

Revival 901

Chapter 901 Two People Who Missed Each Other

No one expected that after being resurrected, Li Jun could actually rely on his own Ghost Domain to connect with the world within the Ghost Drawing.

It should be noted that the terror level of the Ghost Drawing is extremely high. When Yang Jian entered its world, even his Ghost Eye couldn't open and was suppressed. Even the ghost with the codename Ghost Envoy was imprisoned because of the Ghost Drawing's presence.

Perhaps this is because the Ghost Flame controlled by Li Jun has a restraining effect on the Ghost Drawing.

But no matter the reason, this sort of indirect control over the Ghost Drawing is an exception among exceptions. It's almost impossible for anyone other than Li Jun to replicate this.

Inside the ancient mansion.

As the Ghost Flame in Li Jun's hand expanded, enveloping the surroundings, the skyscraper within the flames seemed to invade reality from the illusory supernatural realm in an instant.

That lifeless Ping'an Tower gradually appeared before them.

The ancient mansion was disappearing...

No, it wasn't disappearing — it was being replaced.

Whether it was Li Jun, Chen Qiaoyang, or the other wandering ghosts within the mansion, all of them were gradually transitioning into a new scene, entering the Ping'an Tower from the painting's background.

This phenomenon had just begun to manifest.

Darkness enveloped the surroundings, rushing in swiftly.

The coffin-shaped darkness shifted, surging in like a tide, blocking everyone's path. This transformation left no place for the others to stand, forcing them to approach the dim and lifeless Ping'an Tower.

Because if they didn't move closer, they would be consumed by the coffin-shaped darkness.

Once swallowed by that darkness, entering it would be equivalent to stepping into the Ghost Coffin.

Hidden within the Ghost Coffin is the true S-ranked specter, the Ghost Envoy, and encountering the Ghost Envoy in isolation almost guarantees certain death. Surviving by sheer luck is virtually impossible.

But the dreadful part is this—

The Ping'an Tower is the true origin of the Ghost Drawing. Entering it is the same as stepping into the world of the Ghost Drawing. Even if you manage to survive in the skyscraper filled with malevolent ghosts, you'll never be able to escape.

Both paths lead to death.

And this was Li Jun's real trump card to deal with Chen Qiaoyang.

"You have no way out anymore. Just enter the building obediently." Li Jun's hoarse voice growled lowly.

Borrowing the supernatural power of the Ghost Drawing and the Ghost Envoy carries immense risks.

He had to be extremely cautious, as connecting with the world of the Ghost Drawing also meant it was connecting with him. Should anything go wrong, the malevolent specters within the Ghost Drawing could potentially escape into reality. For this reason, Li Jun avoided this dangerous method unless absolutely necessary.

"Chen Qiaoyang, something feels very off about this situation. Quickly think of a way to escape! Stop insisting on dragging things out with Li Jun—it's not worth it."

Zhang Qing, terrified, had even abandoned his wheelchair. He stumbled stiffly as he ran, evading the encroaching darkness behind him.

Wan Tong, too, was fleeing in heart-pounding fear.

But it was all futile.

The ancient mansion was only so large. Before them was the eerie skyscraper invading from the illusory supernatural realm, while behind them was the ever-consuming darkness.

Even the small spaces left for standing wouldn't last long.

Though Chen Qiaoyang had only just broken free and didn't know much about the outside world, his sharp instincts told him one thing: This young man named Li Jun had borrowed the supernatural powers of the Ghost Drawing and the Ghost Coffin to deal with him.

"Young as you are, you certainly have ruthless tactics. I've been trapped for long enough and refuse to be confined in that painting again. Furthermore, you're merely borrowing the strength of the ghosts—you don't truly control them. So, don't overestimate yourself. I was meddling with these ghostly things long before you were even born."

Chen Qiaoyang stared at Li Jun, his eyes unyielding and sharp.

There was a strange fierceness in his expression—not the kind seen in ordinary people, but more akin to a malevolent ghost locking its gaze upon its prey.

"If you think you can stop me, go ahead and try." Li Jun, engulfed in ghostly flames, stood unyielding.

Behind him, the shadowy Ping'an Tower grew more distinct. It had fully invaded the real world. You could even touch the building's walls, smell the burnt odor, and feel the chilling air emanating from inside.

Li Jun had forcibly pierced through to the world of the Ghost Drawing.

This was no longer the ancient mansion of Dadong City; it now belonged to the Ghost Drawing. In this world, whether they were ordinary people or ghost controllers, without finding the correct exit, escaping was impossible. The only one capable of escaping was Li Jun, who controlled the Ghost Flame.

And having entered the Ghost Drawing's world—

The fuzzy-featured woman in red, originally within the ancient mansion, began to clarify in form. It seemed as though something incomplete about her had been restored.

Most notably, the red-dressed woman's feet had become entirely visible now, though her facial features remained obscured.

At the same time, this woman from the painting began to move.

She wandered outside Ping'an Tower, pacing and drifting about. Clear, resounding footsteps echoed through the air. The sound of her steps mismatched her body—despite her wearing vague red embroidered shoes, the sound resembled leather shoes stomping on old wooden floors.

Ghost Footsteps.

This eerie sound of her steps would kill anyone it approached. In the past, even with the Eight-Tone Music Box's curse activated, Yang Jian almost succumbed to this rule-bound killing—it was nearly impossible to resist.

However, the woman from the painting wasn't the only terrifying presence looming.

The Ghost Coffin's darkness continued pressing closer, while she roamed the area.

Chen Qiaoyang, Zhang Qing, and Wan Tong had no escape routes left.

Confronted with two S-ranked supernatural events, even Captain Level individuals would feel fear and despair.

With this one tactic, Li Jun was capable of dealing with any supernatural event or any formidable entity.

And yet—

Chen Qiaoyang began to laugh, his cold grin devoid of sound. "Young man, did you really think the name Chen Qiaoyang, the Ghost Shepherd, was just empty flattery? Do you think borrowing the power of that cursed painting and that coffin renders me helpless? If you plan to take me down, allow me to educate you—my life, Chen Qiaoyang's, isn't something even ghosts can claim."

He stood motionless.

Both hands gripped the old, rickety railing of the mansion's second-floor balcony.

And yet, he seemed untouched—the space he occupied still belonged to the ancient mansion. The world of the Ghost Drawing hadn't been able to encroach upon him.

"That...what is that?" Li Jun's expression faltered.

Ghost flames flickered in his dark eye sockets as he spotted four eerie silhouettes manifesting around Chen Qiaoyang.

They looked like malevolent ghosts but resembled four corpses even more.

Each corpse was strange. One was dried up and blackened, its flesh tightly clinging to its bones. Another was bloated and pale, as though submerged in water for an extended period. The third was mangled, bearing scars from sharp weapons. The final one appeared intact but wore clothes from the Republic of China period, starkly out of place in the modern era.

These four corpses were likely four distinct malevolent ghosts.

Yet, the chilling part was that the ghosts held hands, standing in a circle around Chen Qiaoyang, forming an impenetrable barrier. They shielded him entirely from the influence of the Ghost Drawing and the advancing darkness.

The wandering, eerie woman in red from the painting drifted aimlessly, but she never approached Chen Qiaoyang. He did not belong to the world of the Ghost Drawing. By relying on his own supernatural means, he ensured his safety.

"What a shame. If you'd come a little earlier, the spirits I command wouldn't have been enough to resist the cursed painting and the coffin. But now, though my preparation isn't fully complete, it's enough to keep me alive."

Chen Qiaoyang's eyes shifted subtly, though his sharp, unwavering gaze remained fixed on Li Jun.

"I am, after all, the Ghost Shepherd. And as for you...you're the one who should disappear."

With those words, a series of old clock chimes resonated through the mansion.

The bell within the ancient mansion had begun to ring once more.

Chen Qiaoyang intended to reset the time within the mansion, banishing the cursed painting and the coffin.

As the chimes echoed—

The Ping'an Tower looming in reality began to distort like a mirage, fading away. Simultaneously, the encroaching darkness rapidly withdrew, and even the wandering woman in red evaporated as though everything was on the verge of vanishing for good.

And yet—

The position Chen Qiaoyang occupied also began to fade, while Li Jun remained unscathed.

It was an illusion.

In truth, Chen Qiaoyang hadn't disappeared; rather, the mansion's resetting clock was ejecting him from the current time.

"Your reset is futile. We exist in the same timeline—wherever you go, I'll be there as well." Li Jun shouted.

"I know. But supernatural powers work differently. The clock's influence doesn't extend the same way to the cursed painting and coffin. And I'm not the same as them," Chen Qiaoyang replied.

As soon as he finished speaking, his form vanished entirely.

Li Jun stood where he was, still present.

The receding darkness surged forward again, the flickering mirage of Ping'an Tower resumed its clarity, and the vanishing woman from the painting abruptly reappeared...

The supernatural forces were too strong. Even the clock's resetting power could only suppress them momentarily for a few seconds.

Chen Qiaoyang, however, had already been removed by the reset.

Li Jun, on the other hand, failed to reset and remained behind.

"Damned old man," he cursed under his breath, his expression a mix of rage and frustration.

This sly opponent had an unnervingly deep understanding of supernatural powers. To think that he'd come so close to trapping Chen Qiaoyang within the world of the Ghost Drawing, only to be outmaneuvered and eluded by him.

All that was left were two insignificant individuals.

Zhang Qing and Wan Tong.

The two of them had already entered the world of the Ghost Drawing, no longer within the ancient mansion. Staring after them, Li Jun said nothing and retracted his Ghost Domain.

The Ghost Flame faded, isolating the supernatural phenomena.

A cold-green flame flickered threateningly in Li Jun's palm. Within it, a clearly visible, eerie Ping'an Tower stood still, and the shadowy figures of Zhang Qing and Wan Tong could be seen as they fled in terror.

But in the end—

Li Jun clenched his fist, extinguishing the flame, and all traces of the supernatural disappeared.

The Ghost Drawing ceased. The Ghost Coffin no longer invaded reality.

Li Jun was left standing alone in the desolate, dim ancient mansion.

"Li Jun? Why are you here?"

Suddenly, a voice full of surprise echoed within the mansion.

Li Yang stood on the third floor of the mansion, looking down at him with astonishment.

"It's you...Li Yang?"

Li Jun recognized him. Raising his head, the ghostly flames in his dark eye sockets danced menacingly.

"Wait, behind you—"

Suddenly, Li Jun's expression twisted as he noticed two terrifying figures standing alongside Li Yang. They were a middle-aged couple, their complexion sickly pale, emanating a deathly aura. They stood like two corpses frozen in place.

Ghosts!

No doubt about it.

They were terrifying specters wandering within the ancient mansion.

Chapter 902 The Most Troublesome Person

The chime of the clock rang out!

At the same time, outside the ancient mansion, Yang Jian finally heard the sound he had been waiting for.

This chime came much later than the previous one, which indicated that it wasn't marking the passage of time but rather a forced restart initiated under duress.

This meant that Wang Chaling and Li Jun, who were inside the mansion, had managed to back an adversary into a corner, forcing them to restart as a desperate move to save themselves. Because if the enemy had already killed Li Jun or Wang Chaling, there would have been no need for a restart—it simply wouldn't have happened.

Thus, this chime wasn't bad news; it was good news.

Yang Jian, clutching a splintered long spear, stood resolutely atop the building.

The fierce winds buffeted him, his body as frigid as ice, devoid of any semblance of human warmth. Yet, he remained as still as a statue, his ghostly eye scanning the interior and exterior of the mansion, silently anticipating the enemy's emergence.

Because if they were forced to restart, their next move would undoubtedly be to escape the mansion and flee into Dadong City.

And that would be the moment to strike.

Beside him, Xiong Wenwen seemed bored and was toying with the Ghost Child. He had somehow procured a tree branch and was poking at the Ghost Child with it, as if studying this dangerous little creature.

The Ghost Child, too, remained motionless, its head slightly tilted as it stared at Xiong Wenwen.

Its red eyes, devoid of pupils, carried an expression that appeared almost childlike and innocent. Yet behind that innocence lay a subtle, concealed ferocity that was suppressed and restrained.

"Something's happening."

Suddenly.

Just then, Yang Jian noticed a shadow abruptly appear within the darkness of the mansion's doorway.

"Stop fooling around; it's time to act," Yang Jian remarked, his gaze instantly becoming sharp and focused.

The supernatural forces within the mansion were still present, and even his ghostly eye couldn't fully penetrate their mysteries—he could only just make out someone emerging. After all, the mansion itself was part of the Ghost Domain.

The ghostly eye being able to see this much was already remarkable.

Yang Jian didn't attempt to use multiple layers of Ghost Domain to forcibly invade the mansion either; there was no need.

With two captain-level figures already inside, the issue should be manageable.

"Lost two errand runners and now forced to abandon the clock adjustment and leave the mansion—what bad luck. Young people these days are so reckless, completely unaware of caution and danger. They dare to carry such terrifying things and yet aren't afraid of losing control and causing havoc?"

Chen Qiaoyang sighed, shaking his head with a look of resignation as he slowly stepped out of the mansion.

He surveyed his surroundings.

The courtyard of the ancient mansion was filled with coffins—some old, some new. It didn't differ much from how it used to look, except that the number of coffins seemed to have increased a bit.

"What year is it now? Just how long have I been trapped here? I need to venture outside to find out. For now, I'd better keep a low profile until I figure out the situation. If all the captains at Headquarters are like this, I'm going to have a headache."

Perhaps Li Jun's earlier display had shaken him.

Chen Qiaoyang came to terms with reality, recognizing that even in this era, there were top experts adept at dealing with vengeful spirits. If he underestimated them, he could suffer serious consequences.

So, he altered his approach and decided to lay low in Dadong City for some time, waiting to grasp the situation before resuming his old trade.

But no sooner had he stepped outside the mansion...

...than he was stopped by a handsome young man dressed in a suit and glasses, looking the part of a successful businessman, who smiled warmly and blocked his path: "You seem unfamiliar. Would you mind stopping for a chat? I'm Wang Chaling, the person in charge of Dadong City and a captain-level figure. Oh, by the way, how's my friend Li Jun doing inside?"

"Wang Chaling?"

Chen Qiaoyang paused his steps, smirked, and brushed his graying hair with one hand. "The third generation of the Wang Family? Looks like the Wang Family's been living pretty comfortably—it's only the third generation. I'd thought you'd be on the fourth or fifth by now. After Wang Lu and his wife died, your family rarely dealt with those ghostly things anymore. Otherwise, you'd be the right age to just drop dead at this point, wouldn't you?"

Wang Lu and his wife.

They were the second generation of the Wang Family, and they were currently lost within the ancient mansion.

Wang Chaling was no fool. The moment he heard Chen Qiaoyang's words and looked at his attire, his heart sank.

Someone from the same era as his parents?

How could such a figure have been hiding in the ancient mansion all this time without him ever hearing about it?

"You knew my parents? May I ask... who you are?" Wang Chaling probed.

"Had some dealings with your family's second generation before. Regret not going hard enough back then—I should've killed your parents. But thanks to them, I've survived until now," Chen Qiaoyang replied. "As for that young man you mentioned, Li Jun, he's probably dead by now. Who knows? Why don't you, as the third generation of the Wang Family, go inside and reunite with your parents?"

Wang Chaling's expression froze slightly.

It was clear now—the man before him was an enemy, and not just any enemy, but one from his parents' era. On top of that, Li Jun had evidently encountered grave danger.

It made sense.

Otherwise, with Li Jun's temperament and personality, there was no way he would've allowed this man to leave the mansion unscathed.

Without hesitation.

Two terrifying figures emerged behind Wang Chaling.

Elderly and specter-like, they wore old-fashioned attire from the Republic of China Period. Their faces were lined with wrinkles, and their entire beings were monochromatic—almost like portraits from memorial photos.

"The first generation of the Wang Family..." An unmistakable glint of fear appeared in Chen Qiaoyang's eyes.

The Wang Family's most formidable forces weren't the mansion, nor its second or third generations, but the very first generation—the initiators of the Wang Family's cursed legacy—the two elderly ghosts standing before him.

Chen Qiaoyang dared not let his guard down.

Those two figures could end his life if he made even a single mistake.

In turn, four ghastly corpses slowly materialized around Chen Qiaoyang's position. Each had died in a horrendous and unique way, their decomposing hands intertwined, encircling him.

This was a safeguard.

A protective barrier created by vengeful spirits.

"Four ghosts?" Wang Chaling's hair stood on end, and his heart sank.

But the sudden shift in Wang Chaling's expression registered keenly in Chen Qiaoyang's eyes.

"The third generation of the Wang Family seems useless; he doesn't understand the horror of his family's first generation of ghosts. He's faltering..."

Having survived decades as a Ghost Shepherd, Chen Qiaoyang's insight was razor-sharp. The moment Wang Chaling's demeanor shifted, he quickly assessed him as a mediocre fighter. His earlier clash with Li Jun had already exposed his shortcomings.

"Wang Family's third generation, I don't intend to kill you—not until the fourth generation of your family is born. The grudges between us were settled with the deaths of Wang Lu and his wife. If I kill you here, your family will end with you. Then, if all of you lose control and turn into vengeful ghosts, it'll be a massive mess to clean up."

"So, let's leave it at that. I have other matters to attend to—I don't have the time to engage in pointless fighting with you youngsters."

Chen Qiaoyang snorted, his tone carrying the undeniable authority of a senior figure that brooked no question.

He then clasped his hands behind his back, strolling leisurely away from the mansion as if the confrontation had been nothing but a minor hiccup.

Wang Chaling's eyes flickered with hesitation. On one hand, he wanted to eliminate this man here and now; on the other hand, he feared the supernatural forces under Chen Qiaoyang's command.

Was Li Jun truly dead?

If so, could Wang Chaling, by himself, stop this man?

If he couldn't, then his own death would mean disaster for the city—a loss of two captains in Dadong City would undoubtedly lead to total chaos.

A fight wouldn't be worth the risk.

So, he continued to step backward.

He retreated beyond the confines of the mansion.

Outside, the world was eerily silent—dark and oppressive, with streetlights extinguished.

The supernatural power had extended to the area outside, and the entire district had already been sealed off.

"It's been so many years—Dadong City has become more and more prosperous. The entire city seems lit up, unlike in my era when power outages were a common occurrence," Chen Qiaoyang remarked with a sense of nostalgia as he stepped out further. He looked up at the skyline, visibly struck by the contrast.

It was his first glimpse of the modern world.

But at the same time, he remained wary of Wang Chaling.

Sure enough.

The third generation of the Wang Family was a disappointment—even failing to hold the mansion. How far the mighty had fallen, considering how the second generation, backed by the first generation's power, used to dominate their circle unchallenged.

"Young man, take care. I'm leaving. Rest assured, the grudges between us have been settled—we likely won't meet again."

With that, Chen Qiaoyang waved his hand farewell, extending a surprising courtesy, as if offering Wang Chaling his blessings.

Wang Chaling's face darkened slightly, his gaze shifting as he mulled something over, but ultimately, he refrained from acting, watching helplessly as Chen Qiaoyang walked away.

He knew this man spelled nothing but trouble. If allowed to roam free outside the mansion, calamity wasn't just possible—it was inevitable.

The best course of action now would be to eliminate him here and now.

But reason told him it would be foolish to challenge this figure alone.

As his mind raced.

Chen Qiaoyang's footsteps drifted farther and farther. Hands still clasped behind his back as he strolled, his posture relaxed and unbothered.

Soon, he was about to leave the street altogether.

"What a troublesome place this is—I need to leave immediately," Chen Qiaoyang muttered silently to himself.

Unlike before, facing captain-level figures without sufficient numbers of ghosts under his command was unwise. These youngsters might not entirely know their limits, but they were capable of unpredictable bursts of power that could take him down.

But then, the unexpected happened.

As he reached the end of the street, Chen Qiaoyang halted abruptly, his expression stiffening, growing increasingly grave.

A golden, fractured long spear stood firmly planted in the ground, buried deep into the concrete as it barred his way.

"Hmm?" Chen Qiaoyang saw the weapon and immediately realized what was happening.

In an instant.

The dim sky began to darken further, turning a blood-red hue. Shadows on the ground swayed unnaturally, as if an enormous, oppressive force were encroaching from all directions.

The entire world transformed once more.

The bustling, vibrant city was gone.

Replaced by something eerie—a sinister, crimson domain infused with supernatural forces.

"Leaving in such a hurry?" A cold, detached voice echoed through the air.

From the entrance of the road appeared a shadow—the figure of a young man materializing out of nowhere. Calmly, he stepped forward, reaching out a charred hand to grasp the golden, fractured spear planted in the ground.

"As expected, dealing with someone named Yang is always the biggest headache."

Chen Qiaoyang's gaze locked onto the youthful, yet all-too-recognizable face before him. His gaunt expression twisted into a look of savage intensity.

Chapter 903 Confrontation

Chen Qiaoyang stared intently at the familiar yet unfamiliar young man before him, his face somewhat grim.

He had already inquired with Zhang Qing and Wan Tong, the two errand runners, back at the old mansion and knew a lot about the person in front of him. For example, his name was Yang Jian, codenamed Ghost Eye, and he was a captain-level figure at headquarters. He was also the first person to resolve an S-level supernatural event.

He also heard that not long ago, he defeated Ye Zhen, who was known as the number one Ghost Tamer...

There were many such pieces of information, and Chen Qiaoyang was tired of hearing them.

He only knew one thing.

This Yang Jian was related to that person with the surname Yang, most likely a descendant.

"Back in the old mansion, I killed quite a few people, but I didn't see you. So, who are you?" Yang Jian's Ghost Eye peered, his voice cold as he asked directly.

He doesn't recognize me?

Chen Qiaoyang immediately noticed this crucial piece of information.

Thinking it over carefully.

Indeed.

He and this Yang Jian had never met, and he had heard that Yang Jian became a Ghost Tamer less than a year ago. Previously, he was a student and entered the supernatural circle very late.

"Ghost Shepherd, Chen Qiaoyang." He restrained his expression and introduced himself.

Ghost Shepherd Chen Qiaoyang?

Yang Jian furrowed his brows, searching through his vast memories for these words, but found nothing.

He was neither in the headquarters' files nor a known Ghost Tamer because even Liao Fan's memory lacked information about Ghost Shepherd Chen Qiaoyang.

"In the old mansion before, the clock kept ringing and resetting, was that your doing?" Yang Jian interrogated.

Chen Qiaoyang smiled slightly, "Why should I tell you so much?"

"My patience is limited. You'd better cooperate, or else I won't be able to resist killing you." Red light flickered in Yang Jian's pitch-black eyes.

"So rude. You're more impulsive than the young man from before, always ready to fight and kill upon meeting someone, without a hint of respect for the elderly or love for the young. I heard that society is a peaceful place now, fighting lands you in jail. But it seems things haven't changed."

Yang Jian coldly replied, "Peace? This world will be peaceful once people like you are eliminated. Looks like you don't want to talk. That's fine. If you don't want to talk, I'll just kill you first and search for useful information from your corpse."

He didn't have that much patience.

Moreover, he didn't necessarily need to ask anything. At worst, he could suppress the opponent and forcibly steal memories using the Ghost Shadow.

"Wait, wait." Chen Qiaoyang suddenly raised his palm to signal.

It was his first time encountering such a young man who didn't even show any willingness to talk and just wanted to act without a reason; it was simply monstrous.

"Go on, it doesn't affect our confrontation." Yang Jian's gaze was calm.

The confrontation had already begun.

The shadow underfoot had already invaded Chen Qiaoyang's side, intending to secretly steal his memories. But when the ghost shadow invaded his vicinity, it stopped.

It seemed there was some unseen terrifying presence around Chen Qiaoyang blocking the ghost shadow from eroding him.

Chen Qiaoyang also sensed Yang Jian's probing; his expression stiffened slightly, and he quickly said, "I just want to know if your father, Yang Xiaotian, is still alive."

Yang Jian's expression abruptly changed, "You know my father?"

His father had been dead for a long time and was involved in the supernatural circle. During his life, he was extremely mysterious, and not many people knew his name. Yet, the person in front of him, Chen Qiaoyang, could call out his father's name.

"Your face is too familiar, looking just like your father. It's hard not to recognize. I interacted with your father before I was trapped in the Wang Family old mansion."

Chen Qiaoyang said, "Your father was a very outstanding man. No, he was naturally talented for this circle. Honestly, I admired your father a lot."

"He is dead," Yang Jian said, "dead for many years."

"I figured as much."

Chen Qiaoyang slightly lamented, "Seeing his son entering this circle, I knew he must be dead. If he were alive, he wouldn't allow you to meddle with these dirty things. But it's still hard to believe, a person like your father would also have a day of his death."

"Everyone dies, and no one is exempt," Yang Jian's eyes were cold, showing no sadness or nostalgia.

Like a person without feelings.

"That's right, everyone meets their end. No one is exempt. But aren't you curious about how your father died? I know a few people who were very close to your father during his life. Maybe you should investigate the cause of your father's death." Chen Qiaoyang said, trying to divert Yang Jian's attention.

"If you're interested, I can give you names, giving you a chance to avenge your father."

"I'm not interested in those old grudges. Digging up past enmities is meaningless when the person is already dead. What surprises me is you, knowing my father and many things from the past... You're not a Ghost Tamer of this era."

"You're from the same era as my father."

Yang Jian examined Chen Qiaoyang, as if discovering something valuable.

Knowing his father and being a Ghost Tamer of the same era as his father were two different things.

He had been pursuing the root of the fierce ghosts, discovering the supernatural phenomena were all connected to the Republic of China Era. However, there was a significant gap from the Republic of China Era to the present.

The only confirmed person alive from the Republic of China Era is Old Qin.

There's also a grandfather named Luo Yong, the horrifying fierce ghost called Door Knocking Ghost.

But little information could be obtained from fierce ghosts; only living people can know more.

Therefore, Yang Jian sought a second-best option. The Republic of China Era is too distant, nearly a hundred years ago. Many people are dead, making it difficult to dig further. However, finding someone from his father's era might yield important information.

For them, pursuing the Republic of China Era was much easier than for Yang Jian.

"I entered this circle slightly earlier than your father, so I can say we're of the same era. But are you not really interested in your father's death and his experiences during life? In this circle, the more you know, the better it is for your survival." Chen Qiaoyang said.

"No, I'm more interested in you now. I want the memories in your head today," Yang Jian said.

"Is this how you treat your elders? Your father owed me a favor during his life, yet today you want to attack me?" Chen Qiaoyang reprimanded severely.

Yang Jian sneered, "I've never met you, and I haven't seen my father for a long time either. Whatever your relationship was with him isn't up to you to dictate. Trying to fool me with a few words? Do you think I'm a child? Even if you really were a friend of my father, so what?"

"In the Wang Family old mansion, you manipulated the clock, resetting the time, attempting to release the fierce ghost locked inside. Even if you were my father's friend, I'd still have to kill you, and I'd do it even more ruthlessly because my father was wrong to befriend a scourge like you."

"Fine, very fine. You speak so righteously. The Yang Family brat is indeed one of a kind, disgustingly hypocrite." Chen Qiaoyang was also angered by this.

He initially wanted to deceive Yang Jian as these young people lacked experience. That Li Jun was impulsive but lacked experience, and that Wang Chaling was cautious but lacked courage.

Unexpectedly, Yang Jian turned out to be ruthless and decisive, unlike what his age should suggest.

"Righteous? Hypocritical? You're wrong. I'm not bothered by you causing trouble in Dadong City, but I want your memory now. But you're not willing to give it to me, so I might as well kill you easily, saving your chaotic actions in the future. In the end, I'm also a captain. Killing you earns me a bonus." Yang Jian clutched the cracked spear.

The Ghost Eye opened another eye.

The world became increasingly eerie, everything around seeped in red light, as if about to melt away.

This is the fifth layer of the Ghost Domain.

Within the fifth layer of the Ghost Domain, Chen Qiaoyang's fierce ghosts manifested.

These were four bizarre, terrifying corpses. One was pale and bloated, as if drowned. Another was covered in wounds, as if hacked to death with sharp objects while alive. The third was withered and black, as if dried for a long time. The last one seemed freshly dead, neither decayed nor damaged, but its attire was from the Republic of China Period, out of place in modern times.

These four corpses were four fierce ghosts, only able to manifest in the world within the five layers of the Ghost Domain.

And terrifyingly, these four fierce ghosts formed a circle, surrounding Chen Qiaoyang, isolating the invasion of the Ghost Shadow and the coverage of the five-layer Ghost Domain, like guards protecting him.

No.

They're not guards.

Those four ghosts were hand in hand, standing there, looking like a prison.

Chen Qiaoyang was a prisoner in the prison.

He was both trapped and protected.

"Do all of you want to oppose me? When did I, Chen Qiaoyang, have to endure this insult, and you, the Yang Family brat, think you can steal my memory?" With the facade torn, Chen Qiaoyang didn't hold back. He glared at Yang Jian, his wrist bleeding.

The thickening black blood emitted a stench like rotting corpses.

The blood dripped on the ground, squirming eerily, forming several weird characters.

"Kill Yang Jian."

The words formed by blood quickly dispersed, then turned into thick blood flowing into the adjacent scar-ridden, damaged corpse.

The fierce ghost was initially inactive but suddenly seemed reborn, starting to move.

The body was shaking, the neck twisting.

This scar-ridden, damaged fierce ghost turned its head, strangely staring at the roadside to the right. It didn't look at Yang Jian, who was standing at the street corner.

Because that Yang Jian was false... an illusion created by the Ghost Domain.

Living people couldn't tell the difference, but a ghost could.

"Is this guy manipulating fierce ghosts?" Yang Jian narrowed his eyes at this scene.

No.

This Chen Qiaoyang wasn't manipulating fierce ghosts, definitely not. No one could truly manipulate fierce ghosts. His earlier approach seemed to use his own supernatural ability to influence the fierce ghost, as if granting it a new murder pattern, making himself, who wasn't initially targeted by the fierce ghost, instantly conform to the killing rule.

But this influence should be time-limited, meaning that granting the fierce ghost a murder pattern is only temporary. After his supernatural influence ends, the fierce ghost will become uncontrollable again.

Is this what's called the Ghost Shepherd?

"Attack."

Yang Jian only analyzed the situation briefly but didn't hesitate. Facing a Ghost Tamer from his father's era, he was not careless.

In an instant.

The Ghost Domain morphed.

The Yang Jian standing at the intersection talking to Chen Qiaoyang was gone, the whole world shrouded in red light.

The sixth layer of the Ghost Domain activated.

This layer of the Ghost Domain could temporarily immobilize fierce ghosts. Yang Jian wanted to decide the outcome in one second.

The effect appeared.

In the six-layer Ghost Domain, the four fierce ghosts surrounding Chen Qiaoyang fell into a temporary pause, and the scarred, incomplete corpse that had just been assigned a killing rule lost its movement.

But just as Yang Jian was about to act.

Suddenly.

Chen Qiaoyang, surrounded by the fierce ghosts, moved, turning to stare coldly at Yang Jian, seemingly able to see him in the Ghost Domain.

"Even the sixth layer of the Ghost Domain can't pull Chen Qiaoyang in? What exactly is the ghost beside him?" Yang Jian was astonished.

Since that's the case, he'll just eliminate the ghosts around Chen Qiaoyang first.

The next moment, the red light receded.

The six-layer Ghost Domain vanished.

Everything around returned to calm, but there was one less ghost around Chen Qiaoyang.

A cracked golden spear pierced the scarred, incomplete fierce ghost, pinning it firmly to the opposite wall.

"Brat, your Coffin Nail is just one, I don't believe you have more." Chen Qiaoyang's face darkened, eyes fixed on Yang Jian's blackened hand.

That was the Ghost Hand.

It was said to have the ability to suppress other fierce ghosts. This information was gathered from that errand runner, Zhang Qing, though its truth was uncertain.

Chen Qiaoyang's wrist continued to bleed, causing the thick blood to trail toward the nearby pale, bloated corpse.

The second ghost was given a new murder pattern by Chen Qiaoyang.

Also aimed to kill Yang Jian.

The moment the ghost targeted Yang Jian, the air was filled with a cold, damp scent.

Yang Jian's body was chilling; his clothes getting damp, dripping water. It was a mixture of flesh and skin.

His body was melting.

Soon.

Yang Jian would become nothing but body fluid on the ground.

This situation reminded him of Ghost Child's maneuvering of body fluid.

Could it be that the body fluid was a piece of this ghost's puzzle? It seemed interconnected with another Water Ghost encountered before, Ye Jun.

If these are all puzzles, then clearly, the ghost released by Chen Qiaoyang is a bigger, more terrifying piece.

Because while other puzzle pieces were unshaped supernatural phenomena, only the ghost beside Chen Qiaoyang seemed relatively complete.

Yang Jian's body was gradually vanishing, not melting, but slowly sinking into the pitch-black ground, entering the Ghost Shadow to shield himself from the ghost's influence.

The Ghost Shadow could attack enemies, but also protect his own body.

"You're indeed troublesome. All the more reason I can't let you leave."

All that was left was Yang Jian's head on the ground. His form vanished, submerged in darkness, and as he finished speaking, even that head was engulfed by shadows.

Next instant.

Suddenly.

Cold, stiff, black hands emerged from the pitch-black ground, writhing and crawling, tightly gripping the swollen, pale corpse.

The fierce ghost struggled, the body shaking.

Also slowly being suppressed.

"This brat... is extraordinary." Chen Qiaoyang's expression changed.

The second ghost was rapidly slipping from control, no, had already slipped.

Thinking Yang Jian only relied on supernatural items in hand, unexpectedly, the fierce ghosts he wielded were equally formidable, capable of suppressing a ghost beside him.

"Bang!"

The water-soaked, pale, bloated corpse toppled onto the ground. The shadow covered it, countless blackened hands encased it, leaving just a silhouette with its real form unseen.

The ghost was engulfed by darkness and hands.

"While this brat deals with the ghost, should I escape or finish him off and solve this trouble?" His eyes flickered, contemplating, and hesitating.

Then he glanced over, noting the golden spear pinning down the other ghost, not far away.

With no one holding it, just abandoned there lonely.

Supernatural items don't recognize owners; anyone who holds can use them, if successful not only retrieve the Coffin Nail but release the restrained fierce ghost as well.

"Chance!"

Chen Qiaoyang felt this was a turning point, a chance to completely escape the captains' pursuit.

If successful, not only could he take down the Yang Family brat, but he could also figure out a way to eliminate the Wang Family's third generation.

His wrist was still bleeding.

Soon.

The third ghost left his side.

But just at that moment.

Within the dark shadow, a human-like silhouette flickered nearby, like a shadow, yet resembling a living person, observed by a crimson Ghost Eye on the dark shadow.

The third ghost leaving Chen Qiaoyang was that desiccated corpse, like a mummy.

But the mummy lacked one arm, seeming somewhat unbalanced.

Nonetheless, the mummy cackled weirdly and gradually crouched down.

Its movements were strange.

Yet the mummy's hand grabbed at the Ghost Shadow, holding fast.

At this moment.

Chen Qiaoyang rushed out, heading straight for the cracked golden spear on the wall.

"Old fool, you're ultimately greedy." Seeing this, the Ghost Eye in Yang Jian let out a cold laugh.

"Chen Qiaoyang."

Suddenly, a strange yet familiar voice called out Chen Qiaoyang's name from behind him.

Chapter 904 The Confrontation Between Old and New

Chen Qiaoyang paid the price of three ghosts to hold down Yang Jian.

At least, that's what he believed.

The Yang brat may be fierce, but with the Coffin Nail out of his hands and two ghosts suppressed, it was impossible for him to muster the strength to strike again. And even if he had other tricks up his sleeve, Chen still had one ghost left to use.

Moreover, if he could just hang on for a while longer and retrieve that Coffin Nail to release the pinned ghost, the tide of this battle would instantly turn in his favor.

The action had to be fast.

Because this place wasn't far from the ancient mansion, and the Wang Family's third generation was still nearby. If they got involved, he'd really be done for.

Just freed from trouble only to die immediately? If the old hands in the business heard of this, they'd laugh their heads off.

"Chen Qiaoyang..."

However, a strange yet familiar voice suddenly appeared behind him, as if someone he knew was calling him from nearby.

In the middle of his movement, Chen Qiaoyang momentarily froze.

The voice was too similar, eerily similar to his late wife's. After so many years, the memories were hazy, yet the sound stirred something deep within him, compelling him to turn and look.

This was a ghost's trick: Ghost Call.

The name called by a Ghost Call sounded different to everyone. To Chen Qiaoyang, it took on the voice of his deceased wife.

But to Yang Jian, it sounded like the eerie, childish voice of the Ghost Child.

At that moment.

The Ghost Child hidden inside the Ghost Domain revealed itself, targeting Chen Qiaoyang at this critical juncture and calling out his name.

Just as Chen paused and instinctively considered turning around, the corner of his eye caught a glimpse of something chilling: a cold corpse dressed in Republic of China Period garb, its eyes shut and expression peaceful, yet deeply unsettling.

This was his last remaining ghost.

The instant the ghost's presence entered his field of vision, it snapped Chen Qiaoyang back to his senses.

His face abruptly shifted: "No, this isn't right. It's not my wife calling me—it's a vengeful ghost. This is another one of Yang Jian's tricks. He's still controlling other supernatural powers..."

Awakened to reality, Chen Qiaoyang quickly reined himself in, halting the unconscious act of turning around.

Cold sweat streamed down his back; he dared not look behind him.

Experience told him that Ghost Call, once acknowledged by turning back, could well spell certain death. He would never make such a fatal mistake.

"Chen Qiaoyang, Chen Qiaoyang, Chen Qiaoyang..." Yet the Ghost Child's voice rang out repeatedly.

Every utterance evoked a poignant memory within Chen Qiaoyang, representing someone dearest and most familiar to him. Despite knowing full well that it was a spectral trick, his body betrayed him, yearning to glimpse behind, inching closer to losing itself, his control slipping.

"Damn it, shut up."

Chen Qiaoyang forced himself to resist. Blood continued seeping from his wrist, thick and black, dripping onto the ground. Gradually, the blood formed three distorted, trembling characters.

The characters spelled his name: Chen Qiaoyang.

It was a supernatural disguise—briefly altering a ghost's killing pattern while simultaneously erasing his own identity.

By inscribing his name on the ground, Chen's identity transferred away from his body, leaving him an empty vessel untouched by the ghost's targeting.

Against spirits that lock onto names and identities, this trick often proved highly effective.

"Chen Qiaoyang..." The ghost continued to call his name.

But at that moment, Chen Qiaoyang no longer felt the effects. The blood-scrawled characters on the ground began to blur and disperse, losing their cohesion.

This method of identity erasure was clearly temporary, able to last only for brief moments.

Once the inscription faltered or the blood flowed away, the supernatural effect would fade, and the Ghost Call would again influence him.

"It worked."

Seizing this window, Chen Qiaoyang arrived at a cracked wall.

A golden, splintered spear had pierced through a haunting corpse, thrust deeply into the figure.

This supernatural weapon was no illusion conjured by Yang Jian's Ghost Domain—it was a real spear. As far as Yang Jian was concerned, fishing required tangible bait. The deceptions of the Ghost Domain might fool novice ghost handlers, but against seasoned veterans, Yang knew better than to rely on such tricks.

"So, in the end, I've won, haven't I?" Chen Qiaoyang gripped the golden spear, attempting to wrench it free.

If he could snatch it away and release the ghost pinned to the wall, victory was his—even without relying on the Coffin Nail.

After all, he didn't believe Yang Jian could fend off the assault of three ghosts. Suppressing two was already likely his limit.

"It won't budge?"

Chen Qiaoyang's expression twisted in confusion.

The fractured golden spear embedded in the wall wouldn't move an inch, no matter how much force he exerted.

This was impossible.

Chen had always believed his ghost-enhanced body was immensely strong. Removing the spear from such a shallow depth should have been a minor effort. Even if it were buried fully in the wall, he could still pull it loose.

The current scenario revealed only one possibility.

"A trap!"

Chen Qiaoyang immediately realized, his gaunt face frozen in a grimace.

The placement of this weapon—so conveniently nearby—was no oversight by that Yang brat, but deliberate. A calculated ploy laid out from the moment Yang began his attack.

But why? How could Yang predict that he would attempt to seize this weapon?

If he hadn't acted on this move, wouldn't Yang's gambit be utterly foolish—abandoning his own weapon?

Unless... he could foresee the future.

No.

Perhaps it wasn't entirely Yang's plan. Perhaps there was another accomplice at work here.

"Damn it."

Chen Qiaoyang frantically pondered, connecting dots in a flicker of thought. In that instant, clarity washed over him, leaving room for only one reaction.

Escape!

He had to flee immediately; staying meant certain death. Yang seemed to have calculated every step, from the moment he first revealed himself.

Chen Qiaoyang released his hold and began retreating, intending to slip away with his last remaining ghost and leave Dadong City.

But then.

The wall ahead began to shift and crumble.

The golden, splintered spear moved as well.

Behind the impaled corpse, the silhouette of a humanoid shadow rapidly emerged.

The shadow spread, snaking around the golden fractured spear like an outstretched hand.

In the dim light.

A crimson ghost eye observed everything.

Chen Qiaoyang's pupils contracted sharply as he watched the shadow seize the fractured spear and wield it, slicing toward him. He also noticed the spear tip was wrapped around a rusted, sinister Firewood Knife.

Not good! Not good!

He knew all too well the outcome of being struck by that blade. The Firewood Knife's curse was overwhelmingly powerful and came with devastating side effects. It was wholly unsuitable for use by the living—its sole effect was dismemberment rather than outright slaying. In Chen's view, the Firewood Knife was second-rate, far inferior to the Wang Family's ancient mansion clock.

Yet as the knife struck, Chen had no way to dodge.

He lacked a Ghost Domain and couldn't teleport to safety.

The knife descended swiftly.

Despite its rusty blade and chipped edges, incapable of cutting through wood, it sliced through supernatural entities as if cleaving tofu. The eerie corpse was bisected effortlessly.

"Thud!"

Something heavy hit the ground and rolled into the roadside gutter.

A human head.

The terrifying ghost dressed in Republic garments now stood before Chen Qiaoyang, blocking the deadly strike.

The fourth ghost, the most menacing of his four—a trump card reserved for key moments—was dismembered before displaying its true power, a massive loss.

Pain churned through Chen Qiaoyang's chest. Furious and distressed, he dared not utter a threat and turned to flee.

As long as he survived, the Ghost Shepherd could rise again.

This was his final window for escape, as Yang Jian—having unleashed the cursed blade—would surely suffer its effects. Even if he didn't perish, he'd undoubtedly be in bad shape.

But after taking only a few steps away, without even leaving the street, the scene unfolding before him left him dumbfounded.

"I told you, no need to rush away. Our duel isn't over yet—welcome to round two." Yang Jian's figure reappeared in front of him.

Not a single wound scarred him—those near-melting injuries were gone, his condition seemingly impeccable.

"You brat." Chen Qiaoyang's fury surged as his eyes fixated on Yang Jian's neck.

By all logic, the curse from the Firewood Knife should have decapitated him. How could he remain completely unharmed?

Yang Jian, noticing his puzzled stare, touched his neck and said, "You find it strange, don't you? It's really quite simple. Just like during the ancient mansion event—I slightly fast-forwarded my own time. Right now, I'm Yang Jian from one minute ago. One minute ago, I was perfectly fine."

"I call this phenomenon 'self-restart.'"

"Self-restart?"

Chen Qiaoyang wasn't stupid; Yang Jian's explanation quickly hit home, and he roared, "That's impossible. How could you achieve this on your own? Your father couldn't do this when he was alive. You've been in the game for less than a year—how could you reach this level...?"

Fear gripped him.

For the first time, Chen realized Yang Jian had attained a place beyond imagination.

This was the realm of the most terrifying vengeful spirits.

Living humans should scarcely be capable of wielding such power. In his memory, only one individual had ever demonstrated such a feat: a mysterious figure surnamed Qin, rumored to have survived from the Republic of China Period.

"Some truths are hard to explain to you. Time is short, so let's cut to the chase." Yang Jian's gaze hardened.

This battle had pushed him to deploy every deadly move.

Five layers of Ghost Domain had been countered; six layers plus the Coffin Nail had merely subdued one ghost; seven-layer Ghost Domain's self-restart had come into play.

The full force of his Ghost Shadow, Ghost Hand, and Coffin Nail were all engaged in the struggle against spectral forces. His final strike had been reserved specifically to dismember the fourth ghost by Chen Qiaoyang's side—failure would have spelled defeat.

Yang Jian's gaze briefly drifted toward the decapitated ghost.

At the moment, it remained motionless.

This was expected.

Chopped apart by the cursed blade, the ghost temporarily fell into stasis. Its fragmented state reduced its Terror Level and hindered its revival. But once it recovered, it would reconstitute and spring back to action, undeterred by its dismemberment.

That ghost was the most dreaded adversary.

Always kept close to Chen Qiaoyang and never utilized.

Even a fool could see this was the deadliest of the four ghosts, forcing Yang to reserve his cursed knife strike for it with no hesitation.

Cold sweat trickled down Chen Qiaoyang's brow.

Though Yang Jian merely stood there in silence, his presence was oppressive, suffocating.

The brat was proving even more troublesome than his father in his heyday. Most confounding of all, Yang seemed to possess none of the supernatural powers inherited from his father.

"No, something's terribly wrong."

Soon after, Chen noticed his legs were rapidly losing sensation. A chilling, ghostly energy began invading his body.

The Ghost Shadow, though suppressed, wasn't completely neutralized.

With no other ghost beside him to stave it off, Chen had no way to counter the invasion.

If the shadow reached his head, it would steal his memories—and if Yang Jian so desired, it could overwrite them entirely.

This ability wasn't purely derived from the Ghost Shadow but incorporated the powers of that bloodstained old newspaper as well.

"Victory's ours, ours! Xiao Yang, don't forget this was all thanks to your Daddy Xiong! Without me, you'd never have beaten this old bastard. Make sure to give me a raise when we're back!"

Seeing the tide turn, Xiong Wenwen emerged from some unknown hiding spot, hands on his hips, gloating triumphantly.

"Can that kid really predict the future?" Chen Qiaoyang struggled against the ebbing control of his body, glaring venomously at Xiong Wenwen with a murderous intent.

Top-tier ghost handlers were already a nightmare, but adding precognition into the mix made for an unbeatable team.

Chapter 905 Loss of Control and Invasion

Chen Qiaoyang was captured.

He stood motionless on the deserted street, frozen like a puppet.

A massive shadow loomed beneath his feet, dark and eerie, unlike the shadows of normal buildings. As time passed, Chen Qiaoyang's body gradually became enveloped by the shadow.

The invasion of the Ghost Shadow continued smoothly.

However, because Chen Qiaoyang's body possessed some form of Supernatural Power, the invasion process was not fast.

But Chen Qiaoyang was powerless to resist this invasion, as he no longer had any usable ghosts at his disposal.

"So, the second round... I win, right?" Yang Jian stared at him, his Ghost Eye twitching restlessly.

Under his gaze, Chen Qiaoyang found it incredibly difficult to escape.

"You little bastard! If I hadn't taken the ghosts from the Wang Family's ancient house yet, do you think you'd even measure up to me?"

Chen Qiaoyang gritted his teeth, his old face contorted and ferocious.

He was deeply unwilling, frustrated that his full abilities had yet to be unleashed but he was already cornered. Worse still, the ones blocking him were freaks—no normal individuals among them—and his misfortune couldn't be worse.

"Do you think saying useless things like that has any meaning? Losing is losing; there are no excuses and no luck when dealing with the supernatural," Yang Jian said, still on high alert, waiting for the Ghost Shadow's invasion to complete.

Chen Qiaoyang's face darkened but he remained silent.

Meanwhile, the disturbance here had already drawn Wang Chaling's attention from outside the ancient house.

Earlier, Yang Jian had been fighting within the Ghost Domain, but now that he was outside of it, the activity was naturally noticeable to others in the outside world.

At this moment—

Wang Chaling hurried over, but by the time he arrived, the confrontation between Yang Jian and Chen Qiaoyang was already over. Now they were stalling each other, locked in a temporary deadlock.

However, with Chen Qiaoyang being invaded by the Ghost Shadow, the situation was undeniably in Yang Jian's favor.

"Captain Yang..." Wang Chaling stopped in his tracks, halting just outside the range of the ominous shadow.

Yang Jian spotted him as well, turning his head slightly to glance at him: "Wang Chaling, you've disappointed me. A man like this swaggering out of the ancient house, and yet you did nothing. What's the matter? Are the two ghosts behind you just for decoration, or have you chosen self-preservation and decided not to involve yourself in this fight?"

"Making a move against him is highly risky. Li Jun has already fallen, and I don't stand much of a chance alone. If you'd shown up sooner, perhaps teaming up might have changed the situation," Wang Chaling replied calmly.

"So, are you blaming me?" Yang Jian said coldly. "Being outmatched and being too afraid to act are two very different things. With your way of handling things, it's no wonder the ancestral house got lost."

Wang Chaling's gaze flickered, but he didn't refute Yang Jian's remarks. Instead, he asked, "What's your plan now?"

"Obviously, end him." Yang Jian responded.

"Looks like you're at an impasse." Wang Chaling commented.

Yang Jian replied, "Invasion is just a matter of time. He won't last much longer unless he has some other tricks up his sleeve."

Wang Chaling glanced at Chen Qiaoyang again.

The man showed no sign of action, with most of his body shrouded by the ghostly shadow, rendering him seemingly incapable of movement.

"Be cautious. He's not as simple as he looks. If you need help, just say so," Wang Chaling said.

"The Wang Family's third generation is here as well. Haha, talk about misfortune piling on," Chen Qiaoyang suddenly laughed. "Who would've thought, after barely escaping, I'd have to face three captains of the modern era—and all of them acquainted. Falling to this state today is truly a stroke of bad luck."

"I thought Li Jun inside the ancient house was fearsome enough, but I didn't expect someone outside to be even more ruthless."

After finishing, he looked at Yang Jian again.

That familiar yet distant face dredged up past grudges and grievances.

"Still, I've held my cards close. If I've calculated correctly, it should be about time now," Chen Qiaoyang said with a cold smirk.

"You talk too much," Yang Jian said, his expression shifting as he sensed something unusual.

In an instant, the Ghost Domain was activated.

The surroundings became suffused with red light once again.

This was the Fifth Level of the Ghost Domain, isolating reality and cutting off Chen Qiaoyang's escape route.

"Yang, you little bastard, you clearly can't foresee far enough into the future. Otherwise, why would you set up such pointless defenses at this moment? The hand I've prepared isn't here—it's over there." Chen Qiaoyang's gaze shifted toward the direction of the ancient house.

As if to validate his words—

"Dong! Dong! Dong!"

The sound of a clock echoed suddenly from within the ancient house.

The sound came from a pendulum clock.

"The pendulum clock in the ancient house? Reactivated?" Yang Jian glanced at the time; it was already past nine in the evening, though not yet ten o'clock.

This wasn't the usual time for the pendulum clock to reactivate.

"The ghosts—out of control."

Chen Qiaoyang laughed. "I've broken through the defenses of the Wang Family's ancient house. Now, what will you do?"

"Kill you first," Yang Jian's face darkened as he began to understand Chen Qiaoyang's plan.

Concerned that he couldn't safely leave Dadong City, Chen Qiaoyang had tampered with the pendulum clock in the ancient house, initiating a complete reactivation at a specific time. This would release all the ghosts within the house into the real world, causing chaos—and giving him the chance to escape amidst the turmoil.

The next moment—

Yang Jian appeared beside Chen Qiaoyang, his hand gripping him by the neck.

With a forceful squeeze—

Crack!

The sound of breaking bones reverberated.

"You think strangling me will kill me? I'm not that easy to kill," Chen Qiaoyang said, his head lolling to one side, his skin beginning to crack and bleed.

Sticky, pitch-black blood oozed ceaselessly, carrying a terrifying Supernatural Power.

The Ghost Shadow continued its invasion, stealing Chen Qiaoyang's memories.

Memories that didn't belong to Yang Jian surfaced.

Chen Qiaoyang widened his eyes, staring hard at Yang Jian. He could feel his memories blurring and certain things slipping away into oblivion.

Yang Jian, in stealing those memories, simultaneously attempted to rewrite them.

The most violent method was to wipe out all memories—turning them into zero.

Complete erasure.

If successful, Chen Qiaoyang was as good as dead.

"You little bastard! Trying to erase me?!" Chen Qiaoyang cried out in terror, as the cracks in his skin spread faster, and the viscous, pitch-black blood coated his entire body.

"Annoying."

Yang Jian ignored him, sensing something was amiss outside the ancient house. Danger approached swiftly, even invading the Ghost Domain.

But so what.

Yang Jian persisted, not stopping his invasion of Chen Qiaoyang.

If he let up now, he might never have another chance to eliminate Chen Qiaoyang.

Yang Jian was keenly aware that Chen Qiaoyang no longer relied on physical survival as a ghost wielder; rather, he had become a preserved consciousness—a different kind of entity. Killing him required these drastic measures.

"Yang Jian, watch out!"

Suddenly—

A warning voice rang out from outside the Ghost Domain. Wang Chaling's voice.

At this moment—

The Fifth-Level Ghost Domain was abruptly breached.

A horrifying supernatural phenomenon sent chills down the spine.

A bridal sedan chair appeared, seemingly crafted of paper, carried by four red-and-green paper figurines, materializing directly in front of them.

The next moment—

Yang Jian was struck by the eerie paper sedan, sent flying. Chen Qiaoyang was hit too, but he tumbled into the sedan, which then carried him away.

The sedan didn't travel far before its outline blurred, disappearing within Yang Jian's Ghost Domain.

Taking Chen Qiaoyang with it.

"A ghost that escaped from the ancient house?"

Yang Jian quickly scrambled up, his body twisted and caved in like a corpse. Yet, under the Ghost Shadow's cover, he rapidly healed.

His face, however, was grim.

Because—Chen Qiaoyang wasn't dead.

Chapter 906 The Wang Family Generation

The eerie red glow that enveloped the sky was fading, and the darkness covering the ground was dissipating.

With the inexplicable paper figures carrying the sedan chair appearing, Chen Qiaoyang managed to slip away from Yang Jian's five-layer Ghost Domain. This escape rendered Yang Jian powerless because it happened so suddenly, and most of his supernatural powers were still engaged in fighting other ghosts.

His own condition was far from ideal.

By the time he reacted, that supernatural phenomenon of the paper figures carrying the sedan chair had already vanished.

Chen Qiaoyang had disappeared as well.

Any ghost capable of infiltrating the five-layer Ghost Domain was anything but ordinary. Now that it had left, even finding it would be an immensely difficult task for Yang Jian.

"I only managed to erase half of his memory, which means I only stole half of it. Although it wasn't a complete success, it wasn't a total failure either. This confrontation can be considered a draw." Yang Jian's gaze glimmered faintly red as he stood firm, gripping the golden, fractured spear in his hand.

The reason he didn't consider himself victorious was that he knew this Ghost Shepherd, Chen Qiaoyang, still had immense untapped potential.

If Chen Qiaoyang managed to locate a truly terrifying ghost, his danger level would skyrocket dramatically.

Most troubling of all, this Chen Qiaoyang was impervious to the Firewood Knife.

Even dismembering him might not kill him; the only feasible way seemed to be erasing his consciousness entirely.

"Damn, Xiao Yang, how could you be so careless? He slipped away just like that! This is bad, bad, bad! He saw Daddy Xiong's face earlier; he's definitely going to target me for revenge later. Xiao Yang, quickly, go find Leuk San to make me another paper figure—but this time, make it a handsome one!"

At this moment, Xiong Wenwen was panicking after seeing Chen Qiaoyang escape.

After all, just moments ago, Chen Qiaoyang looked like he was ready to tear him apart. Now Xiong Wenwen wished he could change his look entirely and start fresh as a new person.

"Your precognition had some discrepancies," Yang Jian remarked. "This amount of time shouldn't be your limit."

"Anything involving the supernatural can't be perfectly accurate. Besides, we've done our best. Look at Xiao Wang over there, just standing and talking without lifting a finger—he might as well be holding a bucket of popcorn," Xiong Wenwen retorted, shifting the blame as his eyes darted around. He pointed a finger toward Wang Chaling, who stood not far off.

Wang Chaling's eyes flickered slightly. Though Xiong Wenwen's words were harsh, this was indeed a moment susceptible to causing internal discord.

"Our plan didn't factor him in, so ultimately, the fault lies on us. These are two separate matters," Yang Jian said as he glanced at Wang Chaling again.

"What exactly are you scheming, Wang Chaling? Were you waiting for Chen Qiaoyang and me to perish together?"

Wang Chaling replied, "I knew nothing of the situation inside the Ghost Domain, and I thought you had already won. If I intervened rashly at that moment, you might think I was trying to take credit. I hesitated for a moment, but I didn't expect Chen Qiaoyang's counterattack to happen so quickly—even managing to invade your Ghost Domain. Those four paper figures carrying the sedan chair are truly extraordinary."

"Speaking of paper figures, perhaps it has some connection to Leuk San. He should know a little something."

Paper figures and Leuk San?

Yang Jian frowned.

Indeed.

Those paper figures and the sedan chair that emerged suddenly do bear a striking resemblance to Leuk San's supernatural style.

But he felt that the connection between them wasn't substantial. This kind of supernatural phenomenon had escaped from the ancient mansion, whereas Leuk San seemed to control some sort of puzzle.

"Whether or not it's related to Leuk San doesn't matter. What matters is that you didn't even block a single ghost for me. Li Jun probably wasn't much help either. So, is this what you call teamwork and cooperation? I'm really curious now—are you truly incompetent, or are you deliberately holding back?"

Yang Jian's face was cold as he finished speaking, giving his cracked spear a hard shake.

The corpse pinned by the coffin nail was immediately hurled straight toward Wang Chaling's side.

The corpse, which looked like it had been hacked to pieces by sharp weapons, was a terrifying ghost. It had been suppressed by the coffin nail, which made it appear calm and unthreatening, but the moment it freed itself from the nail's suppression, it would immediately revive as a ghost. No one knew its killing method or how it claimed its victims.

But any ghost that Chen Qiaoyang kept around was certainly no ordinary entity.

Watching as the corpse hurtled toward him, Wang Chaling's expression subtly shifted. He knew Yang Jian was dissatisfied with him and was now testing him.

Yet in the next moment—

Two lifeless, heavily-wrinkled figures, as if decaying corpses that had been dead for days, eerily manifested before Chen Qiaoyang.

These two figures, a man and a woman, resembled an elderly couple.

Before the ghost's body could hit the ground, the two terrifying elders raised their stiff hands and grabbed hold of it.

One grabbed the corpse's head, and the other grasped its legs.

The corpse struggled as it began to revive, the ghost resisting continuously. But it was no match for the terrifying grip of the elderly pair. Within moments, the battle between ghost and ghost was over.

The reviving ghost hurled by Yang Jian had been subdued.

But what was most horrifying was this—

The terrifying elderly pair, their stiff hands gripping the corpse tightly, began to pull on it, tearing it apart.

The severely scarred ghost's body was forcibly stretched and distorted. At last, the body emitted a strange, shrill scream—part resurrection, part warning of terrible imminent danger—and then, suddenly, it was ripped in two.

The ghost was torn apart, its supernatural power suppressed and its puzzle shattered. It could no longer revive. In this state, the ghost's danger level had fallen to a degree even ordinary people could efficiently manage—its threat reduced to an unbelievable extent.

"Hmm?" Yang Jian narrowed his eyes, fixating intently on the two lifeless elders.

The two terrifying spectral elders before Wang Chaling, having completed their task, began to blur and fade, eventually vanishing entirely once more.

"Using the strength of two ghosts to tear apart another ghost alive, while simultaneously suppressing its supernatural energy and scattering its puzzle? This level of suppression has even nullified its immediate threat," Yang Jian murmured, gripping the spear tighter.

He felt an unimaginable, nightmarish sense of terror and danger.

The combined supernatural forces of these two ghosts reached an unfathomable and terrifying level.

This situation reminded Yang Jian of something—the Ghost Envoy, and the tall, spectral male holding the Firewood Knife...

Such ghosts weren't merely killers; even other ghosts were powerless against them.

"These are undoubtedly S-level supernatural entities."

Yang Jian's instincts told him the two spectral elders lingering around Wang Chaling were capable of generating an S-level supernatural incident if they ever lost control.

"Captain Yang, it's not that I didn't want to act; it was a matter of judgment. You saw it yourself, that Ghost Shepherd—he seems to have the ability to control ghosts. If I let him take another ghost, do you think our fight earlier could've ended well? I had my concerns, and you don't need to question me," Wang Chaling said seriously.

For a moment, Wang Chaling exuded the terrifying air of a Wang Family ghost-handler.

The mutilated corpse lying still on the ground was proof enough.

"You're afraid of losing control? Do you think Chen Qiaoyang wasn't afraid of dying? If he had the ability to seize those ghosts of yours, he would have done so already instead of choosing to flee." Yang Jian retorted.

"I don't gamble, because not gambling means not losing. And why should I gamble against Chen Qiaoyang? Three generations of the Wang Family's efforts—to risk it all against a desperate man? What if I lose? If the Wang Family's ghosts run amok, do you understand the consequences? Besides, Li Jun is down. If he were still here, I wouldn't be in such a passive position," Wang Chaling replied with cold clarity.

"Fair point. Not betting means you can't lose. But then, what have you gained?" Yang Jian asked coldly.

"I don't need to gain anything; I just need to keep what I have. Unlike you, the Wang Family's legacy is my responsibility. As long as I preserve this foundation, time will handle the rest," Wang Chaling said.

Yang Jian understood his meaning.

Wang Chaling was essentially the supernatural world's equivalent of an heir to a wealthy family, inheriting supernatural forces from his lineage. By avoiding unnecessary risks, he could ensure the preservation of these forces indefinitely.

"But now, your Wang Family's ancient mansion has lost control. The Pendulum Clock has restarted, and the ghosts previously synchronized with its curse are being released. Dadong City is no longer safe," Yang Jian said.

Wang Chaling replied, "I'll deal with it. The ghosts in the mansion were all ones my Wang Family previously captured. If we could imprison them once, we can do it again. Chen Qiaoyang has fled, and those affected by the Pendulum Clock's curse are dead. Honestly, this operation has been a fairly successful one for me."

"I should be thanking you—and Li Jun."

"You're not worried I'll hit you for saying this now?" Yang Jian asked.

"I don't think you will. Although I didn't help much, I haven't caused you any harm either. Moreover, I need to handle the mansion's loss of control. If we, as captains, started fighting here over something like this, wouldn't it be a bit childish?" Wang Chaling replied.

"So, you're the ultimate winner? Li Jun risked his life, I fought Chen Qiaoyang, and you did nothing but wait to reclaim the mansion?" Yang Jian pressed.

"That's not how I'd put it. I just didn't expect things to escalate this way," Wang Chaling said.

He had underestimated Li Jun's impulsiveness and Yang Jian's ferocity.

In his original plan, the three would act together, allowing him to reclaim the mansion safely and smoothly.

"Hey, Xiao Yang, Xiao Wang, stop talking and look at that thing. Isn't it staring at us?" At that moment, Xiong Wenwen urgently called out as he hurriedly ran off, pointing at a shriveled corpse lying on the ground nearby.

The desiccated corpse was missing an arm. At the moment, it was lifting its head slightly, and its dry, hollow eyes were eerily shifting as if observing Yang Jian and Wang Chaling.

This ghost was another entity Chen Qiaoyang had brought out.

Previously, it had been suppressed by his Ghost Shadow. With Yang Jian retracting his Ghost Shadow, the ghost now began to show signs of activity.

"I'll take care of it," Wang Chaling said.

Almost as soon as he spoke, another ghost manifested—a wrinkled, deathly pale, terrifying elderly figure slowly appeared. The elder advanced toward the shriveled corpse, reaching out with its cold, stiff hand to grab it, lifting it like discarded junk. Then, the elder turned and walked away.

Leaving behind the remnants of the ghost torn into pieces earlier, this second ghost was also effortlessly subdued by Wang Chaling.

Now, only one headless corpse remained standing motionless in the area, along with the ghost covered entirely in blackened Ghost Hands.

Yang Jian observed, striding closer to the corpse covered in countless Ghost Hands. He thrust his spear down into it.

The Ghost Hands started to vanish gradually.

A bloated, corpse-white ghost, as if it had been soaked in water, was finally revealed in its horrifying entirety.

"I'm very interested in this ghost, I'll be taking it," Yang Jian said.

"If you're interested, it's yours. After all, you dealt with it. If you want the others, I can package them all up and give them to you too," Wang Chaling casually replied.

Yang Jian shook his head. "No need. Those ghosts should stay in your Wang Family's mansion. I don't want Dachang City becoming a hub for ghostly entities."

Though ghosts held significant value, for Yang Jian, they posed an even greater risk at this point.

The more ghosts he controlled, the more he risked an eventual loss of control after prolonged suppression.

He wanted no part of that, which was why most of the ghosts he captured were handed over to headquarters—only certain exceptional ones were worth keeping for himself.

"If that's the case, I'll handle the aftermath. The outside is in your hands," Wang Chaling said, as the ghostly elder appeared once more, this time taking away the decapitated, dismembered ghost nearby.

Yang Jian remarked, "Once you've dealt with the mansion's situation, I'll find an appropriate time to retrieve the Pendulum Clock. That kind of supernatural object is wasted in your hands—it'll be of better use to me."

Wang Chaling's expression instantly darkened.

"It would be best if you agreed. If you don't, I'll take it by force. And if you dare to stop me, I'll kill you," Yang Jian said coldly.

Chapter 907

Yang Jian forcefully demanded the right to take the ancient clock in front of Wang Chaling.

As the only known paranormal artifact capable of restarting, the ancient clock in the Wang family's old mansion held immense value. If it hadn't been located outside the physical world, it would have long been taken by other ghost manipulators, leaving Yang Jian, who entered the paranormal circle later, without a chance to claim it.

"Captain Yang, your demand is excessively stringent," Wang Chaling's face darkened at this moment.

The greatest value of the old mansion lay in that clock. If Yang Jian took it, the significance of reclaiming the mansion would be largely lost.

Yang Jian said, "Do you think life is more important, or that clock?"

"Fighting me is not a wise choice; headquarters won't let you pass that hurdle," Wang Chaling said.

Yang Jian's voice remained indifferent: "A dead captain or a living captain—who do you think headquarters would favor? You're a smart person; there's no need for me to explain everything. I'm sure you understand well enough."

"Aren't you afraid I'll kill you right here and now?" Wang Chaling's face turned grim, seemingly provoked by Yang Jian's attitude.

"If you think you can, then go ahead and try."

Yang Jian's gaze remained calm and unshaken: "If I'm not mistaken, you're not a ghost manipulator yet—just an ordinary person. That's why those two terrifying ghosts have been lingering around you, protecting your life and giving you the leverage to stand against captains."

"Ordinary people are far too fragile. Killing you couldn't be easier—a name, a photograph, a phone call... Any of these might serve as a paranormal medium. Do you think you can guard against that?"

Wang Chaling's expression froze.

Of course, he understood that some paranormal phenomena could use mediums to kill, incomprehensively terrifying. Ordinary people faced such dangers, dying inexplicably without ever seeing the source.

Only by becoming a ghost manipulator and enduring the paranormal erosion could one avoid being targeted through a medium.

However, ghost manipulators faced the risk of ghost resurrection. Wang Chaling wasn't without the means to become one; he simply didn't want to tread that path.

As an ordinary person without illness or disasters, living to seventy or eighty wouldn't be an issue. Currently, no ghost manipulators had achieved this, which was his advantage—one he didn't want to sacrifice for a short-lived, irreversible fate.

"If you take the clock, the mansion will lose control, and Dadong City will be finished," Wang Chaling conceded, softening his stance.

Yang Jian replied, "Before taking it, I'll reset the time and trap the ghosts in an unknown time period."

"It's futile. Once the clock leaves the mansion, the paranormal will eventually seep into reality. A single reset of the clock can't maintain the effect for long; it must intermittently restart continuously. That's the balance my family designed, and it can't be broken," Wang Chaling explained.

Yang Jian spoke decisively, "In that case, I'll take over your family's mansion."

"..." Wang Chaling was lost for words.

Yang Jian's domineering stance exceeded his expectations. He thought he could dissuade Yang Jian from taking the clock, only to find Yang Jian pushing further, aiming to seize control of the mansion entirely.

"Isn't confiscating someone's ancestral mansion a bit excessive?" Wang Chaling exhaled lightly, glaring at Yang Jian, nearly ready to risk everything.

"You can't guard this place; I'll help you guard it. How can this be considered confiscation? If you think you're at a disadvantage, name a price—I'll pay market value for it. After all, it's just a few acres of land," Yang Jian said.

Wang Chaling's mouth twitched. It seemed Yang Jian genuinely intended to strong-arm the deal.

"Enough talk. I don't want to keep discussing this with you; otherwise, you might think I truly can't deal with you." Yang Jian didn't leave room for negotiation, sealing the matter unilaterally.

He banked on Wang Chaling's cautious yet indecisive nature.

Losing an ancestral mansion was significant, but engaging in combat with Yang Jian might cost his life.

Wang Chaling weighed the stakes carefully.

He looked deeply at Yang Jian, his expression sour. For the first time since his emergence, he had suffered such humiliation.

"Has Yang Jian fully assumed I wouldn't risk everything against him? If I truly fought him here and now, would there be any chance of winning?"

He pondered, hesitating.

Almost as if responding to his thoughts, the two eerie, cadaverous elderly figures lurking behind Wang Chaling surfaced again.

Seeing this, Yang Jian's face remained composed, though his grip on the fractured golden spear subtly shifted forward.

This was the sign of readiness to strike.

"No chance of winning. He has the Coffin Nail, capable of instantly pinning down one of the ghosts beside me... Moreover, Yang Jian has already prepared to kill me. This isn't mere rhetoric," Wang Chaling cautiously tested Yang Jian's stance and response.

But the result was grim.

If a fight broke out now, he would undoubtedly die, with no chance of victory.

"I need to focus on wrapping things up. We may still have opportunities to collaborate in the future."

He diverted the topic and, after leaving this statement, retreated with the two terrifying ghosts accompanying him.

Unable to win, unable to guard the mansion—it was meaningless to provoke further conflict. Yielding might still offer future connections.

"Still trying to test me in the end?" Yang Jian's expression was indifferent.

This confrontation was his victory.

From this day forward, the Wang family's mansion was under his control.

No matter how unwilling Wang Chaling might feel, as long as he lacked the courage to confront Yang Jian directly, he was destined to lose.

"But if Wang Chaling ever truly becomes a ghost manipulator, carrying the Wang family's first and second generations and mobilizing four ghosts, I might not be his match," Yang Jian thought to himself.

"Unfortunately, he will never take that step. This is where people differ from one another."

To be honest, Yang Jian also envied Wang Chaling.

As a mere ordinary person, he controlled four ghosts. If this had been a year ago, Wang Chaling would have ranked among the top ten globally within the paranormal circle—a true pinnacle among elites.

It was worth noting that a year ago, Yang Jian had been troubled by the resurrection of his Ghost Eye, unable to even use his Ghost Domain freely.

"Xiao Yang, you're being unreasonable. Why go out of your way to offend another captain? Don't you think you've died enough times already? Some people are surrounded by ghosts—a single person is like an entire team. What if one day he comes looking for a fight and you can't beat him? After all, Daddy Xiong won't always be here to take care of you,"

At that moment, Xiong Wenwen appeared out of nowhere again, heaving a sigh and speaking in a heartfelt tone.

With the enemies gone, his arrogance resurged.

"I think it's only a matter of time before you get beaten up," Yang Jian said seriously, staring at him.

Xiong Wenwen responded, "Nonsense. I'm a good kid. I don't fight with anyone, so how could I possibly get beaten up?"

"Because your mouth is foul," Yang Jian replied.

"My mouth isn't foul; I'm very polite. I greet people whenever I meet them," Xiong Wenwen retorted confidently, convinced he was in the right.

Yang Jian couldn't be bothered to argue with him.

His gaze settled on the distant Wang family mansion.

Though Chen Qiaoyang had fled, the issues here were still unresolved: Li Jun had gone missing inside, and Li Yang had disappeared in there earlier as well. Despite the clock's reset interrupting events, the threat was reignited by Chen Qiaoyang's reactivation. The mansion was likely brimming with wandering ghosts, making it highly unsafe.

Wang Chaling is handling it now, but given his efficiency, it will probably take a long time.

"Hmm?"

Just then...

The mansion in the distance suddenly ignited in flames, burning furiously. But these flames weren't normal—they were sinister, green, and cold, exuding an eerie chill.

"Li Jun's Ghost Flame? Is Li Jun still alive, or has he already died, causing the Ghost Flame to lose control and resurrect?" Yang Jian frowned.

His Ghost Eye's vision was obstructed, unable to scrutinize the mansion's interior. He could only speculate.

Yet, shortly thereafter...

To his astonishment, within the eerie Ghost Flame emerged a towering structure, shrouded in desolation, overlapping the bleak mansion with a shadowy presence.

The building appeared to coexist with the mansion yet remained unaffected by it.

It was a Ghost Domain overlap.

"Ping'an Tower? That's the headquarters of the Inner Circle," Yang Jian immediately recognized the building. He even spotted several floors destroyed on the top.

That was from his previous clash with Fang Shiming.

"No, that's not Ping'an Tower—that's The World of Ghost Drawing."

His Ghost Eye seemed disturbed by some paranormal interference, forcing his eyes to shut, unable to look directly.

Yang Jian's face shifted slightly as he realized what the gloomy world within the Ghost Flame truly was.

So far...

Only The World of Ghost Drawing could fully suppress his Ghost Eye, rendering it instinctively shut and incapable of opening.

"Headquarters said the Ghost Drawing issue was resolved. Although it wasn't confined, they successfully restricted it. Could it have been placed in Ping'an Tower?" Yang Jian speculated.

The possibility was high.

When the Ghost Drawing became uncontrolled, it nearly dragged an entire city into its chilling background world, a perilous threat.

To restrict the Ghost Drawing, an appropriate venue would have been chosen to isolate its paranormal influence.

Ping'an Tower was an ideal choice.

Its spaciousness and the aftermath of Yang Jian's confrontation with the Inner Circle meant the building had been sealed off, devoid of occupants, minimizing potential losses.

"It seems like the Ghost Flame connected Ping'an Tower and integrated The World of Ghost Drawing..."

Though his Ghost Eye couldn't peer inside, Yang Jian's regular vision could observe clearly.

Yet, soon...

This paranormal phenomenon faded.

The Ghost Flame extinguished, and the bleak image of Ping'an Tower vanished.

Everything quickly returned to normal.

Beyond that, the distant mansion seemed to quiet down. Terror-inducing figures disappeared, and anomalies dissipated—its loss of control seemed resolved.

"Li Jun is still alive; he must have intervened," Yang Jian surmised after assessing the situation.

"Follow me to investigate."

Without hesitation, he headed towards the mansion with the Ghost Child and Xiong Wenwen.

If Li Jun had perished and the Ghost Flame went haywire, the mansion would have continued to burn uncontrollably—the Ghost Flame couldn't be extinguished.

However, its sudden ignition and disappearance indicated someone was controlling it.

Indeed...

When Yang Jian reached the mansion's entrance again, he saw Li Jun emerge unscathed, though his face carried an eerie oddity—certain areas on it appeared smudged, resembling patches rubbed away by fingers, with a densely pigmented complexion like painted strokes, giving him an unnatural, bizarre appearance.

"Yang Jian?"

Li Jun, now missing his sunglasses, turned to reveal empty eye sockets with sinister green Ghost Flames dancing within, chilling to behold.

"I thought you were dead," Yang Jian said.

"Where's that Chen Qiaoyang guy?" Li Jun asked immediately.

Yang Jian replied, "The mansion's loss of control enabled him to manipulate paranormal forces, letting him escape."

"Even you couldn't take him down?" Li Jun's tone contained a hint of surprise.

Considering Yang Jian's skill level, the odds of Chen Qiaoyang slipping past him shouldn't have been high. If he did, it suggested only one possibility: Yang Jian was defeated—otherwise, he would have pursued and eliminated Chen Qiaoyang.

"He was strong; I barely won," Yang Jian said simply, offering no further explanation.

Escaped was escape; reasons didn't matter. All he needed was to convey to Li Jun that he won—that was sufficient.

That much was meaningful information.

Li Jun inferred the situation: Yang Jian had narrowly triumphed while Chen Qiaoyang suffered defeat yet managed to flee.

Had Yang Jian still had energy left, Chen Qiaoyang's corpse would likely already be seen.

"No need to worry for now. The clock's final restart and calibration released multiple ghosts inside the mansion, affecting the outside as well. The situation will need addressing to avoid turmoil in Dadong City tonight," Li Jun said. "I've temporarily dealt with the mansion, but it's unclear how many ghosts escaped."

Earlier, he reopened the Ghost Drawing and sent the mansion's entire paranormal activity into the Ghost Drawing world.

No direct confrontation was necessary—just casting everything into the artwork sufficed.

Though this method left lingering risks, it was the best choice available.

"Where's Wang Chaling?" Li Jun followed up.

"He might be handling paranormal incidents elsewhere. He's got a busy night ahead, but we don't need to worry about him. Hmm? What's that?" Suddenly, Yang Jian spotted two individuals approaching from the mansion's direction.

One man and one woman appeared to be in their forties, their demeanor lifeless and faces rigid, resembling walking corpses.

"Wang Family's second generation—Wang Lu and his wife?" Instinctively, Yang Jian recalled related information.

Though unaware of these individuals' identities earlier, the memory from Chen Qiaoyang now provided answers instantaneously.

"Do you recognize them?"

Li Jun said, "According to Li Yang, these two ghosts didn't attack him; instead, they guided him, leading him to find the mansion's clock. I suspect this has something to do with Wang Chaling, so I left them alone."

"They're Wang Chaling's parents. They used to be ghost manipulators but succumbed to the family's curse, turning into ghosts. Wang Chaling seems to have control over them for now, ensuring they don't spiral out of control," Yang Jian explained.

"By the way, have you seen Li Yang? Where is he?"

Li Jun glanced behind himself.

At this moment, Li Yang cautiously emerged.

Concerned about external dangers, he had been trailing Li Jun closely, letting him lead to assess the situation first.

"Captain, it's me. I'm fine—I'm still alive," Li Yang said, visibly relieved to see Yang Jian outside.

Apparently, the external conditions weren't as dire as he'd feared.

"I need to follow up on other paranormal phenomena, so I won't stay here chatting," Li Jun said, his pragmatic nature urging action. After briefly greeting Yang Jian, he quickly left.

Despite temporarily stabilizing the mansion, Chen Qiaoyang's reactivation of its paranormal elements—lasting only minutes—had undoubtedly unleashed numerous ghosts.

Yang Jian had simply lacked the capacity to track those developments amidst the chaos.

Once Li Jun departed...

Wang Chaling's parents—the ghostly couple—also slowly receded from view.

The mansion, though visually unchanged, had lost much of its eerie, sinister aura.

"Did you find the clock inside the mansion?" Yang Jian asked Li Yang, surprised.

He knew of the clock's presence but hadn't pinpointed its exact location within the mansion.

The correct time and place were crucial for locating the true clock.

Such thoughts emerged in Yang Jian's mind.

But while he had identified the correct time, he lacked the correct location.

The memory gaps from Chen Qiaoyang's stolen recollections hindered him.

"I caught sight of the clock during one of its restarts—it appeared suddenly during calibration. Although I only glimpsed it briefly, I saw a man-sized standing clock in the mansion's..."

Li Yang started to reveal, but Yang Jian interrupted him.

"No rush—we'll discuss this later," Yang Jian said.

Li Yang immediately understood the importance of discretion and fell silent.

Yang Jian added, "Since everything's settled, let's regroup and aim to leave Dadong City by midnight. We shouldn't linger here; tonight won't be peaceful. But our mission is done—the rest isn't our concern."

Yang Jian's approach differed significantly from other captains.

While captains like Li Jun, Wang Chaling, and Li Leping held both the rank and responsibilities of team leaders...

Yang Jian possessed the rank without the extensive obligations of a captain; instead, he served as Dachang City's regional authority.

The disparity was extensive.

However, the absence of additional responsibilities came with its perks: he only needed to fulfill his duties as a regional authority, not those of a captain.

Thus, Yang Jian had no obligation to address Dadong City's paranormal incidents.

Headquarters couldn't compel him.

Unless they paid extra.

"The clock stays here for now. We'll think of a way to retrieve it later when needed; taking it now would be somewhat premature," Yang Jian remarked, shifting his gaze from the mansion before starting to move away with Li Yang, Xiong Wenwen, and the Ghost Child.

Meanwhile...

Wang Chaling had not rushed to handle paranormal events after leaving the mansion. Instead, he retreated with his eerie companions to a concealed safe house within Dadong City.

For a captain, having personal safe houses was entirely reasonable.

In the safe house, however, a terrifying ghost sat motionless on a chair.

This ghost's body was an ominous shade of bluish-black, its distended belly bearing a rusted coffin nail embedded into its forehead.

"The correct time and location—can they really reveal the clock? Does it truly have the power to restart?"

Wang Chaling stared at the imprisoned ghost in the safe house, his gaze flickering with deep contemplation.

The entity confined within the house was the source of an S-tier paranormal incident.

Its designation: Hungry Ghost.

Chapter 908 Strange Conflict

Wang Chaling stared at the Hungry Ghost sitting on the chair inside the safe house, his eyes flickering, and various thoughts flooded his mind.

He could be sure that no one outside, no matter who they are, knows that it was he himself who stole the Hungry Ghost from the headquarters. So, after the Ghost Shepherd Chen Qiaoyang appeared, he first had to confirm whether the Hungry Ghost he placed in the safe house had been taken by Chen Qiaoyang.

Although the possibility is low, he still needs to confirm it.

"This is currently the only confirmed ghost in the supernatural circle that can restart and has been successfully imprisoned. Whether it's the value of the Hungry Ghost itself or the value of that Coffin Nail, it's enormous, especially important to me; otherwise, I wouldn't have risked stealing this Hungry Ghost from the headquarters back then."

Wang Chaling recalls his decision back then with lingering fear.

If things were to get exposed, he would be pursued by the headquarters.

But he felt that the risk, though present, was within what he could bear.

First of all, it wasn't he who acted, but his grandfather and grandmother who had already turned into fierce ghosts.

Ghosts don't die.

So, even if it failed, nothing would happen, and at that time, the experts in the headquarters had been mobilized for dealing with the Ghost Painting incident, leaving almost no one capable of stopping his generation's fierce ghosts from the Wang Family.

The result was obvious.

He succeeded.

He forcibly stole the Hungry Ghost from the headquarters and brought it to Dadong City, hiding it in the safe house until today.

Regarding the Coffin Nail, Wang Chaling dared not move it for the time being.

He has seriously studied the S-level supernatural incident and the dossier of the Hungry Ghost. For such a level of fierce ghost, any carelessness could cause a catastrophic disaster.

After all, this fierce ghost will restart.

"By using the restart of the Hungry Ghost, I can counteract the restart of the ancient mansion; if I succeed, I can reclaim the clock in the ancient mansion. Then, if I force the Hungry Ghost to enter the restart phase, I can create an inescapable restart loop with the clock's restart. The Hungry Ghost restarts every forty minutes, and the clock restarts every thirty minutes, adding up to seventy minutes."

"One cycle will turn back the time inside the mansion by seventy minutes. If all goes well, I can revert the time inside the mansion to a previous point in time."

"Perhaps even back to that day..."

Wang Chaling reached out to brush the heavy door of the safe house, feeling a flush of excitement in his heart.

Because he has already grasped this opportunity.

It's possible to achieve it; it's not without hope.

It's just lacking a bit of control, control over the Hungry Ghost.

After all, the Hungry Ghost won't continuously restart as you imagine; it will kill people.

Wang Chaling also knew the killing pattern of the Hungry Ghost.

Such confidential files are accessible to someone at his Captain Level.

However, at this moment...

Wang Chaling lowered his hand, showing a slight look of helplessness on his face.

He hadn't come up with a good way to control the Hungry Ghost, and at the same time, the matter of the ancient mansion has attracted Yang Jian, and that clock has been targeted by Yang Jian...

In other words, if he has no way to carry out the infinite restart plan in a short time, then once the clock is taken by Yang Jian, everything would be meaningless.

Therefore, to complete this plan, it must be done before Yang Jian retrieves the clock.

"Yang Jian should not have the ability to take the clock now, otherwise, with his temperament, he absolutely will not leave it for later. Accessing the clock requires the right timing. When Yang Jian fought with Chen Qiaoyang earlier, he seemed to have used the restart ability, but his restart should be very short-term."

"At most within three minutes, and the limitations are very high."

Wang Chaling made this judgment.

He confidently believed that currently, Yang Jian could not have access to the clock.

"But no matter what, my time is running out, and I must quickly think of a reasonable solution to implement the plan." A sense of urgency began to rise in Wang Chaling's heart.

According to his plan, if everything goes well, once the ancient mansion is under his control, and with the Hungry Ghost in his grasp, he would have enough time to slowly perfect the plan and wait for the opportunity.

After all, he is an ordinary person, not a ghost user capable of living long.

At worst, spend a few years, a dozen years.

With conditions met, Wang Chaling is not in a hurry; he can afford to wait.

"Since there is no issue here, I must go out and handle the matters outside."

After confirming that the Hungry Ghost was unharmed, he did not linger, turning around immediately to leave.

The empty safe house returned to silence once again.

Behind the thick door, the corpse with bluish-black skin was sitting inside with a grotesque bloated belly, appearing like a puppet, unmoving, with the Coffin Nail deeply embedded in the forehead of this fierce ghost.

However, what no one noticed was.

As time passed, fragments peeled off from the Coffin Nail stuck on the Hungry Ghost's forehead, seemingly rust on the Coffin Nail.

Simultaneously, the numb, lifeless eyes of the rigid fierce ghost began to move slowly.

The eerie eyes glanced toward the direction of the safe house's door.

As if seeing through that door, it caught sight of Wang Chaling's receding figure.

But soon, the eerie eyes turned back again.

Everything seemed as if nothing had happened.

Only occasionally, fragments of rust from the Coffin Nail kept flaking off.

Meanwhile.

In front of Ning'an Building in Dadong City.

Yang Jian had already summoned the team to rendezvous and was preparing to leave this city.

"The supernatural event inside the building has gone out of control. How's the situation on your side?" Feng Quan walked over, monitoring the anomaly inside the building, shaking his head slightly, indicating helplessness.

"The ancient mansion is temporarily under control. A dangerous character named Chen Qiaoyang escaped, and we need to keep an eye on him in the future." Yang Jian said, glancing at Ning'an Building under Wang Chaling's name.

Red wooden benches had been placed at the entrance of the building.

The lights inside were off, only occasionally flickering in places untouched by the supernatural, apart from sporadic screams.

Feng Quan said: "If this goes on, the building will be done for."

"Wang Chaling didn't come to handle it?" Yang Jian frowned.

"Never showed up." Feng Quan replied.

Yang Jian said, "This guy sure can sit still, not handling his building's supernatural event and running off to who knows where, leaving us to clean up his mess."

Previously, during his confrontation with Chen Qiaoyang, Wang Chaling just watched the show on the sidelines.

He said he was going to handle the supernatural event in Dadong City, but then disappeared.

"Now that the other side is settled, do we manage this side?" Feng Quan asked.

Yang Jian asked, "You've been observing for so long, any good idea?"

If there was a good way, he wouldn't mind solving this red-bench supernatural event along the way.

"I observed that the more people die inside the building, the more red wooden benches appear. One person dies, one red wooden bench is added, but I believe these benches should have an initial medium, which is the bench where the real ghost once sat."

Feng Quan said, "If you can find that hidden red wooden bench, there might be a way to handle it."

"No, the medium has already spread. The ghost is killing through this red wooden bench medium. It's out of control, not limited to the initial red wooden bench anymore; each bench can allow a ghost to appear." Yang Jian voiced his opinion.

"To resolve this, there's only one way: have something special sit on the red wooden bench. That thing shouldn't be too fearsome, causing the bench to break, but at the same time able to withstand the ghost's attack on the bench. If successful, the other benches would lose their medium functionality because there's only one ghost, unable to attack others while attacking."

Yang Jian combined previous situations to come up with a plan.

But carrying out this plan is difficult, very difficult.

Simply put, it's about passively enduring the ghost's attack from the bench while the supernatural power you're carrying can't be too strong, as it would destroy the bench, stopping the ghost's attack.

"Seems like Chen Qiaoyang indeed left me with a tough problem, trying to distract us with a building full of people, giving him time to complete the timing; he just didn't expect us to be this ruthless, taking care of him at the ancient mansion first, then coming back for this red bench."

Yang Jian showed a slight cold smile.

Chen Qiaoyang's choice wasn't wrong, using the responsibility, sympathy of those in charge, and somewhat scattering their attention.

A typical person in charge would definitely have fallen for it.

However, the script didn't play out as Chen Qiaoyang thought, so he failed this time.

"Captain, shall we retreat? This side has been sealed off and it looks like you've taken care of things over there; everyone is fine." At this point, Huang Ziya and Tong Qian walked over.

"Li Yang, are you alright?" Tong Qian asked.

Li Yang shook his head: "A close call, but no serious problems."

"Then what are we waiting for, go back to sleep, go back to sleep, I'm so tired." Xiong Wenwen yawned.

However, he was a paper person who didn't need sleep and could act twenty-four hours.

"The red bench issue isn't handled yet, and Wang Chaling has disappeared, don't know where he went; finish this matter before leaving." Yang Jian said.

Tong Qian, slightly surprised, said, "Cleaning up for Wang Chaling doesn't really seem like your style."

"I indeed don't want to handle it, but I promised Li Jun to take care of the supernatural event here, so I need to keep my word." Yang Jian said expressionlessly.

Tong Qian nodded.

Although Yang Jian has some personality issues, he indeed keeps his promises, at least not breaking commitments, which is also why the headquarters is willing to ask him for help.

Because Yang Jian doesn't act dishonestly; though expensive, it assures peace of mind.

"Then let's quickly finish this matter and head back to Dachang City." Tong Qian said: "Anyone got a good idea?"

He looked to everyone, glancing over Li Yang, Feng Quan, before ignoring Xiong Wenwen and the innocent Ghost Child.

Finally, the hope was left with Yang Jian.

To handle a supernatural event, not only courage is needed, but more importantly, a kind of intuition, a unique way of thinking.

The group fell silent, all pondering how to handle the red bench supernatural event.

Fortunately, they were not inside the building now, ensuring their safety, giving them enough time to analyze this matter and think of a countermeasure.

"It's time for Daddy Xiong to shine now." Seeing everyone remain silent, Xiong Wenwen immediately stood up, wanting to take the spotlight.

"Predict a few times and a method will appear."

Yang Jian glanced at him: "With so many red benches, countless mediums, endless variables, how long do you plan to predict?"

"No, I don't need to predict those things; I just need to predict you, see how the future you solves the problem, and then tell the current you your future actions, wouldn't that work?" Xiong Wenwen said confidently.

"No need, I thought of a solution." Yang Jian said.

Feng Quan was astonished: "So fast? What's your plan?"

"I need bait to actively trigger the killing pattern." Yang Jian said.

"I'll be the bait." Tong Qian responded immediately without hesitation.

In supernatural events, having someone as bait is normal, but it sounds cruel, which many people cannot accept.

But in reality, it's an indispensable part of an operation.

Just like someone always has to charge on the battlefield.

Yang Jian said, "No one can ensure safety in supernatural matters. If you as bait fail, you'll die, and a new supernatural event will arise, not worth it. Let a normal human do it."

"Nobody is willing to do it." Tong Qian shook his head.

"As long as you offer the right conditions, someone will inevitably be willing to cooperate and risk their life for you." Yang Jian finished speaking and shifted his gaze to the city center of Dadong City in the distance.

A red glow flashed swiftly, encompassed it, and ended quickly.

The next moment.

A young man in a hospital gown, barefoot, appeared in front of Yang Jian.

"Zhang Zhidong, you're sick, there's something in your brain, and based on my experience, the success rate isn't high; you'll die on the operating table. Why not give your life to me today? Once it's done, I'll arrange the surgery for you with at least a ninety percent success rate."

Yang Jian coldly spoke.

This young man named Zhang Zhidong looked puzzled and bewildered because moments ago he was in a hospital, and now he found himself in front of Ning'an Building.

"Since you haven't opposed, it's agreed." Yang Jian walked over, grabbed his collar, and carried him forward.

Feng Quan, Tong Qian, Li Yang, Huang Ziya, and Xiong Wenwen watched calmly as this scene unfolded.

"Who, who are you?" Zhang Zhidong reacted, stammering his question; he didn't even dare to resist.

In such a supernatural occurrence upon himself, the first reaction is certainly fear.

"I'm Yang Jian."

Zhang Zhidong asked again, "Where are you taking me?"

Yang Jian carried the person back to the door entrance of the building, nearest to a red wooden bench.

He slit the person's arm, causing the blood to drip.

The blood fell on an odd-looking doll.

This was Yang Jian's last substitute doll.

"Sit." Yang Jian pressed on his shoulder, making him sit on the red wooden bench.

Zhang Zhidong was bewildered, lost, unable to resist, and just sat down firmly.

Then, he found his body quickly losing feeling, and a terrifying realization nearly drove him to despair.

The red wooden bench was empty initially, but as he sat down, an eerie person appeared beside him.

Deadly silent, completely absent of life, eerily cold, with worn-out clothing, like a corpse dead for many years, and the person's feet adhered to the bench, seemingly one with it.

"Is this... a ghost?"

Zhang Zhidong's hair stood on end, and his scalp tingled. He wanted to scream but found himself powerless.

Yang Jian stood by, holding the substitute doll, watching coldly.

The substitute doll was struggling now in Yang Jian's hands, punching, kicking, attempting to break free and escape.

But it was futile.

Yang Jian held the substitute doll, preventing its escape.

"I see, an ordinary person triggers the medium to draw out the fierce ghost, then use the substitute doll to transfer the fierce ghost's attack. Now the interesting question arises: will the ghost attack the living person on the bench or Yang Jian's substitute doll?"

"Indeed, he's adept at this game, supernatural phenomena, and rule conflicts, simply born for this job."

Feng Quan's deep voice carried a hint of admiration.

Tong Qian nodded slightly, saying, "If the ghost targets the substitute doll in Yang Jian's hands, then the ghost will inevitably leave the bench, intruding into the real world from the medium."

"Once the ghost appears in the real world, it can be restrained."

Although they instantly grasped the critical point, they couldn't quickly conceive this plan.

It was truly perfect.

The previously helpless ghost on the bench was now forced out by Yang Jian using the substitute doll.

Of course, there was a risk involved.

After all, the ghost might not attack the substitute doll.

"Truly a loss-making deal, using the last substitute doll to deal with the red bench." Inside Yang Jian's heart, a feeling of loss emerged.

This was a life-saving tool, more useful than the Ghost Candle, and consuming it here was uneconomical.

The next moment.

The previously calm bench reacted, shaking violently.

It seemed some unseen supernatural force was interfering with everything.

Yet, Zhang Zhidong sat on the bench, eyes wide with horror, gazing sideways as if witnessing the most terrifying thing.

Rules and rules collided.

The bench, as a medium, remained intact because Zhang Zhidong was ordinary, lacking supernatural power, unable to counter the fierce ghost's attack; he only dripped a drop of blood on the substitute doll.

The substitute doll's role was to divert the fierce ghost's attack.

The ghost's assault shifted from targeting Zhang Zhidong to targeting the substitute doll.

However, the substitute doll wasn't on the red bench, away from the medium, so the ghost now had to kill the outside-the-medium substitute doll, not Zhang Zhidong.

The medium became a shackle, binding the ghost's killing pattern.

The ghost was struggling to break free, seemingly escaping the restraint of the red bench and invading the real world from an unknown place.

"Will it appear?"

Yang Jian wielded a golden cracked long spear, waiting.

The red bench shook more violently, nearly toppling over several times, yet it didn't.

Zhang Zhidong, sitting on the bench, couldn't escape, having to endure this horror.

Gradually.

A supernatural phenomenon appeared.

A terrifying figure on the bench gradually surfaced.

It was a fierce ghost, struggling and shaking, trying to break free from the red bench's restraint and kill the substitute doll not far away.

Chapter 909 Return

Yang Jian used Zhang Zhidong, an ordinary person, as bait and paired it with the sacrifice doll to divert the ghost's attack, creating a supernatural conflict. His purpose was to free the ghost on the red wooden stool from the constraints of its medium and force it to fully manifest.

As long as the ghost appeared, it could definitely be contained under the current conditions.

Indeed.

As the supernatural conflict unfolded, the red wooden stool began to shake violently, and a terrifying, eerie silhouette emerged.

It was the shadow of the ghost.

But this shadow was very blurry, shrouded in a haze, with only a barely discernible humanoid outline. The outline was twisted and deformed, as if it were struggling, yet it also seemed on the verge of laughing itself to death.

The ghost wanted to kill the sacrificial doll in Yang Jian's hand because Zhang Zhidong had triggered the ghost's killing pattern.

However, the ghost could not leave the red wooden stool, its medium.

In this supernatural conflict, how exactly would the ghost kill the sacrificial doll?

Yang Jian narrowed his eyes slightly, clutching the dirty, tattered doll in his hand, waiting for the situation to further develop.

What would happen during the process of the supernatural conflict was unpredictable. He was only relying on his past experiences and his personal approach to make bold speculations.

"The ghost has appeared..." Feng Quan stared fixedly at the eerie ghostly shadow on the red wooden stool.

"No, it hasn't really appeared yet. It's just that the supernatural power is starting to affect the real world. The ghost hasn't fully emerged from the medium. The supernatural conflict is still ongoing," Tong Qian observed carefully, noting that the ghost's form was unstable.

The ghost wanted to attack the sacrificial doll in Yang Jian's hand but refused to leave the red wooden stool.

The medium was restraining the ghost.

At the same time, the ghost's killing pattern was forcing it to act.

Under such circumstances, the ghost was caught in a self-conflict, while Yang Jian, like an experienced hunter, toyed with the fearsome ghost.

Only a ghost can deal with a ghost!

This was a truth Yang Jian seemed to have fully grasped. He had never considered using the strength of living people to fight ghosts but had always tried to manufacture supernatural conflicts, even creating logical paradoxes.

"Look over there! The other red wooden stools are starting to break," Li Yang suddenly pointed toward the building's lobby, at the rows of eerie red wooden stools.

The red stools seemed to lose some supporting power at that moment, developing cracks before snapping apart. The shattered wood continued to crumble into heaps of splinters, which then transformed into a gust of icy cold air and dispersed with the wind.

"The red wooden stools are the ghost's mediums. Now that the ghost is trying to break free from the stool, the mediums lose their purpose without the supernatural power sustaining them," Feng Quan said immediately.

He quickly shifted his gaze back to the red stool in front of him.

The ghost's silhouette was becoming more distinct.

They could even see the old-fashioned, non-modern clothing on the ghost, and the cold, indistinct face.

However, the ghost had no legs.

No.

The ghost did have legs; they were curled up and pressed against the red wooden stool as though fused with it.

The ghost could not move; the red wooden stool was its vessel.

The ghost appeared through the stool and killed whoever sat on it.

Yet now, the ghost was attempting to rise and leave. Its rigid body twisted and struggled, slowly shedding the stool's restraints.

Elsewhere in the building.

The strange red wooden stools that had previously appeared were disintegrating even faster, shattering and turning into dust before vanishing.

The number of mediums was decreasing at an unimaginable rate.

Once the ghost completely left this final red wooden stool, all the mediums would disappear.

The ghost would fully invade the real world.

Zhang Zhidong, the bait, was on the verge of fainting from sheer terror. Others might not see clearly, but he could.

An incomparably horrifying ghost writhed next to him, its body stiff like a corpse.

A blurry face and hollow eyes occasionally glanced at him, as if ready to kill him at any moment. Yet, for some reason, the ghost was repeatedly distracted by something else, turning its focus elsewhere as though engaged in an imperceptible battle.

Zhang Zhidong wasn't stupid. Instinctually, he felt that if this horrifying ghost attacked him, he would unquestionably die.

His body was immobilized, completely out of his control. Escape was impossible.

As the supernatural confrontation continued, changes kept occurring.

Except for the red wooden stool Zhang Zhidong was sitting on, almost all the other stools serving as mediums had vanished, effectively eliminating much of the supernatural phenomena within Ning'an Building.

Even Yang Jian could feel that the Ghost Domain of his ghost eyes was now extending freely without obstruction.

This was both good and bad news.

Without the constraint of a medium, the ghost risked losing control and could become even more dangerous.

"Things don't seem to be going as smoothly as I expected," Yang Jian frowned slightly.

He noticed the ghost on the stool was struggling less violently, no longer as intense as before. The ghost's form was also beginning to blur again, as if it might disappear altogether.

"Did it fail? The medium's restraint seems stronger, and the sacrificial doll doesn't appear able to lure the ghost away from the stool," Feng Quan said in slight surprise.

The sacrificial doll in Yang Jian's hand continued to struggle and move.

This indicated the doll was still effective.

Although it was a single-use supernatural item, it had never failed until now. Could it really be incapable of redirecting the ghost's attack this time?

"Whether it fails depends on whether Zhang Zhidong, who's also sitting on the stool, is still alive. If he dies, it means the sacrificial doll has lost its effect. In a face-off between supernatural forces, the ghost is stronger," Yang Jian said.

Oddly, Zhang Zhidong was still alive.

Although terrified, he remained unharmed.

The ghost's silhouette had blurred to nothing more than a strange outline, its struggles ceased, the stool no longer vibrating, and Zhang Zhidong hadn't been attacked.

The anticipated outcome had deviated.

"Hey, there's no movement now. Xiao Yang, did you break it?" Xiong Wenwen could not help but ask.

Feng Quan lit a cigarette. "The ghost didn't kill anyone, didn't leave the stool to kill the sacrificial doll, and didn't disappear either... It seems the supernatural nature has altered."

"Crashed?" Li Yang looked at Yang Jian.

"Not crashed. If the ghost had crashed, the stool as a medium should also disappear, but it hasn't. Perhaps once the doll is consumed, the ghost will exhibit other changes. For now, though, it seems like a good thing. The ghost appears to have stopped moving, entering some strange equilibrium."

Yang Jian felt the ghost was caught in a conflict with itself, creating a bizarre balance.

This balance was maintained by the sacrificial doll in his hand.

But the doll wouldn't last forever; it would eventually be consumed.

"Take this red wooden stool away and check if there are any others left in the building. If not, this supernatural incident can be considered resolved. As long as ordinary people don't come into contact with the medium, it'll be fine," Tong Qian said.

Yang Jian looked up at Ning'an Building.

The Ghost Domain covered it.

Everything inside the building was visible through the ghost eyes.

"Confirmed. This is the last red wooden stool. The others vanished during the earlier conflict. This isn't a bad outcome," Yang Jian said, retracting his gaze, then turned to Zhang Zhidong. "Can you move?"

Zhang Zhidong's attention was entirely on the ghost next to him.

He stared at the ghost, which seemed to be calming down, his heart pounding as he dared not move an inch.

Zhang Zhidong hadn't realized the supernatural power wasn't affecting him anymore. He could move, but his body remained tightly wound, seemingly beyond his control.

Yang Jian's question met no response; it seemed unheard.

But upon observation, Yang Jian could see signs of twitching in Zhang Zhidong's limbs.

This was the trembling from extreme tension.

The stool's suppression had ceased affecting him.

Yang Jian approached and grabbed Zhang Zhidong by the collar, lifting him off the stool.

As soon as he left the red wooden stool, the ghost instantly disappeared, leaving only a blurry, eerie outline on the stool.

At this moment, Zhang Zhidong snapped awake.

"It seems this matter has been temporarily dealt with. Take the red wooden stool along with the ghost on it and lock it away to prevent it from reappearing somewhere else," Yang Jian said, releasing Zhang Zhidong. "Your task is complete. This turned out easier than expected."

Then, his ghost eyes opened, and the Ghost Domain spread.

Feng Quan, Tong Qian, Li Yang, Huang Ziya... the others began disappearing.

They were leaving Dadong City, returning to Dachang City.

The red wooden stool incident was considered over. Though the ghost remained, Yang Jian controlled the final medium, effectively containing it.

Zhang Zhidong, just regaining his senses, was left dumbfounded.

The group that had been in front of him moments ago was now gone.

The red wooden stool was gone too.

"Almost forgot." Suddenly, Yang Jian's figure reappeared, striding toward Zhang Zhidong.

A cold, blackened hand slowly raised.

"W-What are you doing?" Zhang Zhidong instinctively stepped back, unease filling him.

"Performing surgery on you," Yang Jian replied. Before Zhang Zhidong could react, the black hand plunged into his head.

"Ah!"

He screamed instinctively.

Yet, there was no pain. Even though the entire hand entered his forehead, there was not a trace of discomfort—only a fleeting, icy cold sensation that made him shiver involuntarily.

Yang Jian withdrew his hand. When he opened his palm, a small, crimson tumor-like mass sat in his hand.

Zhang Zhidong stared dumbly at the mass, about to speak when he realized Yang Jian had vanished again.

Everything returned to normal.

There were no eerie red stools, no peculiar individuals...

"This wasn't a dream." Zhang Zhidong stood dazed for a long time. A chilly wind blew by, and as the cold seeped into his body, he finally snapped out of it.

He had left the hospital, wearing his patient gown, standing in front of Ning'an Building for quite a while.

Once fully awake and reflecting on what had happened, a wave of fear gripped him, and he fled from the scene as quickly as he could.

As he ran, memories of the earlier events kept playing through his mind.

The ghost on the stool, the strange group of people... Was it all real?

Could such bizarre, eerie things actually exist in this world, and had it all happened to him?

Out of breath and unsure how far he'd run, Zhang Zhidong finally arrived at the lobby of the hospital where he'd been staying.

Looking at the brightly lit hospital and the moving crowds, his unease and fear gradually ebbed.

He returned to his ward.

But that night, he didn't sleep at all.

The next day, recalling the events of the previous night, he immediately asked the doctor to run tests on him again.

A very strange thing happened.

He was completely healthy. Although he had been scheduled for brain surgery, the doctor informed him that everything was normal and that the tumor in his brain had inexplicably vanished.

"Who exactly is this Yang Jian?"

Afterward, Zhang Zhidong felt an overwhelming curiosity about the events of the previous night, eager to find answers.

However, Yang Jian paid no attention to Zhang Zhidong.

To Yang Jian, Zhang Zhidong was just an ordinary stranger and thus not worth paying attention to.

This trip to Dadong City was short, lasting only three or four hours, but a lot had happened.

What Yang Jian initially thought was a simple revenge operation unfolded into a series of events involving a ghost wielder named Chen Qiaoyang and the entangled secrets of the Wang Family's ancient manor.

Of course, the operation wasn't without its rewards.

They had eliminated a number of potential threats, contained a ghost and its medium—the red wooden stool—and stolen half of Chen Qiaoyang's memories, learning the secrets of the Wang Family's ancient manor and its reactivation.

"This concludes the matter. If anyone has nothing more to add, take some time to rest. Also, be extra vigilant in the coming days. The ghost wielders tied to the Pendulum Clock curse were not limited to those we saw today. Some wielders, though cursed, have chosen to stay out of this struggle entirely."

"We killed many today, so be wary of retaliatory attacks," Yang Jian said as he returned to the Shangtong Tower office and addressed the group.

"And from tomorrow onward, Dachang City will need higher security measures. The appearance of Chen Qiaoyang is an ominous sign. It suggests that even older ghost wielders are still alive in this world."

"As supernatural incidents continue to escalate, these individuals won't be able to remain hidden much longer. Soon, they will all surface."

"Anyone who's survived for decades since the early days must be unimaginably dangerous."

Yang Jian looked serious, his expression heavy with concern.

From Chen Qiaoyang's memories, Yang Jian had learned he wasn't the only survivor from that era.

"It seems the supernatural circle will only grow more chaotic," Feng Quan murmured from behind a veil of cigarette smoke. "But this also proves our prior measures have been correct."

"With the captains of headquarters around, things shouldn't spiral out of control," said Li Yang.

Huang Ziya smiled faintly on the side. "One Chen Qiaoyang dared to confront three captains. If a few more show up, they might even attack headquarters. The supernatural circle is way deeper than we used to think. At least we have our captain to lean on should the sky come crashing down."

She winked playfully at Yang Jian as she spoke.

"You're wrong. The danger from people pales in comparison. The real threat lies with the supernatural incidents. People can be negotiated, intimidated, or reasoned with, but ghosts cannot," Yang Jian responded.

Although the threat of revenge from people lingered in his mind, it wasn't his primary concern.

His main worry remained supernatural incidents.

Take the red wooden stool incident, for instance. What seemed like a simple supernatural event had left Yang Jian feeling somewhat helpless. Even with his arsenal of supernatural weapons—the Coffin Nail and Firewood Knife—he couldn't make much headway.

Then there was the case of the paper effigies carrying the sedan chair.

A five-layer Ghost Domain had been effortlessly infiltrated. If the situation hadn't centered on Chen Qiaoyang, Yang Jian might have faced unimaginable peril.

The Wang Family's reactivating Pendulum Clock curse was yet another unsolved mystery hanging over Yang Jian.

"Enough. It's late, and this isn't the time to dwell on such topics. Let's discuss this tomorrow," Yang Jian concluded.

"Time to sleep, time to sleep. I'm exhausted," Xiong Wenwen cheered, clearly pleased as the meeting ended.

Without another word, Yang Jian vanished in a flash of red light, taking the Ghost Child with him.

"Hey, Xiao Yang! You left me behind?! Take me with you!" Xiong Wenwen shouted.

"Just drive home. It's not far anyway. The captain probably has personal matters to handle," Tong Qian said.

Feng Quan added, "You all go ahead. I'll stay and keep watch at the office tonight, just in case anything else happens."

"Contact us if anything comes up," Li Yang said.

"Of course."

Soon, everyone dispersed and went their separate ways.

In the now-empty office, only Feng Quan remained.

Feng Quan smoked his cigarette, but the smoke didn't dissipate. Instead, it grew denser.

No, this wasn't smoke—it was fog.

Amid the thick fog.

Feng Quan sat in contemplation, muttering to himself, "Has someone tampered with my memory?"

Chapter 910 The Broken Cabinet

Yang Jian didn't leave to rush back home and rest but to handle some unfinished business.

The red wooden stool he brought back needed to be locked up and stored, along with the vengeful ghost taken from Chen Qiaotou, which required proper handling. If the supernatural leaked out, it could very well result in another troubling paranormal incident.

Yang Jian didn't trust anyone else to deal with these matters, so he had to do them himself.

Fortunately, there wasn't anything too pressing in Dachang City at the moment, so Yang Jian's workload was relatively light.

By the time he finished handling everything, it was already late at night.

Yang Jian left the safe house and walked alone along the path in Guanjiang Residential Complex, his brows furrowed as though he was deep in thought.

"After struggling on the brink of death and coming back alive, Feng Quan has now controlled his third ghost. If my judgement is correct, by now Feng Quan's memory has likely returned. The bloodstained newspaper's supernatural ability to rewrite memories seems to have failed—this is evident from the change in how he addresses me."

"But it doesn't matter anymore. Under the current circumstances, even with his memory restored, what can he really do?"

Yang Jian dismissed the matter and then began calculating his next moves: "The Ghost Post Office issue hasn't been resolved yet. If another letter delivery task appears, I'll find myself on the fourth floor of the Ghost Post Office. The fourth floor must have ghost controllers present; otherwise, with the level of danger involved in delivering letters there, ordinary people would already be dead."

The third-floor mission in the Ghost Post Office had already thrown him into the Dachuan City Room 301 incident, where he nearly fell victim to it.

The fourth floor would certainly increase in danger.

Yang Jian couldn't predict what kind of paranormal events he might encounter next.

Aside from that, there was an even more pressing matter than the Ghost Post Office that needed attention—the transaction with the Ghost Cabinet still hadn't been completed.

The deal with the Ghost Cabinet required him to enter an old, dilapidated manor and unlock a wooden door within it.

The key to that door was still in Yang Jian's possession.

But the location of the manor remained unknown.

The Ghost Cabinet had given Yang Jian only ninety days to complete the transaction. Though nearly two months remained, the terror behind the deal and the consequences of breaking it made him uneasy.

"Am I capable of enduring the punishment for failing this transaction with the Ghost Cabinet?" Yang Jian's first instinct wasn't to complete the task.

Instead, he immediately thought about cheating his way out of it.

The transaction with the Ghost Cabinet was a one-way ticket to death.

It could only be used as a last resort to ensure survival, but long-term dealings with the Ghost Cabinet were impossible; they would eventually result in death. The best chance would be to wait for the right moment to cheat the deal. If not, sooner or later, the Cabinet's task would claim his life.

With this thought in mind,

Yang Jian arrived at the top floor of a decorative clock tower within the complex.

There stood an old, blood-red painted cabinet, quietly placed there. Though the cabinet looked normal, it exuded an indescribable eeriness, making it deeply unsettling.

"The red wooden stool, the red cabinet... these are both products of the same era." Yang Jian stared at the cabinet coated with crimson paint that seemed like blood ready to drip off, instinctively associating it with the red wooden stool he had brought back earlier.

This paranormal object bore the hallmarks of the Republic of China period in its appearance and design.

But Yang Jian wasn't interested in studying it now.

He fixed his gaze on the Ghost Cabinet, his eyes showing hesitation and contemplation.

After less than half a minute of deliberation, Yang Jian seemed to have made up his mind.

His ghostly eyes moved unnaturally. A flash of red light passed, and suddenly, a golden-fractured spear appeared in his hand.

"It's time to put an end to this."

Yang Jian glanced at the rusty firewood knife, over which a black shadow gradually spread.

Without any hesitation, he swung the supernatural weapon down against the red Ghost Cabinet.

If the Ghost Cabinet possessed paranormal power, then the firewood knife would undoubtedly inflict damage.

Tonight, Yang Jian planned to destroy the Ghost Cabinet.

As expected,

the rusty blade of the knife fell, splitting a massive crack through the wooden red-painted cabinet, almost splitting it in half.

The weapon in his hand seemed too sharp; he hardly felt any resistance.

Yang Jian stared at the gaping wound on the Ghost Cabinet, his expression shifting slightly.

From the split in the cabinet, fresh blood began to seep out eerily, as though the strike had landed not on wood but on a living, breathing body.

"Now that I've started, there's no turning back."

Yang Jian ignored the supernatural phenomenon and raised the golden-fractured spear again, letting the ghostly shadow permeate the firewood knife for another slash.

The second strike was even fiercer, directly severing the cabinet door completely off.

The interior of the cabinet was pitch-black, and within the darkness, faint movements could be seen, as though something was squirming inside.

"This is strange. I haven't succumbed to the curse backlash from the firewood knife." Yang Jian quickly realized his body was normal.

The dreaded curse of the firewood knife hadn't manifested.

"Why? Could it be that the Ghost Cabinet isn't classified as a 'ghost,' nullifying the knife's judgment? But if it isn't a ghost, why does the knife's ghost-splitting ability still work?"

This puzzled him.

Nevertheless, Yang Jian set the mystery aside for now.

The absence of the curse was a positive development.

Without hesitation, the third slash descended.

The Ghost Cabinet split apart even further, its door shattered completely.

The darkness deep within the cabinet dissipated with the strike, as though it had been nothing more than an illusion.

But the blood continued seeping out.

The blood wasn't flowing out from the interior of the cabinet but from within its wooden panels.

When Yang Jian struck, the blood splattered outward.

Still, this supernatural occurrence didn't deter him. Once Yang Jian decided on something, it was hard to stop him.

The fourth slash, the fifth slash...

Yang Jian's movements were swift. With each strike, the Ghost Cabinet collapsed at an unimaginable pace, reducing itself to a pile of wooden boards and fragments. However, these were soaked in blood, exuding an indescribable sinister air.

Quickly,

his movements came to a halt.

The task was finished.

[End of the display due to char limit.] Let me if to end rest.