat blurry. But it was clear enough to see that the old house also used green bricks; after the construction, there were only ventilation holes, oddly enough, no windows on either side, only a tightly closed large door.

The half-collapsed wall of the old house due to neglect exposed green bricks scattered on the ground, overgrown with weeds.

It seems to have been abandoned even longer than that old mansion from the Republic of China period in Dachang City; because Yang Jian had heard that there used to be an old man in Dachang City's old mansion who took care of it and lived there. It was only after the old man passed away decades ago that the mansion fell into complete disuse.

"If the old house in Dachang City has been abandoned for forty years, then this one must have been forsaken for at least sixty years," Yang Jian mused, his eyes narrowing slightly as he stared at the photo.

With this estimation, it's very likely that the owner of the old house in Ling Town had already died during the Republic of China period—judging by the current situation, probably during the mid-stage of the resurgence of malevolent spirits, not making it until the end.

The owner of the old house in Dachang City, however, clearly lived much longer.

"That's not right."

Yang Jian scrutinized the photo closely. In it, there was a tourist doing a scissor-hand pose in front of the old house, but that wasn't the point. The focus was on the old wooden door of the house, which was slightly ajar by about a slit of 10 centimeters or so, with nothing visible inside as it was pitch black. Yet, in the photo, a blurred hand could be seen extending through the slit, its few stiff fingers resting on the door's edge.

Moreover, the hand appeared at a very strange position—at the very top of the door.

Those old-fashioned wooden doors are generally tall and narrow, and each door would be at least three meters high, out of reach for the average person.

Furthermore, with the wooden door tightly locked and only a crack open, there were no longer any occupants inside.

So whose hand could it be?

Yang Jian glanced at his own palm, tried to make a comparison, but couldn't deduce anything; the photo's resolution was too low to make out any clear features and it was impossible to confirm if it was a ghost's hand.

"When was this photo taken?" he immediately asked.

"Let me check," Wan Delu replied as he took the photo, recalling, "It was five years ago. This photo is five years old. I had people buy it from a neighbor there. The woman in the photo is the daughter of a neighbor's schoolmate. At that time, during the summer vacation, they ran to this town to play. You know how city people are with old houses like this, so she took a photo as a souvenir. However, for some reason, the photo was left at the neighbor's home..."

"That's enough, no need to be so detailed. You've investigated quite a lot, even such trivial matters are thoroughly looked into," Yang Jian cut him off, pointing at the blurry hand on the old wooden door, "What do you think this is?"

Wan Delu took a careful look and said, "It's a blur in the photo, like a white spot... wait, it doesn't look like that. This isn't a white spot, it looks like...oh my god, it's a hand, a hand stretching out from the crack of the door, with a total of four fingers. This... this photo has captured a ghost."

As he realized what it was, his face turned pale with fright.

Wan Delu also knew, no human hand could reach that high, and most obviously, there was no one inside the dilapidated house anymore.

Thus, the conclusion was clear—there was a ghost inside the old mansion.

...

With these thoughts, the photo in his hand felt exceptionally hot, even untouchable.

"Five years ago, the ghost had already appeared in this old house."

Yang Jian stood up, deeply furrowing his brow, "Could it be that an event of a fierce ghost's resurgence had occurred five years ago? No, that's impossible. If the ghost escaped five years ago, why didn't it have any impact at all?"

"Right, when the family demolished the old house, were there any deaths among the workers?"

"No, the demolition went smoothly." Wan Delu shook his head, "No one died."

"It doesn't add up at all." Yang Jian turned back and looked at the photo, "The ghost from five years ago hasn't killed a single person until now? And this hand seems to be a Ghost Hand, assuming it's the same ghost, then the question arises, why did the ghost appear in the bottle afterwards? The ghost in the bottle was clearly imprisoned."

"But who handled the supernatural event from five years ago? At that time, there was no headquarters, perhaps there were yin and yang masters, but they certainly couldn't deal with a supernatural event of that level."

Headache.

Yang Jian felt that trying to unearth past clues and secrets on his own was too difficult, due to the sheer number of inconsistencies.

And he saw these inconsistencies as results of missing information.

This matter had to be put on hold for the time being...

Yang Jian withdrew his gaze, slightly shaking his head, "Right, any news about the other soul vases?"

He felt that if ghosts were imprisoned, then there was definitely more than one.

"There's another soul vase, which seems to match the previous one," Wan Delu said.

"You haven't acquired it?" asked Yang Jian.

Wan Delu replied somewhat uneasily, "I can't acquire it. I've heard that the soul vase is still on Antique Street, but that street has been sealed off, currently out of business. I had a private detective take the opportunity to secretly take a few photos, take a look."

After saying this, he took several photos out of his pocket.

The photos were original and taken by a drone.

In the photos was an antique street, but it was empty of people.

"This isn't an ordinary lockdown; some shops didn't even close their doors, clearly, these people left in a rush. This was an emergency evacuation."

After looking at a few of the photos, Yang Jian casually tossed them onto the table, "It seems the worst has happened. A ghost has been let loose, and there has been a supernatural event on Antique Street."

Indeed, they were too late to act, unable to prevent such an event, which resulted in the release of ghosts that had been imprisoned before, and this ghost likely came from another soul vase.

Now, the person in charge in Zhong'an City must be quite busy.

Hearing about the supernatural event on Antique Street, Wan Delu's heart trembled; he had this suspicion before but didn't dare to confirm it. But hearing it from Yang Jian's mouth, he had already resolved to stay far away from that place, never to return in his lifetime.

"What a pity, I thought there would be some unexpected gains. Didn't expect it to be a wild goose chase," sighed Yang Jian. Although he didn't count on stumbling onto a bargain, there was no harm in trying, especially with Wan Delu running errands for him.

"By the way, Brother Tui, for this investigation, I especially invited the owner of the original house, that Luo Yong person, to J City. Would you like to meet him?" Wan Lude suddenly asked.

Yang Jian was a bit surprised, "You brought the person to J City?"

"It's to clarify this matter; how could I dare to be careless?" Wan Delu replied.

Yang Jian pondered for a moment, "The owner of the old house? Since he's here, let's meet."

After all, he was a descendant of a yin and yang master from the Republic of China Period, perhaps he could leave behind some useful clues. Yang Jian still wanted to unravel the mystery of the fierce ghost's resurgence; if this mystery could be solved, they might find a way to resolve the supernatural event.

Although Wang Xiaoming speculated that the group had failed back then.

Yet that group ensured nearly a century of peace, and relics like the Ghost Mirror and Ghost Cabinet were passed down from that era, which contained even more important secrets.

"That's great, I've arranged for a car downstairs and how about we have lunch together? I've already arranged the restaurant," Wan Delu quickly stood up, smiling enthusiastically.

"No problem, let's have lunch together then," Yang Jian nodded.

He also knew why Wan Delu was so enthusiastic; after all, ordinary people would feel insecure after learning the truth, and befriending a yin and yang master was more beneficial than not, as it could save one's life at a crucial time.