

Revival 636

Chapter 636

Yang Jian, despite the threat of death, had successfully passed by the ghost and walked down the stairs unharmed, but Li Yang and the foreigner named Jimmy clearly lacked the courage to do the same.

Confronted by the ghost slowly ascending, fear had made them recoil, leaving them unsure of what to do next, and they seemed to have frozen in place.

The dreadful sound of footsteps behind them was rapidly closing in, with no intention of stopping because of this.

But Yang Jian was the first to act, stretching the Headless Ghost Shadow along the wall, like a person's shadow walking. The Ghost Shadow quickly reached the two men, enveloping them and forcefully restricting their movements in an attempt to lead them away from the dangerous staircase.

Under the control of the Ghost Shadow, the two men began to retreat quickly. Li Yang, though struggling, wasn't resisting too fiercely and was still within manageable limits.

The Ghost Shadow led them around the ghost depicted in the painting.

The narrow staircase was only wide enough for one person to ascend or descend at a time, and during regular use, people had to sidestep past each other, but the ghost wouldn't actively make way.

The ghost, whose features were blurred and wore red clothing, was still slowly ascending. Its size, not particularly large, stood in the middle of the staircase, blocking the way. To get past, one had to either squeeze by forcefully like Yang Jian or cross over fearlessly above the ghost's head. As for whether such a nearly direct encounter would lead to an attack, there was no choice in the matter.

The sinister footsteps behind them, in some respects, posed a greater danger than the ghost in the painting.

Approaching the ghost in the painting might not necessarily lead to an attack, but after the footsteps came near, death was certain. Yang Jian couldn't stop it himself.

At this moment, Li Yang, struggling, tried to squeeze past from one side of the ghost painting. He dared not do it himself, but the Ghost Shadow was controlling his body so that he had no way to act on his own. Despite the terror, his body involuntarily drew closer to the ghost before him.

An icy feeling seemed to seep through his entire body. He smelled the scent of old oil paint, and the ghost before him was not like the dead as he imagined, but more like an ambulatory old painting.

In the midst of their squeezing and touching, he made actual contact with the ghost.

He didn't feel the cold body beneath the red clothes, but rather it was as if he were touching a piece of paper with something missing inside, just an empty husk of a body.

In the meantime, Jimmy was lifted by the Ghost Shadow in an attempt to flip over the ghost's head. He couldn't struggle; the Ghost Shadow was like hauling a corpse.

The two of them forced their way past the ghost in such a simple and direct fashion.

But the footsteps from behind had already arrived. Judging by the sound from the wooden staircase, they were right behind the two men, very close to the ghost in the painting, probably only a distance of about three steps.

This proximity was dangerously close; it was very likely they were about to be attacked by that terrifying sound of footsteps.

The encounter of the two ghosts on the staircase seemed to trigger some unpredictable change.

At that moment,

The ascending ghost's footsteps suddenly stopped, no longer continuing upward as if something invisible ahead had blocked its path.

Similarly, the footsteps stopped then, halting as if on a particular step and not continuing the pursuit.

Or perhaps the footsteps were likewise blocked by the ghost in the painting.

At this moment, the two forces seemed to be locked in a standoff, neither giving way, confronting each other on the narrow staircase in an incomprehensible manner.

Yang Jian's Ghost Shadow seemed to be disrupted, as if an invisible supernatural power was intervening in everything around. The Ghost Shadow that had originally stood up was now trembling and distorting, and eventually, he could not entirely control it.

"Bang!"

Li Yang and Jimmy, who had just passed by the side of the ghost, fell from the Ghost Shadow, crashing heavily onto the steps below, and tumbled down.

Fortunately, the staircase was not high. Although they fell hard, at least they didn't fall unconscious or receive any fatal injuries.

"Quick, get up and leave this building."

Yang Jian had already saved them once, and now, without any hesitation, he retreated. Only when he reached the road behind him did the twisted Headless Ghost Shadow at his feet return to normal.

"The ghosts have stopped moving?" He then stared intently at the ghosts on the stairs inside the building.

He knew that the disappearance of footsteps and the cessation of the ghost's movements meant some change, but he dared not assert what the outcome would be.

"Wait, something's not right..."

Suddenly, Yang Jian saw the initially blurry figure of the ghost, which had been facing away from him, starting to become clearer, and he could even see the appearance of its feet, which before had been just a vague outline.

Everything looked as though the ghost was gradually becoming more real.

"Could the footsteps on the staircase have become a part of this ghost's puzzle?"

Immediately realizing something, his expression changed drastically.

Ghost puzzles didn't require specifics, just like the Hungry Ghost, which at first was just a blackish-green baby, but after assembling its puzzle, it turned into a fearsome dead person wrapped in a funeral shroud... The image would change according to the pieces of the puzzle it received.

The ghost in the painting was now undergoing some kind of transformation.

"If the footsteps on the staircase really became a piece of this ghost's puzzle, as I suspected, then this becomes even more troublesome."

The ghost painting alone had already decimated a team of foreign ghost handlers; if the triggered and deadly footsteps were added to it, the terror level of this ghost would rise even further. Ordinary ghost handlers would get killed just by approaching it, not to mention that the ghost painting itself had another unknown killing rule.

As the ghost began to change, Li Yang and Jimmy also staggered to their feet at this moment. They had not yet steadied themselves when they ran out in panic, trying to get as far away from the building—and the ghost on the staircase—as possible at the fastest speed.

"It's time to leave."

Upon seeing them run out, Yang Jian immediately said.

Now it wasn't about how dangerous the ghosts here were, but rather, finding a way to leave. He had located the Source Ghost and even made direct contact with it, and could be very certain that this ghost was unlike the others.

The best proof was that it couldn't be suppressed with just one quota.

Finding a way to complete the transaction of the Ghost Cabinet was the purpose of this trip.

Instantly.

The three of them started evacuating without looking back, moving swiftly and running, including Yang Jian, especially now as his Ghost Domain was being suppressed.

However, Yang Jian's physical abilities displayed now were already beyond normal. He had long exceeded the limits of the living, so he could run very fast and without feeling any fatigue. If he didn't consider the breakdown of his body, he could keep running like this indefinitely.

But the two men behind him were clearly lacking in stamina. Driven by fear, they managed to get away from the building as if injected with adrenaline, but eventually, they were so exhausted they almost collapsed on the ground, gasping for air.

"There's no time for you to rest. Up ahead is where you were hiding before. While that ghost has not yet appeared, it's best you take this chance. I won't wait for you too long. If you delay, I'll leave first," Yang Jian said, looking at them seriously.

"I understand."

Li Yang seemed to have undergone some change in his body after becoming a ghost handler; he caught his breath a bit faster and immediately ran back to their previous hiding spot.

Yang Jian took a glance but was more concerned about the direction they had come from.

The staircase wouldn't stop the ghost for long, and since this was inside a ghost painting, it meant the ghost could appear at any moment.

Therefore, until he had completely left the place, Yang Jian wouldn't let his guard down.

Time passed by bit by bit.

In less than five minutes, a group of panicked survivors ran towards them from the nearby building. There were more people than before, and although they were somewhat disorganized, their actions were surprisingly unified—they were quiet and stayed together.

In a sense, these people have all been vetted by supernatural incidents; surviving up till now isn't merely a matter of luck.

"Based on our previous deal, since you've led the way and found the ghost's location for me, I will now lead you out of here. There may be dangers along the way, but don't expect anyone to save you, because no one can survive in front of a ghost, so you'll have to rely on your own luck."

Yang Jian gave them a glance and issued a warning in advance.

Li Yang immediately translated what was just said.

Everyone was silent, no objections raised, which was taken as silent consent.

"Very well, then let's move immediately." Yang Jian glanced again at the people, but David, the man from before, was not among them.

He had been kicked by Yang Jian, and although not dead, he probably couldn't move anymore.

And at this time, no one was willing to carry a burden.

David had been abandoned.

A perfectly normal decision; back when Yang Jian had encountered the Hungry Ghost incident, his classmates did the same. Nobody cared about others, and it was already considered nice if you didn't sabotage someone else while escaping.

Without another word, Yang Jian started running towards the exit they had used to enter this place.

A large group of people followed behind him.

"Oh, shit."

Jimmy, still out of breath, saw that they had to run again and couldn't help but curse, his face covered in sweat.

But Yang Jian hadn't gone far before he realized that something was off.

When he had first arrived, he entered another ghost painting scenario without spending much time, but now, the distance seemed to have increased, or perhaps the background of the ghost painting had expanded. The once short road now eerily stretched out a great distance.

"The size of that foreign city hasn't changed; it's the same as before. What has changed is the piece of the Big J City backdrop in the ghost painting; the city has expanded... Could it be that the ghost painting incident has worsened in this period?" Although Yang Jian sensed something was wrong, he didn't stop running.

This was the clumsiest but the only way to leave the ghost painting.

"It's not that it got bigger, but that we've entered another ghost painting," he thought.

Yang Jian counted in his mind, he had encountered three ghost paintings since coming to see Li Yang; the first was the one hung in the villa, the second was Big J City, and Li Yang was in the third.

But now the fourth ghost painting had appeared during this time and filled in the gap between the first and second paintings.

That's why their sense of distance had changed.

"Yang Jian, we're in trouble; that, that ghost is following us."

However, it was at this time that Li Yang suddenly sped up to the front, trembling as he pointed behind them.

"What?"

Yang Jian in the front hadn't been paying attention to what was happening behind, but Li Yang's warning made him look back.

He immediately saw a peculiar red figure standing rigidly in the middle of the road about three to four hundred meters away, but the figure didn't stand there long before it began to walk towards them. Although its steps were slow, it was closing in quickly.

This was its Ghost Domain. Never mind if it walks slowly; even if it stands still, it could appear right in front of you the next moment.

"Someone unlucky in the crowd has caught the ghost's attention," Yang Jian realized immediately where the problem lay.

Ghosts don't follow you for no reason; they aren't that bored. Once a ghost follows, it suggests a possibility: someone has met the ghost's criteria for killing, so it has appeared.

"Who's been targeted? Is it Jimmy or Li Yang, who had previous contact with the ghost, or is the ghost coming for me?" Yang Jian immediately looked towards the two of them.

The likelihood of these survivors being targeted was slim; if they were, they would have died long ago, not lingering until now.

Therefore, he believed that the three of them had a higher probability of being targeted.

"If I'm the one being targeted, then continuing to run is meaningless. Sooner or later, I'll be attacked," Yang Jian stopped, then grabbed Li Yang standing beside him, while Ghost Shadow left behind Jimmy.

"You two stop with me. The ghost is very likely coming for us. Li Yang, tell the other survivors to keep running and not to stop."

He made a judgment.

The survivors were running slowly; they wouldn't get far in one or two minutes. He had to shake off the ghost following them within these couple of minutes, then catch up with the group and leave this place.

"Us again?" Li Yang almost cried this time.

He thought he was finally going to leave this place unharmed, but an unexpected event occurred just at the critical moment.

He had no choice; he couldn't escape Yang Jian's grip on his own, after all, he knew where the exit was.

"Don't be too nervous. Perhaps it's just another ghost from the ghost painting. If it's the Source Ghost coming for me, then I will dismember it right here," Yang Jian said with a stern face, somehow a rust-covered, eerie firewood knife had appeared in his hand.

He always carried this firewood knife, just without a suitable opportunity to use it.

He still had one quota left to suppress a ghost, which to some extent could be used once more without cost.

After the third time, he did not know what kind of consequences he would face the fourth time, but he understood that the cost would be enormous, possibly even life-threatening.

But now, he could not concern himself with that anymore.

If he had been targeted, he definitely couldn't get out because this was the Ghost Domain of the ghost painting, which could trap a person completely and attack incessantly. Under such circumstances, no one could withstand. A foreign team couldn't bear it and was wiped out.

So, Yang Jian decided not to drag it out. The curse of the Eight-Tone Music Box echoed in his mind, and time was very important to him.

"We three saw it just now in the corridor, came into contact with the ghost. The conditions are the same for all, so there's a one-in-three chance I'm targeted. Indeed, there wasn't enough time, the footsteps on the stairs didn't hold the ghost back for long. If we had managed to delay a bit longer, we might have been able to leave here safely," Yang Jian thought to himself.

Li Yang said, "I've already told the others to run quickly, but what do we do now? We can't stop that thing."

"We don't need to stop it, just lure it away. The ghost may not be fixating on all of us, possibly just one among us. I guess the ghost's target is one of us three, so we need to act separately."

Yang Jian said calmly, "You stand on the right side of the road, Jimmy on the left, and I'll stand in the middle. Let's see who the ghost has fixated on. Regardless of which one of you two is targeted, you must stay here and not leave, or you'll doom everyone."

Li Yang looked up in shock, his face filled with disbelief.

"Don't look at me like that. Do you think you can be saved if you're targeted?" Yang Jian said, "Translate that for Jimmy next to you."

"And what if you, Mister Yang, are the one being targeted? Then we can't all get out," Li Yang swallowed nervously and asked.

Yang Jian replied, "I'll try to fight it. If I succeed, I'll be fine. If I fail, I can only show you a way out. After that, it's up to you."

Of course, the chances of him failing were slim.

With the eerie firewood knife in his hand and the replacement doll he carried, dying wasn't so easy here. He just had to pay a certain price.

Li Yang didn't ask anything more and immediately relayed the current situation to Jimmy.

Chapter 637 Leaving the Painting

Yang Jian had forcefully kept Li Yang and Jimmy with him in order to determine which one of them the following ghost was after.

Now was not the time to play the hero, but for someone to pay the price. Hoping to get out alive from the ghost drawing without a hitch was obviously impossible because as long as the target wasn't dead, the ghost would not stop its actions.

So far, Yang Jian had never witnessed a ghost voluntarily abandon its target; one had to suffer at least one attack from the ghost no matter what.

And that one attack was the most dangerous; ordinary people would undoubtedly die, but ghost masters might not necessarily. If they could hold out, they could survive.,

"It's coming."

At this moment, Yang Jian's expression became stern.

The ghost, standing in the middle of the road with its blurred facial features, was already walking towards the three of them. The manner in which it moved was eerie; despite the walking motion not being quick, the distance between the ghost and the people was rapidly closing as though a camera lens was zooming in without their control.

Everyone could only passively wait for the arrival of the ghost.

"Mister Yang, do you hear footsteps?" However, Li Yang, who stood beside the road, suddenly looked at Yang Jian with panic.

He asked out of doubt, yet his unease was intensely palpable.

As a survivor who had lived here for several months, he had some close encounters with ghosts and each appearance of this particular ghost had been silent. But this time was different—frightening and bizarre footsteps actually emerged beneath this ghost's feet, a sound that was not unfamiliar to him.

He had heard it before on the wooden staircase inside that building; it belonged to another sort of unknown supernatural phenomenon.

Without Li Yang's reminder, Yang Jian also heard it.

Tap tap!

The ghost's feet produced a rapid series of footsteps, a sound so peculiar it didn't match the ghost's slow walking movements and was incongruent.

This abnormal sound wasn't important at the moment.

What mattered was that once the ghost got close, someone would endure two attacks at once—one being the eerie footsteps and the other from the ghost drawing itself.

If both attacks landed on one person at the same time, Yang Jian felt that there may not be a ghost master in the world who could withstand it; even using a death-substitute doll might still result in death.,

Because using just one death-substitute doll might not be enough; two may be necessary.

"The danger of the ghost drawing is really starting to show now. Maybe the level of danger posed by the ghost drawing wasn't enough before, and only the peril of the Ghost Domain was somewhat greater.

Now it seems... an unsolvable Ghost Domain combined with the ghost's attack, plus the ability to restart, is well-deserving of an S-level supernatural event."

At this moment, even Yang Jian felt a headache coming on.

If it was him tackling this supernatural event, he wasn't sure how to start and felt that any team coming here would be annihilated.

"The footsteps mean death when they get close, so my choice is correct. I must completely dismantle the ghost drawing, disperse its jigsaw, and then find a way to survive."

Yang Jian's hand was tightly clutching the rusty firewood knife.

The moment of truth for the one-third chance of being chosen was at hand.

The ghost had already approached to about twenty meters away from them, moving swiftly—a speed impossible to shake off.

Yang Jian was tense, and Li Yang was also sweating profusely, his tired and haggard eyes fixed on the approaching ghost. Across the road, Jimmy was still praying with his eyes closed, seemingly believing in its effectiveness, or perhaps prayer did have some use, allowing him to avoid death every time.

For every step the ghost took, two or three footstep sounds were emitted. It hadn't taken many steps before the ghost had closed in to within ten meters of them.

The distance was now very small.

But no matter how close it got, Yang Jian could not make out the facial features of the ghost; the characteristics of its body remained vague. The only clear aspects were its pair of flawless white hands and the gradually clearer feet, except these feet were not immaculate but mottled with corpse spots, as if they were pieced together from another body.

"Is it coming for me?"

At that moment, seeing the ghost approach within ten meters without changing direction and heading straight for him, Yang Jian wondered.

"Good. Since it's coming for me, let's dismantle the ghost drawing's puzzle here."

Taking a slight breath, the Headless Ghost Shadow appeared again under his feet, forming a huge shadow on the ground. As soon as the ghost got close, the Ghost Shadow would cover it, locating the ghost's footprints and triggering the curse of the firewood knife.

But just as Yang Jian was prepared for a direct confrontation with the ghost, an unexpected event occurred.

The ghost stopped about five meters away from him; even the footsteps ceased for a brief moment, and the eerie noise from stepping on the ground disappeared for a second.

Then the ghost changed direction, heading towards Jimmy on the other side of the road.

"Huh?"

Yang Jian's pupils contracted, ready to drop the knife at any moment, but the ghost changed its target unexpectedly.

This was definitely not because the ghost feared the knife in his hand, nor was it because he wasn't being targeted—it was because at that moment, he no longer fit the ghost's killing pattern, and Jimmy became the new target.

At that moment, he seemed to have a vague understanding of the ghost drawing's killing rule...

Although he couldn't be completely certain, he was very close and probably already guessed the majority of it.

"Li Yang, don't just stand there, let's go."

Yang Jian didn't stand foolishly pondering but shouted, then turned and ran.

"Someone has to die, and Jimmy's death is the best choice," Yang Jian thought, because he was an ordinary person, and his death won't affect the overall situation. After all, plenty of ordinary people have been killed by ghosts here.

Li Yang trembled all over from the shout and almost subconsciously started running with Yang Jian.

Jimmy seemed to guess that he had been targeted; with eyes closed, his face pale, he was drenched in cold sweat as he prayed while crying.

He did not run away, either because he knew he could not escape, or because fear had paralyzed him.

Eventually, when Yang Jian and Li Yang were far away, there was still no movement from him.

In the end, he seemed less afraid and shouted something to Li Yang in English, which Yang Jian could not understand.

"What did he say?" Yang Jian didn't look back, but he guessed that Jimmy was already dead.

Panting, Li Yang replied, "He asked me to tell his mother that he loved her."

"Is that so?" Yang Jian's expression darkened slightly.

Honestly, he didn't dislike Jimmy. The man had courage, followed directions, and even dared to act alongside Yang Jian. But the reality was that cruel; once the ghost targeted someone, they had to be left behind.

Even if they didn't stay in one place, they couldn't leave alive.

"If I make it out alive, I'll pass the message to his mother. I've known Jimmy for some time now..." said Li Yang.

"Then you'd better do it quickly, as you won't live much longer in that condition. Your ghost has been controlled before, and its resurgence is quite advanced. You'd be lucky to live another six months," Yang Jian remarked.

Li Yang nodded.

By then, the two had caught up with the other survivors, and occasionally, Yang Jian glanced back.

The ghost did not follow; no longer did anyone seem to be the target.

"This way."

Suddenly,

Yang Jian stopped at the entrance to a dim alley and called out.

The path he had originally walked had disappeared, completely covered by another part of the city's construction, and the original trail was nowhere to be seen. But he had been careful to leave a mark as he walked.

It was a golden bullet.

The bullet stood at the entrance of the alley.

Meaning, the road he had taken had now become this narrow alley, though the surrounding landscape had changed.

Yang Jian took the lead into this phenomenon, with the others, in a state of terror, following without hesitation, not considering if there was danger ahead or if this path truly led out.

They had thrown in their lot with Yang Jian, the stranger.

On both sides of the alley rose high-rise buildings, their drab light obscured, making it very gloomy.

The path wasn't long, and Yang Jian quickly reached a dead end, with a wall obstructing the way ahead.

But strikingly out of place, a low window appeared on the wall.

The window was without glass, dark and empty inside, looking eerie and hollow. And there, Yang Jian found another golden bullet at the window.

The marker was precisely correct.

"Climb through this window to leave this place," Yang Jian said, glancing at Li Yang.

Li Yang immediately translated and relayed the message to the survivors.

"Don't wait here for them; we need to go first. The Ghost Domain could change at any moment, it could even invade reality; it's not necessarily safe on the other side," Yang Jian said and promptly bent down to step through the dark window.

Once he crossed over, the surroundings changed.

He entered a small room. The door was shut tight, and the light from the ceiling was dim and lifeless, as if it could go out at any second.

"Back home."

Yang Jian verified the situation; he had arrived back at Villa No. 8.

By that time, Li Yang and the other survivors had also made their way out one by one. The small room immediately became crowded.

"Don't let them cluster here, lead them away from the villa, further away. The Haunted Painting's Ghost Domain has invaded this room, and the ghost could reappear at any time," Yang Jian instructed.

"Okay, okay," replied Li Yang, seemingly excited, immediately accepting the instruction.

The survivors gradually left the domain of the Haunted Painting, exited the room, and Yang Jian received some thanks in return. An emotional foreign woman even wanted to kiss him, but he bluntly refused her.

He had no interest, especially not in foreign women.

"So what if they survive and leave the Haunted Painting? They've already been involved in a paranormal event, took part in the incident with the Haunted Painting. Once they appear outside, they'll probably be taken into immediate custody," Yang Jian shook his head slightly, paying no heed to them.

Chapter 638

After everyone had left the room, Yang Jian looked at the ghost painting again.

There was no change in the painting, and the ghost inside did not follow them out. This was good news; he could temporarily lock the room and leave the ghost painting there.

Although it was dangerous, he felt that he needed to keep this exit for now because it was the only entrance to the world of the ghost painting that he had control over. There might be a chance to use it later.

"I need to go back and try to make a deal with the Ghost Cabinet," Yang Jian felt that having found the source of the ghost painting should count as fulfilling the trade.

But just to be safe, he reached out and touched the ghost painting.

Suppression was formed.

At that moment, the cold, eerie atmosphere in the room began to dissipate, and the lighting immediately returned to normal. Then, the window on the wall changed into the frame of an oil painting, and the dark entrance disappeared, reverting back to the appearance of an oil painting. However, at this time, the scene inside the painting had changed.

The background had turned into a dim, narrow alley; in the distance was a city submerged in a dark world. But at the entrance of the alley, the figure of a woman with blurry features was clearly visible. It was unclear when this ghost had arrived there, but it seemed that if Yang Jian and the others had been just a few minutes later, the entrance would have been blocked by the ghost.

"The world in the background has expanded. It's no longer just a residential complex. As expected, the ghost painting cannot stay in one place for long; it needs to keep moving," Yang Jian thought privately.

Although he had temporarily suppressed the ghost painting's strangeness and prevented its resurrection, it was only temporary.

Once someone outside complies with the ghost painting's murder rule, the ghost inside will gradually emerge from the painting and seep into reality.

When the world of the ghost painting and the real world overlap, that will be the beginning of a nightmare.

"This matter is no longer my responsibility. My life is almost gone now. Let others handle it."

Yang Jian's gaze shifted, and he immediately picked up the canvas from the floor to cover the painting, then locked the room.

He had to return to Dachang City again.

Without the suppression of the ghost painting, his Ghost Eye had returned to normal, only it was much calmer than before.

The restlessness and unease of its revival seemed to have disappeared.

"Was the revival of the Ghost Eye reversed under the pressure of the ghost painting?" Yang Jian began to feel surprised, as this time his journey was not completely without gains.

This discovery was particularly important.

If his Ghost Eye were on the verge of reviving later on, he could enter the ghost painting or just stay in the room with the ghost painting, and this would suppress his condition.

With this in mind, Yang Jian felt that the painting had become even more important to him.

One day, hanging it in a private room would indirectly suppress the Ghost Eye in his body — both safe and convenient.

Of course, the prerequisite was that he had to fully understand the ghost painting's murder rules.

Soon, he left the place and walked out of the villa.

However, outside the house, some of the survivors who had walked out earlier were still lingering. They hadn't left or were still harboring some concerns.

"Mister Yang, how are things?" Li Yang had not left either; he hurried over to ask.

"There's no immediate danger for now, but why haven't you left? Why are you still here? This area near my building isn't safe at all. This is Big J City; you can move about freely, and your personal safety can be ensured. This is no longer the world of the ghost painting," Yang Jian said.

Li Yang replied, "I thought about going home, but it would be difficult to explain this situation to others, and I have no money on me..."

He said, his expression becoming somewhat embarrassed.

Who would carry money while living in the world of a ghost painting for a long time?

Yang Jian glanced at the others; "Are they the same?"

"No, it's different for them. You've also noticed that those who stayed are innocent children and teenagers who got caught up in this by accident. Now they suddenly appear overseas and feel bewildered. Moreover, other people are not related to them and do not have the responsibility to help them," Li Yang explained.

Indeed.

Those lingering at the door were mostly young people and children, including seven or eight-year-old foreign kids, teenagers around eighteen or nineteen, and women in their twenties or thirties. Being in a foreign land and not knowing their way around, they were unable to rely on their own abilities to get back home, so they felt lost and helpless.

"Wait a moment."

Yang Jian immediately returned to the villa, and when he came back, he had several gold bars in his hand. These were the compensation left by He Tianxiong, but there was no cash, after all, to necromancers, cash was as useless as scrap paper.

"Take it and use it. This money should last you a long time. I don't have the time to take care of these people, so you'll have to look after them yourself. If things get too tough, call this number."

He quickly wrote down a phone number for Li Yang, which was Liu Xiaoyu's number.

"Just say you know me, that you're also a necromancer, and then explain the previous situation clearly. Someone will come to deal with it."

The headquarters wouldn't neglect any intelligence related to ghost drawings at this critical juncture, so they would pay extra attention to their existence; ensuring their livelihoods was not an issue.

"Thank you," Li Yang said gratefully.

Yang Jian said, "Even without my help, you'll be able to live well after becoming a necromancer. After all, we are considered very important talent, and every country needs us. However, your ability is quite special. I might need your help in the future, and when that time comes, don't refuse."

"You saved my life. I'll definitely not refuse if you need help in the future," Li Yang said.

"That's good to hear."

Yang Jian nodded, considering forming a team once he resolved the curse of the Eight-Tone Music Box.

This Li Yang could be a potential teammate. Although he had just become a necromancer, his mental fortitude was evident, and he would likely improve rapidly after the ghost drawing incident.

Yang Jian didn't linger any longer and planned to leave.

"Thank you for saving me. How can I ever thank you?" At that moment, a foreign child, with eyes wide open, looked at him and asked.

Although Yang Jian's foreign language skills were poor, he could understand words of gratitude.

"You don't need to thank anyone, as no one went out of their way to save you. If there's anyone to thank, thank Jimmy and Li Yang. They are the reason you survived," Yang Jian said, pausing momentarily to look at the child.

His attitude towards the child wasn't as harsh.

Because children lacked the scheming and cunning adults possess, in other words, they posed no threat to him.

Li Yang translated Yang Jian's words for the child, who then asked, "Then, may I know your name?"

Yang Jian said, "I am just an insignificant figure, but you can call me Mister Yang."

He chose not to reveal his name to the child; they shouldn't get involved in this circle, even if it was just a name.

Li Yang translated it, and the child said in English, "Thank you, Mister Yang."

Yang Jian nodded as an acknowledgment but quickly walked away. He hadn't gone far—just around the corner at the crossroad—when he had already disappeared.

Li Yang, who saw this, was bewildered but didn't say anything. He simply told the others, "Don't be curious about Mister Yang or try to find out anything about him. We only need to know that he saved us. That's all. It's better to keep his matters a secret."

While he said this to them, he actually thought that ordinary people spreading rumors about these supernatural events would only lead to trouble.

"I want to know everything and write a book someday, recording this bizarre tale."

The foreign child spoke with a grown-up's tone, seeming rather mature and more curious than afraid of the supernatural incidents.

This was in line with a child's psychology.

"Just make sure you never publish it," Li Yang managed a slight smile, advising the child.

Although his first foray into the world of ghost drawing had delayed him, the day hadn't yet ended.

When Yang Jian returned to the Guanjiang Residential Complex in Dachang City, it was already the afternoon.

Just like last time, he stood on the clock tower where the Ghost Cabinet was placed. There were some people moving around in the complex, but no one noticed his arrival, as he deliberately avoided others' gazes.

"I have found it. Help me remove the curse of the Eight-Tone Music Box," Yang Jian wrote this message and then stuffed it into the hollow slot on top of the Ghost Cabinet.

Something in the pitch-dark Ghost Cabinet seemed to grab his note, pulling it in all at once.

Yang Jian stood there, waiting for the transaction to complete.

Chapter 639 Content That Can't Be Completed

Yang Jian stood motionless atop the deserted clock tower at this moment. At the top of the tower, there was a small compartment housing an antique wooden cabinet. The style of the cabinet was ancient and filled with a sense of the bygone era, yet its red paint looked as if it had just been applied, crimson and vivid, as though it had been soaked in fresh blood.

There was an indescribable eeriness about it.

Even in broad daylight, standing under the sun, one could still feel an abnormal chill when near the cabinet.

Having written his note, Yang Jian had already stuffed it inside the Ghost Cabinet, now staring motionlessly, awaiting the Ghost Cabinet's response.

He had roughly figured out the trading rules of the Ghost Cabinet from last time, simple yet terrifying.

The first time Yang Jian initiated the trade with the Ghost Cabinet, the rules were clear: both sides would propose conditions and fulfill each other's demands.

It sounded mutually beneficial, with a hint of friendly assistance, but in reality, the living simply couldn't afford to trade with the Ghost Cabinet because after each trade, the Ghost Cabinet would raise the stakes, and the conditions would become increasingly difficult to fulfill, until you died... and then the next trader would appear.

There was a way to break off the trade, which was to complete a task given by the Ghost Cabinet and then refrain from making any requests.

That meant exchanging two conditions for one, a slight loss on one's part.

When Yang Jian first traded with the Ghost Cabinet, he wasn't aware of this and suffered a loss, interrupting a trade and paying an extra condition.

He felt it was best not to interrupt trades early on and that it was preferable to withdraw after two or three trades, although the previous user of the Ghost Cabinet left no information regarding this.

Perhaps it was out of fear of the Ghost Cabinet's threat or maybe it was a way to remind those who came later; only after figuring it out could one truly comprehend the terror and strangeness of this object.

"What's most taboo in trading with the Ghost Cabinet is greed, but every ghost controller is a desperado risking it all. For someone whose life is nearly over, it's very difficult to overcome such greed, for they dare to do anything," Yang Jian reflected inwardly, thinking that the Ghost Cabinet was very much like Pandora's box.

From the moment the trade began, an invisible curse was released.

This curse didn't originate from the Ghost Cabinet itself, but from the heart of each individual.

"After this trade, the Ghost Cabinet will certainly make an extremely demanding request, and with my current abilities, the likelihood of completing it is very low... even a matter of life and death," Yang Jian assessed the situation.

Merely locating the ghost in the photograph had almost led to his demise in the ghost painting; if not for the curse of the Eight-Tone Music Box still being in effect, he would have had no way to return alive.

Therefore, after completing this trade, he had a bold idea.

That was to use the bizarre Firewood Knife to hack apart the Ghost Cabinet.

Waste a chance, destroy the wooden cabinet, and dismember this haunted object.

Yes, Yang Jian was currently considering this. In other words, once the Ghost Cabinet fulfilled his part of the trade, he planned on reneging on the deal.

I'm not playing anymore.

Flipping the table.

If he continued playing, Yang Jian felt that he would end up like the previous user of the Ghost Cabinet, with a very tragic fate. Therefore, the best strategy was to forcefully withdraw at an opportune moment.

The curse of the Eight-Tone Music Box was the opportunity.

"Something's not right."

As Yang Jian was contemplating how to renege, he suddenly sensed a change and noticed that the Ghost Cabinet seemed different than before.

The piece of paper he had sent in appeared to have been swallowed, not returning and without any message or sign of a trade taking place. From start to finish, the Ghost Cabinet seemed very calm, as if unresponsive.

"Based on the last time, the Ghost Cabinet should have responded immediately after I completed the trade. Why is it taking so long this time?" Yang Jian furrowed his brow, filled with doubt.

Could it be that the Ghost Cabinet was even more despicable than him and knew that he was planning to renege, thereby choosing to renege first?

No, that possibility wasn't likely.

"Let's wait a bit longer," he decided.

Yang Jian was not overly anxious; he still had time, with only half a day gone by of the three-day curse period.

About ten minutes passed.

Suddenly,

the quiet, unexceptional cabinet door beneath the Ghost Cabinet moved slightly, protruding a bit, as if about to open.

"Here it comes."

Yang Jian immediately opened the cabinet door, and sure enough, there was a piece of paper inside—the very one he had inserted earlier.

On the paper were two sentences.

The first sentence was what he had written: I have found it. Help me resolve the curse of the Eight-Tone Music Box.

The second sentence, in twisted script, was unreadable as any handwriting, resembling irregular black marks formed into words: Unable to resolve the curse of the Eight-Tone Music Box. Change the request.

"What?"

Yang Jian's face showed a hint of consternation. What did this mean? He had gone through so much trouble to find the Source Ghost from the ghost painting for them, and now they were saying they couldn't resolve the curse of the Eight-Tone Music Box?

Had he overestimated the Ghost Cabinet's abilities?

Or was the Eight-Tone Music Box's level of terror beyond the Ghost Cabinet's capabilities?

"No, perhaps there was a problem with my request. To resolve the curse of the Eight-Tone Music Box? That would be like asking the Ghost Cabinet to eradicate a ghost, but ghosts cannot be killed, so the Ghost Cabinet cannot fulfill it," Yang Jian considered, reflecting on his request once more, deeming it unreasonable.

He should have written it as making the curse of the Eight-Tone Music Box leave him or to transfer the curse.

In that case, there wouldn't be a need to resolve the curse; Yang Jian would just need to break free from it.

But then he hesitated again.

Once he was freed from the curse of the Eight-Tone Music Box, would he die immediately?

"Transferring the curse is a gamble, but there should still be a chance of survival."

Being unable to eliminate the curse meant that his fail-safe option was gone, leaving him to make a risky decision.

After much consideration, Yang Jian decided to write down the following sentence on a piece of paper: Help me transfer the curse of the Eight-Tone Music Box onto a dog in the neighborhood.

It would be best if the curse of the Eight-Tone Music Box had a bearer, and he felt that an animal would suffice. Letting a dog die in his place would minimize the loss.

However, as he was about to stuff the note into the Ghost Cabinet, he paused.

"If the curse of the Eight-Tone Music Box can truly be transferred, wouldn't it be a waste to transfer it to a dog? What if it were transferred to a ghost? Once the curse of the Eight-Tone Music Box takes effect, ghosts will be attacked by the curse. What kind of outcome would that produce?"

An idea struck Yang Jian, and he thought of another method.

Ghosts don't die, but the Eight-Tone Music Box would kill a person afflicted by the curse.

The clash of these two might very likely cause some ghost to crash.

"Indeed, it's a viable method."

He pondered over which ghost to transfer the curse to.

Having control of three ghosts, the state of being frozen in the Headless Ghost Shadow could be ignored, the Ghost Hand was incomplete and had already begun to falter after losing two slots for suppression. Even if it bore the curse, it wouldn't mean much. Thus, only Ghost Eye was left to use.

To transfer the curse to Ghost Eye?

It was a bit of a mad idea, but if successful, Yang Jian would solve the problem of Ghost Eye's resurrection, and the help to himself would be enormous.

"Forget it, let's try."

The temptation was too great, and Yang Jian felt an impulsive urge to attempt it.

Because he knew that even if he resolved the curse of the Eight-Tone Music Box, he had already used Ghost Eye up to the sixth layer. If not for the suppression of the curse, he would have died from Ghost Eye's resurrection. Hence, even after resolving the curse issue, he didn't know if using a slot could suppress his current situation with Ghost Eye.

It would be better to solve the problem once and for all, rather than dealing with Ghost Eye's issues after resolving the curse.

If successful this time, Yang Jian would reach unimaginable heights.

"Help me transfer the curse of the Eight-Tone Music Box onto Ghost Eye."

Yang Jian wrote down this phrase, not allowing himself any time to regret as he quickly sent it into the Ghost Cabinet.

It was risky, but the gamble was worth it.

Soon.

The cabinet doors under the Ghost Cabinet moved again, this time without any delay.

Yang Jian opened the cabinet door and took out the note again, his heart sinking as he read the twisted letters that formed the same sentence as before: Change another request.

But this time, the Ghost Cabinet didn't say it was impossible, only that he should change his request.

That is to say, it was capable of transferring the curse, but it didn't do so.

"What's the reason for this?"

Yang Jian's eyes darkened as he began to suspect that the rules of the Ghost Cabinet's trades weren't as simple as he had imagined and that there were some limitations he wasn't previously aware of.

He speculated whether his request was too demanding, which is why the Ghost Cabinet had refused.

This possibility was strong.

After all, his previous trades with the Ghost Cabinet were minor. The last time he had merely asked the Ghost Cabinet to locate Zhao Lei. This time, he had escalated to the level of transferring the curse of the Eight-Tone Music Box. Although transferring a curse might seem simple, in reality, it would interfere with a ghost's killing pattern which is a different level of difficulty altogether.

Could it be the number of trades made was too few, so his trading power was limited?

Would he need to trade more before he could make excessive demands with an increased cost?

Yang Jian remembered a warning left by the previous user of the Ghost Cabinet: "You will have everything and lose everything."

At first glance, it seemed like a warning.

But it might also be reminding him that the trade was likely to be an equal exchange: you get as much as you lose.

Yang Jian had only found the ghost in the ghost painting. Although he had faced terrifying dangers, this was because the ghost painting incident had erupted. Had the ghost painting incident not occurred, a mere glance at the ghost painting would have been considered completing the task, which would have been far too easy. That's why the Ghost Cabinet had rejected the request.

Regardless of the outcome, Yang Jian now found himself in a difficult situation.

Because the Ghost Cabinet couldn't help him deal with the curse of the Eight-Tone Music Box in a short time.

Thus, the Ghost Cabinet plan had failed.

"Do I have to trust Wang Xiaoming's plan?" Yang Jian hesitated.

He dared not gamble on Wang Xiaoming's plan because it might come from human skin, and he had no idea what traps might be set within. One misstep could have terrible consequences.

"Since the Ghost Cabinet can't fulfill my request, maybe it can help me fix the loopholes in Wang Xiaoming's plan, improving my chances of survival," Yang Jian quickly came up with a compromise.

He knew that Wang Xiaoming's plan was likely effective but also riddled with traps, which could be resolved with the help of the Ghost Cabinet.

This request wasn't difficult, much less costly than transferring the curse of the Eight-Tone Music Box, so the Ghost Cabinet would surely not refuse.

"This should be workable," Yang Jian thought to himself.

Chapter 640 Astonishing Changes

After his attempt, Yang Jian's plan to resolve the curse of the eight-tone music box with the help of the Ghost Cabinet fell through.

Of his three alternative plans, he was now left with only one: to trust Wang Xiaoming to find a way to solve the curse. Although this was something that headquarters had already agreed to, Yang Jian had never felt completely at ease with Wang Xiaoming.

"If I must try Wang Xiaoming's plan, then I have to let the Ghost Cabinet devise a way to deal with the traps in the plan," Yang Jian thought to himself.

With the help of the Ghost Cabinet to foresee dangers and then avoid them rationally was currently the most feasible method.

He thought hard for quite a while.

Yang Jian then realized that this seemingly simple problem was actually very difficult, having already wasted several sheets of paper.

For example: Help me deal with the traps in Wang Xiaoming's plan.

If he wrote down this sentence, the Ghost Cabinet would indeed meet the requirement, but what if the plan failed? What if he didn't die in the traps but died from the curse of the eight-tone music box?

He then wrote: Help me successfully survive tomorrow's plan.

If he wrote down that sentence, Yang Jian might indeed survive, but it's possible that only a consciousness preserved by the curse of the Ghost Cabinet would remain, turning him into a special anomaly.

"Dealing with the Ghost Cabinet isn't as simple as I imagined. You never know how the Ghost Cabinet will affect you, so perfection is unattainable. No matter what request I make, the risks I have to bear are still mine to bear."

Yang Jian shook his head slightly, crumpled the paper in his hand irritably, and threw it away.

Quickly.

His gaze shifted, and he directly wrote the following sentence on the paper: "I want to be alive a month from now and conduct the next trade with you."

This request was quite clever.

Yang Jian proposed that the next trade take place a month later, meaning he had to be there a month from today, which means he couldn't die within that month. If he did die, then the Ghost Cabinet would have failed to meet his requirement, and the rule of infinite trade would be unilaterally broken by the Ghost Cabinet.

Therefore, if the Ghost Cabinet wanted to continue the trade, Yang Jian could not die from the curse of the eight-tone music box, nor could he die from other supernatural events.

The most important thing was he did not make any requests regarding supernatural events. Under normal circumstances, this should not be very difficult; after all, it's quite easy for an ordinary person to live for a month.

The paper stuffed inside the Ghost Cabinet remained without any reaction.

The old wooden cabinet was as silent as before, as if judging the difficulty of Yang Jian's request or considering whether to agree to it.

Yang Jian was not in a hurry; he continued to wait.

The wait was not very long this time, and soon there was a movement in the door below; it opened slightly.

Yang Jian immediately opened it to check, and inside was the note he had just stuffed in, with two black, twisted words written on it: Seven days.

Seven days?

Yang Jian's gaze sharpened. Although the timeline had been shortened, there was an effect. Sure enough, there was a loophole in the Ghost Cabinet that could be exploited. It couldn't solve the curse of the eight-tone music box, but it could ensure his survival for another seven days to conduct another trade, which seemed to be more difficult. Yet, the Ghost Cabinet deemed the former to be harder.

"Good."

Without a second thought, Yang Jian wrote down a single character in response.

After stuffing the paper back in, the Ghost Cabinet went completely quiet as if waiting for the seven days to arrive, and the rule of infinite trading was temporarily extended.

"This is the best outcome. It's like buying insurance from the Ghost Cabinet, ensuring that no matter what, I will be alive to stand in front of it after seven days," Yang Jian thought to himself.

Whatever the trap or the failure of the plan, betting on either side was unstable, only this was the most secure.

"That's all I can do for now. This should be the best I can do at the moment. Tomorrow's plan by Wang Xiaoming doesn't matter anymore. What matters is that I will definitely survive the next few days."

The curse of the eight-tone music box lasted three days, but he had to trade with the Ghost Cabinet after seven days; the dates did not match.

This means that if Wang Xiaoming's plan failed, there would be a conflict between the curse of the eight-tone music box and the trading rule of the Ghost Cabinet. It was an intangible contest between ghosts, and Yang Jian used this factor to enhance his chance of survival.

Of course, if Wang Xiaoming's plan were successful, then the help from the Ghost Cabinet would be redundant, and Yang Jian would have wasted a condition in vain.

After ensuring there were no problems, Yang Jian descended from the clock tower.

He did not return to Big J City, although the ghost painting event was still being processed. For the time being, it had nothing to do with him; after all, he had resigned from the position of captain. Although he had not completely left the headquarters, he was on indefinite leave, which had its pros and cons.

The advantage was now apparent.

He could avoid the ghost painting event, and nobody at headquarters would assign him any tasks.

Yang Jian walked through the quiet residential complex. The Guanjiang Residential Complex, although a bit lively, still had a low occupancy rate. While quiet, it was relatively safe; the more people there were, the higher the chance of causing supernatural events. You never know which unlucky person might inadvertently attract a supernatural event.

Of course, living in a mountain area might be safer. If possible, retreating to the mountains would be a good choice.

Lost in his thoughts, he had arrived at his front door.

Yang Jian's current home was once the sales office of the Guanjiang Residential Complex, converted into a five-story residence with facilities like a reception hall, dining room, gymnasium, swimming pool, office, and so on. Originally purchased from Zhang Wei's father, Zhang Xiangu, it was quite luxurious for Yang Jian at the time.

According to Yang Jian's plans, this place was to be where he would take care of his mother in her old age. The yard was large enough, and the building spacious enough, that this asset alone could ensure they would never want for food and drink.

However, this asset was no longer impressive, but since he had grown accustomed to living there, he had no intention of moving.

As Yang Jian approached the door, he noticed that the green belt next to the courtyard had changed; it was now planted with a good number of vegetables, which, due to poor weather conditions, weren't growing well. These were likely planted by his mother when she was bored.

He pressed the doorbell.

Nobody opened the door.

"Not at home?" Yang Jian's Ghost Eye opened and swept over the place; the house was empty.

"Have Jiang Yan and Zhang Liqin moved out? Or did they go to work at the Shangtong Tower in the city center?"

However, after glancing at the two women's rooms, Yang Jian saw signs of occupancy. It didn't seem like they had moved out, meaning they were likely still living here.

After all, they were two women who had survived supernatural events and had suffered some mental trauma. To some extent, they both lacked a sense of security, otherwise, they wouldn't have willingly stayed here for so long.

Yang Jian also had no intention of driving them away.

With such a large place, having more people around to liven it up and accompany his mother during her free time seemed good to him.

Yang Jian entered the house and made his way to the fifth floor.

The fifth floor housed some dangerous items.

Two ghosts confined in golden boxes, a bound ghost skeleton, a ghost mirror covered with a black cloth, and some firearms.

He was least worried about the imprisoned ghosts; as long as nobody touched them, it was impossible for the ghosts to escape. What he feared most was someone tampering with the Ghost Mirror, which is why the door was locked, but such locks were really only a deterrent for ordinary people; if someone truly intended to open it, they couldn't be stopped.

After checking everything, Yang Jian moved to the room where the Ghost Mirror was kept.

The room was pitch-black, devoid of any reflective surfaces.

He looked at the mirror covered by the black cloth and pondered, "These things are too dangerous, there is inevitably going to be a slip-up if they're kept here. It would be better to put them in the safe house. Zhang Xiangu expanded the safe house last time; carving out a small room to store these items shouldn't be an issue."

Yang Jian felt that it was unsafe to keep these dangerous objects here; if a problem arose, wouldn't his home be completely compromised?

Thereupon, he began to move these hazardous objects.

Given the current circumstances, Yang Jian directly utilized the Ghost Domain to transfer all the items to the safe house, then carried them into the small room constructed from gold.

This safe house was undoubtedly rarely used. If a time came when it did need to be used, the situation would be quite dire already, and the potential risks of these items wouldn't be much of a concern.

"What's left is the Ghost Cabinet," Yang Jian said as he exited the safe house, glancing up at the clock tower.

After thinking it over, he decided it would be better not to move the Ghost Cabinet for the time being.

Though the object was strange, it was relatively stable. He would figure out a way to secure it after getting through the current crisis with the Eight-Tone Music Box,

After handling the potential hazards at home, he didn't rush to leave the complex but went to the unfinished building site at the very back of the residential area.

A newly constructed building with the semblance of a modern temple stood in the middle of the empty site.

The temple-style design was merely a disguise; inside was actually an ancient house from the Republic of China Period. The reason for the renovation was that Yang Jian neither dared to destroy that ancient house from the Republic era, nor did he want others to discover it—the best method was to conceal the old house with another building.

Yang Jian took a moment to consider, then walked over.

A tall wall had been newly erected around the ancient house, with only one antique-style red-painted gate. But the gate was currently locked tight, as if no one was inside.

Yang Jian disappeared in front of the gate, directly entering the interior.

The refurbished ancient house was not as ghostly and sinister as one might imagine. On the contrary, it was filled with a modern aura—clean, well-lit, and featuring a retro style that was exceptionally elegant and serene, well-suited for those who enjoyed tranquility.

"Yang Jian, you've come? Your business trip seems to have lasted quite a while this time."

A quiet, pleasant voice rang out, as an eighteen or nineteen-year-old young girl emerged from a room on the second floor. She stood in the corridor, calmly looking at Yang Jian in the living room below.

That room was previously where the Ghost Cabinet had been placed.

But after the renovation, it had become Wang Shanshan's personal room.

"Came to have a look and deal with some minor issues," Yang Jian replied, looking at Wang Shanshan.

There was not much change in her from before—aloof, pale, lean, yet her figure remained graceful, possessing an indescribable air of cold beauty.

...

"Are we about to die?" Wang Shanshan said as she walked down the stairs.

Yang Jian said, "Why would you suddenly say that? Can't I just come and see you?"

Wang Shanshan pointed to her head, "Recently, a piece of music has been appearing in my mind, and I think it has something to do with you. This music is kind of eerie; it's probably not a good thing."

Yang Jian was startled, then his heart chilled, "You too?"

The curse of the eight-tone music box had actually extended to Wang Shanshan, which he hadn't expected.

"You've said before, if you die, I will die too. Looks like your trip wasn't smooth. Want a Coke?" Wang Shanshan went downstairs, took out a bottle of Coke from the fridge, and handed it to Yang Jian.

It seemed that her life here was still full of ample supplies.

"Thank you."

Yang Jian opened the Coke and took a gulp, "I've encountered some trouble, but I'll solve it. Don't worry, you won't be in any danger."

"I'm not worried about myself, but what if we die, what about it?" Wang Shanshan's gaze showed a hint of concern as she looked toward a corner of the living room.

Somehow, in that corner, stood a child who appeared to be five or six years old.

This child, although clothed, had skin that was exposed and looked as deathly pale and bluish-black as a corpse's. It was incredibly cold to the touch, and its eyes were red and lacked pupils. It was eerily and ominously similar to ghost eyes. Right now, it was motionless, with its head tilted slightly as it watched Yang Jian.

A feeling of being watched by a fierce ghost irresistibly surged from the bottom of his heart, making one's hair stand on end.

Ghost Infant!

Yang Jian's gaze instantly hardened.

It was a deviant left over after the Hungry Ghost incident ended, and he himself didn't know what to call this thing. This Ghost Infant was at once a derivative ghost of the Hungry Ghost, a ghost slave, and parasitically lived inside Wang Shanshan's body, having some unclear connection with her.

"It hasn't been that long; this Ghost Infant has actually grown so much." Yang Jian said, "How have you been feeding it?"

"Meat."

Wang Shanshan glanced at the fridge, "Fresh flesh and blood. I've tried beef, pork, chicken... but it prefers mutton the most. However, mutton is just a substitute out of necessity. You should be clear about what it really wants to eat. Now it has stopped growing, at least from what I've observed these past few days."

"This is the Second Stage Ghost Infant."

Yang Jian calmly analyzed, "If it needs to continue growing without killing, it has to be fed with ghosts, but that could easily get out of control. I left it behind out of greed, and I still don't know whether that decision was right or wrong. It's too dangerous for you to continue living with it."

"One misstep and you could die."

Wang Shanshan said, "For now, I am still safe; it's more obedient than you'd think."

"No matter how obedient, it's still a ghost."

Yang Jian's gaze was frosty, "Starting tomorrow I may encounter some dangers. My visit this time was to consider its existence. If I really die by accident, you'll also die with me, but what about it? If it still exists in this world, then there's nobody who can control it. I won't allow the Hungry Ghost incident to happen again."

"So what do you suggest?" Wang Shanshan was stunned, then asked.

"I'm thinking... either I'll take it with me, at least it can't cause too much trouble outside, or you lock it in a specially made box for a few days. Once I can confirm it's safe, I'll call you," Yang Jian said.

He would meet Wang Xiaoming tomorrow.

So taking advantage of today, he needed to take care of some loose ends—essentially, to make arrangements in case of his death. The existence of the Ghost Infant was a potential hazard, even more dangerous than leaving a Ghost Mirror at home. He definitely had to deal with it.

"You can choose a solution for me; after all, this matter also concerns you."

Yang Jian left the choice to Wang Shanshan.

Wang Shanshan thought for a moment, then walked up to Yang Jian, looking up at him, "Take it with you. It might be able to help you, but don't let it die. If everything is fine in a few days, bring it back. It can solve many problems here and provides a certain level of security to the neighborhood."

"Alright, since you've said so, I'll take it with me when I leave Dachang City today," Yang Jian looked at the Ghost Infant, his gaze shifting.

He knew this thing was not a danger for now, but after all, it was a horrifying entity left by the Hungry Ghost, and he couldn't help but feel wary since the memories of the Hungry Ghost incident still cast a shadow in his heart.

"By the way, you just mentioned it solved quite a few problems. Did something happen in the neighborhood recently?"

Suddenly, he picked up on the information in Wang Shanshan's earlier words and asked immediately.

Wang Shanshan replied, "It should have been five nights ago, it went out and when it came back, it had several human fingers in its mouth."

Yang Jian's complexion changed slightly, as this short sentence revealed the dreadful ferocity of the Ghost Infant.

"What made it run out?"

Wang Shanshan shook her head, "I don't know. Just to be cautious, I gave it an order: to drive away any ghost-user that enters the neighborhood without permission."

...

"So you're saying that a strange ghost master attempted to enter the residential complex that night? Then the Ghost Infant found him, ran out to attack him, and even bit off several of his fingers?" Yang Jian made a reasonable guess.

"It should be that way."

"Does Zhang Han know?"

Wang Shanshan said, "He mentioned it, and said he would investigate, but there's been no news for the past few days."

Yang Jian glanced at the corner where the Ghost Infant lurked and fell into deep thought.

A ghost master, at the very least, is someone who controls a ghost, yet when confronted by the Ghost Infant, several of his fingers were bitten off and he was driven away. What did that indicate?

It indicated that the most ordinary ghost masters were no match for this Ghost Infant.

And that was without even letting the Ghost Infant consume other ghosts; otherwise, the level of danger would be unimaginable.

"Where is Zhang Han now?" Yang Jian asked.

Setting aside the matter of the Ghost Infant for now, since he had decided to take it away and could handle it slowly later on, the appearance of a strange ghost master in Dachang City who tried to enter the Guanjiang Residential Complex warranted vigilance.

If he were a ghost master with a well-known name and power, he would surely have approached through proper channels. This sneaky behavior was very hostile.

Revenge?

Or some sort of malicious probe?

Regardless, Yang Jian felt that he had to look into the matter; otherwise, he would find it hard to leave in peace.

"He's at Shangtong Tower. It's working hours now, and since you left, he's taken over your responsibilities there," Wang Shanshan said.

Yang Jian nodded and said, "That's what I asked him to do. Then I need to make a trip to Shangtong Tower. Actually, you don't have to stay here all the time. It wouldn't be bad to go out and spend more time with your family."

"I need to keep an eye on it, and I've grown accustomed to being alone. I can surf the internet, play games, read books here, and people bring me all kinds of delicious food, so it's not boring. Sometimes it's quite interesting to watch Zhang Wei's livestream," Wang Shanshan said.

Yang Jian said, "I'm sorry, I'm the one who made you like this."

"You don't need to feel guilty. You saved me. Otherwise, I would have been dead a long time ago. We've been over this several times, and you're not allowed to say that again," she responded, her indifferent eyes subtly flickering with seriousness.

The two of them were no longer the students who sat in school, studied, and prepared for exams. Although only about half a year had passed, both Yang Jian and Wang Shanshan had grown a lot.

"I don't have much time left. There are still some things I need to deal with. I should leave," Yang Jian suddenly said again.

Wang Shanshan nodded but then seemed to remember something, "By the way, I've been in contact with Miao Xiaoshan recently. She mentioned you met with her during your trip. How is she? Is she doing okay?"

"Not too well. She almost died."

Yang Jian continued, "A supernatural event occurred at her school. If I hadn't arrived in time, the situation would have become more dangerous than the one at No. 7 Middle School within half an hour."

"It's good that she's alright. But I want to know, how are things between you and her? Your mom is pressuring you to find a girlfriend. I told her you and Miao Xiaoshan are quite close, so I'm asking on her behalf," Wang Shanshan said.

"Of course, if you find it troublesome, I can cover for you for a while. Later, I'll tell your mom that we're dating. That way, my parents will also feel more at ease, especially considering my current state—they are really worried," she added.

"You can do that. Let the adults worry less. There's no future for Miao Xiaoshan and me. She's just an ordinary person and should live an ordinary life. Getting involved in this circle would only harm her. You wouldn't want all of our high school classmates to die out, would you?" Yang Jian didn't refuse and spoke up.

Like Yang Jian, Wang Shanshan was gradually losing her emotions; all that remained was perhaps some attachment. To some extent, they were the ones who truly understood each other.

"Since you agree, let's settle on that."

Wang Shanshan calmly said, "Whether it's pretending to be your girlfriend or even a fake marriage, I can help you out. The only thing beyond my ability now is having children. My current physical condition doesn't allow it, but I don't mind trying with you."

"..."

Yang Jian said, "I know what you're thinking. You just want us to die a dignified death to avoid regret, but you don't have to do this... never mind, let's not talk about this anymore. I'm heading out. Once I've dealt with the curse, I'll come back to see you. Don't be so pessimistic, okay?"

"Do you think people like us still have hope?"

As Yang Jian was leaving, Wang Shanshan's query, almost as if she were talking to herself, came from behind him.

She was looking for an answer or perhaps, pained by the current state, was seeking some truth.

"I don't know, but I'm looking for it. At the very least, we can't give up, right?" Yang Jian stopped, turning back to say.

Wang Shanshan didn't say anything, just calmly watched him.

Without lingering any longer, Yang Jian quickly left the ancient house.