

Revival 691

Chapter 691

Once the white Ghost Candle was lit, the consequences were terrifying. If not handled properly, it could easily spiral out of control, for no one knew what kind of entity might be attracted by the Ghost Candle. If it attracted a spirit of an extremely high Terror Level, the result could be instantaneous annihilation.

At this point, even a ghost controller of Yang Jian's caliber dared not light the white Ghost Candle himself. He let the Ghost Child use it while he quietly hid to the side to observe the situation.

His red ghost eyes could spy on every anomaly in the darkness.

He saw more and more Dead Man's Heads floating over in the sky and the number of Ghost Slaves appearing nearby was also increasing,

The originally deserted streets suddenly seemed bustling, as "people" kept emerging. At this rate, the intersection would soon be packed. There were at least more than ten corpses lying around Yang Jian himself.

One could only imagine how many had died at the hands of the Door Knocking Ghost in this city, and how many had become Ghost Slaves under the erosion of supernatural powers.

The darkness echoed with noises of the moving crowd.

A thick smell of corpse decay lingered coldly around.

All senses were under extreme duress, inflating everyone's fear to the limit.

The woman named Mishima Keiko, who could sense the presence of malevolent spirits, seemed on the verge of breaking down, cowering in a corner of the street, screaming and crying without restraint, seemingly having lost the capability to even flee.

Nagase, as a ghost controller, was faring slightly better. His face was extraordinarily pale, and he was trembling as if he had never imagined facing such a situation. This was not a simple paranormal event but a tremendous disaster. The malevolent spirits had formed a Ghost Tide, able to devour the life of any living person.

"Guess we're not surviving this time," thought Nagase.

With uneasy and panicked eyes, he looked towards Yang Jian, the architect of this entire situation, wondering if he was confident enough to handle this predicament.

Watching the eerie passersby, Nagase was fortunate; the ghosts did not focus on him because their priority for attacks was the Ghost Child.

The Ghost Child, dressed in funeral clothes, was now engulfed by the crowd, seemingly being swallowed up.

But the light from the Ghost Candle continued to flicker in the darkness, incessantly drawing ghosts nearer.

Yang Jian was unmoved, his expression chillingly collected. He had barely utilized any of his ghostly abilities, merely commanding the Headless Ghost Shadow to clear away corpses close to him to avoid any potentially dangerous mix-ins.

"The Door Knocking Ghost hasn't appeared yet?"

His ghostly gaze scrutinized everything around him, and his face couldn't help but grow darker—so many Ghost Slaves had been attracted, but the source still hadn't emerged.

"The Ghost Child is still holding up for the moment. It hasn't suffered any serious ghostly attacks. If something unexpected happens, I will immediately use the Ghost Domain to get the Ghost Child out of here," Yang Jian thought to himself. Although it seemed dangerous for the Ghost Child to be swallowed up by the crowd, these Ghost Slaves were unable to harm it through its burial clothes.

The longer the Ghost Candle burned, the stronger its attraction to the surrounding ghosts became.

At this very moment,

The eerie figure wrapped in tattered clothes from the house Yang Jian had entered earlier suddenly opened the door and stepped out. It was a genuine ghost that had been inactive before, hiding in the building.

Now, however, this ghost had come onto the street and was heading towards Yang Jian's location.

In another place,

another corpse walked out. It was headless, the body of one called Sakai who had died recently.

After his death, a ghost had revived in his body. Yang Jian hadn't had the time to deal with it before, so he had tossed it aside without concern. But now, the corpse was moving on its own, walking down the road towards the crowded intersection.

Beyond that,

Other horrors hidden within the city were also incessantly surfacing.

If the Door Knocking Ghost had not yet arrived, the lit Ghost Candle would attract all the ghosts, in which case Yang Jian and the others would certainly be annihilated.

"Bang!"

Suddenly, the Dead Man's Heads floating in the sky began to fall, slightly reducing the number. But quickly, new decapitated heads flew up to replace those that had dropped, becoming part of the floating Dead Man's Heads in the sky.

"There's a limit to the number of Dead Man's Heads floating there. As the rotten heads fall, new ones take their place... Sakai died because a few Dead Man's Heads had already fallen from the sky, and he became a replacement. This means that Sakai, Nagase, and that Keiko, or even me—all of us are already targeted by those balloon heads."

"It's just that we haven't been selected yet, and this selection seems to be random, with no first-come, first-served basis."

Yang Jian finally pieced together some key information and felt a peculiar unease. He subconsciously touched his neck.

His head had fallen off more than once before; he didn't want to lose it again here because if his head fell this time, he was sure he wouldn't survive.

"Better put up some insurance. Can't be stingy now," he thought.

Seizing the moment before the Door Knocking Ghost had yet to appear, Yang Jian quickly took something out of his luggage bag.

A piece of porcelain in the shape of a human figure, distorted and strange.

Ghost Porcelain.

This was one of the three pieces of Ghost Porcelain that President Mishima had acquired from a trade previously.

Yang Jian immediately took a small bunch of his own hair as a medium and placed the Ghost Porcelain in the corner of a small shop by the street, setting it up and pressing it upon the hair.

Very quickly,

the hair underneath the Ghost Porcelain disappeared, going directly into the interior of the Ghost Porcelain.

An indescribable feeling of constriction appeared on Yang Jian, a sensation he was not accustomed to, as if his entire body was enveloped by a fierce Ghost Cage... oppressive, stifling, suffocating.

Yang Jian bore this discomfort and learned to adapt to the sensation.

He knew it wouldn't last long, as soon as this matter was over, the medium inside the Ghost Porcelain would be removed by him.

However, just as he had finished setting up the Ghost Porcelain, suddenly,

the floor inside the small shop began to age, to decay, as if it had been abandoned for decades.

"Huh?"

Yang Jian's expression changed, and he immediately looked in a certain direction.

At one end of the street, the darkness was approaching, and there a ghostly elder in a long robe with livor mortis patches was slowly walking this way, with a pair of grey-white lifeless eyes that were frightening, an unprecedented feeling of horror and alarm.

The Door Knocking Ghost.

It had arrived.

"Blow out the Ghost Candle, bring that Dead Man's Head and come with me," Yang Jian shouted, issuing his command.

Immediately,

the bodies that were buried in the middle began to shift, topple, making way for a path.

The Ghost Child, dressed in funeral attire, held a Dead Man's Head and tilted its head to look this way.

The Dead Man's Head in its hands eerily stared straight ahead, and any Ghost Slave that it fixed its gaze on instantly lost the support of its supernatural power and fell dead to the ground.

"It seems that the old man hasn't changed, still the same as before, but... the sense of danger he gives me has become even stronger,"

"No time to care, must go on."

Yang Jian had already prepared to withstand the hardship, even if it was dangerous, he would not shrink back; otherwise, he wouldn't have so crazily ignited the Ghost Candle.

Now, the original source of the ghosts had been drawn here, and the safety of the others couldn't be his concern at the moment.

Swiftly, he converged with the Ghost Child.

According to his plan, he intended to combine the abilities of one person and one ghost, to instantly suppress the Door Knocking Ghost, not giving it any chance to attack, and directly dealing with this supernatural incident.

"Can it be done?"

Questions arose in Yang Jian's mind, but he had never truly made contact with this ghost, and couldn't predict what changes would occur after the encounter.

Despite his thoughts,

his actions were swift.

Upon his command, the Ghost Child's actions were even swifter.

The Dead Man's Head it was holding in its arms had already fixed its gaze on the slowly approaching elder in the long robe.

Yang Jian, not reassured, revealed a dark Ghost Hand, and quickly, the attack of the Ghost Hand ensued. The elder's body, covered with livor mortis patches, began to crawl with black, cold palms, which appeared on all parts of its body as if to swallow it whole.

These Ghost Hands, though not the source, still possessed some suppressive power.

Combined with the Dead Man's Head in the hands of the Ghost Child, the majority of ghosts would instantly lose their ability to move.

Chapter 692 Suppression by Three Parties

The Door Knocking Ghost was successfully lured over.

Although the plan deviated slightly, it was still carried out smoothly. After the appearance of the Door Knocking Ghost, Yang Jian instructed the Ghost Child to extinguish the Ghost Candle, ceasing to attract nearby ghosts.

But even though the candle was extinguished, the ghost had arrived—the danger had not dissipated.

An old man clad in a retro cheongsam, his body covered with corpse spots, walked towards them.

The first wave of confrontation between Yang Jian and the Ghost Child had already begun. The Ghost Hand, in collaboration with the decaying Dead Man's Head, exerted their suppressive force directly onto the Door Knocking Ghost.

"Will it be effective?"

Yang Jian's ghostly eyes opened wide. Although he did not use the Ghost Domain, he still fixed his gaze on the familiar and terrifying specter, observing the ensuing situation.

However, the next change made him feel somewhat startled.

The darkened palm that landed on the cheongsam-wearing old man now began to show corpse spots as well, then it decayed, and soon stopped moving and fell off, devoid of the strength to keep the Ghost Hand active. This was essentially a confrontation between ghosts, just like the way he had destroyed some Ghost Slaves earlier.

In this confrontation, Yang Jian's Ghost Hand was at a disadvantage.

The old man with corpse spots on his cheongsam continued to walk forward; his movements did not stop, and Yang Jian realized the situation seemed somewhat grim.

He quickly looked at the Dead Man's Head that the Ghost Child was holding.

The Dead Man's Head still stared ahead, with its eerie gaze fixed on the fierce ghost in front of it, showing no deviations. However, the outcome was not the old man being immobilized, but the level of decay on the Dead Man's Head worsening... no, it was continuing to decay.

"How could this be?"

Yang Jian's pupils contracted slightly. Even though the Dead Man's Head was already decaying, because it belonged to a ghost, the rate of decay had not changed, remaining the same. But now, merely for suppressing the Door Knocking Ghost, the head that hadn't changed at all was starting to show signs of decay.

The decay was rapid.

In just a moment, the strange face on the head decayed to the point of peeling off, and a stench of rotting flesh began to fill the air.

"The first wave of suppression has completely failed. The situation is more severe than I thought. Now, I must initiate the second wave of suppression while this decaying Dead Man's Head is still of use, and for this, I need to make direct contact with the Door Knocking Ghost."

Yang Jian's expression was extraordinarily grave.

After a brief hesitation, he charged forward without retreat.

Heading straight for the Door Knocking Ghost.

The fear he faced back at No. 7 Middle School had to be confronted once again by Yang Jian. Even after so much experience, his heart was still uneasy and fearful. This corpse-spotted cheongsam-wearing old man had become his nightmare, always lingering deep in his mind and surfacing from time to time.

"No way, he's going to approach that ghost..." Nagase, who thought he had breathed a sigh of relief, saw Yang Jian actually charging towards the ghost coming his way on the street, and his face instantly changed.

Having read the files, he recognized this as the source of the Ghost Door Knocker incident, a truly despair-inducing ghost.

"Haha, Mister Yang, please, keep it up. I hope you succeed."

At that moment, Nagase smiled, his smile containing more despair than anything else, as if he had resigned himself to dying here and thus no longer cared.

With the floating Dead Man's Head, the swarming Ghost Slaves, the old man appearing... there were no incidents before because he hadn't been targeted yet.

But being targeted was only a matter of time.

Besides, Yang Jian's actions were not going smoothly.

The closer he got to the Door Knocking Ghost, the colder his surroundings felt. This chill was an illusion—it was the influence of the fearsome ghost, eroding his body with supernatural power. If it were an ordinary person, they would likely be dead by now.

But the Ghost Porcelain took effect.

Yang Jian felt his body being eroded by supernatural forces, yet that oppressive, suffocating sensation was counteracting the cold.

The Ghost Porcelain, placed in a small shop near the street, was swiftly changing color at this moment. A layer of dark shadow was encroaching on the porcelain as if paint soaked into it, and at the same time, inconspicuous lines began to appear on the surface of the porcelain.

If these lines were to expand, they would become cracks.

It's just not that apparent yet.

But Yang Jian hadn't actually made contact with the Door Knocking Ghost.

Soon.

Yang Jian was within five meters of the Door Knocking Ghost. A few steps forward and he could touch the ghost in front of him, and even though he was so close, the Door Knocking Ghost still showed no reaction. Its target was the Ghost Child because the Ghost Child had just lit the Ghost Candle, and until the Ghost Child was attacked, it would not change its target.

However, Yang Jian's gaze was now fixed on the pocket of the cheongsam the old man was wearing.

Retro cheongsams, according to the old styles, were unlikely to have pockets, but there was a pocket at the waist of this old man, and it was visibly bulging, clearly containing something. This detail had been overlooked by many, who wouldn't even consider the possibility of a ghost harboring a huge secret. After all, those who saw the Ghost Door Knocker were too preoccupied with escaping to dare take anything from a ghost.

"I'll take the chance. Even if it's not successful, the objective of this mission can still be met."

Yang Jian took a deep breath and quickened his pace to follow, circling to the back to make contact with the ghost before him, because from that direction it was easier to feel for the pocket on the ghost's body.

The darkened Ghost Hand reached out and grabbed the arm of the old man in front.

Gaunt, rigid, icy... even with Yang Jian's Ghost Hand making contact, at that moment he felt a shocking abnormality, as if he had touched a tiger's rear and was enveloped by a feeling of being about to be bitten back at any moment.

Danger, immense danger.

The ghost within him was sending out a warning, or perhaps it was Yang Jian's innate sense as a top ghost controller sensing the peril.

"Are you kidding me, still moving forward?"

However, Yang Jian soon felt that the old corpse in front of him showed no change in its movements, continuing to walk forward, which meant that the supernatural power he had stolen from the Ghost Coffin, which belonged to the Ghost Envoy, had no way of suppressing the Door Knocking Ghost, or perhaps inside the body of the Door Knocking Ghost there was more than one ghost...

With the source of the Ghost Hand's suppression failing, Yang Jian hesitated no longer. The Headless Ghost Shadow on the ground spread ahead, and as the fierce ghost walked forward, it stepped onto the Ghost Shadow.

The Ghost Shadow began to rapidly invade the fierce ghost in front, attempting to form a suppression.

At this moment.

The Ghost Hand, the continuously rotting Dead Man's Head, and the Headless Ghost Shadow – the abilities of three ferocious ghosts all focused on the Door Knocking Ghost.

This was the maximum extent of suppression Yang Jian could manage so far; if this didn't work, he would have to use his last resort... that rusty and odd Firewood Knife, which with one strike could dismember a ghost and reduce its Terror Level.

"Tap tap!"

The sound of footsteps disappeared at this moment, and it seemed that suppression had taken effect. The gaunt old man covered in corpse spots that Yang Jian was holding stopped.

"Opportunity."

Yang Jian dared not delay any further, and his other gloved hand stretched directly toward the ghost's pocket.

He would talk about securing the Door Knocking Ghost only after grabbing the item, depending on what would happen next.

But at this moment, a sudden change occurred.

The old man who stopped moving did not lose the ability to move as a result.

In the next instant, a withered, waxen hand covered in corpse spots suddenly grabbed Yang Jian's wrist.

The strength was unbelievably great, and Yang Jian's wrist made a crackling sound, though the noise was more like breaking porcelain than snapping bones.

In that conspicuous little shop by the roadside, the protective Ghost Porcelain safeguarding Yang Jian sat in the corner, and now an astonishing change appeared on it.

Cracks began to form on the wrist of the porcelain figure in human shape, and then more and more cracks appeared, until finally, with a pop, the porcelain figurine's wrist broke off, as did its hand, and it fell to the ground.

"Are you kidding me, it can still move?"

Yang Jian felt a chill trying to invade him and affect his body, but luckily, his ordinary hand was gloved with Gold material, which isolated the supernatural and made the situation slightly better.

But this strength... was weirdly unbelievable. Now his wrist had lost sensation, probably broken, and there might even be a comminuted fracture.

However, Yang Jian was not concerned about the injury to his body, as the Headless Ghost Shadow would piece it back together; if all else failed, he would find Huang Ziya for a recovery.

"Let the Headless Ghost Shadow take the item." Beads of cold sweat appeared on Yang Jian's forehead.

Unable to break free from the withered, waxen old hand, he could only let the Headless Ghost Shadow continue its invasion, to take the item from the Door Knocking Ghost, and then he would open the Ghost Domain to make a forced escape.

But it seemed the situation was even more dangerous than he thought.

The old man who had stopped his movements started to turn his stiff head, slowly turning to look in Yang Jian's direction from behind.

The head was turning on the neck, seemingly about to turn toward Yang Jian.

But it didn't.

After the old man's head turned ninety degrees, it stopped. A profile of his face was now in front of Yang Jian, sparing him the horror of a sudden ghostly twist. Yang Jian saw clearly the gaunt face twitching slightly, as if forming a sinister smile, or as if it were a terrible omen of an incomprehensible ghostly revival.

"Hurry," he urged.

More cold sweat gathered on his forehead, but the Headless Ghost Shadow's action continued. At this time, any relaxation of the suppression could spell failure.

Although not fully suppressing the Door Knocking Ghost, Yang Jian was well aware that he had suppressed it by at least seventy percent, halting the ghost's murderous actions.

A tangible shadow in the form of a hand had stretched into the old man's pocket, but unfortunately, Yang Jian did not have the tactile sensation of a Ghost Shadow and could not feel what was inside. He could only hope that right after the Ghost Shadow took the item, it would immediately retreat.

At this moment, however.

There was an oversight on the Ghost Child's part – the rotting Dead Man's Head that had been held aloft slowly began to float...

The suppression associated with the Dead Man's Head had vanished.

Chapter 693 Retreat and Secrets

Yang Jian braved tremendous danger to engage with the Door Knocking Ghost. According to the plan previously conceived in his mind, the combined repression from the Ghost Hand, Ghost Shadow, and the decomposing Dead Man's Head held by the Ghost Child should have been sufficient to halt the activities of a fierce ghost of this caliber. He even felt that the Ghost Hand combined with the rotting head alone should have been enough.

The reality of the situation made Yang Jian realize that things were far from simple.

This emaciated old man, covered with the mottling of decaying flesh, appeared to be more than just what he seemed on the surface. Killing by knocking on doors was perhaps just one of its manifested patterns of murder. There were many more terrifying things hidden within the old man that many people subconsciously ignored.

"Damn it."

However, at the critical moment of his confrontation with the Door Knocking Ghost, Yang Jian's pupils constricted, and even his hair seemed to stand on end due to the terror.

That's because he saw the highly decomposed Dead Man's Head that the Ghost Child was holding begin to float up slowly, and at the same time, the suppression from the head disappeared.

The decomposing Dead Man's Head needed to fix its gaze on a target to be effective. Now that it was floating up, the fierce ghost in front of him had already left its line of sight, so the pressure from the rotting head veered off course. The resultant impact was extremely fatal, as just now it took the combination of three ghosts to barely suppress the ghost's movements.

But now... with one main force for suppressing the fierce ghost gone, this meant that the ghost's movements could at least be restored by half.

"It's starting to struggle?"

Yang Jian felt the gaunt, cold body he was holding regain movement. The arm was shaking, the strength eerily abnormal, seeming ready to break free from the Ghost Hand's suppression. But this struggle was still barely within a controllable range, enough to only steady half of the ghost's body.

"Not good..."

The old man in front of him continued to turn around, seemingly having set his sights on Yang Jian who had been making small moves behind his back. A strange aura enveloped him and began trying to invade his body.

The protection of the Ghost Porcelain continued.

But now, Yang Jian saw that on the wrist being held by the old man, patches of mortuary spots were beginning to appear despite wearing Gold gloves, without any real contact with the fierce ghost. Gold could insulate the influence of supernatural powers, but still, the weird aura eroding from the surroundings was rapidly deteriorating Yang Jian's body.

The mortuary spots spread along the arm, with the speed not decreasing in the slightest. Instead, it became more and more intense. If this continued, Yang Jian's body would quickly rot and completely turn into a corpse.

Even though Yang Jian was now controlling three ghosts, the only true ghostly parts were a maimed palm and a few ghostly eyes. The Ghost Shadow wasn't even considered part of the body, more like a shadow attached to him, so most of his body was still that of a living person.

And the body of a living person was extremely vulnerable, easily eroded by a fierce ghost.

"The Ghost Porcelain is helping me resist this eerie erosion, otherwise, I'd be completely rotted by now... but this can't go on, If I can't suppress the Door Knocking Ghost, I can't imprison it. Moreover, the decomposing Dead Man's Head has already floated away, and the ghost from the Head Balloon Event might have already got this puzzle piece."

"Once it's completed, there's no predicting what might happen."

"I must make a choice at this time."

Urgent sweat broke out on Yang Jian; the situation had reached the brink of losing control, and he had to make a choice—whether to make a decisive retreat now or to continue the fierce struggle.

If he really continued the hard fight, it's not like he lacked the means.

He still had the ghostly eyes unused, and that rusty, eerie Firewood Knife could also directly dismember the Door Knocking Ghost.

It's just that the cost might be a bit high. Yang Jian's real goal was only to take something from the Door Knocking Ghost, not to really fight to the death with it. After all, this was Kobe City, not his own jurisdiction of Dachang City.

"If I force a fight under these circumstances, I'm going to suffer a lot, and it's quite possible that I might really die here. And now that I have what I came for..." The thought of retreat flashed through Yang Jian's mind.

Retreat!

The Door Knocking Ghost was too terrifying, and the first round of probing attacks had completely failed. To deal with this ghost, he would have to formulate a new plan and approach later on.

Once he made his decision, Yang Jian acted very swiftly.

His Ghost Shadow started to retreat quickly, but as it did, one of its arms brought back something from the pocket of the old, vintage long coat worn by the Door Knocking Ghost. With the situation critical, Yang Jian did not look closely; he swiftly released the Ghost Hand.

The pressure from both the Ghost Hand and the Ghost Shadow disappeared.

At this moment, the Door Knocking Ghost fully recovered its mobility, no longer affected by any force.

The withered old man covered in livor mortis completely turned around now, still clutching Yang Jian's wrist, as if he intended to do something else.

"Crack!"

Simultaneously, in a corner inside a street shop, a strange porcelain that had been placed there was now full of cracks, and at last, as if the force it was bearing reached its limit, it burst into pieces with a loud pop.

A piece of Ghost Porcelain was thoroughly exhausted.

And without the opaque protection of the Ghost Porcelain, the terror of the malevolent ghost was faced directly.

At this moment, Yang Jian felt a horrifying threat, and this chilling sensation made him realize his current predicament. Without any hesitation, he layered his Ghost Eye and used the Ghost Domain.

In an instant, four layers of the Ghost Domain unfolded.

Red light enveloped himself, and at the same time spread over the nearby area, covering Nagase at the nearby crossroads, as well as Mishima, and their accompanying interpreter Keiko—while the Ghost Child was free to come and go within his Ghost Domain.

The range of the Door Knocking Ghost's domain expanded, but in reality, it was not formidable at all, far inferior to that of the original Ghost Envoy's domain.

Or rather, within the realm of the Ghost Domain, Yang Jian had surpassed many of the true malevolent ghosts, since as the first ghost he tamed, the Ghost Eye's revival and utilization levels were very high.

Immediately,

The red Ghost Domain replaced the dim world, and at the same time the terrifying old man in the long robe also disappeared along with it; the nearby streets and buildings underwent drastic changes, from being in the city to now being on a suburban road in Kobe City.

The swarming Ghost Slaves disappeared, and the Dead Man's Head floating in the sky vanished as well.

This sudden change made everything previously experienced feel like a nightmare.

The domains of ghosts invaded each other, and Yang Jian led the others out of the Door Knocking Ghost's domain, temporarily withdrawing from that terrifying Kobe City.

"We've made it out."

Yang Jian could not help but breathe a sigh of relief; at a critical moment, his Ghost Domain could still save lives. Otherwise, he would have had to use the substitution doll or even the bizarre Firewood Knife.

The others who were with him were also brought out.

The Ghost Child was unaffected, standing not far away.

However, the highly decomposed Dead Man's Head had disappeared. Just now Yang Jian's Ghost Domain had covered it, but it did not bring back the gradually ascending Dead Man's Head. The power of the four-layer Ghost Domain seemed to be disrupted, so in the end, he lost a very valuable ghost.

"As I suspected... there is a certain connection between that head and the balloon heads; the moment it was taken out of the Ghost Child's backpack, it was targeted, seemingly attracted by something. If not for this problem at a critical moment, I wouldn't have had to make such a difficult decision."

"The only thing to be grateful for is that my previous guess was correct; the Door Knocking Ghost really did have something in its pocket."

Yang Jian's gaze shifted to the ground.

The headless shadow seemed to have partially risen, and a square wooden box, larger than a palm, appeared in the hand formed by its shadow.

Yang Jian felt no strange aura from the wooden box, nor any peculiar characteristics. He only knew that it was painted with gold lacquer, isolating the influence of Supernatural Power and also evading the scrutiny of the Ghost Eye.

"Well hidden indeed, I was nearly killed by a malevolent ghost for this thing."

Yang Jian did not rush to investigate but instead took the box and placed it inside a larger gold box he found in his luggage bag.

It was still uncertain what was inside, so it was better to be cautious for now.

Chapter 694 The Terrifying Livor Mortis

"Really, has anyone made it out alive?"

On the silent highway, devoid of traffic, Nagase couldn't help but mutter to himself as he gazed at the scene before him. Everything was the familiar scenery of before, but without the Ghost Slaves surging from all directions, the terrifying Dead Man's Head floating in the sky, and most despairingly, the Corpse Spot Elder.

The eerie phenomenon had vanished, and Nagase knew he must have left Kobe City—or rather, that dreadful place.

Because this was still Kobe City, just without any malevolent spirits wandering around.

However, at this moment, the woman named Mishima was still huddled in a corner, sobbing and talking to herself, seemingly having an emotional breakdown and unable to recover.

Keiko was doing slightly better, eyes shut, trembling in fear, refusing to look or concern herself with anything, placing all her hope in Yang Jian. She was very clear that as long as Mister Yang took care of her, she wouldn't die; if he didn't, struggling to survive would be futile.

Three people had survived, while the middle-aged man named Sakai had died in the Door Knocking Ghost's Ghost Domain.

The Ghost Child was still circling nearby, unaffected by the recent events.

"The Corpse Spot is spreading, and it's a terrible curse. Those who have come into contact with it will be eroded by the ghosts' power and become decaying corpses. I haven't officially come into contact with the Door Knocking Ghost; I was just near it, although my hand was grasped. But even though it was through the Gold Glove... Still, even with that protection, my body is continually deteriorating."

Yang Jian's face changed abruptly.

He didn't pay any mind to the object he had just acquired but immediately started to check his own body. He discovered that the Corpse Spot on his arm was spreading, reaching his shoulder without any signs of the color fading after the spread.

If he didn't find a way to deal with it, his body would turn into a corpse once again.

Like the Door Knocking Ghost, covered in Corpse Spots, decaying, becoming foul.

"The Corpse Spot on the other hand has disappeared."

Then, he noticed the other arm, the one that belonged to the Ghost Hand, didn't have any Corpse Spots, or perhaps they had appeared but then vanished.

The Supernatural Power of the Ghost Envoy had preserved Yang Jian, but only to a small extent—just one arm.

Clearly, the puzzle of the Ghost Envoy wasn't complete, which had led to this outcome. If Wei Jing had come here, he wouldn't have been affected by such a curse at all. He could suppress all things supernatural because he was a ghost himself.

"This curse is more terrifying than I imagined, even the nearby flowers and trees have withered." Yang Jian glanced over; the cold, decaying aura emanating from him now affected his surroundings.

The greenery by the roadside had rotted away.

This was merely the result of indirect contact. If he had been actually touched by that old man, Yang Jian wasn't sure if he could have withstood this state. But he had a feeling that, in his current physical condition, he wouldn't be able to resist. After all, his body was still that of a normal human, not entirely otherworldly.

This was because he used to have the protection of Ghost Porcelain but before escaping, his Ghost Domain had become very clear to him—Ghost Porcelain had shattered.

This meant that Ghost Porcelain's protection had reached its limit and couldn't completely block the Door Knocking Ghost's erosion.

Yang Jian couldn't afford to waste time. He quickly allowed the Ghost Shadow to return to his body.

The chilling black shadow invaded his body, merging with him. Since the Headless Ghost Shadow was in a non-responsive state, Yang Jian wasn't worried that his body would be dismembered due to the Ghost Shadow's uncontrollable state.

"I rarely let the Ghost Shadow merge with my body, because doing so only worsens my condition unconsciously. After all, it's not easy to control the power of a fierce ghost. But now, it should be fine for resisting this Corpse Spot Curse."

Yang Jian thought to himself.

His skin gradually darkened as if it had been sun-scorched for too long, losing the previous pallid, unhealthy complexion.

The invasion of Ghost Shadow made Yang Jian's body feel as if it had turned into that of a fierce ghost, an odd sensation.

After his senses were affected, his emotions changed too. In that moment, Yang Jian seemed to become a conscious ghost, indifferent, devoid of any human emotion, and with a latent urge to dismember living bodies, like how a child longs for a fascinating toy.

This was the instinct of a fierce ghost.

Once he died, such instincts would awaken and take control of his body, adopting this innate behavior.

Killing would become the norm. That was the essence of a fierce ghost's revival.

So, the biggest problem in becoming otherworldly isn't having a ghost's body, but overcoming the instinct to be controlled by a ghost. Even if the ghost was non-responsive, the instinct remained. The more ghosts he controlled, the more intense the instinct became. It wasn't too bad with incomplete puzzles, like arms or legs, but once he wholly succumbed to becoming a ghost, he too would transform into one.

"The Corpse Spot is fading; the curse has been resisted."

At that moment, Yang Jian breathed a sigh of relief when he saw the Corpse Spot on his chest fading and then gradually disappearing.

The rotten stench emitting from his body also began to vanish.

But this dispersal was slow.

It took a full ten minutes, using the power of the Headless Ghost Shadow, for Yang Jian to nearly clear the Corpse Spots from his body.

This result made Yang Jian's expression darken.

...

Before being officially cursed by the Corpse Spot Curse, it took ten minutes just to clear the curse. If one was fully cursed, could Ghost Shadow really hold it off? Or would it be necessary to switch to a new body to escape the curse?

Yang Jian was contemplating countermeasures.

It was essential to consider the worst-case scenario, and not harbor the slightest hope of chance; a quality every top-tier ghost manipulator should possess.

But after pondering for a while, he temporarily shelved the issue.

Because now was not the time to relax.

"Originally, I could have used Ghost Domain to take away that rotten Dead Man's Head, but the suppression on my Ghost Eye also exists, preventing Ghost Domain from covering it, and now it has resulted in the loss of the Dead Man's Head... The critical puzzle piece for the balloon made of heads seems to be now complete."

"At the same time, the terrifying level of Door Knocking Ghost is also confirmed. Although it hasn't reached the degree of an S-class specter, I believe it far surpasses ordinary Level A supernatural incidents, and with the balloon made of heads incident added on, it has become even more troublesome."

"Fortunately, I got what I wanted, and also ascertained some crucial information. The first wave of the confrontation had gains and losses."

"In summary, this round was not a loss."

Thinking thus, Yang Jian felt he had been too greedy before, wanting to lure ghosts with a Ghost Candle to solve everything in one fell swoop, completely underestimating that Corpse Spot-ridden grandfather.

It was somewhat presumptuous.

After all, without the curse of the Eight-Tone Music Box, he also dared not exploit the full capability of a fierce ghost's power.

The stagnation of the six-layer Ghost Domain, the dismembering ability of the eerie kitchen knife; he dared not, nor did he want to, play his two trump cards.

He wasn't going to go all-out for the Exorcism Club. Yang Jian hadn't become so noble. His visit this time was just going with the flow, aiming to make a bit of money while taking away the secrets of the Door Knocking Ghost. Moreover, he wanted to maximize the value he could get before the half-day of the Ghost Cabinet's trading time was up, not wishing to waste it.

Previously accustomed to a life of poverty, this calculated way of living had also become a part of Yang Jian's character.

If it were regular life, Yang Jian would definitely be a miserly little character, but after becoming a ghost manipulator, this trait turned out to be very suitable.

"Mister Yang, now that we have pulled out, what do we do next?" Nagase, having calmed his emotions, came over and asked.

Although the matter wasn't resolved, Nagase truly admired the man before him.

He dared to confront so many fierce ghosts on his own and even managed to leave unscathed, and even Keiko, an ordinary person, didn't suffer any harm. What did this imply?

It implied that Yang Jian still had plenty of strength in reserve and had not gone all out. Perhaps the recent action was part of his calculations, a reconnaissance to gather intelligence.

"First, let's rest nearby. I need to seriously contemplate a strategy. The ghost is not so easily dealt with – you saw the situation earlier. It's much more complicated than imagined," said Yang Jian straightforwardly.

"Wait, you speak Chinese?"

Suddenly, he realized that Nagase was speaking Chinese.

Nagase said with a smile, "I can speak at least four languages, but I really can't boast about my linguistic talent in front of Mister Yang."

"It's due to distrust," Yang Jian said calmly. "Concealing that you can speak Chinese might help you extract some important information from me, which could increase your odds of survival. It's a smart move, and it's normal for someone as cautious as you to have survived till now."

"I am really sorry to have made Mister Yang laugh," Nagase quickly bowed in apology.

"No need to apologize, I don't blame you. After all, this operation was indeed filled with danger," Yang Jian said.

"You have a broader mind than I imagined, Mister Yang," Nagase smiled again. "It's really good that we survived this time. I know of a nice hotel nearby where we can rest temporarily, it's just..."

He said, looking around.

The unease in his heart had not dissipated.

Yang Jian said, "There's no danger near here, lead the way. If any danger arises, I'll handle it."

"Alright," Nagase nodded.

"Can you still move?" At that moment, Yang Jian walked over and patted Keiko.

Keiko jumped, startled, and at that moment, she finally opened her eyes. When she saw the calm scenery around her, an expression of relief seemed to spread across her face, "Thank goodness, it's finally over."

"Mister Yang, I can move. Please don't leave Keiko behind," she said.

"Call over that woman named Mishima, and get ready to leave," Yang Jian instructed.

Soon, the group arrived at a nearby hotel.

The brief rest was for the purpose of reformulating a plan and also to allow these people to relax a bit. After all, they had just been through a horrifying scenario. They, including Yang Jian, were no longer suited to continue without rest.

Chapter 695 Coordinates

"Mister Yang, it seems we're quite fortunate, this is a very famous Hot Spring Hotel. I believe it won't lead to Mister Yang's death. The only pity is that the innkeeper seems to have gone missing, so it looks like no one will be here to entertain us."

A group of people arrived at the hotel, planning to rest and regroup.

Nagase introduced the hotel with a smile, as if he was very familiar with it.

At that moment, Yang Jian glanced over, "That Mishima wasn't acting right from the start, her mental state seems to be troubled."

"She's probably gone mad."

Nagase said, "Miss Mishima suddenly sensed too many fierce ghosts, her mental and endurance limits were reached. Though she's safe for now, the trauma seems not so easily healed. She's really unfortunate and pitiful, barely at the last step and yet couldn't hold on."

He also glanced behind him.

That Keiko had been comforting Mishima, but the woman called Mishima was just holding her head, her expression terrified, pupils dilated, muttering to herself, unclear what she was saying. It looked like her condition was quite bad and she wouldn't be able to recover her senses anytime soon, meaning she couldn't participate in the next operation.

"Ordinary people are just a bit too fragile," Yang Jian shook his head slightly, not saying much more.

He didn't blame, just reflected.

This Mishima, in fact, had been in a safe state from start to finish, even when he and the old man made contact she wasn't attacked. In the end, she couldn't withstand the mental strain; nobody else was to blame but her own fragility.

"After settling her in the hotel, we won't need to bother with her."

Yang Jian said, "Keiko, call President Mishima. Have Nagase explain the situation, tell President Mishima that my mission has not been successful for now, and that we need the next plan, which will take some time."

"Don't worry, Mister Yang, I will communicate well with President Mishima," Nagase assured.

Yang Jian nodded, not saying much else, and walked into the hotel with the Ghost Child, carrying the luggage bag.

He was in no mood to deal with these trifles. As for whether President Mishima would be disappointed upon hearing the mission failed, Yang Jian didn't care, he had his own methods and style of doing things.

He arrived at a secluded hot spring area.

Yang Jian sniffed the rotten stench on his body, deciding to wash it off first.

The Ghost Child couldn't enter the hot spring; it had corpse water on it, which would turn the hot spring into a pool of death water, probably unusable thereafter. So, he had the Ghost Child keep watch nearby, guarding against possible paranormal occurrences.

The warm hot spring water couldn't dispel the chill on Yang Jian's body.

His complexion was still pale, revealing an unhealthy pallor, looking at first glance like a young man with a frail constitution.

Even though Yang Jian was mostly submerged in the water, he held a golden box in hand. This box, obtained from the Door Knocking Ghost, was suspected to contain the secret to a supernatural resurrection. The box wasn't as heavy as expected, but it did have some weight. Shaking it, he heard no sound, unsure what was inside.

Besides, the box wasn't made of pure gold, just an ordinary wooden box painted with a layer of gold paint. Although the paint was thin, it completely sealed the box; not even a crack was left unblocked.

That meant the box hadn't been opened since the day it was put into the Door Knocking Ghost's pocket.

The secret had been preserved in its entirety.

No longer able to contain his curiosity, Yang Jian decided to open it and have a look, after all, he had come such a long distance for this very thing.

There was no hesitation.

Yang Jian directly used the Ghost Hand to open the golden-painted box. Although it was a bit bold and impulsive, his vigilance was strong, and he was ready to instantly activate the Ghost Domain to block any supernatural danger should anything go amiss.

However, it turned out that he was overthinking it.

After the wooden box was opened, everything remained calm; no strange occurrences transpired.

"What is this? Where's the secret I was promised?" Yang Jian's brow immediately furrowed as he pulled out an old wooden board from inside. The board was so aged it was almost rotting, resembling the material of the Ghost Coffins he had encountered.

Despite its eerie appearance, he couldn't detect anything unusual about the board.

It felt as if it had been broken off from somewhere randomly.

"There are carvings on the board."

Yang Jian flipped it over and saw that someone had forcibly carved some numbers with their nails—114, 22 30, 30.

That was all; the numbers seemed unconnected, crudely etched, with deliberate spaces in between.

"Are you playing charades with me?" Yang Jian thought for a moment, his expression growing somber.

The last thing he liked was solving such cryptic puzzles. Why couldn't the information be presented clearly? Instead, it was concealed in this manner. He wasn't a decoding expert. Moreover, deciphering a code from a hundred years ago was akin to groping in the dark with no clues at hand. Even if it were handed off to Wang Xiaoming, he'd likely be just as perplexed.

To guess the correct information, one would at least need something to reference and compare.

"The information from the Door Knocking Ghost must be very important. He intentionally left behind this damaged wooden board with those numbers for a reason. Perhaps it was to prevent the information he left from being too easily obtained, so he took an extra precaution. Or maybe he was in a hurry to leave behind the information and didn't have time for elaborate preparations, so he had to just give it a try."

Yang Jian pondered for a while but ultimately could not figure it out.

He was extremely disappointed, even a bit annoyed.

It was just like the previous owner of the Ghost Cabinet who, despite having used the Ghost Cabinet and knowing all its patterns, didn't divulge a thing, instead leaving behind warning messages and mysterious riddles.

"However, thinking about the Ghost Cabinet and that Ghost Mirror, I do have a bit of a clue. The people from the Republic of China period who disappeared left behind items that, to some extent, tested the capabilities and temperament of subsequent users. Their mindset when leaving these artifacts was quite conflicted; they didn't want these things to be exposed to the world but also didn't wish for them to be entirely buried and forgotten."

"So they intentionally left some hints, letting you know half and leaving you to figure out the rest, as a form of an invisible test. If the old man had the same thought before his death, then this number is a test for me."

Yang Jian's eyes flickered with thought.

Putting himself in the old man's shoes, if he knew a great secret, how would he both test others and ensure the item's preservation?

"Who's there?"

Suddenly, at that moment, Yang Jian sensed someone approaching and immediately shelved his numerous thoughts, shouting out.

"It's me, Keiko. I came to help Mister Yang wash his back," Keiko approached, holding a bath towel in front of her, her cheeks flushed with a careful step.

Yang Jian said, "No need. Your duty is to translate, and there's nothing for you to do right now. You can go rest. Even if there is an action to be taken later, it won't concern you. Nagase is better suited to be the translator than you are."

"Please don't say that, Mister Yang. I have been working very hard, so please allow me to continue to take care of you as that is the only value I have," Keiko insisted earnestly and persistently.

"Did President Mishima give you an order you can't refuse?"

Yang Jian asked, "I can have Mishima cancel the order. You're just an ordinary person; there's no need for you to get involved in this sort of thing. After all, nothing is more important than staying alive."

He did not dislike Keiko, so he gave her a way out.

But Keiko shook her head and said, "No, this is my own choice now, and it has nothing to do with President Mishima's order, because I also want to repay Mister Yang for his kindness to me."

Yang Jian frowned slightly, as he found Keiko's way of thinking somewhat incomprehensible.

Or rather, the thought processes of this foreign woman were somewhat strange to him; it was normal for him to have difficulty adapting.

It was actually quite normal for Yang Jian not to understand.

Within the Supernatural Club, there was a strong emphasis on hierarchy and personal honor and shame. Keiko, sent by Mishima to take care of Yang Jian and handle translation, would find it difficult to hold her head up high in the Supernatural Club if she were simply sent back like this, and she would be chided for a lifetime.

"Suit yourself. I have something to do now, so just go soak in the hot spring alone. Just don't bother me," said Yang Jian.

Keiko complied softly and tiptoed into the hot spring.

Yang Jian glanced at her, his expression calm. He was in no state to take any interest in this woman, but he had to admit that Keiko's physique was indeed impressive; President Mishima had indeed invested quite the effort in pleasing him, sparing no expense.

Keiko could feel Yang Jian's gaze and blushed with a smile, seemingly unfazed.

Yang Jian shifted his gaze away and continued to ponder the secret of the string of numbers before him.

However, with his current means, after much consideration, he still couldn't decipher the clue. He could only try to memorize the numbers, then go back and consider a strategy, asking all his teammates in Dachang City for their thoughts in order to pool their wisdom.

"Did Mister Yang encounter some trouble? Maybe Keiko can help out a little," said Keiko, pushing the water aside and approaching with a blush.

"This has nothing to do with you."

Yang Jian coldly refused: "And stay away from me, for your own safety."

Keiko nodded, but she still glanced at the wooden board Yang Jian was preparing to put away, and seemingly saw the row of numbers, though she didn't see them all, and then said, "Is it those numbers that are troubling Mister Yang?"

"You are too nosy, forget what you just saw. I don't want a second person to know about what just happened. If you let it slip, I will take you out myself," Yang Jian warned.

"Please don't worry, Mister Yang. Keiko will keep a secret. Please trust my integrity," Keiko pleaded.

Yang Jian said nothing, simply packing up the box and then placing it in his luggage.

But Keiko seemed to be contemplating those numbers, then uncertainly said, "Mister Yang, the numbers that troubled you just now should be an address, I think. I didn't see the whole thing, so I don't know the exact location."

"An address?"

Yang Jian's expression flickered: "Why do you think that? How could those numbers be related to an address?"

"It's the latitude and longitude, those numbers should represent coordinates, they can precisely determine a location," Keiko explained, her previous knowledge making the numbers seem familiar.

"Coordinates?"

Yang Jian's heart thumped with realization. Although unconfirmed, he felt Keiko's guess might very well be correct.

It was a set of coordinate addresses.

Recording the address directly could introduce errors, such as a certain street or building, because houses and roads can change, but coordinates are eternal. Hence, coordinate positioning is very precise. Moreover, this method of positioning has been around for a long time. The old man had died six months ago, so it is reasonable to assume he had learned this method.

"Taking the secret with oneself is too obvious; leaving a coordinate address and then hiding the secret somewhere else is a bit more secure. It must be this way."

Yang Jian perked up at once and immediately said, "I need a phone that can input and locate coordinates."

"The phone is outside with the clothes. I'll go get it for Mister Yang," Keiko said.

She promptly walked out of the hot spring, covering her body with a towel, obviously unbothered by Yang Jian's gaze.

"Quite a bold woman," commented Yang Jian.

Soon, Keiko brought the phone. She knelt beside Yang Jian, handed him the phone, and said, "Nagase has already reported this incident to President Mishima just now; I almost forgot to inform you, Mister Yang."

Without a word, Yang Jian took the phone and activated the GPS feature.

He entered the numbers from his memory that were on those wooden boards.

The next moment.

The screen on the phone flickered, and a location appeared before his eyes.

Yang Jian didn't recognize the place, but the nearby city was marked; it's near... Dahan City.

"It's certainly a coordinate," Yang Jian's eyes narrowed as he stared at the phone, as though to burn the address into his memory.

If he wasn't mistaken, that place was definitely where the old man had lived before his death, or it was a place of great importance; otherwise, it would not have been deliberately recorded.

"Near Dahan City? It's not far from Dachang City. Plus, before coming to Kobe City, I also found some clues about Dahan City. No supernatural events have ever occurred there, even in these days of frequent supernatural occurrences. This is not survivorship bias but rather something deliberate."

"The old man died there, and the address left behind points to there. It seems that Dahan City hides some great secret," thought Yang Jian.

This was not mere speculation but a theory supported by a series of evidences.

"You are more useful than I thought, to have seen at a glance that it was a coordinate," Yang Jian said, breaking his train of thought to offer rare praise to Keiko.

Without her pointing it out, he might have guessed for days, or even weeks.

Keiko immediately smiled, her eyes curving, "I'm happy I could help Mister Yang."

"Then let me scrub your back for you, Mister Yang."

"No need," Yang Jian still rebuffed her firmly.

"Why? I'll be very gentle, and I won't disappoint you, Mister Yang," Keiko asked, puzzled.

Yang Jian replied, "There is no why. I've said before, your task for today is over. Whether you rest or soak is up to you. I'm finished here; I need to think about the next steps. This matter is not yet over. The brief rest now is just to adjust my condition."