

Revival 951

Chapter 951 The Unburied Person

The ancient mansion looked eerie, but fortunately, the journey so far had been without danger. Not even a glimpse of a ghost had appeared, which brought a sense of relief to many.

But upon closer thought, it made sense.

If one couldn't even approach the mansion, then this delivery task wouldn't be possible in the first place.

All the couriers would have perished outside, and who would remain to complete the task?

As the mansion's door was pushed open, an area sealed and shrouded in mystery for years was revealed to the group's eyes.

This may well be the first group of living people to set foot here since the mansion was abandoned long ago. If not for this delivery task, or the bus breaking down, no one would ever willingly come to such a haunted place. Besides, you wouldn't be able to find a location like this otherwise.

At this moment, Yang Jian took the lead. Holding his fractured spear, he was the first to step inside the mansion.

The heavy green stone brick floor was covered with a layer of dust, evidence of long abandonment.

His ghostly eye instinctively opened, scanning the surroundings to ensure his safety.

Yet what his ghostly eye saw was utter darkness—nothing at all.

"Supernatural interference... The ghostly eye's vision is being affected. As expected, this mansion isn't ordinary." Yang Jian's face turned grim as his ghostly eye lost its ability to discern anything nearby.

However, the inherent supernatural nature of the ghostly eye wasn't disrupted.

In other words, while he couldn't see, his ghostly eye still retained its ability to reboot.

The mansion's front yard was empty, with nothing but a wall standing behind the main gate. This was likely a "screen wall," a feature unique to traditional Chinese architecture.

Passing through the front yard led to an inner courtyard.

The courtyard was shaped like a hollow square, but looking up, the sky above was dim and oppressive, providing no light to the mansion. Instead, it amplified the suffocating atmosphere.

"As of now, there doesn't seem to be any danger." Yang Jian continued cautiously, observing his surroundings attentively.

Behind him, Li Yang, Yang Xiaohua, Zhou Deng, and the other couriers—Wang Feng, Da Qiang, Old Lin, and others—followed one after another, their eyes darting around, wary of every movement.

"A well-preserved mansion, quite refined. If it were out in the open, it'd fetch a nice price," Zhou Deng remarked, seemingly assessing its value.

If the price were good, it appeared he might even consider moving the entire mansion elsewhere.

After passing the courtyard, two corridors extended to the left and right. Both were deep, dark, and led to unknown destinations—impossible to see the ends, appearing like paths of no return.

Rooms lined both sides of the corridors. The ones closer to the exterior were barely visible, but the deeper rooms were completely obscured by the darkness.

"Rooms..." Yang Jian instinctively touched the old key in his pocket.

It was the key given to him by the Ghost Cabinet, which could unlock one particular locked room here.

The Ghost Cabinet's seemingly simple trade merely required him to open a door and do nothing else.

Yang Jian carefully inspected the surroundings.

He spotted the door.

On the second room to the right, the door bore a brass lock of an antiquated style. It seemed that once he had the key, unlocking it would be straightforward.

"It looks like the room the Ghost Cabinet wants me to open. No idea what's inside it." Yang Jian pondered but quickly shook his thoughts away.

This wasn't the time to dwell on it.

With the situation uncertain, he couldn't risk unlocking the door just yet.

The Ghost Cabinet's task wasn't urgent. There was still over a month left until the deadline. For now, his focus had to be on completing the delivery task and successfully reaching the post office's fifth floor.

As Yang Jian turned his gaze toward the main hall, his expression darkened instantly, and even the fractured spear in his hand shook slightly.

In the center of the hall, someone was sitting.

No.

That wasn't a person. To be precise, it was a corpse—a corpse that looked like an elderly man, tall but emaciated, with loose, sagging, dark-brown skin marred by corpse spots, as if he'd died not long ago. The body still seemed fresh.

The elderly corpse was garbed in a loose robe, completely out of place for this era.

The old man's corpse sat rigidly on a black Taishi Chair, barefoot, without shoes.

Next to it was another Taishi Chair, but that chair was empty, with no corpse seated on it.

"A corpse? Or possibly a malicious ghost?"

Seeing Yang Jian halt, the others followed suit. Some instinctively stepped back upon witnessing the scene.

The mansion.

A corpse within the mansion.

Everything appeared so sinister that one couldn't help but imagine the worst.

"Even if it's a ghost, at most it's just one. We have so many people here; what's there to be afraid of? Can't we handle it?" Fan Xing said, his tone tinted with annoyance.

They'd encountered numerous ghosts throughout the journey.

With such an eerie mansion, expecting no ghosts would seem illogical.

If there was only one ghost, it would even be a positive outcome—at least the danger's source was identifiable. They could simply stay alert and fend it off, or take preemptive measures to eliminate the threat.

"This corpse is unusual. If it turns out to be a ghost and fully manifests, it will likely be fierce. Yang Jian, you'd better think of a countermeasure. That Coffin Nail of yours looks promising—why not just nail the thing down now?" Zhou Deng suggested.

Yang Jian cast him a glance: "I've thought of that. But if I leave the Coffin Nail in this corpse, will someone take advantage and steal it?"

The fractured spear in his hand could be disassembled, and the Coffin Nail used independently to pin down the corpse in the hall, preventing unforeseen incidents.

However, leaving the Coffin Nail on the corpse was likely to tempt someone into stealing it.

Underestimating these people's moral limitations would be a mistake.

When it came to survival, they'd resort to anything and weren't concerned about the consequences—whether a ghost might reappear or not. They cared only about their own safety.

"You're overthinking. I'd never stoop to something like that," Zhou Deng swore earnestly. "Besides, I wouldn't dare touch your belongings, Yang Jian. I'd like to live a few more years—I'm not eager to meet my end so soon."

"Let's check the back hall."

Yang Jian eyed the corpse cautiously. Even knowing the corpse was likely a ghost, as long as the ghost wasn't actively killing, it posed no immediate danger.

If anything unusual happened, there would still be time to use the Coffin Nail.

Moving cautiously into the hall, he approached the corpse sitting on the black Taishi Chair.

Confirming the corpse showed no signs of movement, Yang Jian proceeded to the back hall.

In the back hall, he immediately noticed a crimson-lacquered coffin. Beside it sat an Incense Burner, its incense sticks slowly burning, releasing a faint fragrance.

Beyond that, the back hall contained nothing of interest.

"A corpse and a coffin... This old man appears to have died only recently. Could he have prepared it in advance when alive but didn't expect to pass away so suddenly, before having time for burial?"

The presence of these items suggested such possibilities.

Beyond the back hall lay the rear courtyard, leading out into the surrounding Old Lin.

The entire mansion consisted of little else—quite simple, apart from the coffin and the corpse seated in the Taishi Chair. There wasn't much else to note.

Of course, there were also the rooms along the corridors on either side of the inner courtyard.

"We have to stay here for seven days?"

Yang Jian frowned, glancing at the others, then spoke directly: "I'll be staying here for a few days. Anyone unrelated to this task should leave promptly if you have no business here. Don't disrupt me. If you turn back now, you might still catch the bus. Staying here will only lead to a dead end."

This warning was directed at those other than the couriers.

Wang Feng, Da Qiang, Old Lin, and Yang Xiaohua all remained silent. They had no desire to stay in this place but saw no way out.

"No, I'm staying here. I've already noticed the malicious ghost inside me is being suppressed, showing no signs of revival."

"This place is truly strange. I only just realized that ever since entering the Old Lin, I've stopped feeling the urge for my ghost to awaken—it's just like being on the bus. I'll stay and observe for a few days before deciding what to do next."

"So you're all experiencing this? I thought it was just me."

The others voiced their reluctance to leave, surprised by the mansion's peculiar atmosphere.

It seemed safer here than on the bus.

So far, only one ghost had been sighted, and even that ghost remained inactive.

Compared to the bus with its terrifying ghost count, this was infinitely better.

"So the supernatural interference earlier was because of this. I wrongly assumed I was the only one affected," Yang Jian murmured, touching his forehead.

The inability of his ghostly eye to see earlier suddenly made sense.

"What about you?" Yang Jian turned to Zhou Deng and Fan Xing, the assigned leaders.

"I want to take those two lanterns outside. When you've finished your task, I'll leave," Zhou Deng replied.

He seemed particularly interested in the place and wanted to explore, perhaps collect a few supernatural artifacts.

Fan Xing's eyes flickered slightly: "I heard Yang Jian brought along a doorknob from headquarters—one capable of unlocking the correct door at the right time to leave here. I'd like to rely on Yang Jian for this favor. Would that be possible?"

The revelation made several undecided ghost wielders widen their eyes, staring at Yang Jian with surprise and anticipation.

In an instant, Yang Jian became the center of attention.

"You dare reveal such information?" Li Yang glared at Fan Xing.

No one expected a team leader to turn traitorous at such a crucial moment.

But it wasn't hard to understand.

With the bus broken down, the group had fled into the Old Lin and arrived at the mansion.

Leaving seemed unlikely with the bus out of commission, so Fan Xing shifted focus to Yang Jian.

When survival hung by a thread, secrecy became irrelevant.

"Indeed, dead men can keep secrets," Yang Jian muttered grimly.

"Then you'll have to kill us all," Fan Xing countered. "But Yang Jian, don't be upset. I'm not asking for much—just hoping you can take us along when you leave. Until then, we'll obediently follow your orders and promise not to cause trouble."

"Exactly, Yang Jian. As long as you take us with you, we'll abide by your commands," someone chimed in.

"Yang Jian, how many days will you be here? If there's anything we can help you with, we're willing to assist for mutual benefit and survival," another added.

"Ghost-eye Yang Jian, I know you're capable, but you've got so many people here—can't you grant us this one favor?"

Faced with this collective appeal, Yang Jian wasn't angered. Instead, he sneered coldly: "I'll be staying here for seven days. If you can survive those seven days, we can talk. If you manage to make it through alive, I won't mind bringing you along."

Seven days?

"You want to wait for the old man's seventh day to pass?" Zhou Deng suddenly spoke.

His words caused several people's expressions to shift instantly.

This wasn't a fortunate number.

According to folklore, the deceased return on the seventh day of death.

Looking at that elderly corpse, seemingly recently deceased, the thought of staying here for seven days carried ominous undertones. Was the intention to preside over the seventh day of this ghostly occurrence?

Chapter 952 Faded Lantern

Seventh day?

Inside the dimly lit hall of the old mansion, everyone stared at the emaciated corpse of an elderly man slumped in the black Taishi Chair, and after hearing Zhou Deng's words, their expressions changed instantly.

In folklore, it is said that after a person dies, they return to life on the seventh day—this is known as the seventh day ritual.

On this day, the deceased turns into a ghost to revisit their old haunts one last time, seeing their loved ones before returning to the underworld. However, there's another saying: if the deceased harbored deep resentment, they will transform into a vengeful ghost on the seventh day to seek revenge.

"The post office instructed us to stay here for seven days. If this old man died today, then we'll end up staying here until the seventh day of this old man's death."

The ominous thought dawned on Old Hawk, and his face darkened slightly.

"The seventh day ritual? That's just an unfounded legend. In my opinion, what's truly likely to happen is that seven days after this elderly man's death, the vengeful ghost will awaken. Don't be fooled into thinking this is just a normal corpse now—once it starts awakening, it could transform into an extraordinarily terrifying ghost. Staying here for seven days would surely result in a horrifying death."

One of the ghost tamers in the group spoke up.

"You're absolutely right. Although we don't know why a recently deceased elderly corpse appeared here, my guess is that this old man was likely a ghost tamer too. He has just died, and the vengeful ghost hasn't yet awakened. But within the next few days, something will definitely go wrong. I suggest throwing this corpse far away; even if the ghost revives, at least it won't affect us directly."

Fan Xing said, "Throwing it far away is risky. Using a coffin nail to pin it down is the safer option."

He directed this comment towards Yang Jian, hoping Yang would use the coffin nail.

If Yang Jian used up the coffin nail, his strength would be significantly diminished. Even though he was skilled, he wouldn't be completely invincible.

This was an indirect way of weakening him.

Li Yang immediately stared at him, saying, "You want us to use the coffin nail? Don't think I don't understand your intentions. Fine, then we won't touch the corpse at all. Let's see who survives after the vengeful ghost awakens."

The ugliness of human nature on full display.

If Yang Jian selflessly used the coffin nail on the old man's corpse, these people would soon become restless.

"Li Yang, don't be angry. I'm just thinking about everyone's safety. I truly admire Captain Yang, and at a moment like this, faced with unknown dangers, none of us have much confidence. We can only rely on Captain Yang. Captain Yang, if you're willing to use the coffin nail to eliminate this hidden threat, then whatever you ask us to do next, we'll agree to it. What do you all think?"

Fan Xing said this earnestly, with apparent sincerity.

"Alright, I do trust the reputation of Ghost Eye Yang Jian. As long as Captain Yang sets the example, we're willing to follow your lead from now on."

"Taking orders from Captain Yang isn't an issue, but Yang Jian has to demonstrate his abilities first."

Others immediately echoed the sentiment.

They seemed to be subtly joining forces to pressure Yang Jian into leaving the coffin nail behind.

Meanwhile, Fan Xing maintained an appearance of being completely selfless, acting as if he only had the group's best interests at heart.

But being a ghost tamer and surviving this long was no simple feat. None of them were straightforward individuals; betrayal and double-dealing were all too commonplace.

Trusting them? Yang Jian would've been dead countless times over.

Yang Jian's expression shifted slightly. Holding his splintered long spear, he turned and looked at Fan Xing, then at the others. "You want my coffin nail, sure. I'm not an ungenerous person. For the safety of everyone and to eliminate hidden dangers, I'm glad to do it. But I have one small request."

"Captain Yang, what's your request? Just say it. As long as we can fulfill it."

Fan Xing responded. That use of "we" already signaled his attempt to unite the remaining ghost tamers into a team.

The others understood Fan Xing's intentions but had little choice but to cooperate in the face of Yang Jian, a top-tier Captain-level figure. Without unity, losing control of the discourse would quickly turn them into cannon fodder in any forthcoming supernatural event.

If they wanted a chance at survival, they needed to secure some voice in the matter.

As such, since Fan Xing had dared take this step, they didn't mind temporarily aligning with him.

Too bad Zhou Deng showed no interest in joining forces. If he did, the group might have a shot at countering Yang Jian's influence.

Yang Jian said, "My request is simple: I'll provide the coffin nail, but you'll provide one person."

"What do you mean by that, Captain Yang?" Fan Xing asked.

Yang Jian replied, "It means I'll use the coffin nail on the corpse without question, but I feel that there's someone who's been talking too much, and it's annoying me. If you help me with this—eliminate this loudmouth—I'll be in a much better mood and naturally willing to look after all of you."

"To survive, one must offer their life to earn my favor. So, show me your determination."

With that, his lips curved into a frosty smile, and his gaze lingered on Fan Xing.

Fan Xing felt a chill run through him as Yang Jian's stare unsettled him. He could even sense the hostile glances from nearby individuals—ones that betrayed an intent to act.

They seemed genuinely swayed by Yang Jian's words, ready to take him down as a token of allegiance.

"Cap-Captain Yang, isn't that going a bit too far?" Fan Xing forced a smile, visibly uneasy.

Yang Jian didn't respond and instead added, "Of course, there's another proposal: all of you, together, come at me now. If you manage to kill me, then everything I have will be yours. Afterward, you can decide what to do."

He coldly swept his gaze across the group.

Li Yang frowned slightly, preparing himself for any action.

The other messengers hesitated, staying silent, though their gazes grew sharp as they glanced at the remaining outsiders.

No matter what, Yang Jian was delivering the letter. Like them, he was fulfilling a mission, and they would need his help in the days ahead.

If Yang Jian were killed here, all the messengers would be doomed.

"That—that's unnecessary. We were just having a proper conversation, and now it's come to violence? This is simply a misunderstanding, nothing else."

Someone, sensing the shift in atmosphere and the brewing tension, immediately backed down.

"We wouldn't dare offend Captain Yang. Personally, I'm a big admirer of yours. Earlier was just a cautious suggestion; no offense was intended. I hope you don't take it to heart."

Instantly, apologies and explanations flooded in. Their attitudes changed dramatically, leaving no room for criticism.

A thinner-skinned person might feel genuinely embarrassed after being spoken to like that.

Yang Jian's gaze remained icy, his expression unyielding. He said, "You don't need to answer immediately. Take your time to think about it—I'm in no rush."

The others fell into quiet, and even Fan Xing was left momentarily stunned.

He soon realized the implications of Yang Jian's words.

From this point onward, the more dangerous the old mansion became, the greater the likelihood that Fan Xing would be killed by the other ghost tamers. As long as Fan Xing remained alive, Yang Jian wouldn't use the coffin nail to suppress the vengeful ghost.

As for the second option—teaming up to challenge Yang Jian?

That was absurd.

Going against a Captain-level expert backed by headquarters was practically suicidal. Even if one succeeded, retribution from headquarters would be inevitable, not to mention Yang Jian had other allies by his side—he wasn't alone.

Thus, for now, the unspoken conflict and tension were postponed.

"Yang Jian, since we're already inside this mansion, what do we do next?" Old Hawk spoke, breaking the uneasy silence.

"Find a room to rest," Yang Jian said. "You're not planning to stand in this hall all night, are you?"

The others glanced at the corpse sitting in the hall, feeling an unexplained chill.

Were it not for their numbers.

No one would willingly stay in such a dark, eerie hall, face-to-face with a tall, skeletal corpse.

Yang Jian paid them no mind and began investigating the rooms along the mansion's twin walkways. He wanted to check for hidden dangers.

The corpse had already been confirmed as a potential threat.

Since he didn't plan to waste the coffin nail on it, he decided to simply leave it unchecked.

If the corpse really did awaken as a vengeful ghost, he wouldn't be the only one facing danger.

Moreover.

Based on the Ghost Post Office's instructions that ghosts would appear after the seventh day, the corpse itself shouldn't exhibit abnormalities before then.

He decided to observe for now.

Yang Jian left the hall and walked down the corridor near the central courtyard, heading toward the right.

The walkway's ground was paved with bluestone bricks, though it seemed neglected—darkened and faintly unclean over time.

The first room along the right-hand corridor was close to the courtyard, and thus had a clearly visible door and windows.

The intricately carved wooden windows offered a distinctly antique look. Standing near the doorway, a quick glance inside revealed a simple setup.

The room was mostly empty, containing only an old round table, a cabinet, and a bed frame. The bed was covered with blankets, though a thick layer of dust rendered them unsightly and unused for years.

"Seems like an ordinary room." Yang Jian didn't detect any supernatural presence.

Li Yang touched the door briefly and then shook his head slightly, signaling no findings.

The room appeared safe.

Yang Jian moved on to the next room, where the door had a brass lock firmly attached, making it inaccessible. Strangely, this room lacked windows—its walls unbroken and seamless, as if purposely designed without them.

Li Yang approached, placing his hand on the room briefly, before abruptly withdrawing, his expression shifting dramatically.

"Did you find something?" Yang Jian asked immediately.

Li Yang lowered his voice. "Captain, this room is peculiar—it seems to suppress supernatural powers. When I touched it, even the ghost within me fell silent. There must be something extraordinary inside."

"If we want to open it, we'll likely have to break the lock. But I suspect this lock might be a supernatural artifact itself, as it hasn't rusted in the slightest despite being here for so long—not even a speck of dust on it."

"Sharp observation." Yang Jian also suspected the lock to be supernatural.

Its vivid appearance amidst the corridor's darkness suggested it resisted the effects of the eerie environment.

Brass lock, coffin nail, firewood knife, scissors... Supernatural items from the Republic of China period, especially metallic ones, often carried ominous significance.

"A valuable item—an extraordinary find. Such a fine lock being wasted here is almost a pity." Zhou Deng suddenly wandered over, grabbing the brass lock and tugging at it forcefully.

The lock rattled noisily but remained steadfastly attached.

Without hesitation, Zhou Deng pulled out a firearm and fired twice at the door's latch, aiming to break it.

"What are you doing?" Yang Jian's voice carried a sharp edge.

"Just experimenting, Captain Yang. Don't mind me." Zhou Deng waved dismissively, signaling others who heard the gunfire not to overreact.

But after firing, the bullets lodged themselves deeply into the wooden door.

The latch remained intact, yet fresh blood began seeping out from the bullet holes.

The scene felt eerily familiar.

It reminded Yang Jian of the time he hacked into the Ghost Cabinet with the firewood knife—the same unsettling blood seepage occurred.

"Something's wrong with this room. That brass lock wasn't placed here for me to take but to keep whatever's inside locked away. Too sinister—better to leave quickly." Zhou Deng's face paled, and he immediately abandoned the lock, retreating with impressive speed.

In an instant, he disappeared, likely moving on to other places in search of treasure.

"He's insane." Li Yang watched Zhou Deng leave, alert and wary.

Messing around in a haunted location like this was either suicidal or indicative of a loose screw.

Clearly, Zhou Deng fell into the latter category.

After all, he knew fear and fled when something felt off.

"Shots didn't work—prying it open likely won't either. To unlock this room, we'd need to find the corresponding key." Li Yang stared at the brass lock's base, noting the keyhole.

It clearly required a matching key.

Yang Jian remained silent, observing and contemplating.

The key? He had one.

It was on him.

Yet he had no intention of unlocking the door right now.

"Whatever's inside, it should only be revealed after the seventh day when the letter delivery mission is complete. Combining the delivery task with the Ghost Cabinet exchange later would minimize risks—this is the safest course."

Yang Jian was cautious, deciding to wait until the final moments before opening the door.

"Let's keep exploring."

Yang Jian continued down the corridor.

The third room was ordinary; the fourth room was normal too; and so were the fifth and sixth rooms...

The farther they went, the darker the corridor became, until they had to turn on their phones' lights to illuminate their surroundings.

Thankfully, the light wasn't affected by supernatural forces, allowing for clear visibility.

"An endless corridor." Yang Jian and Li Yang halted.

The two dared not delve further, fearing they'd lose their way.

Everything ahead felt repetitive.

Room, hallway, room, hallway... No door numbers or distinguishing features; every room followed the same layout and arrangement.

Yang Jian turned to retrace his steps but shone his phone's flashlight forward, illuminating a chair in the corridor.

A black Taishi Chair.

The chair was identical to the one in the hall where the corpse sat.

The chair faced away from them, as if barring them from continuing forward.

"Who would place a chair here?" Yang Jian's mind was brimming with questions.

After inspecting the chair and confirming no one was sitting in it, he decided to head back.

On his way back, he encountered Yang Xiaohua, Old Hawk, and others.

They didn't dare venture deeper, lingering instead near the third room.

"Let's settle in this room. Keep your distance from the others; those reckless wanderers are beyond reason. Compared to them, you folks lack their sheer madness. As for the corpse in the hall, leave it alone for now—it might just be our letter's delivery target. Either way, we'll have to wait seven days and reassess the situation."

Yang Jian addressed the others.

"Are you certain this is the right room? Wouldn't a room closer to the outer area be better? At least we could retreat quickly in case of danger."

Yang Xiaohua suggested.

"Being too close to the hall isn't safe," Wang Feng said, his gaze shifting. "But being too far away isn't ideal either. The second room is locked—it seems unusual. I'd recommend checking the rooms on the left-hand corridor instead."

He glanced towards the opposite side.

Over there, other ghost tamers had already opened one of the rooms.

"We'll stay here," Yang Jian repeated firmly.

The others relented, dropping the issue.

While the rooms on the left side seemed preferable, the presence of other tamers there wasn't reassuring.

Here, at least, their group of messengers from the fourth floor offered some sense of security.

Opening the room door, Old Hawk, Yang Xiaohua, Da Qiang, and Wang Feng began unpacking their belongings.

Their gear included emergency food and water, flashlights, batteries, and tools—well-prepared for survival.

Given no supernatural interference, ordinary people would likely endure seven days here without issue.

Yang Jian required none of these supplies; he could go without food, water, or sleep now.

Similarly, Li Yang, whose body had been invaded by a ghost, wouldn't encounter problems over seven days either.

The group examined the room quietly before settling into their chosen spots.

The bed was notably untouched.

Nobody dared use it or considered sleeping there, opting instead for corners to rest.

Checking the time.

They had departed Dachang City at nine, traveled through three stations, and finally reached here. Unnoticed, it was already 11:40 PM.

Once midnight passed, their seven-day task in the mansion would officially begin.

Currently, it hadn't.

"This room feels completely unsafe," Old Hawk commented, noting the intricate, carved windows.
"Anyone passing by could see right in."

Wooden doors offered no defense.

The room was small, the corridors barely wide enough.

If confronted by a ghost, they'd likely face a dire struggle—akin to their horrors in the Ghost Post Office.

"Hmph. No place in this mansion is safe. The outside is even creepier—the old grove is clearly unnatural. The hall has a corpse. Unless we stayed in the courtyard, which isn't practical for seven days, rooms are relatively better hidden—less conspicuous..."

Da Qiang coldly retorted at Old Hawk's complaint.

Old Hawk offered no rebuttal.

Because he knew Da Qiang's assessment was correct.

Sticking to the rooms gave them some semblance of invisibility, reducing likelihood of encountering a ghost. Wandering recklessly meant courting death.

"Get some rest. I'll take the first night watch," Yang Jian declared.

"Captain, let's rotate shifts," Li Yang suggested.

"No need. Only I'm capable of handling emergencies right now. You can't afford to be incapacitated—if you face trouble, we won't have a chance to leave alive."

Li Yang's ability to connect to the Ghost Gate left them a potential escape route.

Hence, he couldn't be allowed to meet misfortune.

Li Yang offered no resistance, simply nodding in agreement with Yang Jian's reasoning.

The others, too, had nothing further to add, quietly awaiting the passage of time.

Midnight arrived without notice.

Everything remained uneventful—no sudden disturbances, though the silence outside grew increasingly eerie, suggesting the ghost tamers were settling their own plans without foolishly venturing recklessly.

Meanwhile.

None paid attention to the fact that, at the mansion's entrance, the two red lanterns rapidly began losing their color after midnight.

Their crimson hues faded, and the lanterns turned stark white—the light within also transforming into pale radiance.

Soon.

The red lanterns became two white ones.

A chilling wind swept from the old grove.

The white lanterns spun slightly.

On the opposite side of the lanterns, a black "奠" character emerged at some unknown point.

No.

Perhaps the character had always been there—it had merely been overlooked.

At this moment, the mansion seemed transformed into the setting for a funeral.

Chapter 953 The First Night

Once midnight passed.

This marked the beginning of the post office's mission. The fourth-floor messengers were to stay here for seven days. This was the first day—merely the beginning.

In the oppressive and dimly lit ancient mansion, an eerie silence prevailed.

The other Ghost Rider companions who followed Yang Jian here also fell silent. Although they were bold, they were not without a sense of caution.

It was evident that something was wrong with the mansion. Without understanding the situation, no one dared to act recklessly, and they opted for relatively safer spaces to linger.

The main hall was entirely empty at the moment. The ghastly quiet suffocated the air, leaving behind only the corpse of an emaciated elderly man sitting in a black Taishi Chair. His eyes were closed, his face expressionless, while his icy dead feet rested on the ground, mottled with corpse spots.

Behind the hall lay a coffin.

Yet no one dared to place the old man into it—not even approach the corpse. They let it remain, motionless and undisturbed.

The corpse seemed to become a forbidden entity, unapproachable to all.

Even Zhou Deng, after observing it briefly, shook his head and walked away. He figured the clothes on the corpse didn't seem valuable—likely not a paranormal item—thus had no further interest.

Outside the ancient mansion.

Chilly winds swept through, causing the two large lanterns hanging on the front gate to sway incessantly.

No one noticed, at this very moment, the two lanterns had shifted from a vibrant red to a ghastly white. A pitch-black "Condolence" character was now painted on them, glowing faintly with a ghostly white light. These lanterns' eerie luminescence made them stand out against the oppressive, dark world—as if summons for lost souls.

Nearby, Old Lin rattled faintly.

Breezes stirred its branches, shaking the entire forest.

The forest wasn't without visitors.

Wan Zhou, along with two other Ghost Riders, wandered around uneasily in this haunted woodland. Gathered together, their faces were taut with tension and something close to panic.

They were lost.

Lost within this ghost-infested woodland.

The cause stemmed from earlier, when they witnessed the supernatural bus suddenly restarting. Wanting to escape the forest quickly and board the bus, they took a shortcut instead of sticking to the winding path.

While logical at first, they hadn't expected what would come next: the forest trapping them—unyielding and unforgiving. Retracing their route didn't lead them back to the familiar path either.

After endless circling.

Wan Zhou and his companions were utterly stranded—no way forward, no way back.

"This forest isn't as simple as it seemed before. It's not just a mere woodland; this is clearly a Ghost Domain. Stop wasting time. If we're truly in a Ghost Domain, we have to find and resolve the source of its paranormal disturbance; otherwise, we'll be trapped here forever."

Wan Xing's face was grim.

He had missed boarding the restarted bus, separated from the others who headed to the mansion.

Now, he was cornered in a cursed destination with no escape, abandoned by the world itself. All that surrounded him was eerie silence and unfathomable dread.

"This forest seems small, but once lost within, it stretches endlessly. Finding the paranormal source here would be extremely difficult," another said.

"If we don't figure it out, we're going to die here. We've already missed the bus. If we keep wasting time, we won't even make it to the mansion," Wan Zhou said.

With no options left, they could only hope to rediscover the path and venture towards the mansion.

"Exactly. Yang Jian must have a way to escape. He boarded the bus not to suppress the resurgence of ghosts but to intentionally come to this mansion. If he dared to come, he must be prepared—and others likely followed him for precisely this reason."

"Unfortunately, I made the wrong choice earlier. I thought following you would lead us back to the bus safely—but instead, you took us down the wrong path and landed us in this mess."

Another Ghost Rider blamed Wan Zhou for their predicament.

Wan Zhou responded, "What's the point of saying this now? Do you think I didn't want to get back to the bus? I figured cutting through a little bit of forest wouldn't lead to complications—how was I supposed to know this would happen? Besides, from the way it looked earlier, once the supernatural bus started, it could leave any moment. A delay by even one second would have meant missing it completely."

"Fight for one second; don't gamble even a minute. Don't you understand that principle?"

"The more critical the moment, the more caution is required. When it comes to life and death, you can't afford mistakes," the other Ghost Rider retorted.

But the third companion interjected: "Enough arguing. Right now, we need to work together to survive this crisis. And haven't you noticed? Since midnight passed, this forest has grown stranger—it feels like something's stirring."

"I've felt it too. Let's stop wasting time here and move in that direction." Wan Zhou himself was inexplicably uneasy.

He refused to linger too long and began acting again without hesitation.

The three companions put aside their disputes and joined forces, brainstorming survival strategies.

As Ghost Riders, their minds were shaky but not irrational—they remained alert and focused.

Yet as they walked further, they suddenly froze—their expressions changed drastically.

Opposite them appeared three silhouettes, shrouded in the dim forest. The darkness made their forms indistinct—mere blackened outlines, approaching steadily with synchronized steps, showing no signs of pausing.

"No way these are living people."

The thought instantly surfaced in all three minds.

They exchanged silent glances.

Run!

Without waiting for the mysterious figures to close in, they turned around and bolted—without an ounce of hesitation.

Despite being Ghost Riders, their limited strength left little room for error. They might handle one ghost, but three figures suggesting multiple spectral entities was a death sentence.

However, before they had fled far, they stopped abruptly again—their eyes narrowing in horror.

Those shadowy figures emerged once more at a distance within the forest. This time, they remained still, standing silently.

But now, their number doubled—six blurry, humanoid shapes scattered among the trees ahead.

"Change direction again," Wan Zhou muttered, cold sweat covering his forehead immediately.

The other two felt their skin crawl. Although the six figures were motionless, the sheer sight of them paralyzed their steps.

Glancing back.

Three more figures wandered through the forest, swiftly closing in.

Clenching their teeth.

Without daring to delay, Wan Zhou and his companions escaped in yet another direction.

"Maybe those figures from earlier are Ghost Slaves rather than fully-fledged apparitions. We might be overreacting here—this forest can't possibly harbor so many dangerous entities," one said while fleeing.

"That may be true, but who in their damned mind would gamble on that? We're already dangerously close to ghost resurgence—it's only thanks to the bus we're prolonging our lives. If we encounter real ghosts here, we wouldn't stand a chance in hell," Wan Zhou cursed furiously while sprinting.

This was a streak of wretched luck.

How did they end up in such a godforsaken place?

"Look ahead."

Suddenly, the three halted again, trembling.

Further into the forest, a new group of eerie figures appeared, leaning against the trees with their backs facing them—still unmoving.

No.

Not entirely unmoving.

The ghostly figures, sensing Wan Zhou's group, began grotesquely twisting their necks, craning them backward...

One after another, a dense cluster of lifeless heads emerged—deathly pale, staring coldly with eyes devoid of warmth.

Hundreds.

Thousands.

An uncountable number began peeking from behind the trees. It seemed as though every tree had something sinister hidden—or each tree symbolized its own malevolent entity.

A bone-chilling wind swept through.

Wan Zhou and the others found themselves drenched in cold sweat, their bodies trembling as if submerged in icy waters.

This wasn't a mere forest—it was a Ghost Forest.

No wonder.

No wonder the ghostly apparitions chasing them from the bus refused to venture into this place.

The dangers here dwarfed the threats aboard the supernatural bus tenfold.

"It's over."

The trio's faces were consumed by despair.

They stopped running—not because they didn't want to escape, but because all paths were blocked, surrounded by ghosts on all sides, with no chance of survival.

The hostile apparitions emerged from behind the trees, advancing towards them.

From every direction.

Endlessly appearing.

And soon.

The forest echoed with their frantic, final screams—a desperate cry for life before everything vanished into silence once more.

The eerie specters concealed themselves again, as if retreating into the woodland. The forest returned to its deceptive normalcy.

But unnoticed—the forest perimeter quietly gained three new trees. These were far younger than the others—oddly pale compared to the darkened old trees. From a distance, they appeared distinct.

A cold wind swept through.

The new trees swayed alongside the ancient ones, their movements producing faint rustles.

Meanwhile, Yang Jian remained oblivious to the fate of Wan Zhou and his group.

He stayed secure within the third room of the mansion, vigilantly guarding the door and waiting for time to pass.

The mansion was tranquil during the night—or at least, the other Ghost Riders hadn't made any disturbances. This was a relief because if something happened to them, the noise would alert the others, sparing them from being unprepared when real danger struck.

Yang Jian was exceptionally alert, his thoughts fixed on three things:

The locked room next door, the corpse of the elderly man in the main hall, and the red coffin behind the hall.

"I've prepared for the locked room and the corpse, but what about the red coffin behind the hall?" Yang Jian pondered.

Coffins, as paranormal objects, weren't new to him.

Previously, the Ghost Envoy was spawned from a Ghost Coffin—a chilling apparition. However... that coffin was black, whereas this one was red.

"In folklore, black coffins symbolize unnatural death, whereas red coffins represent peaceful passing—a celebratory funeral. Although it's just tradition, older customs often carried meaning and taboos. Even the color choice had significance and couldn't be arbitrary."

"If the first individuals imprisoning the Ghost Envoy were early-era Ghost Riders, their choice of a black coffin implicitly indicated danger. Similarly, the red coffin now suggests that the elderly person in the main hall passed peacefully."

Yang Jian's mind brimmed with knowledge and memory.

Fragments of folk customs—borrowed from the collective recollection within the Ghost Shadow.

"The seventh day traditionally represents the soul's return. It's reasonable to predict that on the seventh day, the elderly man in the main hall would undergo ghostly resurgence. That day could be paramount for survival, potentially wiping out everyone here, including me."

"The letter may not necessarily be for the elderly man. Although superficially, this corpse is the only viable recipient, the locked room could harbor something sinister too. Additionally, there's the possibility that the supernatural bus might pass through again after seven days—potentially disembarking another apparition."

"Thus, I'm certain the post office's true mission isn't about delivering the letter but testing how messengers survive through these seven days."

"The first day is merely beginning, but danger is inevitable. The post office wouldn't allow an unchallenged survival."

Yang Jian meticulously analyzed and evaluated the scenario.

Suddenly, the mansion stirred with activity.

"Bang! Bang-bang!"

The sound came from outside, as though someone was heavily pounding on the mansion's thick front door.

The noise was faint, yet its clarity pierced the silent night.

"Someone is knocking?"

In an instant.

Within their rooms, Lao Ying, Wang Feng, Da Qiang, Yang Xiaohua, and Li Yang all opened their eyes.

In an environment like this, sleep was impossible, save for quick rests to regain strength and awareness. Any disturbances were enough to jolt them awake.

"Knocking again?" Yang Jian's expression darkened.

He had a personal vendetta against two things: unexplained knocks and rainstorms.

"Who is it? Who's knocking outside?" someone shouted—Zhou Deng.

This man still showed boldness.

Yet no reply came from outside; the knocking persisted, growing more urgent.

"One, two, four... six. Judging by the rhythm, at least six hands are knocking," Yang Jian deduced, carefully listening.

"Could it be Wan Zhou and his group out there?" Li Yang asked softly.

He hadn't forgotten about the group that stayed behind to wait for the bus instead of following them.

"I'll go check it out. You all stay here. Unless I return, no one opens the door under any circumstances." Yang Jian knew he couldn't sit idle. Gripping the fractured long spear, he opened the door and stepped out.

Turning a corner, he arrived at the main hall.

There, he saw Zhou Deng, along with a few Ghost Riders who had emerged in response to the noise.

At that moment, everyone stood silently in the hall, eyes locked on the corpse of the elderly man seated in the black Taishi Chair.

"Did someone... move the corpse?" Zhou Deng asked after a moment, breaking the silence.

The corpse had shifted its position without explanation—originally seated in the left Taishi Chair, it now sat in the right one.

Its posture remained unchanged, but its position had inexplicably swapped.

"I've been in the first room all along, keeping an eye out. The hall was empty—I didn't even glimpse anyone near. Besides, who would waste their time pulling pranks on this rotting corpse?" Fan Xing responded, his face grim.

Outside the mansion, the frenzied knocking echoed louder, more insistent.

A chilling unease seeped into everyone's hearts.

"I remember the mansion's gate being open..."

Someone murmured faintly.

Everyone immediately turned to look, but their view was obstructed by a wall—unable to see the front courtyard.

The gate was open?

Then who—or what—was knocking on the door outside?

Chapter 954 Incomprehensible

Inside the ancient mansion, many people were startled awake. They stood in the main hall, their eyes filled with astonishment, turning to look toward the direction of the mansion's exterior.

The sound of palms slapping against the door rang out urgently, as if someone outside had encountered an emergency and desperately wanted to come in, hoping the people inside would hurry up and open the door.

However.

Someone said something that sent chills down everyone's spine.

The front door of the mansion wasn't closed!

As soon as these words were spoken, Zhou Deng, Yang Jian, and even the others started to recall.

Indeed.

Li Yang was the first to open the door, Yang Jian was the first to step into the mansion, and as for who entered last, it wasn't clear, but everyone knew that after entering, the mansion's door hadn't been deliberately shut.

It wasn't carelessness; the door wasn't closed.

Rather, everyone tacitly accepted the reality of keeping the door open.

After all, this place was so eerie. If the door were shut and couldn't be opened, trapping everyone inside, what would they do?

The walls surrounding the mansion weren't tall, but who could say if they'd even be able to climb out in the end?

So leaving the door open was actually a backup plan, an easy exit strategy, theoretically the right thing to do.

"So, there's something outside slapping the door, but it didn't come into the mansion?" Yang Jian's eyes narrowed. "That doesn't make sense. If it were a ghost, it would definitely seize the chance to wander inside while the door's open."

"Unless there's something in this mansion preventing certain malevolent entities from approaching."

Zhou Deng posed his speculation, "Maybe it's some kind of rare supernatural object. If we could find it, it might help us survive."

He always suspected the mansion contained treasures and wanted to dig them up.

It seemed he couldn't bear the thought of leaving empty-handed.

"Should we go over and take a look? With so many of us here, together we should be able to handle a typical ghostly incident." Fan Xing's eyes shifted as he suggested teaming up.

Immediately, he added, "I'm not having any ulterior motives; I just think that if we don't address such an anomaly, it could eventually threaten all of us. Right now, the mansion is relatively safe, with only that corpse in the main hall. But if other entities seep in, the situation could take a nasty turn."

What he said was indeed correct.

No one voiced any objections.

Even though Yang Jian wanted to get rid of this guy, he had to admit the logic behind this idea was sound.

He had to survive in the mansion for seven days. It was only the first day, and malevolent entities were already slapping the door. If he didn't get to the bottom of it, the subsequent days would be spent in constant fear.

Or worse, not even realizing the ghosts had infiltrated the mansion.

"Let's go check it out. If you don't intend to help, don't come along to add to the chaos." Yang Jian said this and walked out of the main hall, holding a cracked spear, bypassing the courtyard, and heading toward the door.

The rest of the group exchanged glances and deliberated for a moment.

The meaning behind Yang Jian's words was clear.

Anyone heading over had to be prepared to confront a ghost. If you weren't in good condition or lacked the necessary abilities, don't bother tagging along just to spectate.

Otherwise, you might not help but instead worsen the situation with your own ghost-related complications.

"The two lanterns I left outside better not have been tampered with." Zhou Deng suddenly thought about it, and, worried, rushed over to check on the lanterns he had placed outside the mansion earlier.

"Two people are too few. That kind of urgent slapping noise would need at least six hands to achieve. We need two more people." Fan Xing's eyes shifted. "Count me in. Anyone else willing to join?"

At this moment, he proactively volunteered for the risky endeavor, perhaps hoping to regain some leverage within the group.

"Count me in. I refuse to believe that, with so many top-tier ghost handlers working together, we'd still run into an accident," said an unfamiliar ghost handler, stepping forward.

"Alright, let's hurry up and catch up."

Fan Xing and the newcomer immediately dashed after Yang Jian.

The others, though, had their own considerations and were unwilling to take risks, preferring to conserve their strength.

Yang Jian quickened his pace.

His face was expressionless, his gaze tense, fully prepared for a confrontation with malevolent ghosts at any moment.

But just as he entered the front courtyard, without yet bypassing the screen wall ahead to see the door clearly, the urgent slapping noise abruptly ceased.

A series of rapid footsteps sounded nearby.

Something was leaving at an unreasonable speed.

"Arrived too late? No, it left after hearing commotion." Yang Jian stood by the doorway, gazing in the direction of the receding sound.

There was nothing there.

Only a few old trees stood, swaying incessantly under a cold wind.

Turning back to look at the door.

It was covered in filthy handprints, dense and nearly filling every inch. Even areas too tall to reach had prints.

Moreover, the handprints varied in size and shape, indicating they came from numerous different hands.

"It ran away?"

Zhou Deng also heard the rapid footsteps fading beyond the wall and froze for a moment. He followed the sound but, like Yang Jian, found nothing.

"We're a step too late. The thing that was slapping the door has already left. This is strange; if it were truly a ghost, it wouldn't just leave—it would stay and wait for us to appear." Yang Jian remarked.

"That's true; ghosts don't behave like that. So the thing slapping the door wasn't a ghost? But looking at the state of the door, it couldn't have been a human either," Zhou Deng said, staring at the filth-covered handprints and falling into thought.

Yang Jian added another possibility: "However, there's still one exception."

Zhou Deng glanced at him.

"If a ghost steals a living person's memories and mimics their behavior, the ghost's actions may become disturbingly unpredictable."

"A human-like ghost?" Zhou Deng furrowed his brows.

"It's happened before. Although ghosts typically follow certain patterns to kill, with the evolution of supernatural phenomena, some ghosts, like ghost handlers, may exhibit incomprehensible abnormalities. These anomalous ghosts still abide by rules but act in ways that defy understanding."

Fan Xing arrived and joined the conversation, adding, "Some of these abnormal ghosts can even manipulate their own killing patterns. You might meet the criteria for being attacked, yet the ghost doesn't kill you. By the same logic, you might not trigger the ghost's killing pattern, but it can create an opening, forcing you into its rules."

"People control ghosts, and ghosts control people—it's a mutually converging situation. That's a terrifying issue."

"You sure know a lot," Yang Jian remarked.

Fan Xing replied modestly, "I know a bit here and there, but nowhere near as much as your experience, Captain Yang."

"Everyone, we should shut the door to prevent similar incidents from happening again," another unfamiliar ghost handler chimed in.

Yang Jian was lost in thought, while Zhou Deng was pondering deeply.

Should the door be closed?

"There's no trace of a ghost inside the mansion, which means the entity never crossed the threshold—it only stood outside slapping the door the whole time."

"Closing the door might not be a wise choice. What if the ghost gave us a false signal to close the door, and the real danger arises afterward? There's a saying, you know—close the door to trap the beast. If the door remains open, it might leave us an escape route for critical moments."

While speaking, Zhou Deng raised his gaze to the two lanterns hanging above the door.

His expression shifted unnervingly.

Because he noticed that his two red lanterns had somehow been swapped out, replaced with two white ones—a kind often used for mourning the dead.

"My lanterns have been replaced?"

Yang Jian observed closely and clarified, "No, the lanterns weren't taken. They've been here all along—they changed. If they'd been removed, there would've been marks or traces left behind."

"Interesting. The red lanterns turned into white ones, all without us realizing it. And after that, the anomaly of the ghost slapping the door occurred... Zhou Deng, do you recall the Ghost Candle in headquarters?"

"Red and white Ghost Candles?" Zhou Deng immediately knew what Yang Jian meant.

Any higher-up at headquarters would recognize the Ghost Candle as a supernatural item. The red Ghost Candle could safeguard life by warding off ghost attacks, whereas the white Ghost Candle drew ghosts toward itself.

"Red and white lanterns... Red and white Ghost Candles? Could it be these white lanterns attract ghosts here?" Zhou Deng speculated based on his connection.

"Not certain. Maybe they do, maybe they don't. Without enough information, I can't determine whether closing the door or leaving it open is the safer choice, nor whether we should destroy these lanterns or leave them be. There's no evidence proving that any action we take would be correct," Yang Jian replied.

"Experience and habitual thinking will get you killed in the realm of supernatural phenomena."

Fan Xing offered, "If that's the case, then let's leave things as they are for now. Maintain the status quo."

Chapter 955 the first one

Yang Jian stood in front of the ancient mansion's open door, lost in thought.

The events encountered today were eerie and exceptional: the opening of the mansion's doors, the white lantern hanging on them, and the urgent sound of knocking...

These details were proof enough that something terrifying was unfolding in the mansion.

Though the danger had yet to fully manifest, the unusual signs on day one were already unsettling.

"Using the Firewood Knife can trigger a medium and reveal part of the truth from earlier." Yang Jian gripped the cracked long gun in his hand tightly.

He stared at the densely packed handprints on the door.

This scene brought to mind the bloody handprints from the Caesar Hotel.

But after experiencing such events, Yang Jian was no longer reckless. He understood that some mediums left by ghosts could not be triggered indiscriminately, as certain mediums could lead to severe consequences when activated.

Thus, Yang Jian was assessing the situation, hesitating.

At the moment, he faced a choice: risk using the medium to find the source of the knocking sound or treat it as though nothing had happened and return to the room to pass the time.

It wasn't indecision on his part.

Rather, when dealing with terrifying paranormal events, any decision could have a profound impact on the situation.

This was no game—there was no chance for a redo. A single misstep could mean the end of everything.

Even though Yang Jian, as an anomaly himself, could restart, he still dared not test the waters recklessly.

"I should take a risk. Simply staying in the room and doing nothing might not be enough to survive through the seventh day." Yang Jian's decisive nature took the lead.

He wanted to try, wanted to seize the initiative, and hated the thought of sitting and waiting for death.

"But the handprints left here might just be a trap set against me by the malevolent ghost. The ghost hasn't entered or killed anyone; instead, it merely left countless handprints. This is akin to delivering the medium right to me."

For some reason,

Yang Jian instinctively suspected it might be a trap.

Triggering the medium might initiate a horrifying chain reaction.

If only Xiong Wenwen, who could foresee the future, were here. If he were present, Yang Jian could use his foresight to weigh the pros and cons of the situation.

It wasn't that he didn't want to bring Xiong Wenwen; he feared Xiong Wenwen might not survive the deadly dangers of the supernatural bus.

"Yang Jian, what are you thinking about? Someone like you, hesitating at a moment like this—it seems you've come across something extraordinary. Why not share your thoughts, let us offer some input?" Zhou Deng couldn't resist asking upon seeing Yang Jian's indecisive demeanor.

"Nothing much. I just have my own plans." Yang Jian replied.

He wasn't about to reveal how the Firewood Knife could be used.

Though triggering the medium might seem simple, finding the proper method was extremely difficult for a ghost-tamer if the secret wasn't disclosed.

"Shut the door. Don't touch the lantern for now. Let's continue monitoring the situation and make decisions afterward. In a place like this, survival requires caution. I have a hunch that the reason we're

still alive and haven't been attacked by the malevolent ghost is due to some kind of balance that hasn't been disrupted. But this balance will gradually crumble over time, and we can't afford to end this balance prematurely."

Yang Jian then made his choice and decided to observe for the night.

If the same phenomena occurred again, he'd use the Firewood Knife to trigger the medium without hesitation.

Fan Xing and another ghost-tamer didn't object. Without saying a word, they promptly shut the mansion's heavy doors.

Once the sturdy wooden doors were closed, no anomalies unfolded inside the mansion, nor were there any sounds outside.

It seemed as if all the events earlier had been a false alarm, and peace returned once more.

However, the densely packed dirty handprints on the wood remained etched in everyone's memories.

Though no one spoke.

Everyone knew clearly in their hearts that the malevolent ghost was lingering just outside the mansion, ready to enter at any moment.

Outside was no longer safe.

"Let's go back." Yang Jian said nothing more as he turned and left.

In the main hall, the number of gathered individuals had grown compared to before. Apart from Li Yang and the messenger from the fourth floor, nearly all the ghost-tamers who had exited the bus and entered the mansion were present.

"It's nothing, just a minor anomaly. Carry on with your tasks." Zhou Deng waved dismissively and said, "However, I'd like to clarify one thing: who moved this corpse?"

"Zhou Deng, I already said earlier that no one would waste their time moving this old corpse just to scare people." One person, relieved by the calm outside, hurriedly explained.

"If it wasn't moved by a person, there's only one possibility: the corpse moved on its own. I've long suspected this corpse to be extremely dangerous. If we don't find a way to restrain it, once the malevolent ghost revives, it might kill us all. I think we should use the Coffin Nail."

With that, he glanced at Yang Jian.

Everyone knew Yang Jian possessed the Coffin Nail. This was practically semi-public information.

During his showdown with Ye Zhen in Dahai City, many details had leaked out and become widely known.

Thus, Yang Jian's Coffin Nail was both feared and coveted.

In the current circumstances, people kept their desires hidden, naturally avoiding overt actions. The best way to handle this was to push Yang Jian into losing the Coffin Nail.

Yang Jian glanced at the speaker, then at Fan Xing. His gaze turned icy: "It seems I've been too lenient in the past. Now every random cat and dog thinks they can boss me around. Enough talking. Want to fight me? Kill me and it's yours. I'll count to three. If you don't attack by then, I will."

"I was only suggesting—just a suggestion!" The ghost-tamer's face paled as he quickly corrected himself.

The others glanced around nervously, their expressions unsure.

But it wasn't hard to tell from their faces: they had discussed this beforehand.

"Two..." Yang Jian said coldly.

Would it really come to a fight?

Zhou Deng took a few steps back, observing the situation.

You couldn't intimidate these lunatics with words or reputation alone. If you don't act, they'll never learn.

Three!

On the third count,

The seemingly apologetic ghost-tamer suddenly revealed a grotesque expression, like a ghost awakening for a kill.

Clearly, he had been prepared to act, though everything had been well-hidden, catching others off guard.

But in the next moment,

A cold, blackened hand clamped around his neck.

The movement was swift.

It was faster than the man could activate the ghost's ability.

In other words, Yang Jian had already acted by the time he'd reached the count of "two."

The Ghost Hand made contact, suppressing the ghost's influence. In an instant, the ghost-tamer went limp as Yang Jian lifted him effortlessly. Amidst a sickening series of cracking bones, the man was choked to death.

"Pathetic. I thought you'd be more capable. So what if you control a ghost at the edge of revival? Killing you is child's play." Yang Jian grabbed the corpse with nonchalant ease, as though handling garbage, and carried it to the mansion's courtyard.

With a casual toss,

The astonishing strength sent the corpse flying out of the mansion.

"Yang Jian didn't even use the Coffin Nail..." The others' eyes shrank in horror.

They had assumed Yang Jian's ruthlessness came solely from the Coffin Nail and Ghost Eye, but they hadn't expected the unassuming Ghost Hand alone could easily kill a ghost-tamer.

The seemingly casual choke was actually a confrontation between supernatural forces. If you couldn't suppress the ghost within your opponent's body, there'd be no way to choke them.

But why hadn't the Ghost Hand displayed such power during Yang Jian's fight with Ye Zhen?

Wait.

Everyone suddenly realized something.

It wasn't that Yang Jian's Ghost Hand wasn't strong; it was that the battle between him and Ye Zhen was on another level entirely. Even a fraction of their supernatural abilities could prove fatal, but their higher level made it seem less significant in that context.

Thus, while the Ghost Hand wasn't effective against Ye Zhen, it was utterly despair-inducing against them.

"Anyone else want to make a move? Killing one is the same as killing a group. I wouldn't mind taking you all on." Yang Jian swept his gaze over the crowd and asked.

At this moment,

The others retreated.

Even Fan Xing felt a surge of fear.

He sensed that his so-called position of authority couldn't guarantee his life.

With the mansion's dangers still unclear, Yang Jian was simply holding back—but this restraint was limited...

"Since no one dares to step forward, behave yourselves. I don't want to spend my days watching over you fools." Yang Jian shot them a cold glance before leaving.

He returned to his room, waiting for the inevitable moment to arrive.

This farce had finally come to an end.

The restless crowd temporarily calmed down.

But outside, the wind began to pick up.

The white lantern swayed.

Around the mansion, it seemed countless figures were moving in the shadows.

Chapter 956 The Laying Out of a Corpse

"Captain, how's the situation outside?"

As soon as they returned to the room.

Li Yang eagerly asked, though he had heard some commotion outside, the information he gathered was limited.

"There are traces of vengeful spirits starting to appear outside the ancient mansion. I took a quick look around and closed the door on my way in, that's all," Yang Jian said succinctly.

"Did someone die just now?"

Nearby, Yang Xiaohua slightly raised her head, her bloodshot eyes tinged with anxiety.

Yang Jian glanced at her and said, "I dealt with a restless ghost wielder. These people wanted to unite and force me to use the Coffin Nail to weaken my power. No one wants me to hold onto such a supernatural artifact."

"Indeed, the information about the Coffin Nail was leaked last time, and now many know about it. If we hadn't eliminated a group of them earlier, more ghost wielders would undoubtedly have come to Dachang City with bad intentions," Li Yang said.

In the paranormal community, everyone knows that Yang Jian wields a Coffin Nail capable of pinning down vengeful spirits.

Whoever possesses the Coffin Nail gains the ability to fend off any vengeful spirit.

If it weren't in Yang Jian's hands, countless others would have pursued it long ago, bringing chaos.

"There shouldn't be any particularly dangerous occurrences today, but I have a feeling that the longer we stay here, the more perilous the ancient mansion will become," Yang Jian remarked.

"Get some rest and recover your strength. I doubt we'll have any chance to sleep in the coming days."

With that, he found a spot, closed his eyes, and rested.

Yang Jian did not truly sleep. He remained vigilant, listening closely to the movements beyond the door and tracking every sound in the surroundings.

Soon enough.

The rest of the people in the main hall scattered, each retreating to a hidden corner of the ancient mansion.

Once again, silence enveloped the environment.

Even the hurried knocking sound at the ancient mansion's door subsided, as if closing it had alleviated some tension.

However, as time gradually passed.

Around 3 a.m.

Noises began to emanate from outside the ancient mansion: the sound of wind rising in the night and the rustling of leaves in the forest.

The wind grew stronger.

Throughout the ancient mansion, the wind seeped through its crevices, generating an eerie sound, like crying. The unsettling noise seemed to come from all directions, impossible to pinpoint.

The whistling wind, without anyone noticing, transformed into an eerie wailing.

The change was so gradual that no one reacted at first; the inexplicable transformation quietly became part of the environment.

"Is the entire mansion crying?"

Yang Jian suddenly opened his eyes at that moment. He was now certain: while the wind blew outside, the inside of the ancient mansion was crying. The sound was reminiscent of the Ghost Face of Tong Qian, yet the cries here were manyfold—dozens, perhaps even more than a dozen voices mingling together.

"It's almost like a funeral lament..."

For some unknown reason.

This phenomenon made Yang Jian think of a mourning ritual during a funeral.

On the first day after a person's death, the family is required to wail to express their grief.

Now, the elderly corpse in the mansion had only recently died. These uncanny cries on the first night were eerily identical to the wailing during mourning rituals.

"Seven days... The Seventh Day, the first day's body is unrested, nighttime knocking, mourning cries."

Yang Jian sat still, his eyes glinting as he pieced this information together in his mind, attempting to deduce some pattern.

He now believed that the events taking place inside the ancient mansion were interconnected.

They operated according to a preordained structure, not entirely unpredictable. If he could foresee the sequence of events to come, they might avert much of the danger.

"If everything progresses according to funeral rituals, the most critical task on the first day is to lay the body to rest—place the elderly corpse into the coffin. If nothing is done and the body remains unplaced, without a proper resting process within the coffin, who in this mansion is being mourned?"

This thought struck Yang Jian like a thunderclap, a surge of intense foreboding washing over him.

Because at this moment, the elderly corpse was still left unattended in the main hall. No one dared approach it. If it remained this way, the resting process would fail today, and everyone would bear the consequences of its failure.

He checked the time again.

It was approaching 4 a.m.

Initially, the strange noises within the mansion were merely the whistling of wind. Over time, however, they turned into prolonged crying. Now, those cries had begun to change again.

The mourning wails were shifting locations...

A familiar, sinister cry that had originated in the mansion's front yard was now moving—Yang Jian traced the sound to the interior courtyard.

Another cry, initially emanating from the rooftop, seemed to tumble downward and was now heard in the main hall.

The sounds were growing closer, as if they were coming from just next door.

What truly left the occupants feeling terrified was the sudden presence of a wailing right at the door of their room.

It sounded as if someone stood just beyond, crying audibly.

Chapter 957 7 Days of Change

Yang Jian sensed the anomaly within the ancient house early and chose to entomb the old man. The following time was very calm.

Although the cold wind continued to blow outside the mansion, it was no longer as eerie as before, and the crying sounds had vanished. In the remaining time, everyone in the house managed to rest and no longer felt on edge.

Time passed quickly, and it was soon noon.

However, everything here remained unchanged from the night; the mansion was still very dim. The only difference was that the unspoken chilling aura within the house had dissipated significantly.

This change could only be felt, not described.

"Is the mansion safe during the day?"

With that thought in mind,

everyone dared to leave the room again, seizing this period to discover more secrets of the mansion.

In the main hall,

everyone gathered once more, discussing everything that transpired the previous night.

It was all for survival.

Even if there were conflicts, they had to be set aside temporarily.

"Marking the twelve-hour interval, the mansion is relatively safe during the 12 hours of daylight, but after nightfall, it becomes perilous. Last night, there were strange knocking sounds, wind howling like crying, and the old man's corpse was moved, along with... an old wooden chair in the depths of the corridor being pushed forward."

Fan Xing squatted on the ground, smoking and frowning, said, "There are as many as four supernatural phenomena, each representing ominous warnings. Fortunately, these phenomena were curtailed during the early morning."

"Because by that time, the old man's corpse had been entombed, placed into the red coffin."

After speaking, he glanced into the distance.

The first to discover this was precisely Yang Jian.

Such untraceable supernatural manifestations were blocked by using this method; it was something no ordinary person would think of.

"So, everything happening in this mansion is related to the funeral of this old man? From the first day to the seventh-day resurrection day, every day we have to complete part of the funeral rites; otherwise, vengeful spirits will invade this mansion early, dooming us all?"

Zhou Deng approached and said to Yang Jian.

"That's my hypothesis. If you have any better ideas, feel free to share," Yang Jian said.

"No, it's a very reasonable deduction, and since your method worked, the next step is to deduce the requirements for the second day to ensure the funeral proceeds smoothly," Zhou Deng replied.

"If the first day was entombment, then the second day according to old funeral rites should be mourning?" The eagle frowned and expressed their opinion.

Fan Xing came over and retorted, "It shouldn't be mourning. There were cries last night, so that matter should be past. I think the second day should be a vigil."

"A vigil? Impossible, you think it's that kind of Western funeral? If placing in the Coffin Nail was the first day's task, then the second day's task must be keeping vigil, meaning everyone stays in the main hall, and guards the coffin without leaving," Wang Feng declared confidently.

"After the vigil, relatives and friends must be informed to attend the wake, which is also known as a vigil. After the vigil is hosting a banquet, which requires feeding the guests. Once the guests leave, it's time for the funeral procession and burial," Zhou Deng said.

"Aren't you just talking nonsense? Calculating this way, the seventh day hasn't even passed, and the person is buried? In some places, a corpse needs to be parked for three, five, or even seven days. According to common customs, the body is kept for seven days, and after the resurrection day, the burial follows; this adheres to tradition as well as science."

"Because in the past, people could appear dead and might revive after a few days; hence, the resurrection day was introduced."

"This place is haunted, and you're still talking about science." Someone unceremoniously refuted Zhou Deng.

Others also argued, presenting their opinions.

Nonetheless, through this discussion, they managed to ascertain some major points.

It was generally accepted that the second day primarily involves three tasks: keeping vigil, mourning, and vigil.

As for the funeral procession, burial, or seventh-day rituals, those were deemed the least likely to occur.

"Actually, we could try each task one by one and see which is effective before making a decision," someone suddenly suggested.

The suggestion seemed good, relatively steady and conservative.

Attempting?

Yang Jian glanced at him coldly: "How many lives do you have to take such risks? If it's a vigil, do you think we will be keeping vigil for the old man?"

"Having relatives and friends to mourn is just a manner of speaking. This old man is already dead; he doesn't have any living relatives. If what arrives to mourn are vengeful spirits, and we miss the designated day, we're the ones who will suffer. Didn't last night's supernatural phenomena suffice?" Fan Xing instantly interjected, supplementing the argument.

Clearly.

If instead of entombment, another action was taken, those supernatural phenomena would have spiraled out of control, turning into a supernatural event.

Once off course, further steps would follow in error.

This mansion would become a haunted house, and no one could survive such a scenario.

"There's still time now. If you want to discuss, let's leave it for the evening. We shouldn't waste what daylight safety time we have. I think it's more important to thoroughly explore the mansion first to identify which areas are dangerous, so we can prepare. Last night, it was too rushed. There were many places I didn't get to check," Zhou Deng said.

"Zhou Deng, you mean to steal supernatural artifacts," Fan Xing remarked.

Zhou Deng widened his eyes: "How can you slander someone for no reason? What's called stealing? Does this haunted place have a manager? I call it retrieval. I am a nominated team leader, and retrieving loose supernatural artifacts isn't my duty? If I don't take them, such supernatural artifacts may cause certain degrees of supernatural events."

"I'm thinking for everyone's safety, so this doesn't count as theft, not at all."

Good heavens.

It seemed his skin was thick; he'd already thought up a full range of reasons and excuses.

Yang Jian watched him and said, "The supernatural artifacts here must not be disturbed. They were placed purposefully before, and rash actions could disrupt the mansion's balance."

"Yes, what Captain Yang said makes sense," Zhou Deng nodded.

However, words are words.

As everyone resumed their discussions, he found another chance to quietly slip away, heading toward the rear hall, which seemed more worth exploring for him.

The time quickly slipped away.

In a blink, the day had passed.

The seventh day's first day, known as entombment, was confirmed without a doubt, as no unusual occurrences happened that whole day.

The situation for the second day remains undetermined, which is still up for discussion.

Soon.

Night fell.

The mansion still showed no obvious changes, except it inexplicably began becoming chilly and, as time passed, the chilling sensation gradually intensified.

Nighttime.

The wind picked up once more.

From nine o'clock onwards, the mansion began feeling abnormal.

The cold night wind continued to blow, and at ten, it turned into bursts of crying. By eleven, the crying became more pronounced. The prior supernatural phenomena hadn't disappeared; instead, they re-emerged. But today, it seemed the most important wasn't this wind sound, rather the mansion itself became peculiar.

It was as though something inside the mansion began making various strange noises.

Yang Jian stayed in the room, as before.

He heard a series of strange gnawing sounds coming from the depths of the corridor, along with the sound of a chair being pushed and scraping across the floor, and what seemed to be the sound of someone bathing in the adjacent room, splashing water...

"Is it here again?"

Yang Xiaohua looked somewhat numb; she curled up in the corner, holding that red balloon, and murmured a slight complaint.

After surviving the bus and the first day in the mansion, she seemed acclimatized, feeling not as frightened or anxious.

There was a form of growth.

After all, having become a messenger and successfully reaching the post office's second floor showed she held some potential.

Yet, unease was inevitable.

Because new supernatural phenomena emerged, especially concentrated in the endless corridor outside the room.

No one dared go check out that area.

The time approached eleven-thirty.

Half an hour remained until the second day.

But this time, the anomaly occurred much earlier, seemingly blurring the day's boundary.

That was certainly not good news.

Chapter 958 The 925th vigil.

The other side of the old manor.

Fan Xing and the other ghost tamers gathered together; with him included, there were six people in total.

It's a pity that Zhou Deng wasn't sociable; otherwise, their team's strength would be even greater.

"Do you hear that? Sounds coming from the next room—it seems like someone is listening to a radio..." one person whispered.

From the neighboring room came the crackling sound of static, produced by an old-fashioned radio. The device seemed to be constantly retuning to recover a signal, though very unstable. Occasionally, a voice emerged, fragmented and intermittent.

"The current time is 11:40 PM, twenty minutes until the next day. Should we take a look next door? If we're lucky, we might obtain a supernatural item." Fan Xing's eyes gleamed with temptation.

After all, it was just in the adjacent room, very close.

The timing was ample, entirely sufficient for an attempt.

"How will the item be divided if we get it?" someone asked.

Fan Xing replied, "That depends on who survives until the end."

The others thought for a moment and then nodded in agreement: "Alright, let's do it. With this many of us, even a vengeful spirit could be suppressed. Sitting here idly is a waste of time."

"Then let's act—don't waste any more time," Fan Xing immediately urged.

In an instant, everyone in the room stepped out.

Outside, silence reigned. From the neighboring room came the crackling sounds, and the poorly soundproofed wooden door combined with the hollowed-out windows let those noises spill out clearly.

Fan Xing promptly extended his hand to push open the door to the second room.

The once-empty room of yesterday had, at some point, inexplicably gained a dusty, old radio sitting atop a table. The radio continued producing crackling sounds, its signal unstable and tuning incapable of locking onto any station.

"No sign of a ghost..." Fan Xing's eyes flickered as he glanced at the others.

The others nodded.

Grouped together, they stepped into the room.

However, as soon as these people entered, the previously erratic radio suddenly connected. The crackling sound ceased abruptly, replaced by an ordinary voice emanating from the device: "Hello? Anyone there? Hello..."

The radio seemed to malfunction, as though intercepting a phone signal.

"Hello? Can anyone hear me? Hello."

The six people in the room stared silently at the radio, shrouded in complete stillness.

It seemed none of them dared respond to the voice.

"Hello, hello, can you hear me?" The voice inside the radio repeated its query.

Still, no one answered.

These ghost tamers were anything but foolish; they knew better than to respond to such a sinister voice.

For five minutes straight, the voice persisted in its relentless inquiries. When no one replied, it eventually faded away.

"Crack... hiss! Hiss!"

The signal broke again.

At this point, the group exhaled faintly in relief. One person remarked, "This doesn't seem like anything impressive—let's take it and leave this room as soon as possible."

Fan Xing nodded decisively. Just as he was about to reach for the eerie radio...

Suddenly.

The crackling of the radio's signal became clear again, and the same voice emerged once more, now tinged with eerie laughter: "Ah... ahahaha, someone's here. I heard you... hiss!"

After uttering these words, the radio again lost its signal.

"This isn't good."

Fan Xing's eyes tightened suddenly, his nerves on edge.

He glanced at the ghost tamer who had spoken earlier.

That individual's face turned ashen: "Don't look at me. I got careless just now; I didn't expect this thing to play tricks."

Fan Xing picked up the radio, only to discover it was already in a thoroughly dilapidated state, completely incapable of functioning. Dirt filled its internal structure, suggesting it had been unearthed from somewhere.

"This isn't a supernatural item—it's a medium for transmitting a curse."

Fan Xing tried fiddling with the radio, but it offered no reaction. If it were truly a supernatural item, it would undoubtedly activate.

Greed had backfired.

Not only did they fail to obtain anything, but they had also attracted a ghostly curse.

"Leave this place."

Fan Xing's face darkened as he discarded the radio, retreating hastily.

The others scrambled to flee as well.

But it seemed they were already too late.

As they exited the door, they were struck by the sight of pitch-black darkness engulfing the hallway outside.

The encroaching darkness had reached the very threshold of the room.

Nearby, an old, black Taishi Chair stood in the corridor, appearing to hold the darkness at bay. Yet what sent chills down everyone's spines was the sight of a pair of hands draped over the chair's backrest—hands rigid and icy, with blackened nails and fingers covered in bruises, marked with blotches of sickly green and black.

The other end of the hands disappeared into the darkness, making it impossible to discern what lay beyond.

Moreover, at this moment, the black Taishi Chair in the corridor was being pushed forward by those terrifying hands, scraping along the floor and producing a maddening creaking sound.

"No way..."

Fan Xing and the others were paralyzed with fear at the sight, and not a single one dared approach the ominous chair or the hidden entity behind it; they turned tail in unison and ran.

The room was no longer safe—they had to make their way to the great hall.

On the other side, Yang Jian also heard the sound of the black chair being maneuvered, though it wasn't so close to him yet. There was still some distance between them.

Fan Xing and his group's commotion, however, had already caught Yang Jian's attention.

"They left their room and entered the great hall?" Yang Jian furrowed his brow.

He checked the time again.

It was already 11:55 PM.

The second day had yet to begin.

"Someone must have done something foolish; otherwise, these survival-driven cowards wouldn't have dared enter the great hall early," Yang Jian muttered to himself.

He was used to it.

Where there's a group, there will always be idiots.

But that was fine.

Idiots were bound not to last long—once they were dead, the rest could carry on.

"Time to head out. I've mostly confirmed that on the first day, vigilance was key—the anomaly originated in the room, meaning staying inside may very likely lead to death." Yang Jian stretched, got up, and pushed the door open.

He glanced into the depths of the corridor.

It was dim.

The Taishi Chair sat far off at the sixth room's location, still at a safe distance for now.

Though compared to before, it was significantly closer.

When Yang Jian turned his eyes toward the opposite corridor, his face darkened.

On the corridor where the others had been staying, darkness had completely engulfed it. At the doorway of the first room, there appeared another black Taishi Chair, once again bearing those grotesque hands.

A ghost had manifested, and the manor was perilously close to being fully invaded.

"It's only the first day—how can this be happening before the second?" Yang Jian wasn't focused on who had screwed up.

Instead, he found himself involuntarily shivering at the realization.

If the ghost was appearing now and this close, how would the following days unfold?

Could they really survive until the seventh day?

"Creak..."

At the same time, from the depths of his corridor came the sound of a wooden door opening. The noise was faint, seemingly originating behind the black Taishi Chair.

"It's not only on their side—things on this side are no better. This manor is riddled with leaks and decay. I thought we could hold on until the seventh day, but now it seems the manor might completely succumb within three days."

Pulling his gaze back, Yang Jian decided to stop overthinking. Resolutely heading toward the great hall, he prepared to regroup with the others.

It was time to devise strategies for surviving the looming dangers in the manor.

The group gathered once more in the great hall, though Zhou Deng was absent.

They glanced at the clock.

Midnight sharp.

The second day had begun.

This night was known as the night vigil.

Traditionally, it involved keeping watch over the deceased's body through the night.

"Yang Jian."

Upon seeing him arrive, many people greeted him instantly.

Yang Jian's cold gaze swept over them: "What happened on your side?"

Fan Xing's face shifted slightly. Without hiding the truth, he recounted the incident with the radio.

"Greed? I can understand that—I'm greedy too. But if you're both greedy and stupid, you might as well just die early rather than drag us all down," Yang Jian retorted icily.

"Now's not the time for blame, is it? Shouldn't we focus on completing tonight's task?" Fan Xing dared not argue with Yang Jian and shifted the topic instead.

Yang Jian said, "Tonight appears to be a night vigil. If I'm correct, the manor is now completely unsafe except for the area near the coffin in the back hall."

"Then let's hurry to the coffin and stay there!"

"If I'm wrong, and tonight isn't a vigil but mourning instead, tradition states the coffin should be moved to the great hall and its lid removed for people to view the corpse—there might even be wailing rituals." Yang Jian explained.

"..."

The others fell silent.

But time wasn't on their side for hesitation or deliberation.

Darkness was seeping through the manor.

While there was still dim light before, now the entire place seemed consumed by pitch blackness. The only relatively visible spots were the great hall and the courtyard covered by the skywell.

Chapter 959 The Sought After Supernatural

Once midnight passed, it officially became the second day.

After the first day in the ancient mansion was spent surviving without any major incidents, the dangers of the second day had clearly doubled. On the first day, no signs of malevolent spirits had appeared in the mansion. Whether it was the wailing-like wind, the urgent knocking on the door, or the impenetrable darkness in the corridor's depths, none of these supernatural phenomena had truly invaded the mansion.

But the second day was different.

The presence of the ghost had emerged within the ancient mansion.

At the front of the room shrouded in darkness in the left-hand corridor, an empty black Taishi Chair was placed there. On the chair's backrest, a pair of icy, eerie hands could be clearly seen resting atop it.

Fortunately, the ghost stopped there.

The darkness had encroached to this extent, but did not advance further. Though the main hall was dim, some light still managed to filter in through the skylight.

The group, forced and unwilling, gathered in the main hall.

The rooms could no longer be occupied.

The empty rooms nearby had begun showing various supernatural signs. Staying inside any longer would ensure a tragic fate.

"Head to the rear hall."

Without hesitation, Yang Jian immediately took action upon seeing this.

The others felt a chill in their hearts and followed at once.

The second day was meant for keeping vigil.

Since it was a vigil, the meaning was clear: They had to stay near the coffin and guard the corpse of the deceased elder. If they left rashly or strayed too far from the coffin, it would be an act of extreme disrespect.

Nobody could predict the dangers that such disrespect might provoke.

The red coffin lay in the center of the rear hall.

The surrounding area was barren, with only a small incense burner positioned before the coffin, containing three sticks of incense.

Wait... it wasn't three sticks now. Only two remained.

One of the incense sticks had disappeared.

Yang Jian noticed this change immediately and quickly thought of Zhou Deng.

"Someone took a stick of incense." Wang Feng, the messenger, narrowed his eyes slightly.

"Where's Zhou Deng? We saw him earlier, but where has he vanished now?" Fan Xing glanced around, finally realizing Zhou Deng was missing from the crowd.

"It must have been him who stole the incense stick. That lunatic actually dared to rush out and fight with a ghost over supernatural objects on the bus before, nearly leading the ghost onto it," someone muttered through gritted teeth.

Many detested Zhou Deng deeply.

Everything he did was beyond normal.

The three sticks of incense had been standing here without burning out for two days, unquestioningly special objects. Yet no one dared to touch them, fearing unimaginable dangers would follow.

"At least he didn't touch the coffin. If he had, I'd be prepared to fight him to the death," someone threatened viciously.

Though one incense stick was missing, lamenting it now hardly mattered.

They noticed that the rear hall held another inconspicuous back door.

The back door was currently ajar, leaving a sliver of space.

Through the crack, they could glimpse the scene behind the mansion: a stretch of dense, old woods cloaked in darkness. Next to the woods lay a narrow, winding path that extended all the way to the back door.

This was the second path.

While the front door had one path, the back door also led to another.

"The width of the back door is narrow, but have you noticed—it's just wide enough to allow the coffin to be carried out?" The sharp-eyed Old Lin observed and revealed a rather critical detail.

"So, at an appropriate time, we'd have to carry the coffin out for its burial. We'd follow the small path outside, walk all the way to the old woods, and finally find a spot to bury this coffin..."

Fan Xing took note as well.

"But isn't this far too troublesome? Why didn't the elder settle his funeral arrangements before all this, and just lie inside the coffin from the start?"

"For answers, you'd need to ask the corpse inside the coffin. How could we possibly know?" Old Lin retorted snappishly.

His faction was aligned with Yang Jian, and after previous events, he and Fan Xing could be considered mortal enemies.

With dangers lurking everywhere and death possible at any moment, courtesy was unnecessary.

"The main hall is getting darker..." Yang Xiaohua's weary eyes fixed on the direction of the main hall.

Previously, although the outside had been dim, at least the surroundings were still somewhat visible. Now, however, the area was slowly enveloped in darkness. This darkness was unusual, stopping at the walls between the main hall and the rear hall, refusing to breach further.

The entire mansion was now cloaked in darkness.

The only untainted area left was around the coffin, seemingly the sole safe haven in the region.

"It's confirmed—the vigil must revolve around the coffin. If we hadn't reached the rear hall beforehand, we might already have been consumed by the darkness infiltrating the mansion," Yang Jian's thoughts crystallized in this moment.

"There's a sound in the main hall..."

A moment before they could breathe a sigh of relief.

The previously silent and grim main hall suddenly emitted noises. These sounds were distinct and uncanny—chairs being dragged, as if someone were moving the sparse furniture within, and heavy footsteps echoing throughout. Additionally, a dripping sound—soft and intermittent—could be heard.

It sounded like someone had just showered, their body wet and unfinished in drying.

All at once, the dark and lifeless mansion seemed to stir with activity, no longer stagnant.

Upon hearing these noises, everyone fell silent. They dared not speak nor invite attention, fearing any irrelevant gesture might draw the ghosts toward them.

The noises lingered and, disconcertingly, grew more intense.

"Bang!"

A loud crash erupted from the darkened main hall. A chair had been thrown to the ground, breaking apart into splinters and fragments scattered wildly.

"A ghost is destroying the black Taishi Chair? Could it be that the ghost couldn't locate a target in the main hall, so it's simply wreaking havoc?" Yang Jian mused darkly.

"Shhh..."

Suddenly, another eerie sound crept through the main hall. It mimicked the static of an old-fashioned radio, the sort emitted when a device struggled to find its signal and produced random electronic noise.

"No way. Is it really here?"

Fan Xing's pupils contracted upon hearing this. He instinctively shifted his gaze to one of the other ghost-wielders nearby.

That person's muscles stiffened, their complexion ghostly pale. They didn't even dare glance toward the main hall, nervously lowering their head as though nothing had happened.

The radio ghost seemed to have arrived today.

And it had activated the curse.

No one dared to voice this revelation, for the curse might not target a single individual—it could implicate everyone in the room at the time.

Thus.

Everyone stayed quiet.

Regardless, Yang Jian wasn't privy to these details.

At this moment, creating trouble would only lead to more trouble. If Yang Jian discovered this, he might eliminate them all for safety's sake. Another bloodbath could very well erupt in the rear hall tonight.

But Yang Jian's keen eyes didn't miss the subtle changes in their expressions upon hearing the strange radio noises.

"Did they previously encounter some type of supernatural incident involving a radio?" Yang Jian silently speculated.

As time pressed onward.

The supernatural signs within the mansion intensified. Within the rear hall, everyone heard rapid barefoot footsteps echoing across the mansion—the slap of bare feet on the mansion's stone floors growing disturbingly frantic.

"Is there a ghost who showered, didn't get dressed, and is now running amok in the main hall?" Da Qiang, the messenger, muttered under his breath.

"You think you're funny, don't you?" Yang Jian glared at him.

Da Qiang said no more. Though his remark was intended as humor, his body remained tense, ready for confrontation. He couldn't help but worry the ghost might abruptly dash toward the rear hall.

But for now.

It seemed the ghost hadn't noticed this area yet.

The vigil, as surmised, required remaining near the red coffin to stay secure.

However, more troubling than the noises was the incessant creeping of the radio transmission.

This sound seemed to originate from the direction of the mansion's front door, moving steadily closer without pause, heading directly for the rear hall.

The volume increased.

The static intensified.

"Will the ghost truly find us here?" Fan Xing's nerves frayed, anxiety suffocating him.

As if spoken into existence, fears materialized.

The static from the old radio truly arrived.

It paused right at the rear hall's entrance.

There was no barrier, only darkness lying in between.

"This is the closest the supernatural phenomena have come. Is the main hall no longer safe?" Old Lin's gaze locked firmly onto the hallway beyond.

An obsolete radio appeared on the floor, steadily inching toward the main hall's location.

Something unseen seemed to push the radio forward.

The supernatural had breached the rear hall.

"Shhh..." Static flared from the radio.

The signal abruptly connected, silencing the noise altogether.

"You're all in there, aren't you? Heh... Heh-heh." An eerie, distorted voice crackled from the radio speaker.

Everyone's expressions instantly turned pale.

Chapter 960 No Retreat for the Night Watch

An old, decrepit radio was brought into the back hall by some unknown force, not even ten centimeters away from the darkness behind it.

But even such a short distance was enough to prove that a certain horrifying supernatural phenomenon had crossed the boundary and successfully invaded the back hall.

During the night watch, everyone believed that the spot in the back hall where the coffin was placed was the safest.

But now, that might not be true anymore.

From the radio came a chilling voice: "You, you're in there, aren't you? Heh, hehehe..."

"You must all be in there... sshhh~!"

"Heh, hehehe, I'm coming to find you now."

The old radio kept spouting similar phrases, like a vengeful ghost whispering softly.

"Damn it."

Fan Xing let out a low roar, a sound akin to the dying breath of an enraged corpse. In that moment, even his appearance seemed to change—ashen, dim, yet sinisterly horrifying.

It felt as if he had turned into a ghost himself at that moment.

As his roar echoed, the old radio suddenly cracked apart.

As if losing the supernatural power sustaining it, it shattered instantly into several pieces. But among the fragments, there was only the shell of the radio. Inside, it was completely hollow—nothing but a few pieces of darkened soil. There were no electronic components at all.

By all logic, such a radio could only be a model, completely incapable of receiving any signals.

"You used supernatural power, didn't you? That roar was unique," Yang Jian glanced over.

It was the first time he had witnessed Fan Xing's use of supernatural power.

After the roar, Fan Xing's ghastly expression quickly returned to normal.

"Did it work?" someone beside him asked in a low voice.

"I don't know, but I felt that if I didn't act, that cursed thing might really come for us. Cutting off the medium and breaking the curse first might have some effect. After all, even a ghost can be resisted. We're all ghost tamers—there's no way we're entirely powerless," Fan Xing replied, as if reassuring himself as well as reminding the others.

"The approach isn't wrong."

Yang Jian also approved of Fan Xing's actions in his heart. If they continued letting the supernatural phenomena occur, they would gradually fall into greater danger.

Acting now was the right decision.

However...

The calm didn't last long before another old radio slowly emerged from the darkness. It set itself steadily on the ground, identical to the previous one—even its appearance hadn't changed.

"Sshhh..."

The familiar, eerie static returned.

And soon, the radio caught a signal, the static vanished, and the strange voice resurfaced: "You... won't survive the night... sshhh!"

Hearing this sentence, a cold sweat broke out on many people's foreheads. For a moment, they felt as if the ghost had marked them, and that the words were destined to become reality.

"Did... did it not work?" Fan Xing's courage wavered in that instant.

His power couldn't sever the curse.

"Will I really die tonight?"

Yang Xiaohua's palms turned pale as she gripped the red balloon tightly, silently biting her lips.

Everyone felt tremendous pressure, as if their hearts had slowed to a crawl.

"If it comes, let it come. I'm right here."

At that moment, it was Yang Jian who broke the oppressive atmosphere. Holding his splintered spear, he walked forward, casually picking up the radio from the ground and speaking directly into it.

After speaking, he tossed it away without hesitation.

The radio flew toward the main hall.

But just as the radio disappeared into the darkness, a fragmented voice emerged once again: "You... are you human... or ghost? Sshhh!"

The voice cut off.

The radio disappeared into the shadows, but no sound of it hitting the ground followed. It was eerily silent.

Everyone stared into the darkness, equal parts shocked and terrified.

Bam!

Bam!

Bam!

Three loud bangs suddenly echoed through the back hall.

Everyone jumped, snapping out of their trance.

Yang Jian, holding the splintered spear, struck the ground forcefully and said coldly, "Don't hold on to any illusions tonight. Any ghost daring to invade here must be confronted immediately. This is the last safe haven. If it's breached, we're all going to die here."

"When ghost tamers band together, we've faced even S-class supernatural events without flinching. Even a cornered dog will bite—what are you afraid of?"

Caution doesn't mean cowardice.

Yang Jian hadn't taken action earlier because the seventh day was still far away. It was better to conserve energy and avoid premature confrontation with the ghosts, saving strength for the most perilous days ahead.

But now...

The ghost had marked them.

With no way out, the only option was to fight.

The Ghost Shadow behind Yang Jian flickered and stretched.

A dark shadow spread across the ground, extending along the corridor leading from the main hall to the back hall.

With his splintered spear in hand, Yang Jian took a few steps forward, standing firmly in the middle of the corridor.

"Night watch—it's not about guarding the coffin. It's about surviving the night, keeping ourselves alive against the ghost's assault. If you're scared, go slip out the back door. Maybe you've got a slim chance of escaping."

The others stared blankly at Yang Jian.

No one expected him to make this decision: to fight the ghost here instead of settling scores with the supernatural forces targeting them.

"Can just the few of us hold out through the night?" someone asked, their voice trembling slightly.

Anyone thinking rationally knew the truth.

Outside the old mansion, countless ghosts were wandering. No one dared guess their numbers.

What about ghost tamers?

Their powers would burn out after just a few uses, leading to their untimely deaths. They were already in poor shape after disembarking from the supernatural bus.

"Do you have another choice?" Yang Jian cast a chilling glance at them.

"He's right—we don't have a choice. Everyone, prepare to risk everything." Fan Xing took a deep breath, putting aside fragmented thoughts to step forward. He chose to fight.

With Ghost Eye Yang Jian willing to risk everything, they had no option to back down.

If Yang Jian fell—a Captain Level ghost tamer succumbing to his powers' resurrection—the last refuge would be overrun by the ghost.

"If that's the case, let's fight." The ghost tamer previously cursed by the radio spoke in a low voice.

A few messengers exchanged silent looks, then walked forward without another word.

The group divided into two sides, each watching a corridor vigilantly.

If a ghost dared enter, they would attack without hesitation.

Even if it meant being drained to death, retreat was not an option.

It's here!

A quickened set of footsteps suddenly shifted direction, sprinting towards them.

The radio's static still echoed from the darkness ahead, carrying a faint, chilling phrase: They're over there...

The ghost...

It seemed to be baiting other ghosts closer.

Footsteps rapidly approached.

The darkness crept further into the back hall. The two incense sticks burning before the coffin glowed faintly, their fragrance thickening in the air.

The next moment...

A pale, ghastly leg suddenly emerged from the darkness.

Wet and dripping, it stretched out from the shadows, streaked with dirt and weeds, as if dredged from a well or pond.

The ghost...

It had crossed the boundary completely.

"Bang!"

At that instant, Old Eagle fired. His antiquated firearm let out a dull shot.

The pale leg tore open, as a fragment of human bone, used as a bullet, hit it with precision.

The ghost staggered back. The pale leg swiftly retreated, while the sound of footsteps faded into the distance.

It seemed the ghost was withdrawing, disappearing once again.

"Did we drive it back?" Old Eagle was momentarily stunned.

He was surprised.

After all, his gun was weak, only able to temporarily repel ghosts rather than force them away entirely.

But what had just happened suggested the ghost had been gravely wounded and had no choice but to retreat.

The others didn't understand the situation and looked at Old Eagle in amazement.

"It's not that Old Eagle is so powerful; it's this place... there's something unique about it..." Yang Jian observed the two incense sticks and the bright red coffin closely.

The factor influencing this situation wasn't the incense—it was likely the coffin.

"It's the incense," he muttered.

He noticed one of the incense sticks had burned down slightly, a small clump of ash falling to the ground.

A supernatural force seemed to have dissipated slightly.

"Could it be that fighting here lets us draw on the supernatural power of the incense?" Yang Jian speculated.

But now wasn't the time for guesses.

The darkness continued to encroach.

Suddenly...

Yang Jian felt the Ghost Shadow make contact with something.

A medium had formed.

It was a hazy figure wandering in the dark—not fully formed, but distorted, warped, and creepily eerie.

"Looking for death," Yang Jian muttered.

Without hesitation, he swung the Firewood Knife down at the medium.

The knife struck.

A piercing scream ripped through the darkness of the main hall, like the final wail of a dying person.