

Revival 631

Chapter 631 Li Yang's Change

The room's door suddenly closed, as if the ghost lingering inside didn't intend to let Yang Jian leave.

Or perhaps Yang Jian had already caught the ghost's attention, and this change was merely the prelude to its attack.

"No need to waste time with the ghost in this room," his gaze settled on the empty single-seater sofa in the living room.

He tried to locate the ghost, but even with a quick glance of the room that could be done almost in an eye's blink, he found nothing.

Such a large corpse had vanished into thin air, without leaving the slightest trace behind, exceedingly strange; yet the air still carried that nauseating stench of decay, now denser than before, as if to prove the corpse was still in the house and hadn't left.

Yang Jian stood still, a pitch-black shadow slowly rose from beneath his feet, it looked very tall, like a robust man hidden in the darkness, mismatched with his own physique.

And most importantly, the shadow had no head.

The emergence of the Headless Ghost Shadow took the place of Yang Jian's actions, the towering shadow approached the door, ready to open it and leave.

The tightly locked door began to vibrate violently under the Ghost Shadow's influence, making a loud sound, as if the entire door was about to be destroyed, but even so, it still wouldn't open, managing only to crack a few slits.

"The Ghost Shadow's abilities can't open the door?" Yang Jian's expression darkened, "Moreover, I can feel that the door is much heavier than usual, as though someone outside is forcibly blocking it, preventing me from leaving smoothly."

Was it Li Yang and Jimmy outside?

Definitely not, they were outside but there was no way they could be blocking the door.

Discarding that unrealistic speculation, only one possibility remained.

The door, was blocked by a ghost.

Yang Jian stared at the door, continuing to use Ghost Shadow to ram it.

The door warped and deformed, about to shatter, at this moment through the dim light outside the living room window, he saw, through the door's cracks, a rotten, pockmarked arm laid across the front of the door, rigidly propped there, preventing the door from opening smoothly.

Collisions between ghosts were not a comparison of strength; the Headless Ghost Shadow was powerful, but the reason it couldn't open the door was that it couldn't suppress the ghost outside.

Which is to say, the ghost that had sat on the single-seater sofa earlier was more terrifying than the present Headless Ghost Shadow.

"Damn it, what exactly is standing in front of the door?"

However, at this time, Jimmy outside was panting hurriedly, his entire body tense to the extreme, his face covered in cold sweat, he clung tightly to the wall beside him, glancing out of the corners of his eyes.

He witnessed a horrifying scene.

A corpse that had been rotting for many days had just run out of the room, and now stood motionless in front of the door.

"It, it's a ghost."

Li Yang's heart was also pounding wildly, he dared not move, he even dared not breathe, he could only stiffen in place, pressed against the wall behind him, praying the ghost in front of the door hadn't noticed the two of them.

As for turning around and running away.

They hadn't even thought about it.

The way back had already disappeared, another ghost stood within the wooden staircase above their heads, stepping down the stairs to run would immediately bring it following them.

That would be death, too.

And they were less than a meter away from the Ghost Face in front of the door; if the ghost really wanted to kill them, it wouldn't have given them a chance to escape.

Both were terrified to the extreme, each breath heavier than the next, as their violent heartbeats seemed to echo in the silent, dimly lit corridor.

"If the door can be blocked, then windows and walls can also be blocked. The ghost didn't attack me; it just wants to trap me here. Perhaps this is its way of attacking."

Yang Jian, however, was analyzing the situation, unaware of the plight of the two outside.

If a ghost controller were trapped here, they would die after a few days because the human body can't overcome long periods without food, water, or sleep.

Yet, despite having faced many supernatural events, this peculiar way of killing was still a first for him.

Trapping people with a ghost?

He checked the time.

It had been ten minutes since Yang Jian entered, and if he didn't figure out a way to leave this room soon, he would be trapped for even longer.

"It's a pity that the Ghost Eye is suppressed; otherwise, with the power of Ghost Domain, this house would never be able to trap me... No, I can't say that for sure, the ghost painting suppressed my Ghost Domain, but it would do the same to other ghosts. To some extent, the ghost in this room is even more special than my Ghost Eye."

Because the ghost painting couldn't entirely affect this place, the ghost had roamed here, even forcibly leaving a window to the outside in the living room.

Yang Jian looked at the window again.

To prove his theory, or to figure out the ghost's pattern of movement, he walked over and tried to open the window to leave the building.

If possible, he didn't mind taking a detour and coming back to the third floor via the outdoor stairs.

However, he had just approached the window.

Suddenly, the tightly closed door behind him creaked slightly open, and the Ghost Face blocking it disappeared.

But then Yang Jian felt a pitch-black shadow flash by his side, accompanied by a strong smell of decay.

The next moment.

Behind the dingy glass of the living room window, a black figure appeared out of nowhere, standing stiffly and eerily there, stretching out a pair of hands onto the transparent glass, pressing the glass window shut and preventing Yang Jian from opening it.

Clearly, the ghost had stopped blocking the door and was now blocking the window.

"It can only block one place at a time. If it chooses to block the door, it gives up the window as a way out, and if it blocks the window, then the door will open... This means that to leave this room, I must get two people in. One person stays to distract the ghost, and the other can avoid the blockade and leave safely."

Yang Jian looked through the glass at the ghostly blurred figure outside and immediately thought of a solution.

"Besides, there's another method, which is to move faster than the ghost and leave before it can block the next exit... But this would require Ghost Domain to achieve."

With that thought.

Yang Jian turned and called out to the outside, "Li Yang and Jimmy, are you there?"

"Mister Yang, I, we're still here," came Li Yang's voice from outside.

At this time, Li Yang and Jimmy were still sweating profusely, but they had let out a huge sigh of relief because they heard Yang Jian's voice from inside and saw that the Ghost Face at the door had disappeared.

They had survived the most dangerous moment, and now it was a bit safer.

But the next words from Yang Jian made Li Yang's legs tremble.

"I need someone to come into the room, Li Yang, come and help me," Yang Jian said.

"What?" Li Yang's voice trembled.

Yang Jian said, "Hurry, don't waste my time."

Li Yang's face changed, and after hesitating for a moment, he bit his teeth and cautiously peeked inside.

He saw Yang Jian standing in the living room inside, seemingly looking out the window.

"Just now, I saw that ghost enter the room," Li Yang said. "If I go in, I might die."

"You won't die, this ghost is not that scary," Yang Jian said, looking at him. "Do you think I have any reason to lie to you? If you want to keep staying outside, that's fine, but doing so will waste at least half an hour, or maybe an hour. I am confident of surviving during that time, but I'm afraid you may not be."

"There are more ghosts here than I thought. I remember there's still one lingering on the stairs outside, right?"

"I understand."

Though Li Yang was frightened, he was still clear-headed and knew that trusting Yang Jian was his only way out alive.

Even if entering the room could mean death, he had to accept that risk.

At that moment, he cautiously took a step forward and slowly entered the room.

The air was filled with a murky stench of decay, and the surroundings exuded an indescribable eeriness.

"Come to where I am," Yang Jian instructed.

Li Yang nodded, sensing no immediate danger. He relaxed a bit and hurriedly quickened his pace into the living room.

"Do you see the silhouette outside the window?" Yang Jian pointed at the person pressing their hands against the glass outside.

"I see it," Li Yang's throat moved as he spoke, finding it hard to talk.

Yang Jian spoke with unnatural calm, "The ghost is outside the window, and your only task now is to stand here and watch it. Once I leave the room, you must immediately turn and run out. I'll be outside to restrain the ghost. It shouldn't be difficult for an ordinary person like you."

"Okay, I'll try," Li Yang said, somewhat understanding Yang Jian's plan.

He needed to make the ghost reveal itself.

The best way was to switch places, letting Yang Jian appear outside the door.

"Good."

After speaking, Yang Jian turned and left, moving quickly. In mere seconds, he was out of the room.

Indeed, his guess was correct.

The ghost remained outside the window, not hindering Yang Jian's departure.

Between two people, the ghost could only choose one.

"You can come back now," Yang Jian called from outside the door.

Upon hearing this, Li Yang turned and ran towards the door, seeing Yang Jian there waiting to catch him.

But as fast as he was, the ghost in the room was faster.

A dark shadow seemed to flash by instantly, and a cold wind blew through the silent surroundings.

"Bang!" The door, only a few meters in front of Li Yang, suddenly slammed shut.

Instantly.

His steps froze, and he stood there, then pressed desperately against the door, hoping with all his heart for it to open.

He could only escape alive if the door opened.

Otherwise, he would become Yang Jian's replacement, trapped to die in here by the ghost—even the sight of an exit would be useless.

"Has it finally appeared?"

Yang Jian stood outside the door, looking coldly at the corpse propped against it.

It was then that he could see the face of the corpse.

The corpse of a foreign man who had been dead for a long time, but it was so decayed that one could not discern his features at all, only make out that it should be a male.

"Is this the ghost manipulator who controlled a ghost? A member of that team?" Yang Jian glanced at the other corpses nearby.

Then, without hesitation, he took off his glove and reached out with his ghastly pale hand to directly grab the corpse.

He now didn't need to suppress the Ghost Eye, so the Ghost Hand still had one suppression slot available.

Immediately, the corpse propped against the door lost some strange power, and the decaying body started to collapse, crumbling as if falling apart.

"Creak!"

The firmly shut door opened at that moment.

Seeing the door open, Li Yang rushed out, gasping for breath.

"I told you, you'd be fine," Yang Jian nonchalantly threw the corpse back into the room and closed the door.

He didn't imprison the ghost because he didn't want to waste time, and he didn't have the tools to do so at the moment, opting instead to abandon it.

Normally, he would have simply taken it and sold it.

After all, in the supernatural circles, a captured ghost was quite valuable. Half a year ago, they fetched a price of a billion, and the price would only be higher now, not to mention they were hot commodities. Supernatural incidents had been escalating, and the level of attention far surpassed before, with many consortia and states starting to study and get involved at any cost.

"Yang Jian, I—I feel something is wrong with me," Li Yang said after catching his breath, lifting his head to look at Yang Jian. His face was paler than a corpse's, and signs of livor mortis had begun to faintly appear on his haggard face.

Seeing him like this, Yang Jian's expression changed. He glanced at the motionless decayed body at the door, then at Li Yang, realizing something, and said with a light laugh, "I don't know whether to say your luck is good or bad. But I still have to remind you, you have now become a ghost manipulator."

"The ghost has attached itself to you."

"What, what?" Li Yang looked at him with astonishment, completely incredulous.

Chapter 632 The Inevitable Footsteps of Death

I've become a driving spirit?

Li Yang, still incredulous and a little dazed from shock, looked at Yang Jian, visibly struggling to comprehend the meaning of "driving spirit".

"Don't look at me like that, you will soon find out what has happened to you," Yang Jian said.

Yang Jian did not spend much time explaining, as the rotting corpse at the doorway gave him a rough idea of the situation.

The Door-blocking Ghost was not the corpse itself; it was more like a malevolent spirit that possessed a person, similar to a curse, without a physical form. Just now, by suppressing the ghost, Yang Jian had caused the corpse that had been sustained by supernatural power to collapse completely, rendering it unable to move.

So the ghost chose another person to possess.

Li Yang, who was the closest, became the new target for the ghostly possession.

Of course, this was just a guess, another possibility being that the last person to leave the room would continue the curse, taking the ghost's place to exist.

Anyway.

Becoming a driving spirit is always an accident amid various supernatural events. Even Yang Jian couldn't explain this phenomenon; he only knew that some ghosts could be controlled by the living, while others would lead to immediate death upon contact. As for the boundary between the two, even Wang Xiaoming would likely struggle to deduce it.

"I think I'm beginning to understand you... I've merged with the ghost that was in the room just now. Have I become it?" Li Yang was quick to grasp the situation, after all, he had lived here for several months.

Yang Jian was slightly surprised, "You're right in your understanding, but you haven't become it; instead, the ghost has taken control of you."

"But I don't feel controlled," Li Yang said.

Yang Jian replied, "That's because this has just started, like how a person doesn't immediately die upon getting cancer; it needs time to develop. The same applies to a driving spirit. As time goes by, you'll feel the presence of the ghost in your body more and more. It will keep eroding you, and while you'll have to constantly fight against it, eventually, you'll end up like this."

With that, he pointed at the decomposed, collapsed corpse in front of them.

"How can this be..." Li Yang was terrified.

He then realized that the corpse in front of him might just be the fate of the previous person possessed by the ghost, and that it wouldn't be long before he ended up the same way.

"How can I avoid this outcome?"

Immediately, Li Yang asked the question again, out of sheer urgency.

Yang Jian had already shifted his gaze away, looking elsewhere, and said casually, "You can't avoid it. When you're close to your breaking point, perhaps you can consider controlling a second ghost. Use another ghost to fight against the one inside you, which could prolong the time before the ghost kills you."

"Control two ghosts? Wouldn't that just kill me faster?" Li Yang felt a chill at the idea.

Being possessed by one ghost was already terrifying and unsettling; adding another to the mix, would he even remain alive?

Yang Jian confirmed, "Indeed, it'll kill you faster, and a regular person wouldn't even have the opportunity to control two ghosts."

Yang Jian added, "But you don't need to worry about it; at least while you're still alive, you can possess some of the ghost's abilities to some extent. You'll have some ability to protect yourself in future supernatural events."

"I'll give your ghost a code name. How about calling it Door-blocking Ghost? Or Ghost Door Blocker is fine too. Choose one yourself," Yang Jian suggested.

"..." Li Yang fell silent.

Then he remembered what Yang Jian had said about himself when he introduced himself earlier: his code name was Ghost Eye.

Li Yang took a serious look into Yang Jian's eyes.

He found Yang Jian's eyes to be completely normal, just like an ordinary person's. The only difference was the eyes were colder, seemingly devoid of emotion, which was quite intimidating.

"You're observing me? Or looking for the ghost inside me?" Yang Jian glanced over, "We have wasted enough time. Let's continue searching. This place isn't big; the Ghost Drawing must be here somewhere."

Li Yang immediately diverted his gaze and exchanged a few words with Jimmy, telling him that the search must continue, as they hadn't found what Yang Jian was looking for in that room.

Upon hearing this, Jimmy almost rolled his eyes and passed out.

But at this point, they no longer had a choice in the matter.

Helpless, the two had no option but to continue following Yang Jian in the search through the third floor.

"An unexpected driving spirit has joined us. With my Ghost Eye being restricted, he may be of some help at certain times," Yang Jian silently noted.

Although some time had been wasted, gaining a potential ally was good news.

Otherwise, if he were alone and faced real danger, it might be difficult to cope.

"Including the guy in the room earlier, at least six driving spirits have died on this small floor alone. Besides the Door-blocking Ghost in the room and the ghost on these wooden stairs, there might still be other ghosts around, not necessarily all gone," Yang Jian analyzed the situation, not in the best of moods.

The situation here was more complicated than he had thought.

The only consolation was that so far, they had not encountered any truly terrifying ghosts.

Shortly after.

The three of them started searching the floor, with Yang Jian leading them into the room next door.

The room was locked tight, with nothing inside. Yang Jian searched very carefully, even scanning the place like Ghost Shadow carpet searching, but found nothing.

No anomalies in the third room.

No anomalies in the fourth room...

Apart from that room where the ghost had blocked the door, it seemed that there were no more ghosts lingering in the other rooms.

Yang Jian was nearly certain that the third floor was now safe.

"The Ghost Drawing isn't on the third floor?" Yang Jian once again stood in the middle of the corridor on the third floor, pondering and inadvertently glancing upward.

Maybe it was on the fourth floor.

The third and fourth floors were very close; it was quite possible that the Ghost Drawing was hidden on the fourth floor.

"Are we going to keep searching?" After hesitating for quite a while, Li Yang couldn't help but ask.

He was not Yang Jian; in such a mentally taxing atmosphere, normal people could hardly endure. Jimmy, at his side, was already less lively, and continuing the search could lead to psychological issues.

"This is the objective of my mission. I won't leave until it's completed," Yang Jian stated and then turned to Li Yang, "We've come this far, are you still thinking of backing down? Don't be foolish; even if you return to the place you were hiding before, can you guarantee you'll leave alive?"

...

"Surviving a few more days is all, but to leave you must directly confront the ghosts," said Yang Jian.
"Even the exit I know of is not necessarily safe; there's immense danger involved."

"I understand," said Li Yang, even though he didn't grasp everything. He was clear in his heart that Yang Jian's words were right.

If you want to survive, you have to look for clues on the ghosts and find the exit.

Blindly running away is meaningless.

He had been running around in this world of ghost drawing for several months, his circumstances growing more tragic and the number of survivors dwindling... He didn't know when he himself might die here.

"Let's go to the fourth floor."

Yang Jian's gaze shifted slightly as he made this dangerous decision.

If the ghost drawing wasn't on the third floor, then the probability that it was on the fourth was very high.

They were getting close to the source, and he was not going to back down or give up now.

"There's a ghost standing on the wooden stairs. From the footsteps we heard just now, it's highly likely the ghost is on the stairs to the fourth floor," said Yang Jian. "If I go up the stairs, I'll definitely run into the ghost on the stairs. It's unavoidable. But the ghost drawing has changed the other areas; all the paths are blocked, leaving only these stairs unchanged."

Yang Jian looked at the old wooden staircase.

The stairs were unaffected by the ghost drawing because they were occupied by a ghost. Otherwise, they would have already vanished, like the room from before. Wherever there's a ghost, the influence of the ghost drawing seemed to be reduced somewhat.

"You guys stay here and keep an eye on the situation on this third floor for me. I'll go up to the fourth floor to check. If there's no problem with the stairs, then you can come up after me."

Yang Jian did not ask Li Yang and the one named Jimmy to follow.

Taking them now would be like sending them to their deaths. Besides, Li Yang had just become a ghost controller. Yang Jian didn't want him to be killed by a fierce ghost's resurgence right away. That would just mean he'd have to deal with another ghost inhabiting a body later on.

Neither of them objected.

Yang Jian chose to scout ahead alone.

The steps leading to the fourth floor weren't numerous; it was a staircase where you could see the end.

The stairs were steep and narrow, and unavoidable creaking noises came from the wooden steps upon each step.

Though the sound wasn't loud, in this silent, oppressive, and dim environment, it was especially clear.

"Creak!"

Yang Jian had taken only one step when an immediate response came from above—a heavy footstep that seemed to be descending from the upper floor.

"The sound has appeared again," said Li Yang, looking up and unable to hide his nervousness.

But Yang Jian didn't hesitate a bit as he took his next step. The curse of the Eight-Tone Music Box echoed in his mind, and he wasn't as fearful of the ghost coming down the stairs, so he quickly resumed his climb.

Step by step, though slow, he was resolute.

Soon he had crossed half the steps, and now he could raise his head to see the situation on the fourth floor.

The layout was the same as on the third floor. The only difference was the absence of numerous bodies on the ground, everything appeared very normal.

However, the footstep sound on the stairs was now extremely close. He was sure it was just above his head, separated only by the wooden steps, probably not more than five meters apart.

"The ghost is on the stairs from the fourth to the fifth floor, now descending. Its position is almost level with mine, having crossed half the steps. If I keep moving forward, I'm going to meet the ghost in the hallway on the fourth floor."

Yang Jian estimated, and he was now quite sure of the ghost's exact whereabouts.

"Since it can't be circumvented and is inevitable, I'll just have to confront this ghost head on."

With his thoughts clear, he moved even faster.

With no hesitation, he quickly strode past the stairs to the fourth floor, then stared intently at the stairway leading to the fifth floor.

The ghost was about to appear.

The next moment.

Yang Jian distinctly heard a heavy footstep right beside him, already coming down from the fifth floor, theoretically now on the fourth floor.

But he saw nothing.

No ghost, no abnormalities.

Then, all of a sudden.

Yang Jian felt a wave of dizziness wash over him, his consciousness fading as if to disappear, his body unable to stand and collapsing right at the stairway entrance, as if he had suddenly died.

He had been attacked by the ghost.

After he fell, Yang Jian, in a daze, felt an indescribable chill lingering around him, as if someone was walking back and forth, emitting those heavy footsteps.

But after hovering for a while, that footstep sound gradually faded, as if moving away, or perhaps because Yang Jian was already "dead," he was no longer a target for attack.

As the footsteps faded away.

Yang Jian quickly felt his consciousness rapidly returning. The familiar ring of the Eight-Tone Music Box pulled his fading consciousness back.

"Did I almost die again?"

When his consciousness cleared, Yang Jian felt a wave of relief wash over him.

This was the third time the curse of the Eight-Tone Music Box had saved him—the first time was from the Ghost Scissors' attack, the second was the piano sound assault, and now the third... The time he was cut by the strange Firewood Knife didn't count, as that was an active test and different from the other instances.

All three attacks were strange one-shot killers. Without the Eight-Tone Music Box's curse, Yang Jian would have been killed without any chance of survival.

"Is the ghost haunting these stairs really so terrible? Once targeted, even I could be killed," Yang Jian struggled to his feet.

He was used to this kind of thing by now.

Of course, if he didn't have the curse of the Eight-Tone Music Box, he would never have taken such a risk, knowingly approaching the stairs where he knew a ghost lurked.

Now, he was on the fourth floor, and he no longer heard those eerie footsteps.

Maybe the ghost left, or maybe it was still lurking around but because Yang Jian was no longer a target, he did not continue to be attacked.

Chapter 633 Displaying the True Picture

The ghost accompanied by footsteps had not left, still lingering on the fourth floor. It could move to the third floor at any moment, but so far there had been no one on the stairs, so the ghost had temporarily taken no action, choosing to fall into silence.

Yang Jian's ghost sight was subdued now, making him unable to see the ghost, but he knew it was an extremely terrifying fierce ghost.

Because just a moment ago, he had been killed by this very ghost.

The Undying Curse of the Eight-Tone Music Box had preserved his consciousness, allowing him to come back to life.

"From what just happened, this ghost seemed to be attracted by the sound of footsteps, or perhaps the noise of going up and down the stairs... The pattern must be related to footsteps, once someone makes a footstep sound the ghost will keep approaching, and as soon as a person comes very close to the ghost, the living person is doomed."

Yang Jian's eyes flickered, he was analyzing the situation just now.

Although his analysis might not be correct, he felt that he had grasped the ghost's general killing pattern; it was just not detailed enough.

After all, he had tried with his life at stake, and had gained some useful insights.

"Mister Yang, what happened just now? Are you all right?" Li Yang asked anxiously from below the stairs.

"There was a minor incident, the ghost had already come to the fourth floor recently, very dangerous. You guys stay put there, don't attempt to leave by the stairs, otherwise, the ghost will follow you to the third floor, or even leave the building... then no one can save you," said Yang Jian calmly.

"I understand."

Li Yang trembled, looking at the dim stairs, he felt an inexplicable sense of danger.

Fortunately, they had discovered the presence of a ghost on the stairs early on during their ascent, otherwise he and Jimmy would certainly have died here.

Yang Jian no longer dared to act recklessly now.

He couldn't be sure whether he would be attacked by the ghost again, nor could he say with certainty that the curse of the Eight-Tone Music Box would save him the next time.

After all, the ghost had the ability to kill him in an instant.

"Could the ghost on the stairs also be left behind by the foreign ghost tamers' team? If so, that's good news. It's scary to imagine how terrifying the person who controlled such a ghost must have been," Yang Jian couldn't help but think.

The previous Door-blocking Ghost had been confirmed to be a paranormal event formed after the death of a foreign ghost tamer, but that person's ghost wasn't particularly terrifying and was still within Yang Jian's ability to handle. However, regarding the stair ghost, he felt that he currently couldn't deal with it and if it were outside, he could only use his ghost sight at a distance to cope.

If he got close, he was certainly doomed.

And to think that the formidable person who had tamed such a ghost had faltered in the incident with the ghost painting, it was gratifying to contemplate.

Because after that person died, the ghost was also trapped here, unable to leave.

Although this increased the danger inside the ghost painting, at least the outside was safe, and there was no need to encounter such strange and terrifying footsteps.

"Continue the search."

Yang Jian's exploration was not over; he had searched the third floor without finding the ghost painting and had now come to the fourth floor; therefore, the operation must continue.

But now, with a terrifying fierce ghost wandering the corridors of the fourth floor, Yang Jian was extra cautious in his movements.

He didn't make any sound of footsteps, moving forward carefully, searching alone.

It was lucky that the curse of the Eight-Tone Music Box was still in effect; otherwise, Yang Jian would definitely not have risked this haunted place, which was no less dangerous than any of the paranormal events he had encountered before.

Ghost Shadows beneath Yang Jian's feet explored; he wasn't just relying on his eyes to look for the ghost painting but was using the Ghost Shadow to cover the area, searching for that concealed picture frame.

Time passed by slowly.

Because he had to avoid being attacked by the ghost in the corridor, his searching efficiency wasn't very fast.

At first, Yang Jian didn't find anything.

But soon enough, Yang Jian discovered some traces; this floor had been deliberately damaged in places, with golden bullet casings left on the ground, as if someone had confronted something here at some time.

"As expected, the ghost tamer who died on the third floor had also been up here. They encountered danger here, then fled to the third floor, where they were trapped by the ghost painting and couldn't leave, only to fight desperately, but in the end, they were all killed by the ghosts in the painting. However, I can't understand why a top-notch team of ghost tamers would die inside a ghost painting?"

Yang Jian felt he was getting closer and closer to that thing, but his unease grew stronger.

The ghost painting was somewhere on this floor.

It might be found very soon, but what worried him more was whether anything truly terrifying would happen after making real contact with the source of the ghost painting.

Would the curse of the Eight-Tone Music Box really be able to withstand the source of the ghost painting?

However, Yang Jian hadn't forgotten his mission this time; he simply didn't need to confront the ghost painting directly. He just needed to find it and take a quick look before getting out right away to complete the task given by the Ghost Cabinet.

Soon,

Yang Jian came to a room on the fourth floor.

But the moment he opened the door, he immediately heard something fall to the floor behind it, seemingly knocked over by his action of opening the door.

Looking down, Yang Jian's expression changed instantly.

It was a painting.

There was nothing in the painting, just pitch black, at first glance it looked like a piece of black paper had been mounted onto a picture frame, with no patterns or features on it.

But unlike ordinary black paper, the blackness on this painting varied in density, the shadows changing with the light sometimes forming a handprint, sometimes like the outline of a face concealed in the darkness, yet more often than not, two black dots within the painting were like a pair of black pupils, peering out from the shadows.

A very eerie painting, but not the ghost painting.

Yet Yang Jian's instincts told him that a ghost, or perhaps even a ghost hiding inside this frame, waited for an opportunity to escape.

But before Yang Jian could take a closer look,

What shocked him even more was that the walls and even the ceiling of this room were covered with various paintings, differing in size, with diverse contents but one common feature: all of these paintings had a very dim, oppressive background.

Looking at them was decidedly uncomfortable.

"This is a room exhibiting all sorts of eerie paintings; the ghost painting is very likely to be in this room," Yang Jian's body shook, feeling that he had come to a quite remarkable place.

For the first time, a notion of retreat blossomed in his heart, the desire to close the door and immediately leave this place.

But the music echoing in his mind warned him, he was still under a terrible curse, and leaving now would mean missing a chance to survive.

However, entering this room was undoubtedly going to subject him to a considerable and frightening danger.

Perhaps once he entered, it would be very difficult to come out alive again.

He weighed his options.

In the end, Yang Jian didn't choose to retreat, but he also didn't opt for a forceful search of the room displaying various paintings. Instead, he decided to tentatively look around, ready to immediately withdraw if he encountered anything abnormal, without any hesitation.

He picked up the black painting that lay at the doorway.

Instead of carrying it with him, he chose to flip it over and cover it on the ground, out of sight, out of mind.

After that, Yang Jian stepped into the room.

His gaze darted everywhere, searching and vigilant.

He saw a painting hanging on the wall. The background was dim, but you could vaguely make out that it was the inside of a building. However, what caught his attention was not the background of the painting, but the old staircase depicted in it. One end of the staircase disappeared into the darkness, and the other end extended to the very bottom of the painting.

And it seemed that there was someone standing on the staircase, a person with only a blurry outline, like a shadowy existence, indiscernible.

"This staircase..." Yang Jian's expression hardened.

The staircase in the painting was exactly like the wooden staircase he had just stepped on. No, this painting was based on that very staircase.

Most importantly, the ghost that was invisible on the staircase was faintly revealed in this painting.

From the background in the painting, Yang Jian deduced that the ghost's location was on the third step of the fourth floor downstairs, nearly the same spot where he had been attacked.

Shortly after, Yang Jian discovered another painting.

It depicted a dimly lit living room with a black-screened television in one corner and a single-seat sofa in front of it, the sofa empty and desolate, as if the ghost that had been sitting there had now vanished.

"It's the same room Li Yang and I entered earlier. There was originally a ghost in that room, but now the ghost is on Li Yang, so it isn't shown in the painting."

Yang Jian seemed to understand a bit.

Each painting here corresponded to a specific place, whether it was a room or a staircase, all could be found here. The only difference was that these paintings revealed the real situations from outside, including the hidden, unseen ghosts.

With this realization, he couldn't help but walk a few steps forward, trying to get a clearer view of more paintings.

Before long,

a particularly unusual painting appeared before his eyes.

The painting depicted a gray, overcast sky, and underneath it, a village set in the middle of the fields flickered in and out of visibility.

The village was painted with black dye, blurry and indistinct, only a general outline visible. Yet Yang Jian could see it clearly: the contours of many houses in the village pieced together, forming the vague shape of a coffin from a distance.

And in the most prominent part of the painting stood a sign with three characters on it. The handwriting was blurry, only roughly recognizable as the name of a village.

It must be the name of a village.

"That is... the Ghost Envoy," Yang Jian's expression turned grim.

He was familiar with this village, that coffin-shaped Ghost Domain even more so. It was the Ghost Envoy that had disappeared into the haunted paintings.

This S-ranked fearsome ghost had also been trapped in the haunted paintings.

Besides the Ghost Envoy, Yang Jian saw yet another painting. The background was an old, rural bungalow. Standing at the front door of the bungalow was an old man, his figure blurred, clothes neat and tidy. Although his features were not clearly defined, he could still make out the old man's smiling face, as if he was looking in this direction.

Originally, a painting combined with the background and an old man wearing a peculiar smile instantly gave Yang Jian the feeling of facing a memorial portrait.

This painting felt even more eerie than the ghost on the staircase.

Yang Jian dared not gaze too long, aware that the ghosts in these haunted paintings were more numerous than imagined. Perhaps long before, these haunted paintings had already trapped many ghosts, not all of them left behind by the deceased members of the foreign team of ghost tamers.

"If I encounter any of the places described in the paintings next time, I must avoid them. These places are all haunted, and I must not touch them."

After briefly noting a few dangerous spots, Yang Jian walked a few steps further.

Although the room was filled with paintings, they took up a lot of space. Having entered, he had only looked at a few, and the paintings ahead were unclear due to distance and angle, appearing merely as frames on the wall, their content not displayed before his eyes. To see more, he would need to delve deeper into the room.

Fortunately, there were no anomalies around.

Despite each painting housing a ghost, none appeared before Yang Jian.

Soon,

Yang Jian stopped in his tracks, his eyes fixed on a painting that took up a large area.

This long painting stretched from the ceiling all the way down to the floor.

The background was high-rise buildings, but the true focus was on a single building.

A building shrouded in a dim world.

It had seven levels... just like the building Yang Jian was in.

"This painting corresponds to the situation in this building," Yang Jian immediately stared at the painting, scanning from top to bottom quickly.

But soon, his eyes narrowed.

Because he saw a ghost standing at the entrance of the building.

The ghost was familiar, dressed in red clothes, with blurry features, but surely a woman, with pale hands that exuded an indescribable eeriness.

The ghost he had been searching for all this while turned out to be just standing downstairs.

Chapter 634 Dangerous Building

...

Yang Jian compared the paintings hanging in this room with everything that had just happened and discovered some mysteries about these paintings.

Each painting actually corresponded to a ghost, and also to a scene within the Ghost Painting world. Once you found yourself in the scene depicted in the painting, there was a high probability you would encounter the lingering specter haunting that place. Moreover, the most important thing was that the scenes in the paintings were not always the same.

The content of the paintings changed constantly based on what was actually happening.

Take for example the painting behind Yang Jian, which depicted a ghost sitting on a sofa in a room. But now, that ghost had been tamed by Li Yang, so the ghost in the painting had disappeared as well.

But now, Yang Jian's gaze was fixed on the painting in front of him.

The painting depicted a seven-story building.

Standing at the entrance on the first floor was a sinister woman, her facial features blurry, standing motionless at the doorway as if she had become part of the background of the painting.

Yet, such a scene struck Yang Jian as particularly horrifying.

If the content of the painting was, as he suspected, a real scene from the Ghost Painting, then the ghost was now standing at the bottom of the building he was in.

"When did this ghost appear? When I went upstairs earlier, I had already confirmed the surroundings; there were no ghosts approaching... Or could it be that when I reached the third floor, the environment changed and the ghost from the Ghost Painting had already arrived? Is that change in environment just a sign of impending danger?"

"Wait, something's not right. The ghost down at the entrance is part of the Ghost Painting itself and shouldn't be considered the ghost from this painting. Based on the previous situations, each painting should have another distinct ghost."

Yang Jian's expression turned grave, feeling that this particularly large painting was very unusual.

Because, aside from the ghost at the lower entrance, he now suspected that there was another ghost in this building.

A ghost that had never been documented before.

In order to verify his theory, Yang Jian meticulously searched from top to bottom again, not overlooking any corner, attempting to locate that unknown ghost. Unknown ghosts represent unknown dangers, and it was very likely he would encounter one in what was to come.

The place he was in was a building.

But the representation in the painting was only a flat surface—it was the front of the building. Black streaks roughly sketched out the shape of the building in a style that was casual, like a beginner randomly doodling on a sketchpad, so the painting was not detailed, with little content discernible.

A few twisted lines of the building's silhouette, over twenty dark and empty windows, dim walls, and the murky gray sky.

As for the adjacent streets and other buildings, they were absent from this painting.

Time, it seemed, did not allow Yang Jian to continue his meticulous search for the unknown ghost hiding in the building, for he suddenly noticed a change occurring in the painting.

The ghost that had been standing at the entrance turned around.

Yes.

Yang Jian wasn't mistaken; the ghost that had been facing the front just a moment ago was now seen from the back. The position of the ghost had also changed. It had been at the entrance, but now it was inside the door on the first floor of the building.

The information conveyed by this change was already quite clear.

The ghost was moving.

And it had already entered the building, possibly even starting to ascend the stairs.

"I can't stay here any longer. I must leave this building as soon as possible. The ghost has arrived, it has discovered me, and there is a terrifying ghost on the stairs of the building. Besides, the building itself hides an unknown ghost. If the Ghost Painting completely alters the appearance of this building, I'll be trapped here alive."

Yang Jian's face turned pale as he realized the danger.

What worried him wasn't a direct confrontation with the Ghost Painting, but the possibility of being trapped within the Ghost Painting without the protection of the Ghost Domain, and then succumbing to the curse of the Eight-Tone Music Box.

However, the Ghost Painting on the third or fourth floor, which had yet to be found, left Yang Jian uncertain whether he had completed the task of the Ghost Cabinet.

Perhaps discovering the Source Ghost would count as completion, but that was an easy task; the ghost was on the first floor and about to ascend—it would definitely be encountered during retreat.

But what if the task was to find the Ghost Painting? Or what if both were required together?

"I can't take that gamble. I came here utterly unprepared for a confrontation with the Ghost Painting. The risk of staying now exceeds all other options. If I wanted to handle this perfectly, I'd have to resolve the Ghost Painting incident alone, which is impossible given my current state."

Yang Jian was assessing the situation.

Even though he was already close to the Source, with a few helpers to suppress the ghost downstairs and restart the Ghost Painting, the S-class supernatural incident could be smoothly resolved.

But that step would require risking his life, and it was not something one person could do.

Glancing at the other paintings in the room.

Yang Jian noticed that these paintings were beginning to fade gradually, starting with the one farthest in, as if everything that had happened was an illusion, and there had never been so many paintings hanging here in the first place.

It wouldn't take long for everything in this room to disappear completely, even the room itself might no longer exist.

"Changes have begun again, this means the ghost is approaching, altering the scenery here, not wanting me to continue digging."

...

He knew that the Ghost Domain within the ghost painting was changing, a change he could not stop, just as he had previously used the Ghost Domain to trap others—you could only be forced to accept it.

"The more it happens, the more it proves that I am very close to finding the Source Ghost painting, possibly less than ten meters away. It could be somewhere in this room, maybe in the next one, or perhaps in some inconspicuous place lies the ghost painting..."

Yang Jian felt some reluctance, but the reality told him that it was time to leave.

Getting this far was already quite lucky. For other ghost controllers who entered this place, finding the ghost painting within such a vast Ghost Domain seemed nearly impossible, let alone getting close to it.

Without hesitation or regret,

Yang Jian turned and left, but he didn't touch any of the paintings nearby, nor did he tempt fate by trying to take one of the paintings or a ghost from within a painting.

Any action could lead to his death here.

As he left the room, things happened just as he had anticipated.

The moment his front foot stepped out, the door of the room disappeared, leaving only an old, dim wall. The changes within the Ghost Domain had grown more significant, attempting to alter everything on this floor and erase all suspicious traces to prevent Yang Jian from getting any closer to the ghost painting.

The phenomenon was exactly the same as before, in the school dormitory.

"Li Yang, are you still downstairs?"

Yang Jian had now reached the stairway. Looking down and not seeing Li Yang, he called out.

"Mister Yang, I'm still downstairs, and something is not right. I think I vaguely saw someone coming upstairs," Li Yang's voice revealed a hint of panic.

He was indeed alert, not expecting to have already noticed the fact that ghosts from the painting were heading upstairs.

"We need to leave this place now. I'll rush downstairs as fast as I can shortly, and you follow. No matter what you see or encounter along the way, don't stop. This floor isn't very high, so it should be no problem to burst out of here in one go," Yang Jian said directly.

"I understand," Li Yang replied.

Yang Jian looked once more at the wooden staircase before him.

The staircase could not be influenced by the Ghost Domain from the ghost painting, so it was the only way out right now, but it wasn't safe because another ghost was lingering on the staircase.

Once they acted, that ghost would follow their footsteps.

Then, anyone could be killed.

Even Yang Jian himself might lose the optimal moment to leave due to a brief loss of consciousness, and then get trapped in the building by the ghost painting.

However, the next moment.

Yang Jian moved, almost without any hesitation, acting very quickly. He rushed down the wooden staircase.

He stepped over four steps at once, and in two steps, he had almost crossed half the staircase. He wanted to get out of the building before the ghost caught up or even reacted to him. Once outside, he believed he would be safe.

After a few steps, Yang Jian had returned to the third floor.

He saw Li Yang, whose tense face kept looking down the stairs, seemingly observing the situation below, while Jimmy was paying attention to the abnormality on the floor behind them.

"What are you waiting for? Let's go," Yang Jian barked.

Li Yang also froze for a moment. Although he was prepared, he did not expect Yang Jian to come rushing down so directly—that was a bit too fast.

But before he could think further,

The wooden stairs from the fourth to the third floor creaked urgently, as if someone was swiftly heading downstairs. Yet, the staircase was empty.

"Run, Jimmy!" Li Yang shouted in terror.

Yang Jian didn't rush ahead; he paused, knowing that the faster he moved, the faster the ghost would. To leave, all three of them had to move nearly simultaneously; otherwise, the person in the rear would quickly be caught by the ghost, and then escaping from the building would be impossible.

The sound of descending footsteps on the staircase continued, and the ghost was about to finish the steps to the third floor.

At that moment, Yang Jian started to move again.

He moved quickly, rushing towards the second floor, while Li Yang and Jimmy followed in terror, mustering all their strength to dash downstairs.

Their rapid actions did not shake off the footsteps behind them, which became even more urgent, as if also running swiftly, relentlessly closing the distance between them.

According to what had happened before,

If someone was caught by those footsteps, they would immediately die, without any ghost appearing to attack them; it was like an inevitable curse.

Even Yang Jian could not resist it.

Chapter 635 Encounter on the Stairs

Thump, thump, thump

A series of hasty footsteps echoed through the dim and oppressive stairwell, signaling that several people were rushing down from the upper floors, their urgency palpable. And trailing behind this clatter of footsteps was another sound, as if something were in pursuit.

Strictly speaking, it only takes two flights of stairs to go from the third floor all the way down, a very short distance indeed. A typical person could complete it in about thirty seconds, including the walk through the hallway.

Yet, this short distance had three people lingering on the verge of death.

Yang Jian was a bit more exceptional; he wasn't as fragile as ordinary people. But he hadn't forgotten that danger wasn't only lurking behind him.

It was within his expectations that the ghost from the stairs would give chase—quick action could avoid the next attack from the stairwell ghost. However, the ghost from the painting on the first floor was unavoidable, as there was only this one way out. It was impossible to leave through the windows of the building.

At this moment, Yang Jian had already reached the second floor and quickly passed through the hallway, arriving at the top of the staircase leading down to the first floor.

But then, his eyes narrowed slightly.

Because his most dreaded scenario had come to pass.

There in front of him appeared another ghost, dressed in red, its facial features blurred and indistinct, only recognizable as a woman through other vague characteristics. The most eye-catching aspect was the pair of hands in front of the ghost's body—pale, realistic, yet cold and eerily strange.

This discordant appearance was all the more horrifying.

The ghost from the painting?

Although Yang Jian had been prepared, he couldn't help but pause upon this direct encounter—an instinctive act of caution.

However, his vigilant hesitation wasn't shared by the ghost.

The ghost from the painting had already reached the stairs, ascending in silence, its feet as hazy as the figures in an oil painting, but the old-fashioned embroidered shoes it wore could be discerned, looking very similar to someone in a particular photo.

Perhaps what the Ghost Cabinet was truly seeking was this ghost.

Yang Jian had now seen it, which meant he might have completed the task of the Ghost Cabinet, but that wasn't his current concern.

The narrow staircase was now blocked by the ghost, leaving no way to bypass it. To descend the stairs, he would have to pass by the ghost, with no idea whether an attack would come. Yang Jian only knew that when Wang Quan had passed by the ghost earlier, he wasn't attacked right away, although the ghost had still followed after a few steps.

Therefore, contacting the ghost from the painting carried an extremely high level of risk.

"Mister Yang, why have you stopped? Hurry up; those footsteps are very close now," urged Li Yang, his face ghastly from excessive fear, while Jimmy trembled all over.

The two had drawn closer to Yang Jian and, upon seeing the situation ahead, had hastily halted their steps.

Another ghost was unexpectedly right in front of them, and it was coming up the stairs?

The activity they had observed earlier was real—there truly was another ghost downstairs.

Li Yang nearly collapsed on the spot, and Jimmy, overwhelmed, began to cry and mutter words like "mom," as if he was prepared to die right there, thinking of his loved ones.

"Charge through; stopping is just waiting for death," said Yang Jian, making a decisive yet risky decision in a situation with ghosts both ahead and behind.

The footsteps were drawing nearer, leaving no room for choice, with the exit just a few meters away, in plain sight. Hesitating or recoiling in fear of the ghost blocking the path meant an even more gruesome death.

By charging through, the chance of survival was still substantial.

Of course, Yang Jian could make such a risky move only because the curse of the Eight-Tone Music Box was still in effect. If it had been before, he certainly wouldn't have made up his mind so quickly.

Immediately,

with the Ghost Shadow cloaked over him, Yang Jian charged straight down the stairs towards the ghost in front of him.

The ghost from the painting continued to climb the stairs without stopping.

As Yang Jian burst down from above, man and ghost met halfway up the stairs.

Yang Jian didn't really use his body to resist the ghost in front of him; instead, at this moment, he extended his Ghost Hand, trying to forcibly push away the ghost before him. The Ghost Hand possessed

the authority to suppress a quota of ghosts, and its energy had been effective against the derived products of the Ghost Shadows, but that was only effective against the derivatives, not the ghost in front of him. He didn't know if it would work against this ghost.

The answer was quick to come.

"Can't push it away?"

Yang Jian's face changed drastically as his hand had already made contact with the ghost's body. The power of the Ghost Shadow combined with the repression of the Ghost Hand was unexpectedly unable to push the ghost before him away. It felt like he was touching a cold stone; no matter how hard he tried, the ghost before him remained unmoved. Instead, it continued to advance slowly in the same manner as before.

"This ghost is different from the ones encountered before; its Terror Level is extremely high. It's very likely the real Source Ghost."

Perhaps because Yang Jian hadn't yet conformed to the attacking pattern of the ghost, his bold contact didn't result in an attack from the ghost before him.

The ghost's blurred features didn't even glance at him, nor did they pause, treating Yang Jian as if he were air and continuing on its way upstairs.

Without the time to consider all of this, and without thinking about why the ghost hadn't attacked him, Yang Jian immediately changed his strategy the moment he realized he couldn't push the ghost away.

He flipped over beside the ghost's body and forcibly descended the last step, completely leaving the eerie wooden staircase to avoid being caught by the ghost making the footsteps.

Li Yang was shocked to see Yang Jian handle the ghost's body and bypass it directly. He wanted to follow suit, but when the real ghost approached, he chickened out and couldn't help but step back.

After all, he didn't have the same mental fortitude as Yang Jian, an old hand at guiding ghosts. He lacked the courage to risk everything in a critical moment.

His retreat, however, caused him to bump into Jimmy standing behind him.

The two of them, like scared animals, shivered and trembled, not daring to move forward, yet also afraid to retreat.

Because the footsteps had already approached from behind.

With both ghosts drawing closer, the end seemed predictable.

The narrow staircase left no room for them to dodge; the outcome was foreseeable: they would either be killed by the ghost from the painting or die from the terrifying footsteps behind them.

"These two guys have indeed stopped. I'd told them before, no matter what you encounter, what you see, don't stop."

Yang Jian turned his head and saw this, his gaze turned grim.

He could completely leave now and ignore these two, but then he remembered that Li Yang had become a ghost guide and might be useful later on, and Jimmy had helped locate the Ghost Painting. It would seem too excessive to abandon them now,

especially since they weren't complete strangers.

"Let's try and see. Don't blame me if this doesn't work," thought Yang Jian, as the Headless Ghost Shadow at his feet rapidly covered the wooden staircase's railing and spread over it.

At this point, a third ghost joined the milieu on the staircase.

The Headless Ghost Shadow wasn't aiming to contend with either ghost but to scoop the people up.

Soon, the Headless Ghost Shadow enveloped Li Yang and Jimmy and directly lifted them both up.

Jimmy, powerless to resist like a puppet, allowed the Ghost Shadow to manipulate him, but Li Yang managed to struggle, as he appeared about to break free from the Ghost Shadow's control.

This was due to the ghost inside his body, subconsciously combating the invading Ghost Shadow.

After all, Li Yang still couldn't get used to or even use the abilities of the ghost in his body.

"Will this work?"

Yang Jian quickly brought back the two men lifted by the Ghost Shadow, but the footsteps on the staircase had already reached a fatally close range, and the ghost from the Ghost Painting also drew near.

The two ghosts were now about to collide on the narrow staircase.

Anything could happen at that moment.

Perhaps Jimmy and Li Yang would be killed instantly by the footsteps coming from behind, or they might get targeted by the ghost from the Ghost Painting and become its prey.

Or potentially, an unexpected situation could arise from the two ghosts encountering each other, such as mutual suppression or conflict of rules, which might allow the two men to fortuitously survive.

Hope was right before them, as was death.