

Revival 556

Chapter 556

At this moment, outside a villa complex in the suburbs.

Li Yao had been sitting in the car for quite some time and was growing anxious, as Yang Jian had not returned. Based on his previous efficiency, he should have already taken care of He Tianxiong by now. Besides, from the outside, there didn't seem to be any major commotion in the complex; everything appeared to be very normal.

"Let's go in and have a look."

After hesitating for quite a while, Li Yao couldn't contain her curiosity anymore. She cautiously drove into the complex, heading towards villa number eight.

However, as soon as Li Yao's car entered, she saw He Tianxiong, carrying large and small bags, as if he was preparing to leave.

"What? He Tianxiong is still alive?" Li Yao was shocked.

"Could it be..."

Subsequently, a terrible speculation surfaced in her mind.

If He Tianxiong was still alive, then where did Yang Jian, who went to kill him, go? Could it be that he failed to act and was killed by He Tianxiong?

Although this possibility was not great, there was still a chance.

Who could guarantee that top-notch ghost controllers like Yang Jian would never have an accident?

While Li Yao was lost in her thoughts, He Tianxiong, who had been at the gate, suddenly appeared by her car window.

"Bang!" The sound of breaking glass rang out.

He Tianxiong smashed the window and grabbed Li Yao from the driver's seat.

"I knew it. How could Yang Jian have known where I live? It turns out it was you, you bitch, who told him. I was almost killed by you, and now you dare to show up in front of me?"

He Tianxiong recognized Li Yao and also recognized that this was Zhang Jian's car. Fury surged in his heart, and he had the immediate urge to strangle this traitor.

Li Yao immediately showed a look of panic, "Yang Jian didn't kill you?"

"He nearly did, but in the end, he gave up. I almost died here today. If you hadn't leaked the information, how could I have been defeated so miserably?"

At that question, He Tianxiong's face twisted menacingly. He yanked Li Yao out of the car, threw her to the ground, and with murderous intent, advanced towards her.

Li Yao cried out in pain, showing a look of terror in her eyes.

She had thought Yang Jian had already finished the job and was just delayed in He Tianxiong's house, never expecting such a turn of events.

Yang Jian?

Where was Yang Jian now?

Looking around frantically, Li Yao knew she had no chance against He Tianxiong. Only Yang Jian could stop this guy. Otherwise, her curiosity in driving in to check things out could likely get her killed today.

"Don't bother looking, Yang Jian isn't here; he left a while ago."

He Tianxiong's gaze was ice-cold, and the ferocity on his face did not fade, as if he was contemplating whether to slaughter Li Yao.

Killing an ordinary person was no difficult task for someone like him; it was a matter of lifting a hand, and there was no burden.

Moreover, with Li Yao sitting on the ground, looking up at him, she had triggered the ghost's rule of killing.

All he had to do was let the ghost down.

But the lesson he had just received kept He Tianxiong rational.

"Don't, don't kill me..." Li Yao crawled backwards in terror.

He Tianxiong didn't pursue her but stopped in his tracks and glared at her fiercely, "Remember this, you bitch. I won't kill you today, but it doesn't mean I'll let you off. The day Yang Jian can't protect you, I'll strangle you with my own hands. An ordinary person like you dares to stab me in the back, did you really think I, He Tianxiong, would be so easy to bully?"

After speaking, he resentfully threw the large and small bags into the car and climbed into Li Yao's vehicle, ready to flee.

He knew very well that Yang Jian spared him because he was held up by something else, and didn't want to spend too much time dealing with the ghost on his body.

After all, the ghost on his shoulder was ferocious and not easy to handle.

But He Tianxiong didn't dare gamble whether Yang Jian would change his mind, so the best thing to do was to leave the city for a while, hide out and see how things unfold. As for Li Yao,

it's an ugly truth that when hitting a dog, you must watch the owner. If he gave in to the urge to kill her now, and Yang Jian came after him, there was no doubt he would be a dead man.

He didn't want to deal with such a headache.

He hit the accelerator, and the vehicle surged forward, but soon came to an abrupt stop.

He Tianxiong threw out a set of keys, at the same time, dropping a message, "Pass on a message for me. I've lost the house to Yang Jian; it's his now. The compensation is all inside the house. After this, we're even. I won't trouble him anymore, but I hope he doesn't trouble me either."

Li Yao who felt like she had escaped death was somewhat stunned, and it took her a while to comprehend the situation.

"Damn it, why did Yang Jian let He Tianxiong go? Doesn't he realize how big a threat He Tianxiong is? He could have killed him..." Anger mingled with her fear as Li Yao cursed bitterly.

She believed Yang Jian had made a grave mistake.

Without hesitation, she called Yang Jian's number, seeking an explanation.

"It's me." Soon enough, the call connected and Yang Jian's voice was heard.

"Yang Jian, what the hell are you doing, why did you let He Tianxiong go? Do you know he almost killed me just now?" Li Yao couldn't help but raise her voice.

Yang Jian, who was at the school's basketball gym, received Li Yao's call and immediately furrowed his brow at her reproach, "Are you questioning my decision?"

"You did make a mistake, I'm just reminding you. It's still not too late for you to take action. If you insist on doing this, I expect a reason," Li Yao said angrily.

Yang Jian spoke coldly, "I don't need you directing my actions. If you insist on having a reason from me, then here it is: I thoroughly understand the ghost information on He Tianxiong's body. Killing him is just a matter of raising my hand. I got held up and didn't want to spend time dealing with his corpse. Does that satisfy you?"

"You're too confident. It's like setting a tiger free." Li Yao bit her lip.

Yang Jian said, "What kind of threat is He Tianxiong? A frightened rat that has run off. The biggest threat in our circle is Fang Shiming, and yet you haven't gathered any information about him. To be honest, I'm somewhat disappointed in you. That's it for today; you should go back now. We'll talk more when we meet again."

After that, he immediately hung up the call.

As expected, changing memories does not change a person's nature; Li Yao is still as detestable as ever.

However, her usefulness was about to run out, now that I had laid my cards on the table with my social circle.

By dawn, I believe many in my social circle would have received today's information.

"Did my incident hold you up?" Miao Xiaoshan looked at Yang Jian, sensing something from the phone call.

Yang Jian didn't hide it, "Yes, but it's okay, your safety is what's important. Some things can be done at any time and don't need to be rushed."

Miao Xiaoshan fell silent.

Although she didn't know what Yang Jian had been busy with before, she was sure it was something important, and she couldn't help but feel increasingly indebted to him.

This debt, Miao Xiaoshan knew, was one she could never repay; she could only be thankful that Yang Jian was part of her life.

"By the way, Yang Jian, do you remember what I told you at our last gathering?" Miao Xiaoshan suddenly asked.

"Back then? Wasn't that when we encountered a ghost? Almost got your cousin killed, did you tell me something?" Yang Jian asked, puzzled.

Miao Xiaoshan said, "Of course you did, you must have forgotten. I told you at that time that with the way you act, it would be hard for you to get a girlfriend. If you couldn't find one in the future, you could come to me."

Towards the end, her cheeks turned a bit red.

"Oh, that. I did have some thoughts back then, but who would have thought that half a year later when we met again, you had already stopped developing. That makes it tough for me." Yang Jian glanced at Miao Xiaoshan's unremarkable figure, looking troubled.

"Where are you looking? I was being serious," Miao Xiaoshan bumped Yang Jian's shoulder with her head.

Yang Jian said, "I'm also being serious. If you think you're not happy with your figure, I can help you alter it a bit. After all, I can even swap out living bodies, so a bit of fat is not a problem for me."

"What? You can even change bodies? Is that possible?" Miao Xiaoshan was astonished.

"Of course, would you like to try being a sexier woman?" Yang Jian said with a hint of a smile.

Miao Xiaoshan thought about things like stitching together corpses and couldn't help shivering: "That sounds too scary, I don't want to."

"That's a pity," Yang Jian said regretfully, shaking his head.

Miao Xiaoshan leaned on his shoulder, blinking and wondering if maybe she should reconsider. After all, Yang Jian's preferences hadn't changed, and there was indeed a big gap between her own appearance and that of his ideal girlfriend.

"Ah, what am I thinking?"

She realized she was getting carried away with wild thoughts and quickly stopped herself from thinking such terrifying things.

She certainly didn't want to go through a body change or anything of the sort.

The two of them chatted while waiting for time to pass.

Tonight was destined not to be peaceful; the ghost painting was still in the school dormitory building, and disappearances had already occurred before, which meant that incidents of the ghost painting killing could still happen.

"I'm exhausted. Miao Xiaoshan, why did you come to the basketball gym? You didn't answer your phone, but luckily you sent me a message, or I wouldn't have found you."

After a while, a third person appeared in the basketball gym.

It was Liu Zi, who had followed and run out behind them.

Liu Zi was gasping for breath, soaked in sweat, and it was unclear if she was tired or if the fear had overwhelmed her.

"I turned off her phone. Who knew if the call was from a person or a ghost," Yang Jian said casually, looking at Liu Zi on the basketball court from the spectator seats.

"It's okay, no problem, I was just asking," Liu Zi hastily said.

Fearing to cause Yang Jian's displeasure like Wang Yue, she quickly tried to explain.

"Liu Zi, what about the others? Didn't they leave with you?" Miao Xiaoshan was a bit surprised, seeing only Liu Zi and not the other two roommates.

"Wang Yue and Sun Yujia? They're probably sleeping by now; they had no intention of leaving the room. I was scared, so I left first," Liu Zi said, sounding a bit embarrassed, as if she had abandoned her friends to escape alone.

Hearing this, Miao Xiaoshan looked uneasily at Yang Jian, "Do you think they will be in trouble?"

"It depends. There is no doubt that the ghost painting is in your dorm room, and the chance of them being targeted by staying with the painting for a long time is significant, but..." Yang Jian paused and then added, "you had also spent a significant amount of time in the dormitory and saw the ghost painting, yet to this moment, you haven't been attacked by it, and no ghost painting has appeared around."

"I can't take care of them, so I made sure to confirm that you weren't targeted first. I brought you to the basketball gym because it's empty and spacious, and if you had been targeted, it would be easier for me to handle it alone."

"I see..." Miao Xiaoshan stared at Yang Jian, feeling a mixture of emotions.

At that moment, she understood why Yang Jian had brought only her here.

It seemed like he had been idly sitting for a long time, but in fact, he had been making sure she was safe.

"Ding-ding-ding!"

Just then, a bell rang out in the basketball gym.

Not just in the gym, but alarms started ringing from other buildings in the distance across the school.

"Is there a fire?" Liu Zi hurriedly looked around to confirm it was the school's fire alarm.

This was clearly not a fire.

Yang Jian stood up. He looked through the window and saw a convoy with their warning lights on cutting across the greenery, driving up the pedestrian paths, heading straight for this location.

"They've come?"

He checked the time.

Only fifteen minutes had passed since he hung up the phone.

The headquarters' efficiency was astonishingly fast.

"Yang Jian, what's happening outside?" Miao Xiaoshan asked nervously.

"Nothing much, I'm about to start my work," Yang Jian replied calmly.

Chapter 557 Fall

Work?

Miao Xiaoshan was still pondering the meaning of these two words when she saw a fleet of special vehicles speeding towards them, stopping in front of the gymnasium's main entrance, encircling the vicinity so tightly that not even water could leak through.

If she hadn't known in advance what this was about, a normal person would probably be shocked by such a sight.

"Stay here and don't wander off. Don't answer any calls before I return, and don't call me," Yang Jian first instructed.

"Okay, I won't cause you any trouble," Miao Xiaoshan nodded in agreement.

She had that much self-awareness.

Yang Jian then took a deep look at Liu Zi on the basketball court.

Liu Zi felt this unusual gaze and couldn't help but have an unnatural expression. At this moment, she began to understand that Yang Jian, even in Dachang City, had unimaginable influence. It seemed he could mobilize many people, and the continuously ringing alarms were probably at his command.

"You need to leave this place," Yang Jian's gaze suddenly turned cold.

"Ah?"

Liu Zi was taken aback, then quickly said, "Can't I just stay here quietly? I can keep Liu Xiaoyu company and won't be any trouble to you."

She had hoped that her connection with Miao Xiaoshan would afford her some protection, but to her surprise, Yang Jian was intent on sending her away.

"She doesn't need your company. I don't want to have to repeat myself; leave immediately," Yang Jian said.

Liu Zi quivered her lips, "Where can I go this late at night?"

"Where you go is your choice, but you can't stay with Miao Xiaoshan," said Yang Jian.

"But..."

Liu Zi looked at Miao Xiaoshan, hoping she would speak up and ask Yang Jian not to send her away.

Although Miao Xiaoshan felt sorry, she believed there must be a reason for whatever Yang Jian did; he wouldn't mistreat her roommate without cause, so she kept silent.

Quickly.

The sound of numerous footsteps came from outside the gymnasium; a group of stern-looking special agents in suits swiftly entered and immediately sealed off the not-so-large gymnasium.

The one in charge was a slightly overweight middle-aged man with a serious expression. His gaze quickly turned to the spectators' seats, "Mister Yang, I'm the leader of this support squad, Wang Quan. We will need Mister Yang's guidance for the work that follows. This is Principal Tu from our school; he can handle any issues that arise."

"Hello, Mister Yang."

The roughly fifty-year-old Principal Tu greeted.

"Wang Quan?"

Yang Jian hesitated for a moment then asked, "How much do you know about the Ghost Painting?"

"I've gone through all the files; I know what needs to be known, and if Mister Yang has left anything out, you can ask me," Wang Quan replied.

"Good, that saves me the time of explaining again. However, the Ghost Painting didn't occur here; so far, this place is safe. But I'm unclear about the Ghost Painting's pattern of killing. To be cautious, we should first make arrangements for this student, Liu Zi."

Yang Jian pointed and explained, "The Ghost Painting appeared in her dorm room; she must have had the most direct contact with it."

Wang Quan's expression shifted slightly, and he quickly said, "Understood, I'll have someone take care of it right away."

No sooner had he spoken than two staff members approached Liu Zi.

He didn't ask about her situation, nor did he explain any reasons; he simply took Liu Zi away with him.

Liu Zi looked terrified and bewildered.

Wang Quan said, "This student need not be nervous; it's just a routine observation. I hope you'll cooperate with our work. Once everything is settled, you'll be able to return to school as normal. If this causes any inconvenience in your life, I hope you'll understand."

But faced with his serious and somewhat frightening face, Liu Zi felt even less reassured.

She felt that once she left, she might not come back.

"This is Miao Xiaoshan, my friend. She has also had some contact with the haunted painting. Let her stay inside the basketball gym; I'll take responsibility," Yang Jian said.

"If Mister Yang is taking responsibility, then that's the best we could hope for."

Wang Quan looked at Miao Xiaoshan and a hint of a kind smile appeared on his stern face.

But to Miao Xiaoshan, that smile didn't seem kind at all.

"Well, let's leave it at that for now, it's time to check out the dormitory building. At this hour, it probably hasn't caused too much of a disturbance, and it might just be a minor incident," Yang Jian said.

"I hope everyone is safe. I, too, would like to finish work early and return home," Wang Quan said.

Yang Jian glanced at Miao Xiaoshan beside him, thought for a moment, then took a red candle out of his pocket and handed it to her: "Light this candle immediately if you feel anything strange around you, then call me. If there's no trouble, try not to light this carelessly or take it out without reason."

"I understand," Miao Xiaoshan nodded, gripping the strange red candle tightly.

Although she didn't know what it was, she understood from Yang Jian's tone that it must be particularly valuable.

"Wang Quan, give her a lighter," Yang Jian said.

Wang Quan looked somewhat odd, but still produced a gold lighter and had an accompanying staff member hand it over to her.

"Be careful, I'll wait for you here," Miao Xiaoshan said.

"Hmm."

Yang Jian nodded, then set off with Wang Quan, leaving the basketball gym and heading straight to the dormitory where the haunted painting was found.

On the way.

Wang Quan spoke, "Giving away a red Ghost Candle to a young girl like that, Mister Yang is indeed generous. These candles are not cheap on the market; there are already offers of one billion to purchase them online, and that's just the base price. If we were to negotiate in person, it could probably be doubled or more."

"But so far, only our headquarters has them. They can't be made abroad—these are priceless."

"She is more important to me than a billion," Yang Jian said.

Wang Quan laughed, "Of course, things are more important than life. But Mister Yang, by giving the Ghost Candle to a girl who is not of significance, wouldn't that cause some inconvenience in handling the situation? After all, we need to prioritize the bigger picture. If Mister Yang changes his mind, I can arrange for it to be retrieved. I can be the bad guy, so Mister Yang won't lose face."

"No need. What's given is given; what kind of person takes something back? Besides, I have another one," Yang Jian said, pulling out another red Ghost Candle and waving it.

Wang Quan's smile froze.

What? Two candles?

Was Yang Jian that wealthy? To possess two Ghost Candles—he must have solved many incidents to earn the right to use two.

"Even though Mister Yang still has a spare, having one more wouldn't hurt," Wang Quan said.

Yang Jian replied, "I'll give my things to whoever I want; that's none of your business. If you have time, you might want to investigate the school's art gallery. The haunted painting first leaked from there; maybe the dorm isn't the original site of the incident. There could be other haunted paintings in this school."

The ghost painting was not the only one, he had already known that.

But the real Source Ghost painting definitely existed, it just hadn't been found yet.

"In that case, I'll have to have someone search thoroughly," said Wang Quan with a grave expression, and he immediately ordered his entourage to carry out this task.

Soon, the group of companions had dwindled by more than half.

"If there's danger in inspecting the art gallery, I suggest controlled demolition, or just burning it down," Yang Jian proposed. "Some problematic things can't be destroyed by fire, and this would be a more efficient approach."

"Wait, there are many authentic works by famous artists in the art gallery, used by students for copying and learning on a daily basis—they absolutely must not be burnt," panted Principal Tu as he trotted to keep up with Yang Jian.

Yang Jian didn't stop and continued forward. "You handle it as you see fit, I'm just making a suggestion."

Wang Quan's gaze shifted, unable to deny that Yang Jian's suggestion was a good one. It reduced the danger of the search and ensured the safety of the individuals involved, for if a ghost painting was indeed found in the art gallery, it could bring unimaginable danger.

Quickly.

The group returned to the dormitory building.

At this moment, students were continuously walking out of the entire dormitory building, but it seemed that the ringing alarm had not been very effective since many students were still lingering inside the dorms.

"Too slow," observed Yang Jian with a glance.

Wang Quan immediately addressed Principal Tu, "Principal Tu, you'd already notified them before, why haven't all the students been safely evacuated up to now?"

"This... it's too late, most students were probably asleep by now, so it's a bit difficult," explained Principal Tu.

"I'll get people to assist you, but within fifteen minutes, everyone must leave the dormitory," Wang Quan said. "If that's not achieved, you might as well resign as principal."

Sweat broke out on Principal Tu's face upon hearing these words.

However, at that moment, commotion suddenly arose amongst the students lingering at the base of the building.

Someone exclaimed, "Look, quick, someone is climbing out the window, that's so dangerous!"

"It looks like Sun Yujia from the fifth-floor dorm, oh my god, what is she doing? Call the authorities," another shouted.

"Principal Tu, come quickly and look, Sun Yujia is climbing out the window."

"What?"

Upon hearing his name being called by many students, Principal Tu paid attention to the ongoing situation. He looked up and indeed saw a first-year female student climbing out the window and onto the exterior, seemingly attempting to make her way down from the upper floors.

He was both shocked and anxious, hurrying over and shouting, "Student, do not do such dangerous things, quickly go back to your dorm! Any issue can be resolved, please do not act rashly."

Yang Jian also recognized Sun Yujia.

She was a dormmate of Miao Xiaoshan's. The last time Liu Zi left, there were two other girls who refused to go, and Sun Yujia was one of them.

But now, Sun Yujia was trembling all over, crying while desperately clinging to the window, seeking a way to climb down.

The dormitory building's structure was simple, offering no foothold for Sun Yujia to descend; she was almost hanging in mid-air, swaying, yet even so, she had no intention of climbing back through the window.

It seemed that something even more terrifying was forcing her to abandon taking the stairs down.

"It appears the situation inside the building is more severe than imagined," Yang Jian said, slightly furrowing his brow.

He had seen this scene before, likely during his time in Dachang City.

People, terror-stricken by ghosts, jumping from high buildings, were not uncommon.

Only, the ghost painting shouldn't have progressed to that stage yet—previously, when he saw the ghost painting kill in the residential area, the onlookers weren't affected even after everything was over.

"Aren't we going to save her? She could die if she really falls from this height, and with so many onlookers, it could have a big impact," said Wang Quan standing beside him.

At this time, no one rashly charged into the building.

Because Yang Jian hadn't spoken, and until he did, no action was permissible, not even saving someone.

"Wait a while," Yang Jian said.

"Shouldn't the situation be urgent?"

Wang Quan said, "If it's because of restrictions, I can send people up to the fourth floor, and as long as there are no issues, we should be able to save her."

"There's no need for a buy-one-get-one-free deal."

Yang Jian said, "It's clear from her panicked state, she likely encountered a ghost in the dormitory. The ghost didn't kill her because she hasn't met the conditions for it to kill, but if you go in, it's not certain anymore."

"Then how long do we wait? She won't last much longer," insisted Wang Quan. "We could take a risk and make a move, I've dealt with ghost paintings before, and this thing is relatively safe for now."

"I know she won't last long, that's why I'm waiting for her to fall," Yang Jian said indifferently, then walked toward the base of the building.

Wang Quan sighed with relief when he saw Yang Jian move.

He knew these types of people viewed life with indifference; solving the incident was as much as one could hope for, and expecting them to actively rescue someone was asking too much.

"Finally met someone relatively cooperative, if he is willing to take action, it should be stable," Wang Quan thought to himself.

"Ah, she's fallen," suddenly, several screams erupted from the crowd.

Clinging to the window, Sun Yujia, due to her lack of strength and overwhelming fear and cold, let go, crying as she fell from the fourth floor.

Many were so terrified by the scene that they turned away, unable to watch.

Yang Jian glanced up briefly and casually caught Sun Yujia who was falling from the sky, his somewhat unremarkable body unmoved as if the weight plummeting from high above posed no inconvenience to him whatsoever.

"Find someone to check what happened to her, what exactly she encountered in the building," Yang Jian said, then tossed the now-frightened Sun Yujia to the ground, and strode into the dormitory building.

Seeing this, all the female students were stunned.

What had just happened?

Had this man really just caught Sun Yujia as she fell from the fourth floor?

This seemed almost too incredible to believe. Had it not been witnessed with their own eyes, no one would believe someone could actually catch someone from the height of the fourth floor.

But it seemed that was not the main point. Why did the man end up throwing Sun Yujia to the ground like catching a piece of trash?

Shouldn't he have gently helped her up and then offered comfort?

It just didn't quite match what they'd seen in movies.

Chapter 558: The Affected Floors

Principal Tu of the school and Wang Quan, along with his team, had now started evacuating the students outside the dormitory building while also dispatching some people to inspect other parts of the school.

As for Yang Jian, he entered the dormitory building with Wang Quan and two accompanying personnel.

"There should still be students lingering in the building, leave the responsibility of rescue to us, Mister Yang should just focus on that ghost thing. If you really encounter an extremely dangerous situation, Mister Yang need not worry about our safety, do what you have to do without any concern for us."

As soon as they entered the corridor, Wang Quan spoke earnestly.

"I didn't expect that the people sent from headquarters would have this kind of resolve. That's right, once inside this building, no one can guarantee they'll make it out alive. Impulse, hot blood, good intentions can't solve any problems—only add another corpse to the count. It's a pity not everyone can understand this."

Yang Jian looked at him, showing a bit of surprise.

This almost cruel manner of thinking he had only seen in Wang Xiaoming; very few others possessed it.

Wang Quan gave a bitter smile and said, "Compared to a few lives, resolving the supernatural event is the urgent matter. If the situation isn't addressed, rescuing people is meaningless. That thing kills much faster than we can save, playing a game of efficiency with ghosts, we just can't win. The ghost painting incident that broke out abroad—the number of people who disappeared was horrifying."

"Such an event must not happen again. Mister Yang successfully resolved the Hungry Ghost incident in Dachang City, so you should understand the rationale better than anyone. Of course, there are things that Mister Yang can do that we simply cannot, as sometimes we're powerless and can only do what's within our reach."

Yang Jian kept a steady expression and said nothing; his attention was now focused on his surroundings, not on the conversation.

"The first floor is very normal, let's go check the second floor."

After a quick glance, he determined there were no traces of ghost painting invasion on the first floor, as a ghost manipulator is quite sensitive to supernatural events.

Wang Quan immediately took the walkie-talkie to inform, "Send two people to inspect the first floor, see if there are any students still lingering here, and be cautious about safety."

Upon reaching the second floor, Yang Jian casually made a round, not even looking at many of the dorm doors, and knew there were no problems here either.

Glancing at Wang Quan, Wang Quan immediately understood and again spoke into the walkie-talkie, "The second floor is clear, commence inspection on this floor."

Yang Jian continued on. Although he appeared nonchalant and dismissive, his vigilance was extremely high.

Every action around him was under his scrutiny, after all, he had more than a pair of eyes and could see more than the average person. No need to look around conspicuously; just passing by was enough to know the situation nearby.

"No problem on the third floor either," Yang Jian continued.

This piece of information was undoubtedly very important; it could reassure the staff below to inspect the third floor without fearing an unexpected encounter with the ghost and subsequently dying unknowingly.

However, very soon.

At the stairwell corner from the third floor to the fourth floor, Yang Jian stopped in his tracks.

The stairs leading upward made the environment appear dimmer, despite the spotlights turned on outside, the light here seemed obstructed, dimming significantly. In contrast, the first floor below was quite bright, with this darkness and light forming a very noticeable border in the passageway, causing people to wonder what was really happening on this floor.

Yang Jian frowned slightly; he felt that the ghost eye within him had completely crashed again, starting to quiet down.

An invisible restraint was forming between the ghost and him.

It was a kind of suppression.

Just like when the ghost rope was about to hang the Headless Ghost Shadow.

The Headless Ghost Shadow had no head; the ghost rope could not hold it and had no impact whatsoever.

The situation was now the same.

Only the one being suppressed wasn't the ghost; it was Yang Jian himself.

"The suppression is even stronger than when I faced that newspaper, if I continue approaching, I estimate my ghost eye will become completely useless," Yang Jian hesitated.

Without the Ghost Domain, he could not use the five layers of the Ghost Domain to escape or even banish the ghost, placing him at a natural disadvantage.

Should anything go awry, he might very well fall in this utterly ordinary dormitory building.

"There's a problem with the fourth floor; no one is allowed to come up," Wang Quan reacted swiftly, immediately issuing the notice, "Remember, no one is to come to the fourth floor under any circumstances, and if someone tries to force their way in, stop them with forceful measures,"

Although it was unlikely for anyone to disobey orders under high alert.

But anything could happen amidst a supernatural event; perhaps someone would be influenced by a ghost and rush into the building recklessly.

Such incidents had occurred before.

"The situation is not quite the same as when dealing with the ghost paintings before," Yang Jian spoke in a low voice, "Back then, the ghost paintings were just killing one-on-one without any effect on the surrounding environment, but now... both the fifth and fourth floors are affected. This is not a good sign."

"Is the ghost painting reviving?" Wang Quan's expression changed drastically.

"Unclear, there's too little information on the ghost painting files. Although this thing has appeared before, we haven't obtained key information; everything has to be figured out by ourselves, it's like facing an unknown level of ghost anew,"

He was weighing in his mind whether or not to retrieve the painting from Miao Xiaoshan's dormitory on the fifth floor.

In dealing with other supernatural incidents, Yang Jian had never been so apprehensive; he even had the guts to barge into Caesar Hotel directly.

But this ghost painting incident felt to him extremely complicated.

It was like the tip of an iceberg; the situation seemingly exposed was ordinary, with just a few people killed. However, once you truly encountered it, the terror hidden beneath could drive you to despair.

"Even if the Ghost Eye is no longer useful, I still have two other ghosts. Besides, the silence of the Ghost Eye only benefits me, allowing me to repress any ghost without distinction," Yang Jian's gaze shifted slightly.

He was originally capable of suppressing three ghosts indiscriminately to maintain his own balance.

If the ghost painting helped suppress the Ghost Eye, it was as if he had freed up a quota for another ghost.

This was more useful than holding ten Ghost Candles in hand.

The ghost painting restrained him, yet there was also a possibility that he could restrain the ghost painting.

Moreover, with the Eight-Tone Music Box in hand, he couldn't die no matter what. If he dared not touch even a counterfeit of the ghost painting now, his fate would be even worse if he inevitably became embroiled in a real ghost painting incident in the future.

During this period of thought, Wang Quan remained silent, not uttering a single word.

Whether to go to the fourth floor or not had to be decided by Yang Jian. Wang Quan wasn't a ghost controller; he couldn't, as an outsider, give advice on matters he didn't understand. That could get people killed.

If Yang Jian insisted on not going up to the fourth floor, then Wang Quan would turn around and leave without hesitation, even if there were students left lingering on the fourth and fifth floors.

After all, if even a ghost controller lacked the confidence to return safely, it was certain death for an ordinary person.

"Go to the fourth floor, be ready to encounter the ghost painting at any time, and also, speak less, look around less, and wander less," Yang Jian decided calmly after some thought.

Wang Quan nodded in agreement, signaling to the two accompanying officers behind him to put on gloves and get their flashlights ready.

The equipment had been specially made, coated with gold so as not to be affected by ghost shadows.

Yang Jian didn't issue any further instructions but began to ascend the stairs, heading towards the fourth floor.

Previously, Sun Yujia was on the fourth floor when he was frightened into climbing out of a window and falling to his death, which clearly indicated that there must be something on this floor; perhaps Sun Yujia had already seen it, otherwise he wouldn't have skipped such a large stairway entrance.

Upon reaching the fourth floor, Yang Jian felt as though he had entered a different environment.

The lighting was dim and flickering, the surroundings eerily quiet, and a persistent coldness pervaded the air, with only their footsteps echoing back and forth.

But after taking just a few steps, Yang Jian stopped, feeling as if he had sensed something, and immediately turned to look back.

Something eerie happened.

The corridor behind the corner disappeared, leaving only a deep stairway that seemed endless, leading into a dark abyss. It was unclear where one would end up if they followed the stairs downward—possibly in the depths of hell or at the side of a fierce ghost.

"The stairs are gone?" Wang Quan's eyes narrowed slightly.

Yang Jian didn't speak, casually throwing a bullet downward.

The bullet, made of gold, couldn't be affected by a ghost's power.

Quickly, the sound of the bullet hitting the ground could be heard, stopping beneath the eighth step, as if blocked by something.

"The staircase is still there."

Yang Jian said, "It's just that we have been affected. This is a kind of Ghost Domain; our surroundings are under its influence, but reality has not been completely altered. Yet, if you walk down these stairs, it will be different; you could walk all the way to the end. As for where you'd end up, even I don't know."

Gold could resist the influence of the Ghost Domain, but people couldn't, so walking the same path would yield different results. For someone like him, who possessed a Ghost Domain, it was all too clear.

"Fortunately, the ghost painting is not in its previous state; otherwise, the Ghost Domain's influence would span more than two floors," Yang Jian was not afraid.

He had seen many weird situations like this before, such as the time with the Door Knocking Ghost... the inescapable No. 7 Middle School.

"Let's go, now that we're here, don't even think about retreating," Yang Jian paid no attention to the endless staircase behind him.

He knew that there was nothing good waiting below, but who would be foolish enough to follow a ghost's intent and walk down there?

While Yang Jian led Wang Quan and the others to investigate the fourth floor,

On a certain step of the previously mentioned staircase leading into darkness, a human silhouette hidden in the shadows became faintly discernible. The figure's features were not clear, but the deathly pale, bloodless hands stood out starkly. It seemed as if they had been waiting there a long time.

Near this silhouette, several cell phones scattered on the ground still emitted a faint glow.

They appeared to belong to students from the dormitory.

Some people seem to have walked down this staircase all the way, sinking too deep to return.

Chapter 559

"The source is the haunted painting in the fifth-floor dormitory. Just contain it, and this mission will be complete. The process is very simple; the only thing to worry about is any danger encountered along the way. Currently, the Ghost Domain of the haunted painting has affected two floors, and it might continue to expand, so it would be best if you act quickly,"

Yang Jian walked along the dimly lit corridor, speaking to Wang Quan who followed behind him.

"There might be students stranded on the fourth floor. I think we can stay here for a moment to confirm if anyone is present," Wang Quan hesitated, then suggested.

"There's no need. The path downstairs is already blocked, and what can we do even if we find a few stranded students? We can't take them out. If there are still people, let them stay here. They weren't killed by the ghost before, and it's unlikely they will be killed now,"

Yang Jian spoke bluntly.

Those meant to die would have died already; those alive aren't targets of the ghost and won't die for the time being; the logic was simple.

Wang Quan immediately nodded and followed Yang Jian directly towards the fifth floor.

Dealing with the problematic haunted painting was the top priority.

However, Yang Jian wasn't rushing to the fifth floor; he lingered in the fourth-floor corridor for a few seconds, looking left and right, hoping to make some special discovery, because Sun Yujia had previously jumped from the window of a fourth-floor dormitory, which suggested that the ghost might have been to the fourth floor.

Yet, the dark and quiet corridor had nothing out of the ordinary. The dormitory doors on both sides were some open, some closed, but all were exceptionally silent.

It seemed as though there was no sign of trouble.

"That doesn't make sense," Yang Jian thought with a trace of confusion.

According to his judgment, there had to be something on the fourth floor; that's why he had considered whether to come to the fourth floor when he was at the third-floor staircase.

But the fourth floor, despite showing signs of Ghost Domain invasion, seemed as normal as any other floor, with nothing amiss.

So, why did Sun Yujia jump out of the window just now?

Was it just out of fear?

Or was it because the never-ending staircase on the third floor left Sun Yujia with no other choice?

Unfortunately, the woman had been scared witless and, with the pressing time, they couldn't get any information. Otherwise, there wouldn't be a need for this wild guessing.

"What's wrong? Is there something that doesn't seem right?" Wang Quan, seeing Yang Jian not moving, whispered.

"Not seeing a ghost makes me feel there's something off," Yang Jian said.

Wang Quan felt a chill. What kind of reasoning was that?

Not seeing a ghost should be a good thing, at least it meant they were safe for the time being. Yet, this made it seem like there was a worse feeling looming.

He wasn't a Ghost Envoy, of course, so he wouldn't know that in supernatural events, if the ghost's location could be identified, the survival rate could increase significantly. Most people died without warning.

"Let's go to the fifth floor and have a look."

Yang Jian didn't want to waste time searching room by room. Perhaps there might be some discoveries, but that would delay them even more, especially since there were many dorms on one floor.

After making sure, he didn't hesitate to step onto the stairs leading to the fifth floor.

It was still dim, and the sound-controlled lights in the corridor were still on, although the light was dim, barely enough to make out the path ahead.

But the good thing was, this staircase was normal and showed no signs of anomaly.

However, as Yang Jian left the fourth floor, he did not notice that in the dormitory building, where each level normally had ten dorms, this fourth floor had eleven. The extra dorm's door appeared on the wall between two other rooms, the section of wall seemingly stretched to make it look like any other dorm.

Unless one looked closely, it was impossible to tell there was any difference.

But the students living there could tell, because the door of that extra room was not like the others. This door was made of wood, painted with dark red paint, and had some old, engraved patterns. If one looked closely, it was almost like... a picture frame.

The extra dormitory door was open, the inside dark, seemingly empty.

No, there was a window.

The view outside this window was entirely different from that of the other dorms. It showed a gray and gloomy world; the sky was filled with ash-like particles, falling endlessly as if they could never stop.

This was a strange and eerie world.

However, the view outside the other dormitory windows was a dazzlingly lit, bustling city.

They seemed entirely dissimilar.

"Without the sight of the Ghost Eye, I'm really not as comfortable as I used to be," Yang Jian subconsciously touched his forehead, missing the vision of the Ghost Eye, which made him walk more cautiously than before.

Because in the dim environment, he had also become half-blind.

A wrong step could very likely lead to an unknown location,

If only he could open his ghost eye now, there would be no need to be this timid, and he would be more bold in his actions; he would also have had the capacity and time to search the fourth floor earlier.

Everything went smoothly.

Yang Jian did not encounter any ghosts, nor was he attacked by one; he arrived at the fifth floor with Wang Quan and two accompanying personnel.

Since the floors were built identically, there was not much difference from the fourth floor, but he had been here before, so he knew where the ghost painting was in the dormitory.

Without hesitation, taking advantage of the current safety, Yang Jian moved quickly, heading straight for Miao Xiaoshan's dormitory.

Once the ghost painting lying on the bed was placed into the specially made bag to isolate its influence, the Ghost Domain here would disappear, and the mission would end.

But when Yang Jian arrived at the door of the dormitory from his memory, his expression darkened.

The door of Miao Xiaoshan's dormitory bore the footprint from when he had kicked it in before, and when he left, he remembered the door was dented.

But now... the dent on the door had vanished.

He pushed open the dormitory door without hesitation.

What Yang Jian suspected became reality; neither the layout within the dormitory nor any item on the bed was what he had seen before. It was not possible to find the ghost painting here because this was an unfamiliar dormitory.

In other words, he had walked into the wrong dormitory.

"Are we lost?" Wang Quan reacted quickly; seeing the minute expressions on Yang Jian's face, he knew they had come to the wrong place.

"I underestimated the ghost painting. I thought that while the influence wasn't at its peak, coupled with swift action, I could contain the ghost painting without risk. Now it seems, as it began to influence the floor, it has already completely altered the environment here, but there's nothing we can do about it."

"Battling in the Ghost Domain is something no one can win, not even a Ghost Envoy. Getting lost like this is normal."

His expression remained calm; he was not shaken by this minor setback.

Even if the ghost painting was labeled as an S-rank supernatural event.

"What do we do now? It's extremely difficult to find the ghost painting in the Ghost Domain. I've researched this matter, and it might turn out that instead of finding the ghost painting, we might run into a real ghost," Wang Quan said gravely.

The two accompanying personnel behind him also looked a bit unnatural, even mentally preparing themselves to die here.

After all, they were ordinary people, and encountering a ghost meant almost certain death.

"What's the rush? Like I said before, the Ghost Domain of the ghost painting hasn't completely influenced reality yet. As long as that's the case, it's much easier to handle. Besides, since the ghost painting is just a painting, it shouldn't be capable of moving around freely, right? It's just hiding using the Ghost Domain. If we search carefully, we can still find it," Yang Jian said calmly.

"But we're already lost? The position of the previous dormitory can't be determined at all," Wang Quan said.

Yang Jian didn't speak. Some things were hard to explain to Wang Quan, an ordinary person. Instead, he just looked up at the dormitory door number plate and reached out to take it down directly.

The number plate hanging at the dormitory door changed immediately once grasped by his Ghost Hand.

As if shedding a layer of color, the plate that originally read '503' changed to '603'.

Seeing this, his eyebrows furrowed.

"603? This is the sixth floor, not the fifth. How is this possible? We were clearly certain earlier..." Wang Quan suddenly widened his eyes.

"Sun Yujia didn't jump from the fourth floor, she jumped from the fifth floor. The floor we were just on was the fifth floor," Yang Jian said.

"But the third floor wasn't affected. If you go up one level, it's the fourth floor; there's no way to miscalculate that. Even with a Ghost Domain, it shouldn't be doable," Wang Quan said. "After all, you confirmed it yourself."

"We didn't miscalculate the floor, but that doesn't mean we didn't take the wrong path. If I'm not mistaken, the fifth floor and the fourth floor have overlapped," Yang Jian said. "The real fourth floor and the fifth floor within the Ghost Domain have switched places. You can't even tell if you're on the fourth or fifth floor; it's a trick I've played before. Not just two floors—I could overlap five floors together, and they wouldn't affect one another."

With the activation of a five-level Ghost Domain, Yang Jian had the ability to distort reality, layering five floors on top of each other without interference from one another.

Wang Quan was left speechless.

This kind of eerie situation was enough to shatter anyone's worldview, and with normal human reasoning, it was simply incomprehensible. Only someone like Yang Jian could understand it in an instant and know the reasons behind it.

Chapter 560

Yang Jian wasn't careless, he was just a bit anxious. He thought it would be safer to resolve the situation as quickly as possible while the influence of the ghost painting wasn't too great.

But this haste, neglecting the detail of the floor they had just examined, meant he was deceived by the ghost painting's Ghost Domain. Although the deception wasn't fatal, it could lead to many unfavorable consequences.

"Since we've come to the wrong floor, shouldn't we immediately return to the fourth floor?" Wang Quan said.

Yang Jian replied, "Normally, that would be the correct assumption. However, since the ghost chose to hide the fifth floor, it definitely won't allow us easy access to that level. Getting back to where we were probably won't be so simple."

Having said that, he turned and walked away.

Staying on this floor was only wasting time, and he wasn't sure if the influence of the ghost painting would grow stronger as time passed.

When they returned to the staircase entrance, the stairs leading down had eerily vanished, as if they had never been built, leaving only a smooth cement surface. However, the stairs leading up to the next floor were still there.

But this dormitory building only had six floors in total, with the roof above that.

Therefore, nobody knew where these stairs leading up could actually go, much like the previous ones that descended into darkness.

"The stairs going down disappeared?"

Wang Quan was shocked and immediately said, "But we can climb down from the sixth floor. I have a rope with me, it's specially made, so no need to worry about it breaking halfway."

After speaking, he immediately had two accompanying workers take out a golden yellow climbing rope from their backpacks.

"There's no need. I'll handle it myself. I was thinking of conserving some energy, but it seems unnecessary now. If I can't even deal with a simple ghost painting, then my role as the responsible party for Dachang City is undeserved," Yang Jian said with a slight chill in his eyes.

After he finished speaking, the headless shadow behind him, which seemed to be a concentration of darkness, began to gradually seep into the ground.

Ghost Domains might affect things in reality, but not other ghosts.

Soon.

The area covered by Yang Jian's Headless Ghost Shadow started to collapse, forming a hole. The concrete and rebar there were forcibly dismantled.

Then the Headless Ghost Shadow twisted, forming a black staircase that led down to the next floor.

"Let's go."

Yang Jian stepped onto the staircase formed by the Headless Ghost Shadow and descended first.

Witnessing such a bizarre scene, Wang Quan still felt a residual fear but gestured for the two accompanying workers to follow.

Ordinary people stepping on the Headless Ghost Shadow felt very uncomfortable.

It was as if some sinister, cold creature was invading their bodies, and their feet quite noticeably didn't respond properly, as if following the incursion of this chilling entity would eventually cause Wang Quan to lose control over his body, turning him into a puppet controlled by some strange entity.

Fortunately, the Headless Ghost Shadow was under Yang Jian's control. Even if it had the innate instinct to replace a body, without Yang Jian's body rotting away, the possibility of it going out of control was nonexistent.

Although a little time was wasted.

They returned to the fourth floor.

Yes, there was no mistake, the dormitory plate numbers nearby read 401, 402... and the like, with no plates for the fifth-floor rooms.

That floor had been completely concealed.

"Back to the fourth floor again? The fifth floor really disappeared, just like you said," Wang Quan said, clenching his fists, feeling a profound sense of powerlessness.

If it weren't for the presence of Yang Jian, the few of them who came in would have been trapped and died here, with no way to successfully handle the ghost painting.

However, at the moment, he was not too anxious.

Ghosts were to be dealt with by professionals after all. They were just there to assist, to rescue students stuck here, and to retrieve the ghost painting.

Yang Jian took down a number plate, under the influence of the Ghost Hand the numbers hadn't changed, proving beyond doubt that they were indeed on the fourth floor.

"No matter how well a Ghost Domain is hidden, there is always a point that connects to reality, this point could be a ghost itself or some special object. We need to find that point. Pay attention to our surroundings and see if there's anything that seems out of place, unlike the ghost painting which lacks the flexibility and variation of humans, so it shouldn't be hard to find," Yang Jian said, his gaze shifting as he imparted a piece of crucial information to Wang Quan.

This was his understanding of Ghost Domains. If ghosts shared certain common traits, then his understanding should be correct.

Like his Ghost Domain, no matter how many layers or how much was illusory, only one thing was real and unchangeable—the ghost eye, the source of his Ghost Domain.

"How about the few of us search the dorm rooms over there, and Mister Yang searches this side? Although splitting up isn't a good idea, it's more efficient this way. Besides, this floor isn't that big, you can see all the way down the corridor. If something happens, I believe Mister Yang will be able to react," Wang Quan suggested.

"Okay," Yang Jian nodded, not refusing.

Anyway, I can resist if I face danger, but Wang Quan can't.

In other words, Wang Quan is taking a risk on his own.

However, if one doesn't have this kind of courage, it's probably impossible to do this job.

After discussing, the four of them split up and took action.

Wang Quan, with two staff members, started to move along, touching the wall as they went. The gloves on their hands were specially made of Gold and were impervious to influence. This ensured that when they touched the walls, they were real, so they wouldn't miss any hidden dormitories and could also make sure not to get lost in confusion.

Yang Jian glanced at it and quite approved of this method.

Because this way of dealing with paranormal events for normal people is worth learning.

Yang Jian decided to learn; he too began to move forward while touching the wall. He didn't need to wear gloves because one of his hands was already a part of a ghost's body. He could touch real anomalies and even grab ghosts that others couldn't see.

Bang!

As he passed the door to the first dormitory, he kicked it open, went in for a look, and then came out.

He found neither the passage to the fifth floor nor any lingering students.

Continuing to the next dormitory.

Yang Jian moved quickly, but he was not at all impatient. This was not a nine-death situation but just an ordinary paranormal event, so there was no need to rush.

On Wang Quan's side, although there were three people, they were much slower. They were on edge, not having Yang Jian's confidence, and so they were extremely cautious.

However, as they were searching for the passage to the fifth floor,

at the entrance to the stairs on the fourth floor, the steps that previously seemed to lead into the dark unknown, now echoed with the subtle sound of footsteps.

These footsteps were somewhat light, unlike the heavy tread of a corpse, nor did they have the crisp sound usually made by shoes.

They sounded more like a faint friction just barely touching the ground.

At this moment, a figure from the depths of the stairs slowly walked up and headed to the fourth floor.

As the figure emerged from the blur to clarity, one could soon see a woman wearing what seemed to be red, exposing a pair of pale hands, smooth as porcelain.

But upon closer inspection, it became clear that the woman had no legs underneath.

There were only vague outlines of feet, in an unnatural hue, almost as if... they were drawn.

Moreover, the woman's face, as well as her hair, was blurry. To the average person, it would appear as if someone with severe myopia was trying to view someone else.

No matter what, one couldn't see clearly.

Only those hands were exceptionally vivid and eye-catching; they weren't in that blurry oil painting style but rather looked like a real, flesh-and-blood presence.

No wonder the footsteps were so subtle—after all, how loud could the footsteps of drawn feet be?

The way she nearly floated along was why she could reach the fork where Yang Jian and Wang Quan had split without anyone noticing.

Yang Jian and Wang Quan's group didn't notice, but some people downstairs did.

"Is there something going on there?"

An observant staff member suddenly widened his eyes, pointing at the corridor on the fourth floor and shouting.

The others also looked up.

Instantly, everyone felt a tingling sensation on their scalps.

The way that figure stood stiffly by the corridor, its blurry appearance, and that out-of-place clothing.

At the very first glance, one could determine that this was definitely not a student lingering in the building.

A ghost?

Are you joking? Could a ghost just stand there so brazenly?

"Quick, notify team leader Wang and Mister Yang," the observer shouted urgently.

But the ghost didn't linger for long; it seemed to move to one side after a brief pause.

The figure was soon obscured by the adjacent wall and gradually disappeared from the observer's line of sight.