

Revival 561

Chapter 561 The Person in the Painting

"Ah!"

Yang Jian kicked open the door to a dormitory, and immediately a shrill scream from a female resonated from inside.

There were two students who had lingered on this floor and hadn't left. At this moment, they looked terrified as if they had seen a ghost, huddling together and shivering in the furthest bed.

"Is anyone there?"

He was slightly stunned, it appeared that Wang Quan hadn't miscalculated; there were indeed students who hadn't managed to leave the building in time.

However, judging by the expressions of the two girls, they were clearly aware of the events transpiring in the dormitory building.

This was good, as it meant Yang Jian wouldn't need to waste time explaining.

"There's a haunting on this floor right now, and I'm dealing with it. Stay here and don't wander around," Yang Jian said, before turning and leaving the room to check the next one.

"Wait, wait, take us with you," one of the girls hesitated before hurriedly pleading with a tearful voice: "I don't want to stay here."

She didn't care who Yang Jian was anymore, as long as she could leave this place.

"The ghost might very well be on this floor; are you sure you want to follow me?"

Yang Jian said with a stern face, "You might die even quicker with me, of course, I won't object if you really want to come along, but don't expect me to save you if we encounter danger. I believe you've already encountered some situations before and have some understanding of what's happening."

The girl was immediately frightened into hesitating.

"Bang!"

Without saying more, Yang Jian closed the door and left.

He was not inclined to take two burdens with him, and for ordinary people, hiding in the dorm and sleeping was actually safer because keeping still and hidden lessened the likelihood of attracting the ghost's attention, according to all ghost manipulator's shared experiences.

After all, ghosts that killed indiscriminately were relatively rare.

Yang Jian continued searching for the dormitory where Miao Xiaoshan had previously been.

He was certain that the dormitory on the fifth floor must have been hidden by a ghostly painting. Now that his ghost eye was useless, he couldn't invade the Ghost Domain within the ghost painting. He could only search using the most straightforward methods. If he was careful enough and didn't miss anything, he should be able to find it.

As he continued his conscientious search.

What Yang Jian didn't know was that he was getting closer and closer to the dormitory that didn't belong on the fourth floor but had appeared out of thin air. If he kept going, he was bound to stumble upon that extraordinary room.

Meanwhile.

At the other end of the corridor.

Wang Quan and two colleagues were also rapidly searching each dormitory.

"Captain Wang, there's a student who has been left behind," a colleague reported immediately upon entering a room.

"Note down the number of people and the room number, leave her there, and tell her not to wander off. It's dangerous outside," Wang Quan immediately said. "The way back has disappeared. It's riskier to have them with us. We'll deal with them once Yang Jian has resolved the situation here. Remember, our current task is to locate the ghost painting; don't get distracted."

"Yes, Captain Wang, I understand."

The colleague quickly began to reassure the girl, telling her not to move around and to stay there and wait for them to come back and rescue her.

"Have you found anything?" Wang Quan asked.

Another colleague, who had finished searching a room cautiously, replied, "No discoveries yet."

Wang Quan furrowed his brows. They had almost finished their search and aside from finding a few students who hadn't left on time, there had been no anomalies detected. It looked like the issue must be on Yang Jian's side, and he hoped Yang Jian had found the root of the problem.

"Just two more rooms left. Report back as soon as you've finished searching them."

They reached the end of the hallway, the last two dormitories were almost searched.

Just as one officer had comforted a girl and stepped out of the dormitory to continue the search, he suddenly caught sight of a woman in red who had appeared in the corridor at some point.

He paused briefly, thinking she was a student who had run out of a room, and was about to shout, "This student, it's dangerous outsi..."

Before he finished speaking, his body trembled and then became rigid; his pupils dilated suddenly.

Because he saw the woman's appearance clearly.

Her features were blurred, you could only vaguely discern them, giving a hazy impression; but as much as you tried to see clearly, you never could because her face was meant to look that way. The red clothes she wore were an outdated European style, which clashed with the modern attire of female students.

What was particularly noticeable were her hands—devoid of any blood color, pale as porcelain, glimmering with a subtle white halo.

A ghost!

This reverberated in the officer's mind followed by an explosion of fear as the word surfaced instantaneously.

Are you kidding me?

Where did this come from all of a sudden, why were there no signs beforehand?

"Captain, captain."

The officer's mental fortitude wasn't as strong as during the training, and after a brief moment of being dazed, he instinctively called out.

But before he could finish, Wang Quan was already behind him and quickly placed his hand firmly over his mouth.

"Calm down, don't shout," Wang Quan pressed down his voice harshly, his face making a grimace and tensing his entire body to prevent the colleague from losing control.

As ordinary people, they must remain calm; any action that drew the attention of ghosts meant a dead end, even if a top-tier spirit controller was also present on this floor.

The ghost, though it appeared in the corridor, did not linger for long.

The red figure seemed to ignore Wang Quan and his companion, heading straight for one of the dorm rooms instead.

That dorm room had already been checked earlier, confirming the presence of a female student inside.

Clearly, the ghost's appearance was not without purpose.

It must have been that someone inside had triggered the ghost's murderous rules, thus becoming its target.

However, Wang Quan could only watch helplessly as the ghost silently entered the room, not daring to make any move.

Because any attempt would be futile.

"Breathe deeply, stay calm; have you forgotten your usual training?" Wang Quan whispered, steadying his teammate's emotions.

It took the teammate more than ten seconds to collect himself, then he nodded.

Only then did Wang Quan carefully release his mouth.

"Captain, did you see that?"

There was a taut emotion in the teammate's voice, as strained as his current state of mind, finding it hard to speak.

Wang Quan's face was grim as he replied, "I saw it, the ghost went into Dorm 402. We don't stand a chance against this thing. Notify Mister Yang; only he can deal with it. We need to retreat and get out of here. Even if we are to be killed, at least we won't die so quickly, which gives Mister Yang some time. We still have a chance to survive."

Having said that, the two quickly began to retreat.

But the end of this corridor was a dead end. If the ghost were to come out of Dorm 402 and head this way, they would have no choice but to wait for death with their eyes closed.

Yang Jian was still unaware that the ghost had already appeared in the hallway, only about twenty meters away from him.

Since his arrival, his Ghost Eye had remained dormant, reducing his ability to investigate the surroundings to a minimum. Everything had to be seen with his own eyes; neither the Ghost Hand nor the Headless Ghost Shadow were particularly adept at surveying the surroundings.

When he continued to feel along the wall and touched the doorframe of the next dormitory, he suddenly stopped in his tracks.

There was something off about the doorframe of this dormitory.

Then Yang Jian saw the door of the dormitory transform suddenly, as if a layer of falsehood was suppressed and made to vanish by the Ghost Hand.

The wooden grain, with its old embossing, and the dark red paint, which looked like coagulated blood, were all flaking off, revealing a sense of antiquity.

It was just like the frame of an oil painting.

"Found it," Yang Jian's eyes sharpened.

Indeed, his guess was correct; the flaw of the haunted painting was that it couldn't easily move.

At least, not until it had fully revived.

As Yang Jian grasped the frame, he formed a suppression.

Now that his Ghost Eye didn't need to suppress, it was as if a slot for a ghost had been freed up, allowing the unrestrained suppression of a ghost's movements.

The original dormitory door immediately altered its appearance.

The doorframe turned into a picture frame, and the door itself became an oil painting.

Depicted on the oil painting was the interior of a dorm room: a bed, books, a desk, which could be recognized from the layout and some details as Miao Xiaoshan's previous dormitory.

Because Yang Jian even saw a former female roommate he had met before in the painting.

She was depicted on the tile floor of the painting, only the upper half of her body visible, missing her legs, lying motionless. From the side profile drawn in the painting, it was apparent that this female student was dead, her pupils unfocused, her facial expressions stiff with rigor mortis, her body twisted and frozen in place.

"No, there's something missing from this painting..." Yang Jian scrutinized the oil painting and frowned.

Although he had never seen the haunted painting clearly, even in the previous incident at the residential complex where he had only looked from far away from the tenth floor, the center of the painting conspicuously showed a blank space.

There was no paint on that patch, just the blank outline of a person.

One could imagine that this area should depict a person.

No, more precisely, it should depict a ghost.

But the ghost in the painting had vanished, leaving behind only an empty space.

"The ghost, did it step out of the painting?" Yang Jian quickly speculated.

Considering Sun Yujia's previous incident where she was so frightened that she jumped off the building, if there was a ghost involved, she must have encountered one that had stepped out of the haunted painting.

But now... where was the ghost?

Yang Jian furrowed his brows deeply.

All this happened on just two floors, both of which had been searched without sighting any ghosts.

Even though his Ghost Eye was blind, it surely wasn't blind to this extent.

However, before he could ponder further, Wang Quan's voice came through the satellite-located phone: "Mister Yang, the ghost has appeared, on my side, in Dorm 402."

The voice was very low, betraying tension and unease.

Yang Jian quickly turned around, his gaze following the corridor to the opposite side.

Wang Quan stood in the distance, silent, gesturing towards a nearby dormitory as if to say, the ghost was inside there.

Chapter 562 Familiar at First Glance

Is the ghost in Dormitory 402?

Upon hearing Wang Quan's message and seeing his gestures, Yang Jian's gaze converged on the second dorm room in the distance.

His deduction was quite correct; the ghost had indeed emerged from the Ghost Painting and was now wandering nearby. It was merely good luck that he hadn't encountered the ghost that had walked out of the painting.

But it seemed that Wang Quan and his team weren't as fortunate; the ghost had reached their side first.

However...

Although Yang Jian had pinpointed the ghost's location, he did not take any action, instead falling into a bout of deep thought and decision-making.

The ghost was in Dormitory 402 opposite him, yet the Ghost Painting was on his side.

The two were not in the same place.

If he were to go now and restrain the ghost that had emerged from the painting, what would he do about the Ghost Painting?

Should he leave it here unattended, and if later upon his return the Ghost Painting was no longer here, would that mean the source of the paranormal activity was the painting on his side or the ghost that had walked out from it?

This question was extremely crucial as it affected his next move.

After all, his Ghost Hand could only restrain one ghost while the Ghost Eye lay dormant.

If he were to restrain the painting, then he wouldn't be able to deal with the ghost from the painting. Relying solely on the remaining Ghost Shadow to resist would leave him with no confidence at all, and he would have to use a Ghost Candle in case of danger.

To use a Ghost Candle just for a fake Ghost Painting would mean this mission was a failure.

"Captain Wang, something's not right. Mister Yang hasn't taken action yet; he's just standing there watching us," a team member whispered softly.

Another team member nervously said, "He might not be planning to act at all but wants us to probe the ghost's pattern of killing, right?"

Although they considered this possibility and somewhat understood such behavior, at such a life-or-death moment everyone would feel disheartened and reluctant.

"Shut up, you're not usually this talkative."

Wang Quan sternly stopped this sort of talk, "Focus on Yang Jian's hand. He hasn't taken his hands off that door the entire time. With the distance between us, you should be able to see clearly, right? That's not a door to the dorm, it's the frame of a painting. Mister Yang has already found the Ghost Painting, and it's on his side... Meanwhile, the ghost is on our side. Now we must make a choice."

"Lucky you were eliminated during the headquarters' selection or you wouldn't have survived the first supernatural event with that level of observation. Don't underestimate the choices made at this time. One wrong choice could potentially lead to a dead end for yourselves and others."

"Ghost Controllers aren't invincible either. Haven't plenty died in paranormal events according to the reports?"

Though scolded, the team member couldn't help but bravely inquire due to the matter of life and death; "Then Captain Wang, what choice is Mister Yang making right now? To jail the Ghost Painting and abandon all of us here or to come and deal with the ghost?"

Wang Quan spoke with a grave expression; "He hasn't made a decision yet. If I'm not wrong, Mister Yang is currently assessing the situation. It's quite peculiar at the moment. Although the ghost entered Dormitory 402, it has not shown up since. Mister Yang wouldn't just come over to deal with the ghost simply because of our words."

"What if this is a decoy? Or maybe it's a trap set by the ghost, luring Mister Yang away from the painting? What if what we're saying is a lie?"

"We cannot afford the risk of the Ghost Painting going out of control, so from now on, do nothing, don't mess around, just watch closely. See how a top Ghost Controller handles the situation. If we're to die here, we'll have to accept our fate. Whoever tries anything foolish, don't blame me for being heartless."

Having said that, his gaze grew sharp.

After all, in the face of the most desperate and terrifying events, anyone could falter, and even a single person's faltering could escalate the situation.

What Wang Quan had to do was to eliminate that possibility.

He was well aware that his two team members were somewhat immature, currently under enormous pressure, and had a chance of losing control. However, he believed that as long as they got through this first time, they would grow and become capable operators.

"Yes, Captain Wang," the two team members dared not let their minds wander any further.

Wang Quan nodded, offering them some confidence and affirmation; "Don't worry, remember that we're very lucky with this operation since the person in charge is Ghost Eye Yang Jian."

Everyone in the circle had heard this codename and name.

And he was even more familiar.

Because Yang Jian was the only one who had ever resolved an S-rank supernatural event alone and had managed other horrifying events known as Ghost Door Knocker, Ghost Coffin, Ghost Infant, Ghost Envoy, and lived to tell the tale.

If such a person could not be trusted, then Wang Quan didn't know whom he could trust.

Indeed, Wang Quan's analysis was not off the mark.

Yang Jian was indeed assessing the situation and waiting.

He was waiting for the ghost to appear.

Before the ghost showed itself, he would not abandon the Ghost Painting he had found. It would be foolish to act on Wang Quan's intelligence alone. He had to see the ghost with his own eyes before moving forward a single step.

Time ticked by slowly.

In such moments, every second seemed to stretch on. Despite the short distance between Yang Jian and Wang Quan, who could see each other's every move, this short path could result in instant death should the ghost truly emerge; distance would not affect the ultimate outcome.

"Will the ghost emerge from Dormitory 402, or will it simply disappear?" Yang Jian's gaze shifted slightly, and the headless shadow behind him swayed as if ready to spring into action at any moment.

This silent waiting did not last long.

Soon, the quiet surroundings were disturbed.

With a creaking sound of a door opening, Dormitory 402's door slowly swung open, casting a shadow from inside onto the ground.

These ordinary sounds and shadows struck fear into Wang Quan and his companions.

The ghost, having killed the person in that dormitory just now, was about to come out.

And they were the few ordinary people closest to the ghost.

Accompanied by footsteps so faint they were almost inaudible, the figure lurking in Dormitory 402 finally stepped out.

A face, its features so blurred they were almost indiscernible, crossed the threshold and came into Yang Jian's line of sight.

Then, those mysterious red garments, reminiscent of those found in an oil painting, covered nearly the entire body, leaving only a pair of starkly pale hands and unreal-looking legs visible.

There was no bloody scene to behold.

But to everyone observing, there was an indescribable sinister feeling.

After the ghost stepped out of the dormitory, it did not act immediately but stood there with a slight pause.

This was the first time Yang Jian had seen the ghost from the painting, and he now stared intently at the blurry red figure, noting especially those hands that seemed the most real. A piece of information buried in his mind for some time surfaced due to this scene.

The ghost felt familiar.

As if he had seen it before.

No, he had not seen it before, but something about it looked familiar.

The vague red clothing on the ghost in the painting reminded him of the dress worn by the Dried Corpse Bride he had seen on the supernatural bus.

It was uncertain if they were the same garment; after all, the style of the painting was hazy, and many details were indiscernible.

The hands exposed and the woman's figure, however, made Yang Jian think of an eerie object he had left in Dachang City.

The Ghost Cabinet.

To be precise, the last transaction he had made with the Ghost Cabinet.

The last transaction was proposed by the Ghost Cabinet, which had him find the location of the person in the photo within a year. Afterward, he obtained an old photo from inside the Ghost Cabinet.

Yang Jian still remembered clearly the content of that photo: a woman sitting in front of an old wooden house, dressed in a red outfit from the Republican era, her hair black and lustrous, her hands as white and delicate as porcelain, and those exquisitely embroidered shoes on her feet peeking out from her dress.

Most importantly, the ghost in the painting and the woman in the Ghost Cabinet's photo looked very similar... Though the ghost's face was unclear and hazy, Yang Jian's instinct told him they must be the same in appearance.

Was the Ghost Cabinet looking for the painting or the ghost in the painting?

Furthermore, that pair of shoes that seemed to be painted on were similar to the embroidered shoes he had obtained from the Ghost Envoy incident at the training base.

Yang Jian's gaze flickered uncertainly as many terrifying pieces of information began to link together in his mind.

The dress on the Dried Corpse Bride, the ghost in the painting, the ancient house with red lanterns that he had seen on the supernatural bus, the old photo that fell from the Ghost Cabinet after the transaction.

These pieces were coming together like a puzzle, seemingly interrelated.

Of course, it might just be his wild imagination trying to forcibly fit similar ghosts together.

But if Yang Jian's guess was correct.

Then he might have found most of the puzzle pieces of a ghost.

At that moment, he couldn't help but entertain a bold thought: if he helped the ghost assemble all the puzzle pieces, what would happen? Would it become the woman in the photo?

Or would it become an even more terrifying ghost, or perhaps none of the above, instead causing some unpredictable aberration?

Because, so far, he had never seen a ghost put together all the pieces, so there were no examples to reference.

This kind of information hidden in horrific events holds a great allure for all ghost controllers, a curiosity about the truth.

But no sooner had this thought arisen, Yang Jian fiercely cast it aside.

This was not the time for wild thoughts.

The ghost was already before him, and it was time for action, otherwise continuing to delay could lead to trouble.

Now, should he immediately abandon the painting to restrict the ghost, or ignore the ghost and deal with this ghost painting right away?

He could only do one of these things.

Because the conditions only allowed for success in one.

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The dim, silent corridor was graced by the figure that had emerged from the haunted painting, standing rigid at the entrance of the dormitory room, motionless as if it were a corpse whose life had ceased, seemingly waiting for the next victim after having killed the last qualified person. But currently, no new target was in sight.

The atmosphere at the scene was particularly heavy.

Neither Wang Quan and his companions nor Yang Jian made a sound.

All were waiting.

Wang Quan was waiting for Yang Jian's move, while Yang Jian was waiting for any movement from the ghost.

In the absence of certainty about the true source, the best course of action for Yang Jian was to wait and see if the ghost would continue to kill.

If the killing continued, then it was highly likely that the source of the event wasn't the haunted painting Yang Jian was currently holding, but the ghost from within the painting. The painting might just be a vessel, much like the face-covering cloth he had encountered before, where the cloth itself wasn't the issue but rather the bizarre crying face on it—the ghost.

Conversely, if there was no further disturbance, as was currently the case, then it could be conjectured that the painting was the source, and he wouldn't need to take any action.

Besides, Yang Jian had one more drastic measure up his sleeve.

He could give up his absolute control over Ghost Shadow and free up a slot to suppress the ghost, tackling both the haunted painting and the ghost within it in one fell swoop.

But this approach came with risks.

Though Ghost Shadow no longer posed the risk of revival, its instinct to switch bodies remained, and if it were to incorporate something else into itself in the moment it encountered the ghost, the balance would be thrown off.

And once that balance was lost, the Ghost Eye, teetering on the brink of revival, would swiftly claim Yang Jian's life.

Yang Jian was well aware of the risks and wouldn't gamble on it; the current situation didn't warrant such a risk in his view, especially since Miao Xiaoshan was already safe. There was no need to risk his life for a bunch of strangers.

Probably more than a minute passed.

The ghost remained still.

It seemed that in this building, it could no longer find a target that met its criteria, and thus the ghost fell into a quiescent state, maintaining the same posture.

"What exactly is the pattern to this thing's killings? It's not touch, nor seeing it," Yang Jian's eyes narrowed slightly, trying to discern more clearly.

He had previously thought that one would be attacked by the haunted painting upon seeing it. Yet not only had he seen it, but so had others, and yet they had not become targets of the painting. Now, with the painting in his grasp and having made contact with it, the ghost from the painting still showed no interest in him.

It didn't even turn in his direction.

From what had happened earlier, there must have been a student lingering in dorm room 402 who met the killing criteria of the haunted painting, hence the ghost from the painting had come.

"It's not sound either. Wang Quan was loud when he spoke earlier, and yet the ghost didn't go after him to kill him," Yang Jian eliminated another possible condition.

"But from the international files we saw, it's clear that those killed by the haunted painting definitely had some contact with it."

Yang Jian attempted to analyze the information; if he could figure out the killing pattern in advance, he would have a high chance of survival when facing this ghostly entity in the future.

Another minute of stalemate passed.

Seeing the ghost still hadn't made a move, Yang Jian decided not to wait any longer.

Delaying might also be one of the ghost's traps. Faced with a haunted painting that could become an S-class supernatural event upon revival, he couldn't afford to be careless.

"Wang Quan, you should have something to contain this haunted painting, bring it over. Let's deal with the one I'm holding first. We can't keep waiting; I can't be sure if continued delay might lead to other anomalies. So, you're going to have to take a risk," Yang Jian concluded, after determining that speaking was safe, he directly addressed the issue.

Indeed.

As his voice echoed down the hallway, the ghost standing by the dormitory entrance didn't react at all.

Upon hearing Yang Jian's words, Wang Quan's expression tightened, and he quickly signaled his teammate, "Give me the bag for the haunted painting, I'll go deal with that painting with Yang Jian first."

"Captain, the ghost is standing right there, are we really going over?" another teammate clearly panicked.

Approaching a ghost at close range was extremely risky, and they were well aware of this from their training.

"Of course, we'll go around. We must take the risk at this moment. The ghost is inactive, and Yang Jian can't decide which one to deal with first, so the best approach is to resolve one side first. His decision is correct, the safest. I believe that once the haunted painting is dealt with, Yang Jian will be able to handle this thing," Wang Quan replied as he prepared to act, taking the bag, "You all stay here, I'll go by myself."

As soon as he finished speaking, he stepped forward without hesitation, heading toward the ghost in front.

There was only one way to Yang Jian, with the corridor blocked by the ghost; the only option was to skirt past it.

For him, an ordinary person, getting targeted by the ghost at close range was certain death, beyond anyone's saving.

So Wang Quan was gambling with his life.

But he seemed to have come to terms with this resolve.

Wang Quan's steps were firm, though his face was pale and his body tensely wound, he did not flinch.

As the ghost drew nearer, even with a strong threshold for fear, he couldn't help but break out in a cold sweat as dread filled his heart.

That was a real ghost, after all.

Any slight action from the ghost could mean his end.

"Impressive courage," Yang Jian noted the scene with a touch of admiration.

To dare approach the ghost, knowing full well the danger, was not something an ordinary person could do.

"Run, now that you've chosen to act, speed it up and don't keep me waiting," he urged.

Courage is momentary, and Yang Jian did not want him to lose his nerve.

With teeth clenched, Wang Quan glanced at the ghost just three to four meters away and without another word, steeled himself and ran towards Yang Jian. His hands were tightly clutching a folded bag, big enough to encompass the haunted painting.

Soon.

He had bypassed the ghost.

Close to a genuine ghost, Wang Quan felt a chill akin to that emanating from a corpse, but other than that, everything was normal.

The ghost did not attack him.

Wang Quan successfully passed by the ghost.

His head felt slightly foggy, as if he hadn't expected things to be this easy, that the ghost would really just let him brush past.

He couldn't help but look back, and seeing that the ghost had made no move, he suddenly felt somewhat relieved.

Watching him, the two teammates also took a deep breath of relief.

It was a close call without actual danger.

"Mister Yang, mission accomplished," Wang Quan said, unable to hide his relief as Yang Jian approached.

At that moment, Yang Jian's expression suddenly changed, his gaze fixed on something behind Wang Quan.

The ghost, at this very moment, started to move.

The ghost, which had been standing motionless, suddenly turned its head. Its indistinct face looked towards Wang Quan and then slowly walked toward him.

Had the ghost's killing trigger been activated?

Wang Quan noticed Yang Jian's abruptly altered gaze, and his body stiffened.

Could it be... A terrifying conjecture formed in his mind.

"Keep walking, don't stop, leave it to me to handle," Yang Jian said with a cold face, staring down the ghost that was drawing nearer.

Upon hearing this, Wang Quan's face was covered in cold sweat, his back already chilled.

Indeed, his guess was right; the ghost had followed him.

While others were afraid, Yang Jian was not; for him, this was the best opportunity.

An opportunity to ensure that the Ghost Painting was dealt with without fail.

Very soon.

Wang Quan was close now; he walked to where Yang Jian was.

The ghost from the painting had also completely come over, its pale, porcelain-like hands raised as if about to grab Wang Quan's shoulders.

Feeling the familiar chill at the back of his neck, and catching a glimpse of the hand that was about to reach his shoulder, Wang Quan felt a sense of despair.

The ghost was right behind him.

However, at that moment, Yang Jian reached out and grabbed the pale hand first, preventing the ghost from touching Wang Quan.

The ghost froze.

Because suppression had been formed.

The spot for suppressing ghosts that Yang Jian had freed up was given to this ghost.

As long as it wasn't the ghost that was the true source of the painting, it should be no problem to suppress it.

The next moment.

The ghost's body from the painting began to disappear, dissolving directly into grey ash, carried away by the air and scattered in every direction.

Yet the surroundings remained dark, the lights still dim.

The Ghost Domain was still present.

"I knew it, nearly got fooled by this thing," Yang Jian sharply turned around, looking at the Ghost Painting behind him.

The environment around the painting started to change, the frame vanished, turning into a smooth wall.

But this wall was uneven, slightly trembling, with a tall, headless shadow cast upon it, leaving a distinct mark.

He released the Ghost Painting from his suppression, but left a mark on it with the Ghost Shadow.

Since the painting wouldn't run away, the Ghost Shadow should be able to watch over it.

The deduction was correct.

The next instant, Yang Jian's Ghost Hand directly touched the wall.

The wall disappeared, and the Ghost Painting was revealed once again.

But now the previously blank space within the painting was no longer empty; there was a figure drawn on it, a woman in red with a vague face and a pair of pale, porcelain-like hands extending out of the painting, hanging mid-air.

This was identical to the previously suppressed and dissipated ghost.

Only now, this ghost was about to step out of the painting once again.

"A reset?" Yang Jian's expression darkened.

In that case, the painting itself was the source; the ghost that came out could be suppressed countless times, but the Ghost Painting could always form a new ghost.

Further, once the ghost comes out of the painting, even if you suppress the painting, you can't completely resolve the supernatural event; you must wait until both the ghost and the painting are together to suppress it.

Because only when they are together does the Ghost Painting become whole.

Merely suppressing one side wouldn't completely resolve the incident with the Ghost Painting.

Having understood this, Yang Jian felt a mix of happiness and a new layer of shadows forming in his heart.

Because this was going to be extremely difficult.

The next moment, as Yang Jian once again applied his suppression to the now-complete Ghost Painting, the lights around them flashed suddenly, becoming brighter. The sounds from downstairs could be heard, and the chilling sensation was no longer present.

The Ghost Domain had disappeared.

The pair of hands that had been reaching out from the painting were gone, turning back into hands within the painting.

The oil painting had once again reverted to its previous, ordinary appearance.

Chapter 564 Conjecture

The breathing was heavy and rushed.

Wang Quan felt almost drained; in the brief dozen or so seconds just now, he had truly walked a fine line between life and death. Had Yang Jian moved a bit slower or failed to block the ghost behind him, he would undoubtedly be dead by now.

It was too easy for a ghost to kill an ordinary person, and he was acutely aware of this.

"Did, did it work?" Wang Quan's throat felt dry, making it difficult to speak.

One of Yang Jian's hands was holding the frame; he looked at the ghost painting that no longer exhibited any abnormalities and calmly said, "It's mostly dealt with. The ghost painting has been suppressed by me. As long as I don't let go, no oddities will occur with this thing."

"That's good."

Wang Quan touched the cold sweat dripping from his forehead: "As long as the task is completed, that's what matters. We owe it to Mister Yang this time. The losses are much less than I had imagined."

"Let's not talk about that for now. Bag this painting first," said Yang Jian.

Wang Quan nodded, then called out to the two behind him: "Come over and help, the ghost painting has been successfully contained. It's not dangerous anymore."

The two employees in the distance were also visibly relieved, feeling as if they had survived a great peril. They regained their courage and hurried over.

Soon, with the cooperation of the group, the huge ghost painting was bagged up and wrapped in several layers to ensure no gaps were left.

Only after Yang Jian was certain that there were no issues did he withdraw his hand and continued to observe the painting.

After all, this thing had become somewhat difficult to handle, and now that they had barely managed to contain it, he didn't want any slip-ups at the last moment.

"There are still some students lingering in this building. Go and lead those students out now. Mister Yang and I will watch over the ghost painting. Once everything is confirmed to be fine, I will notify you," said Wang Quan.

"Yes, Captain." The two members immediately began the rescue.

The previous situation was simply not suitable for evacuating people; the ghost was wandering between these two floors. Moving recklessly before resolving the issue would only lead to swifter deaths.

After watching the two members leave, Yang Jian finally spoke: "Tell me, what happened to you just now?"

Wang Quan was prepared and knew what Yang Jian was asking about.

He had been attacked by the ghost while running over from the opposite side. This was definitely not a random occurrence; there must have been a reason. He must have triggered the ghost's killing rule at some point, which is why the ghost targeted him.

"I think I couldn't help but turn my head and took a glance at the ghost," Wang Quan said thoughtfully, presenting his guess.

Yang Jian's expression was cold; "No, when you turned around, the ghost didn't even glance at you. It wasn't because you looked back that the ghost targeted you. Moreover, you said earlier that the ghost entered dormitory 402. Was there anyone in that dormitory?"

"Yes, there was a girl," Wang Quan replied, and added, "I checked myself, I'm certain."

"That girl stayed in her dorm room, she never came out, not even saw the ghost, yet she was still targeted by the ghost," said Yang Jian.

"So it's not turning back to look or seeing the ghost that triggers attacks."

Wang Quan nodded slightly: "You're right, but I really can't think of why the ghost would suddenly attack me. Just now, I did nothing more than circle around the ghost and ran a distance in this direction. If it wasn't for looking back, I virtually did nothing."

"You must have overlooked something," said Yang Jian; "The murderous rule of the ghost might not lie in actions. Sometimes even breathing can trigger it. Think it over again carefully, understanding the ghost painting's killing rule is very important."

"Today's encounter is a valuable experience. If we can use this as a breakthrough, then we will have some advantage when facing the real ghost painting. We won't be completely passive."

"I know, Mister Yang, rest assured I'll figure it out," Wang Quan said earnestly with a severe expression, nodding solemnly.

He was the only person who had been attacked and survived, so he undoubtedly possessed the potential to decipher the killing rule of the ghost painting.

Yang Jian said, "Then keep thinking. Any possibility can be shared, don't worry about misleading me. Even if it's false information, I can deduce the real answer the next time I encounter a ghost painting. It's better than using our lives to test and err with the ghost painting."

Wang Quan did not speak but fell back into deep thought.

Yang Jian did not rush him, observing the ghost painting while waiting.

Now that the supernatural incident was temporarily resolved, he had all the time in the world to wait, not in any rush at the moment.

"It's definitely not because people have seen the ghost painting or touched it that they get killed; it's something else," Yang Jian mused internally.

After the brief encounter earlier, he had excluded all possibilities.

Initially, he thought that just seeing the ghost painting would make one a target, as the ghost showed a very obvious reaction towards the painting. But then he realized that was not the case.

While he was waiting, all the surviving girls from the building were safely evacuated from the dormitory, and the security outside relaxed a bit, not as strict as before.

Meanwhile, the events that had occurred here were quickly reported to headquarters.

But none of this concerned Yang Jian.

He was now determined to use this opportunity to clarify the ghost painting's killing rule.

"Perhaps it's fear." After a while, Wang Quan tentatively voiced his thought: "Earlier, when I turned my head, I was afraid the ghost would come after me, and then the ghost really did target me."

"Fear?" Yang Jian's gaze darkened.

Could that be the situation?

Yang Jian said, "Because you're afraid of ghosts, the ghosts come to kill you? Is the rule that whatever you fear comes for you?"

"There is such a possibility. The female student from dorm room 402 must have been terrified, but the likelihood of this isn't very high. It's not just her who was scared—I also found two female students hiding in another dorm room, and they weren't attacked by the ghost."

"Maybe it's a condition, like seeing a ghost and then feeling frightened..." Wang Quan speculated.

First seeing, then feeling scared?

Yang Jian felt that this speculation was somewhat more plausible than the previous ones, but he knew it definitely wasn't the correct answer because many people who met this criteria weren't attacked.

Like those two team members.

They also saw the ghost and felt fear. If they met the criteria, they would have been killed long ago.

"Captain, headquarters has informed us to immediately send the ghost painting over," reported a team member who rushed over at that moment.

Yang Jian snapped out of his thoughts and said, "Report this matter. Let the people at headquarters analyze it. Inform me immediately when they have answers or speculations. Let's leave it at that for today."

He felt it was difficult to deduce anything.

After all, he was one of the people who had witnessed Wang Quan being attacked. During that brief moment, he saw clearly everything Wang Quan did.

"Well then, Mister Yang, I'll take my leave first. We'll be in touch if there's a chance in the future," said Wang Quan.

"Okay," replied Yang Jian, his response cold.

Wang Quan immediately started preparing to escort the ghost painting back to headquarters with the team.

At that moment, Yang Jian suddenly said, "Wait a moment."

"Is there anything else, Mister Yang?" Wang Quan stopped in his tracks.

"Leave me one of those gloves," Yang Jian said.

Wang Quan was startled, looked down, and then immediately took off a glove, "If Mister Yang needs it, you can apply to headquarters. I believe they can easily meet such a request."

"It's just a small matter. I don't want to deal with Cao Yanhua," said Yang Jian. "One glove is enough. I can't just touch things with this hand; it's sometimes quite inconvenient."

"I understand, I understand. Consider this pair of gloves a gift to Mister Yang. I hope they fit well enough," Wang Quan said as he handed over the work glove to Yang Jian, his eyes lingering on Yang Jian's palm.

The complexion was completely different from that of the rest of his body, deathly pale, icy cold, as if it were the palm of a dead person, attached to a living body in a very uncoordinated way.

A hand that can suppress even ghost paintings must also be... a ghost.

"Alright, that's it, you may go," Yang Jian said as he put the glove on the Ghost Hand.

The golden-yellow glove fit snugly over his palm, very soft, yet heavy, suggesting a significant weight, making one wonder if it was actually made of real gold.

The craftsmanship was beyond question.

If it were sold outside, it would probably start at least at a million, especially since the price of gold has risen to an almost unbearable level.

"Don't go behind my back and tell Cao Yanhua I'm taking a small advantage. This time I'm working for free. If this matter hadn't involved Miao Xiaoshan, who would want to deal with it? Now, I've been dismissed with a pair of gloves. You should come out on top; my travel expenses have never been cheap," thought Yang Jian to himself. Then he put on gloves on both hands.

Otherwise, one hand would be too noticeable, and anyone could see that there was something wrong with it at a glance.

"Indeed, the gloves successfully isolated the influence of the Ghost Hand." Yang Jian touched his chin, no longer feeling that eerie sensation. He could be a little more reassured when touching anything in the future.

However, the only inconvenience was that he'd have to take off the gloves before fighting with someone, which could be easily noticed.

"This will do for now," said Yang Jian as he looked at the arm connected to the Ghost Hand and shook his head slightly. The arm looked like it was rotting flesh on a corpse, blackish in color, and emitting a faint smell of decay.

This was what remained after being eroded by the Ghost Envoy, not even the Ghost Conman Gao Zhiqiang could restore it.

Fortunately, this arm had incorporated the Coffin Nail made by Wang Xiaoming and acquired some ghostly properties. Though it looked horrific, there seemed to be no sign that it would continue to deteriorate or decay.

He pulled at his sleeve, covering the wrist that did not appear to be that of a living being.

Yang Jian left the dormitory building without any expression.

He didn't need to handle the cleanup work; he could just leave once the supernatural event was resolved.

Yang Jian believed that if there were any new findings, Wang Quan would inform him.

Chapter 565 Petty Cleverness

When Yang Jian left the dormitory and returned to the basketball hall, the once-empty space was now crowded with students huddled in small groups, seemingly discussing the day's events, which added a certain clamor to the otherwise quiet basketball hall.

He frowned slightly, "Why arrange for other students to come here?"

A staff member in charge of staying behind approached Yang Jian immediately, "Mister Yang, it's like this—these students have all had some form of contact with the Ghost Hand painting, and for safety reasons, we've temporarily gathered them together. This way, if anything happens, it will be easier to manage."

"If we let these students wander about, they might bring about a greater impact. After all, we also need to ensure the safety of other personnel."

"So what?"

Yang Jian fixed his gaze on him, "Gather them together to trigger a paranormal event and then die together?"

The staff member was taken aback and quickly explained, "How could that be possible? We have Mister Yang here, and we believe that with Mister Yang's capabilities, you can fully cope with any situation that may arise."

"So you mean you want me to clean up the mess? And who told you that I would definitely come to solve the problem if something happened?"

Yang Jian said coldly, "Who came up with this idea? Have him come here."

The worker hesitated at Yang Jian's attitude.

Yang Jian said sternly, "Until today's task is over, I'm still in charge here. If you don't obey orders, I don't mind sending you off."

"Yes, Mister Yang."

Feeling the icy stare from Yang Jian, and the cold aura emanating from his body, the man felt a shiver run down his spine.

Despite the man's young age, he had no doubt that Yang Jian would dare to kill here.

Most spirit controllers are unreasonable madmen.

Watching the man hurry away, Yang Jian slowly withdrew his cold gaze.

Indeed, not everyone is like Wang Quan; some people are talented, while others are just useless, having sneaked in.

They can't get things done; they only know how to play smart.

"Yang Jian, over here."

Suddenly, a shout came from the spectator stands in the basketball hall.

Turning around, he saw Miao Xiaoshan waving at him with a smile, gesturing for him to come over.

Yang Jian's icy expression seemed to soften slightly as he walked over and asked directly, "How is it, nothing happened, right?"

"Nothing, I'm safe here, nothing happened at all. I'm glad you're okay. I saw the lights go out at the dormitory over there and thought you might be in danger," Miao Xiaoshan said with a tense face, revealing a hint of anxiety.

"It was easier to handle than the incident at No. 7 Middle School, at least there was no danger to life," Yang Jian said.

Miao Xiaoshan asked cautiously, "Is it resolved? Will the ghost appear again? You have to be careful. If it gets too dangerous, just hide. There's no need to confront that thing."

"Some things can't be avoided, but whether the ghost will appear again, I don't know; there's still a lot that isn't clear and requires observation for a while."

Yang Jian pondered for a moment, "So you, and the roommates from your dorm who survived, are not completely out of danger."

"But I think the problem shouldn't be too serious."

The Ghost Hand painting had been contained and removed, so the chances of this school being involved again should be quite small.

His only concern was that he hadn't figured out the pattern of the Ghost Hand painting appearances.

It wasn't impossible for a second Ghost Hand painting to emerge at the same location.

Of course, this was just a guess; Yang Jian didn't have the information to be certain.

"I'll be alright, don't worry about me—you should take more care of yourself," Miao Xiaoshan said.

"I don't even know how long I'll survive; there's nothing to care about."

Yang Jian said, "The same words as usual—if anything happens, let me know. I'll be in this city for a few days, but after a while, I'll have to return to Dachang City, so don't hide anything. Otherwise, it won't be so easy to come over after I leave."

"I understand, but don't worry, I'm certain I can survive. I have plenty of confidence in you; after all, you've never lost a fight," Miao Xiaoshan encouraged.

Yang Jian let out a laugh, "I've never lost a fight, that's because my opponents were human, not necessarily the case with ghosts. Anyway, there's no use talking about this; let's leave here first."

"Go where?" Miao Xiaoshan asked.

"Of course, to take you back to the dorm to sleep. Where else could you go this late?" Yang Jian said.

"Ah, back to the dorm?" Miao Xiaoshan's face changed.

"Now that dormitory building is the safest place in the whole school. It's already been the scene of one incident; the chances of something happening again are much lower than elsewhere because the ghost has already checked for hidden dangers for you once."

His rationale made sense, but it still sent a shiver down one's spine to hear it.

"Just the two of us?" Miao Xiaoshan asked cautiously.

"No, after I send you back to the dorm, I have to leave. I still have things to take care of today, so I must go," Yang Jian said.

Miao Xiaoshan suddenly grabbed Yang Jian's arm, "Then I won't go back to the dorm. Can I go with you?"

"Are you scared?" Yang Jian asked her.

"A... little," Miao Xiaoshan replied.

"Then let that roommate whom I drove away before stay with you. Her situation is the same as yours. If you're safe, she will be too. If there's danger for you, it'll be the same for her. Following me, your chances of dying would be greater," Yang Jian said.

Having somewhat figured out the situation with the ghost painting, he could let Liu Zi make contact with Miao Xiaoshan.

"Well, okay," Miao Xiaoshan nodded.

Yang Jian immediately prepared to leave the basketball court with her.

As Miao Xiaoshan was leaving, she looked at the other students gathered there, her expression slightly unnatural.

"All gathered together, it's like they're waiting for ghosts at the door. They've all had certain contact with the ghost painting. If there's anywhere most dangerous here, it must be this place."

Yang Jian spoke indifferently, "Put away your pity, you'll get used to it. Remember, only seven of us in the school have survived. So, if some people are destined to die, they will certainly die. There's nothing to sympathize with. Even I can't guarantee to stay alive if targeted by a ghost, let alone ordinary people."

"If they're all right, then your concern is superfluous."

Miao Xiaoshan nodded slightly, "Yang Jian, you're right."

Although such remarks were cruel, she didn't feel they were wrong, having experienced such terrifying scenes herself.

Just as Yang Jian was about to leave the basketball court, the staff member from before hurried over with a middle-aged man in a suit and leather shoes.

"Mister Yang, I heard you were looking for me? May I know what you need?" The middle-aged man had a smile on his face, very polite and respectful.

Yang Jian didn't even ask for the man's name. While walking forward, he took off his glove, and then slapped the man across the face.

With the Ghost Hand.

The strength can be imagined.

"Bang!"

Immediately, the man, nearly two hundred pounds, did not even have the chance to react before being sent flying to the ground. His head smashed on the basketball court's floor with a thud, after which his entire face twisted, teeth not knowing how many had fallen out, blood flowing profusely.

"I spared your life out of respect for the headquarters. You should know why you received that slap. Trying to pull those kinds of tactics with me?"

After speaking, Yang Jian no longer looked at the man, and immediately left with the stunned Miao Xiaoshan.

The middle-aged man couldn't make out what Yang Jian had said. His head was buzzing, his face indescribably in pain, and he seemed out of control. If not for the lingering sensation, he might even suspect he was about to die.

The other students in the basketball court were shocked by this scene, and the surroundings suddenly quieted down, all of them speculating what had just happened.

But those unaware of the situation could never understand why Yang Jian had delivered such a slap.

"Coach Yao, are you alright? I'll report this to headquarters immediately," the nearby staff member said in shock, then hurried over to help.

It took a while for the man known as Coach Yao to regain some clarity. He grabbed the staff member's hand and said in a muddle, "Don't report it; otherwise, I'll fare even worse. Call an ambulance, take me to the hospital. Let's pretend this never happened."

At that moment, he was afraid, and the pain mattered less to him.

Coach Yao, of course, understood why Yang Jian had struck him. It was because he had taken it upon himself to store everyone who had contact with the ghost painting in the basketball court for convenience.

Who was inside the basketball court?

A high school female classmate of Yang Jian, with whom he shared an intimate relationship.

Coach Yao was very aware of this, hence his actions. Because if something happened, Yang Jian would not ignore it due to that relationship.

If there was no issue, then he would not be at fault.

Either way, he could ensure that there would be no trouble at his end tonight.

But his minor schemes had been seen through, and this ghost-controller known by the code name Ghost Eye clearly didn't like being manipulated.

However, people always harbor a glimmer of hope. Coach Yao believed that even if Yang Jian discovered his scheme, it wouldn't be an issue with the headquarters behind him. Yang Jian wouldn't dare act recklessly, and he hadn't meant to harm anyone specifically; he was considering the overall situation.

As for how Yang Jian's attitude might turn nasty later—that didn't matter.

After tonight, if everyone completed their mission and went their separate ways, chances of further interaction would be slim, perhaps even never seeing each another again. After all, such people usually have short lives and don't last long, making any overlap in their paths virtually non-existent.

But Coach Yao hadn't expected Yang Jian to be so ruthless as to slap him on sight.

"My body, something is wrong."

As Coach Yao was helped up to go to the hospital, he realized that many parts of his body were acting abnormally. Although he could still move, it was becoming very uncoordinated, and this lack of coordination was intensifying.

At that moment, his fear deepened.

Because he felt that Yang Jian's slap might have employed the ghost's power, and now the ghost's abilities were affecting his body.

Death might not be imminent.

But the consequences would likely be very severe.