

Revival 971

Chapter 971 Zhou Deng's Encounter

Unexpectedly, after going in circles, no dangers were encountered. Instead, they found Zhou Deng deep in the Old Lin, almost buried in the earth. Zhou Deng was still alive, although it seemed he had used some special method to preserve his life.

However, he also paid a price.

The usually stingy Zhou Deng lost a white lantern.

Clearly, he must have experienced something incredibly perilous. Otherwise, someone like him wouldn't easily let go of something already in his possession.

But Zhou Deng seemed deeply shaken by this place and didn't linger. He urged everyone to leave quickly and return to the haunted mansion.

Although puzzled, the group didn't oppose him.

After all, Zhou Deng had been outside for so long. He likely knew more about the situation than they did.

Soon enough.

The group returned to the main gates of the haunted mansion.

At this point, Zhou Deng finally let out a slight sigh of relief.

"You're quite afraid of that Old Lin," Yang Jian observed Zhou Deng's demeanor and made a rough guess.

"You've also noticed something's wrong with that Old Lin, haven't you?" Zhou Deng responded.

Yang Jian said, "I haven't seen anything specific, but something about it gives me a strong, instinctual sense of danger. So I wouldn't be foolish enough to venture into the depths of that Old Lin, even if I'm curious. You're not about to tell me you've gone inside, are you?"

The others turned their gaze toward Zhou Deng.

It seemed Yang Jian's guess was spot on—Zhou Deng had most likely entered the Old Lin. Otherwise, how would his body have ended up there?

"It's not an ordinary Old Lin; it's a Ghost Forest," Zhou Deng said seriously, his expression tinged with lingering fear.

Ghost Forest?

The group felt a chill run through their hearts.

Yang Jian asked, "So, are there vengeful ghosts in that Old Lin?"

Zhou Deng shook his head with a bitter smile, "More than just a few. It's utterly ridiculous—so many it's beyond belief. I'd have to be insane to enter the forest with a lantern, walking right into death. As soon as I got in, I realized the forest was far larger than it appeared from the outside, seemingly endless. I was lost inside for a very long time."

"The forest isn't that big. It's the supernatural power affecting your senses, preventing you from finding your way out. That's a typical phenomenon in supernatural incidents," Yang Jian said.

"I know. The entire forest could be a Ghost Domain. But by the time I decided to retreat, it was too late," Zhou Deng explained.

"A ghost started chasing you?" Fan Xing asked.

Zhou Deng nodded. "More or less. And there were so many of them—just thinking about it gives me goosebumps. Of course, I can't be sure whether all of them were ghosts or just supernatural manifestations. You all know, some vengeful ghosts may just be one entity, but they can create countless supernatural phenomena, like the Hungry Ghost case Yang Jian experienced."

"A single ghost capable of producing more fearsome entities than one can imagine," he added.

"So, how did you survive?" Yang Jian asked.

Zhou Deng replied, "Following the idea that if I can't beat them, I might as well join them. I put on the Human Skin Mask and disguised myself as a ghost to blend in with them. It worked—the ghosts didn't attack me."

"..." Yang Jian looked at him, his expression saying, "Are you serious?"

"But compared to my terrifying experience there, that part wasn't even the worst. I initially thought I could remain safe with the mask on, but then I was recognized—by one of them. To this day, I don't dare to confirm whether it was truly a ghost or a Spirit Controller living here," Zhou Deng narrated.

Though his words were brief, they vividly painted his horrifying experience.

He had entered the Old Lin with a white lantern, discovered that the forest was infested with countless vengeful ghosts, and, to save himself, put on the Human Skin Mask to transform his identity. He went from a living Spirit Controller to appearing as a real ghost.

Using this ghostly disguise, Zhou Deng successfully mingled among the other ghosts.

He avoided being attacked, temporarily securing his survival.

In the end, however, Zhou Deng was still discovered.

This ordeal could only be described as hair-raising and adrenaline-pumping.

"What did the ghost that recognized you look like? Or what form did it take?" Yang Jian inquired.

"You're all familiar with the appearance—it was the woman in the red cheongsam who boarded the bus with you," Zhou Deng said.

"Leuk Qingqing?" The Falcon's eyes narrowed.

"No, it wasn't Leuk Qingqing, just someone resembling her. But I'm certain it wasn't her. Before heading deeper into the Old Lin, there's a yellow dirt path extending into the center of the forest where there's a clearing. In that clearing are five graves, and the second grave belongs to a woman," Zhou Deng explained.

"The ghost looked identical to the woman on the tombstone of that second grave."

"But wasn't the second grave collapsed? And wasn't its tombstone blank, without any inscription or photo?" The Falcon immediately countered.

"That's impossible. When I saw it, all five graves were intact. That second grave hadn't collapsed, and the tombstone was upright—I saw it with my own eyes," Zhou Deng said.

"Then it confirms our earlier theory—that the second grave collapsed after you left, and the ghost inside escaped," Fan Xing said.

"That seems to be the case..." Zhou Deng murmured as he fell into contemplation.

He wasn't aware of what had transpired after he left that area.

"What did you do to the second grave before you left? Did you only stick an incense stick in the soil of the grave?" Yang Jian asked.

"Yes," Zhou Deng replied.

"Why did you do that at the time? Was it your own idea, or did a supernatural force influence you?" Yang Jian pressed further.

"I don't know. I just felt I should offer the incense before leaving. No special reason. And I only had one incense stick. I figured if I was offering it to anyone, it might as well be the woman in the second grave—she seemed like a pretty girl," Zhou Deng said.

It seemed he wasn't influenced by anything supernatural; it was a mere coincidence.

"So after that, you encountered that ghost. That female ghost appeared in the Old Lin and saw through your attempt at disguising yourself as a ghost?" Yang Jian deduced.

Zhou Deng answered, "Exactly. The vengeful ghost chased me relentlessly, and in the end, it snatched the lantern out of my hand. Desperate, I plastered that yellow paper onto my face, mimicking what the ghost had done during the bus incident. Maybe it'd work a miracle, I thought, and the outcome was what you've already seen."

Chapter 972 Mourning Day

Under the dim sky.

Beside the eerie ancient mansion, faint rustling sounds echoed. The group lit lanterns and began digging beneath a pitch-black, grotesque old tree in the soil below. Judging by appearances, they had been at it for some time.

A pit gradually appeared before their eyes.

The soil within the pit was also blackened, exuding an odor of decay, as if mixed with blood to form a rotting, corrupted substance.

This soil seemed somewhat familiar to Yang Jian—like the Grave Soil from Fushou Garden in Dahai City.

It was a mixture of mud and flesh, far from ordinary soil.

The earth was loose and disorderly; using the simplest tools, the group easily excavated it. Once they had dug roughly a meter deep, the outline of a twisted corpse emerged. The decomposing body reeked, tangled with tree roots, as if the tree had thrived on the corpse's nutrients.

The corpse was eerie, and the tree grew exceptionally strange.

"A corpse in black clothing? No," Zhou Deng remarked, shaking his head immediately after a glance.

"Fill the soil back in," Yang Jian instructed.

The others, though disappointed, could only resume their labor, refilling the pit with the painstakingly dug soil.

This process could only be done manually.

Due to the supernatural power within this old forest, Yang Jian's Ghost Domain couldn't influence it. Otherwise, he could have directly used his ghostly eye for inspection or even relocated the corpse.

Unfortunately.

He couldn't do it.

The others certainly lacked the capability, leaving them no option but to slowly dig under tree after tree in one of the simplest, least efficient ways possible.

No one knew what—or if—they might find. Everyone was filled with uncertainty.

Restricted by the range of the white lantern, the group couldn't split up too far; they could barely ensure two trees were excavated simultaneously. Any farther could risk attacks from nearby malevolent ghosts.

Although it seemed safe for now, the group hadn't forgotten—the vengeful spirits lingered close.

"Here, something's here," Li Yang suddenly called out.

They were digging beneath another tree.

A corner of white fabric emerged from beneath the soil, partly exposed. Though stained and filthy, it was still clearly discernible.

However, the garment was badly damaged, riddled with rot and holes—as though on the brink of disintegration, oxidation threatening to reduce it to scraps. How long this piece of clothing had been buried under the old tree, no one could tell.

"So Zhou Deng was right after all—there really is white clothing," Fan Xing exclaimed with a hint of surprise.

Earlier, he hadn't believed it, but now the evidence lay plainly before them. He had no choice but to accept the truth.

They continued removing the surrounding soil.

Only then did the group see clearly what lay beneath the dirt.

A rotten, blackened skeleton—devoid of flesh, with only its bones remaining. Its gender was unrecognizable. It wasn't wearing white clothing but was wrapped in a piece of white cloth resembling a corpse wrapping cloth. However, the white cloth was significantly rotted, or perhaps it had undergone strange transformations after burial.

The corpse had astonishingly emerged from the wrapping cloth.

Yang Jian immediately extended his cracked long spear, using the Coffin Nail to lift the white wrapping cloth.

It went smoothly—with no anomalies or strange changes.

"Got it. Just a tattered white corpse wrapping cloth?" Zhou Deng examined the cloth with an experienced eye, recognizing it at once.

Yang Jian took it in hand and shook off the dirt, revealing the ragged white cloth.

"It looks more like a tablecloth than a corpse wrapping cloth," Old Eagle observed, scrutinizing it. "See? This cloth is square-shaped—really resembles a table covering."

"Is this thing even useful? Hard to believe," Li Yang voiced his doubts.

Yang Jian said, "Who knows? Let's keep searching. With our numbers, finding enough mourning outfits for everyone within the remaining time will still be a challenge."

"Better safe than sorry—let's keep looking," Fan Xing agreed with a nod.

Once more, the group set to work, continuously digging near the ancient mansion's old trees.

The chance of finding white mourning outfits was minuscule.

Almost negligible. During the excavations, the group found many strange corpses—some heavily decomposed, some reduced to bones, while others were disturbingly uncanny, as if fresh. The freshly peculiar ones had pale, bloodless skin that wasn't stiffened yet.

Whenever they unearthed such corpses, they silently agreed to bury them back immediately, unwilling to risk further exploration.

The trees here undoubtedly grew for decades, yet after all these years, some bodies remained uncorrupted and even unnervingly intact. Such phenomena defied logic—those weren't ordinary corpses but likely dormant malevolent spirits. Tampering might awaken them, unleashing unimaginable dangers.

Beyond corpses, they dug up other macabre remains.

For instance, a half-decayed Dead Man's Head—its lifeless eyes wide open, grayish-white, dull. It showed no signs of decay.

In another pit, there were two interconnected corpses. Despite their decay, they were conjoined, resembling an infant—but their size was that of adults. One corpse bore a grotesque, torturous visage; the other remained curling in torment.

It was as if a malevolent spirit were invading a living human's body.

At this sight, Yang Jian decisively buried the soil again without delving further.

As time trickled away, anxiety began taking root in the group. The mourning outfits in hand were far too few to sustain everyone—it wasn't nearly enough.

Yang Jian, Li Yang, Da Qiang, Old Eagle, Yang Xiaohua, Fan Xing, Zhou Deng, and an unfamiliar ghost wielder made eight people altogether. They needed at least eight mourning outfits to survive the rituals of tomorrow.

If they failed to gather the outfits by midnight, someone would certainly face deadly consequences for lacking them.

"Only three found so far—there's just one hour left. At this rate, we're doomed," Old Eagle frowned, glancing at Yang Jian.

This posed an imminent threat.

If handled poorly, conflict over supplies might ignite—whether physical confrontations or heavy disputes—division was inevitable.

Yang Jian remained silent, his ghostly eye swiveling uneasily. "Keep digging. Find as many as we can—what happens afterward will depend on the situation."

The group said nothing, continuing their grim work.

At eleven-thirty, luck seemed to shine faintly—they unearthed another mourning outfit. However, it came wrapped around a dead infant. The fetus appeared unformed, still attached to its umbilical cord, as if freshly removed from a womb.

Terrifyingly, the eerie baby's stomach moved faintly—rising and falling like breathing or slumber.

Yang Jian analyzed briefly before deciding to keep the outfit. There were now four mourning outfits in his possession—still insufficient. Despite the horrifying nature of the fetus, surpassing all other corpses in grotesqueness, survival in the looming rituals demanded prioritizing quantity over risks.

If tomorrow were lost... survival efforts would mean nothing.

The time reached eleven-fifty p.m.

At this point, the group ceased their work. The remaining time wouldn't suffice to finish excavating another tree.

"That's it then—we've found all we could. Nothing more can be done. This task is a nightmare. From our starting point, we've been digging relentlessly for six hours, alternating rest and shifts, constantly working," Old Eagle gasped, visibly worn.

Even their tools were subpar, preventing greater efficiency.

Yang Jian hadn't rested the entire time, utilizing his Ghost Shadow for quick digging. Yet, even with its speed, the white lantern's limit hindered progress.

"It feels like everything's calculated precisely. We had one lantern and found four mourning outfits; there are eight people here. If we had two lanterns, perhaps we'd manage to find all eight, meeting our needs perfectly."

Zhou Deng mused aloud.

"Don't blame me for losing one lantern—what's the point of saying this now?" Fan Xing grumbled.

"So what now? We only have four outfits, meaning half the group goes without. Are we letting the rest die?"

At this remark, everyone's expression shifted darkly.

Most uneasy was Yang Xiaohua—a mere ordinary person. If half were eliminated, her death seemed inevitable.

"I won't need one. I have Yang Jian's Eight-Tone Music Box in my mind—I might not be killed," Old Eagle said. He voluntarily relinquished one spot.

Knowing the Music Box curse meant certain fatality within days, he refrained from pointless disputes, finding no worth in needless quarrels.

Facing inevitable death had, in some ways, granted him clarity.

His perseverance stemmed from the faint hope of leaving and seeing his child—living a normal life for a few days, bidding farewell to the world.

"Now isn't the time for this discussion—the changes for Day Four have begun..." Yang Jian's gaze shifted upward subtly.

"Wooo! Wooo!"

The night.

The wind rose.

Biting cold gusts swept through the old forest's treetops, making the entire grove shudder, producing wailing sounds—like something sobbing from within the woods. The noise resembled the mournful cries of Day One but felt much sharper—vivid and realistic, losing its previous hint of ambiguity.

"Bang!"

In the next instant.

One bizarre old tree swayed in the wind before losing balance, crashing onto the ground.

"Hmm?"

The group's gaze snapped toward it, shrinking instinctively.

"That tree was the first one we excavated..."

Before the words finished.

The second tree fell—another they had previously dug.

Then the third and fourth trees, followed by the fifth... one by one, the trees collapsed, every single one they had excavated earlier. No matter whether they disturbed the bodies beneath or left them untouched.

"We specifically avoided touching the roots when digging—we were extremely cautious," Yang Xiaohua quivered noticeably.

Yang Jian's gaze hardened. "Supernatural imbalance—it's completely irrational. Even digging around the soil without touching the corpse could've disrupted some equilibrium. This Fourth Day of mourning was bound to be deadly. Judging by earlier events, the ancient mansion grows increasingly perilous every passing day, culminating in the final rites of the seventh day."

"Five minutes until midnight," Old Eagle checked his watch quickly.

The trees continued to fall—none left standing.

The six hollowed-out pits seemed like signals for imminent doom, releasing danger, bringing forth a reckoning they themselves had initiated.

"Don't pin this on me—everyone participated, every single one of you. Anyway, tomorrow I won't need a mourning outfit—consider it compensation for you all. That should be fair enough, right?" Zhou Deng hurriedly distanced himself from blame.

He also relinquished his claim to a mourning outfit.

With both Zhou Deng and Old Eagle stepping aside, the atmosphere lightened somewhat.

The odds of survival for the others improved slightly.

"Waaaah..."

A fresh surge of trees collapsed while eerie infant cries permeated the forest.

The cries immediately brought to mind the grotesque infant unearthed earlier. The creature had been dormant—but now it had awakened...

"That infant is awake. Yang Jian, you're experienced—you've dealt with the Ghost Infant before. We'll depend on you," Zhou Deng quickly called out.

Yang Jian's expression darkened. "Don't waste time—retreat to the mansion. Staying outside is no longer an option. The mourning rites for Day Three are over."

"Move!" The group didn't hesitate, turning swiftly back toward the ancient mansion.

The chilling wind continued its assault.

The pale light from Yang Jian's lantern flickered nervously—seemingly affected, creating the illusion it might extinguish at any moment.

Fortunately, they hadn't wandered far from the mansion, and the path back was already planned.

Soon.

The group entered the mansion again, heading directly for the hall. Having learned from their experience, they made sure to shut the doors securely.

"Time," Yang Jian asked.

"It's eleven fifty-nine," Old Eagle replied.

Yang Jian's expression shifted slightly as he began distributing the mourning outfits. He threw one to Li Yang, then another to Da Qiang, followed by one to Fan Xing.

Though disappointed in Fan Xing's behavior, now wasn't the time for pettiness—he remained useful.

"What about me?" Yang Xiaohua asked breathlessly, glancing at Yang Jian.

Yang Jian still had one outfit, seemingly reserved for himself. No one dared dispute that.

Yang Jian didn't reply—he merely glanced at Zhou Deng. "As compensation, give her a piece of yellow paper. Consider previous conflicts settled."

Zhou Deng's eyes flickered. He understood Yang Jian also had a piece of yellow paper but didn't question why he refrained from using it himself. "Alright, but I won't take responsibility if anything goes wrong."

"No need for you to," Yang Jian replied.

"Fine."

Zhou Deng produced a yellow paper talisman and handed it to Yang Xiaohua.

Those allocated mourning outfits immediately donned them.

The clock struck midnight.

A sudden, icy wind blew through the mansion's hall, surging in from the distant courtyard, penetrating every corner of the ancient house. The chilling gust left everyone trembling, infiltrating their very bones. Even Yang Jian's lantern abruptly went out, extinguished by the wind.

The lantern's light was gone—its pale glow extinguished.

"As expected, the lantern loses its protective power by the Fourth Day—similar to the incense earlier. These tools are useful for survival during the early days but lose their efficacy in the later stages." Yang Jian thought to himself.

Unperturbed, he discarded the lantern casually to the side.

Yang Jian quickly draped the mourning outfit over his shoulders.

"Bang! Bang!"

Suddenly.

Two deafening crashes echoed—the mansion doors were forcefully flung open, as though by some formidable force.

Immediately after, hurried footsteps invaded the mansion from outside.

"The ghosts are here," someone muttered in terror.

Everyone's faces turned pale.

Despite anticipating the Fourth Day's peril, no one had imagined it escalating so drastically.

The Ghost Forest was out of control, and malevolent spirits had directly breached the mansion.

The doors couldn't hold them back.

On the first day, at least the spirits only knocked—even with open doors, they didn't dare enter the property.

By Day Four, their aggression had reached unprecedented heights.

Chapter 973 Peril Rushes In

The first three days in the haunted mansion have already passed.

Now it's the fourth day.

This day is named: The Day of Mourning.

As soon as midnight arrived, the mansion's conditions took an immediate turn for the worse. A bone-chilling wind surged in from the courtyard, invading the main hall relentlessly. Even the white lantern in Yang Jian's hands was extinguished by the gust.

But everyone had been watching the time, prepared for this.

Four mourning robes were distributed...

The sound of hurried footsteps came from the front courtyard of the mansion, dense and rapid, as though a mob of people rushed into the building at that exact moment.

Yet, in reality, not a single living person was outside.

Everyone stood in the main hall, their expressions instantly taut with tension.

"I disagree with the distribution arrangement for the mourning robes." However, at this moment, the stranger who controlled ghosts suddenly snarled with twisted features.

"Yang Jian, I've cooperated with your actions all along, but at this moment, I refuse to be the one sacrificed."

This stranger had only survived by chance. He didn't know Yang Jian nor Fan Xing. They were mere acquaintances who happened to cross paths, making it all the more fitting for him to be abandoned. Nobody would speak up for him.

Because, whether it was Fan Xing or Zhou Deng, they were both representatives from Headquarters, technically speaking colleagues of Yang Jian.

At this moment.

Everyone glanced at him.

"Reality is brutal; there's not enough to go around, and there's nothing I can do about that," Yang Jian said unemotionally. "But to say you've cooperated fully and supported my actions—well, that's not entirely accurate. I remember you very vividly. You were very keen on urging me to abandon the Coffin Nail earlier."

"And I happen to be a petty person."

"So you're planning to kill me now, is that it?" The stranger gritted his teeth, enraged.

At that moment, he wanted to make a move, fight tooth and nail for a mourning robe, but he didn't dare.

Yang Jian was too fierce.

He was no match.

If he did make a move, he would undoubtedly be the one who ended up dead.

"I'm not trying to kill you. It's just that the circumstances don't allow you to survive, that's all. If there were a fifth mourning robe, I'd gladly give you one. Besides, Zhou Deng voluntarily gave up his right to a robe. If you've got Zhou Deng's guts to tough it out today, I'll have no objections," Yang Jian said calmly, his tone icy.

"Of course, you can also choose to fight for one. I won't stop you. After all, everyone has the right to survive—as do you. But rights must be earned through ability. Otherwise, even if given the chance, you'd squander it," Yang Jian added.

After saying this.

The stranger immediately shifted his gaze toward the others.

Li Yang, Fan Xing, and Da Qiang.

Yang Jian was out of the question. There was no way he would dare lay a finger on him. These three were his only option since they possessed the mourning robes.

"If you want to make a move, do it quickly. The supernatural has already begun invading the mansion; I don't have the time to play with you," Li Yang said calmly, staring at him.

The stranger's eyes flickered for a moment before redirecting his focus toward Fan Xing.

Fan Xing chuckled, "Interesting. You think I'm the easiest to mess with, don't you? That's fine. Go ahead, I'm sure Captain Yang wouldn't interfere since he's already spoken. You can act without hesitation."

The ghost-handler hesitated, eager, but ultimately stifled his impulses.

Fan Xing didn't look like an easy target either.

This left only Da Qiang, the courier.

Da Qiang stood there draped in a ragged, filthy white cloth, his face fierce as he glared at the stranger, already prepared to fight.

To survive, there was no way he would retreat at this moment.

"This guy named Da Qiang took over Yang Jian's position in the rear hall yesterday after he left, using the Ghost Domain to last ten seconds and prevent the ghost from invading the hall... This is a guy with the Ghost Domain. Once he makes a move, he could hide inside his Ghost Domain and refuse direct confrontation with me," the stranger thought.

When it came down to it, the ghost-handler hesitated again.

Nobody was an easy target, and the one who seemed manageable had a Ghost Domain.

"Yang Jian assigned mourning robes selectively. He didn't give me one because I'm the weakest here and of the least use in the upcoming events," resentment and anger smoldered within the stranger.

He didn't want to accept this bleak outcome. In his desperation, his gaze finally landed on Yang Xiaohua.

At this moment.

Zhou Deng began walking over from beside Yang Xiaohua, stroking his chin. "What are you looking at me for?"

Behind Zhou Deng.

Yang Xiaohua's body, cold as a corpse, started to float slowly off the ground. Her face was obscured by a torn yellow paper mask, the incomplete paper covering her features tightly, clinging to her skin like human leather, outlining the contours of a face.

But the red balloon tied to her arm unleashed its supernatural power.

The red balloon carried Yang Xiaohua's sleeping body upward.

However, the mansion's roof was sealed, so her body ceased its ascent once it reached a certain height.

The balloon was blocked by the roof, unable to escape further.

"He's not looking at you; he's looking at Yang Xiaohua," Yang Jian explained.

"Oh, that's the case? Never mind then, carry on," Zhou Deng replied indifferently, hurriedly stepping away.

"If you're planning anything against Yang Xiaohua, here's a suggestion: give up. She's still useful to me. At the moment, she's the only one here who counts as an ordinary person," Yang Jian asserted.

The red balloon only reacts to ordinary people. When someone harbors supernatural power within their body, it results in situations similar to this.

Lifting the body into the air, even the ghost within is restrained and rendered inactive.

Yang Jian orchestrated Zhou Deng to cover Yang Xiaohua's face with a yellow paper mask to induce a false death-like state. The red balloon indeed responded as expected, carrying Yang Xiaohua upward.

However.

No one could say for sure whether Yang Xiaohua would survive if, come morning, the yellow paper mask was removed.

There was every chance she might never wake up again, her life ending here.

Or perhaps she could rise again.

Yang Jian was well aware of this possibility, so he could only test his luck.

"If you can't get a mourning robe, even a piece of yellow paper would work," the stranger spoke up.

"Why should I give it to you?"

Yang Jian sneered, "I didn't invite you to this mansion. Over the last few days, I've put in the most effort among everyone. You aren't qualified to make demands of me. I've already given you a choice. Fight one of the four of us for a mourning robe, anyone you want. Once you win, it's yours. You're too scared of death to act—who's to blame?"

"Wait—don't move."

Suddenly.

The previously silent Hawk's expression shifted sharply, his voice cutting through the tension.

The stranger's eyes widened abruptly, hair standing on end, as he became horrified—and aware.

Something was crawling against his neck.

Small, barely-formed hands.

Caked with dirt, grotesquely stretched.

Then.

A malformed baby's head, eyeless and incomplete, emerged from the stranger's back, twisting its neck as it probed its surroundings.

"It's that baby buried beneath the tree," the crowd froze, their faces blanching.

No one had expected that the first entity to invade the mansion would be this tiny creature.

The ghost-handler's entire body tightened, fear gripping him. He desperately wanted to unleash his supernatural power to counter the ghost but couldn't summon the courage. Today was the fourth day—The Day of Mourning.

More ghosts than he could possibly handle were bound to show up tonight.

Fighting back now was stupidity—a fatal mistake.

So for now.

Since he hadn't been killed yet, it meant the ghost was only present on him, not actively attacking.

After all, no one understood this particular ghost's killing pattern.

Even though it appeared in the form of an incomplete infant, every ghost-handler knew its appearance had no bearing on its terror.

This stranger sweated profusely, his panicked eyes falling on Yang Jian in a desperate plea.

Yang Jian, dressed in dirty, tattered mourning robes, gripped a splintered spear, one of his ghostly eyes open and fixed firmly on the half-formed infant.

Unnoticed.

The vision of the ghost eye returned.

The suppression unique to the mansion was lifted, allowing Yang Jian even to use his Ghost Domain.

"Keeping that thing around is asking for disaster. If it grows up into something like the Ghost Infant, the consequences would be unthinkable. Eliminating it now might nip a terrible supernatural event in the bud," Yang Jian murmured, his grip on the spear tightening slightly.

Suddenly.

His Ghost Domain expanded without warning.

He showed no restraint—deploying six layers at once.

The lion hunts the rabbit with all its strength.

The Ghost Domain instantly engulfed the stranger, freezing everything around him in a moment's pause.

Three seconds.

Three seconds later.

The Ghost Domain vanished as abruptly as it appeared.

Yang Jian's spear left his hands.

On the wall behind them.

The splintered spear had penetrated the malformed infant's head, pinning it firmly against the wall.

The Coffin Nail's suppression was absolute.

While it could only immobilize one ghost at a time, no matter how terrifying the pinned entity was, it could never escape its restraints.

The unformed infant looked like a limp corpse, its arms and legs dangling, completely motionless.

"It's done."

The crowd was stunned.

In just a blink, that ghost was gone from the stranger and pinned to the wall.

"When Yang Jian takes action seriously, it's executed with lethal precision—leaving no room for reaction. Captain-level people are absolute maniacs; it's a miracle for ghost-handlers to make it to this stage," Fan Xing muttered, his own shock undisguised.

Though he had seen Yang Jian act.

Witnessing this particular scene was even more unnerving.

Those in the know discern the truth.

Not only had Fan Xing failed to track Yang Jian's movements but the event was already resolved before anyone could process it.

"All my effort was worth it. This ghost was a problem too big to ignore," Yang Jian strode toward the wall, intending to retrieve his spear.

But just then.

"Wah, wah, wah..."

A series of eerie cries suddenly echoed in the mansion—infant cries.

Yang Jian paused, his expression darkening, as he stared intently at the infant pinned to the wall.

It didn't move.

Yet the cries persisted.

And the source of the sound was undetectable. All he could confirm was that it originated within the mansion.

"You've got to be kidding me. The ghost's pinned down, and there's still supernatural activity? Does this mean that it's not the source ghost?" Yang Jian murmured, retrieving his splintered spear, his eyes narrowing at the ghost immobilized by the Coffin Nail.

The unsettling cries grew louder, carrying an ominous malice.

It was as though the pinned ghost had been enraged.

Yang Jian refrained from removing the ghost's remains pinned to the wall—for two reasons.

One was distrust.

The other—a more pressing issue—was something unrelated to this pinned ghost.

His gaze shifted to the courtyard's direction.

Unnoticed, at some point, two paper effigies dressed in black had appeared on either side of the courtyard. Their faces were sickly pale, eyes open, pupils pitch black, occasionally swiveling left and right.

Additionally.

The corridors of the main hall showed scattered footprints.

On the walls appeared claw-like marks as if stained with dark mud.

The bone-chilling wind churned through the mansion, and the air grew ripe with the stench of decay—a lingering smell reminiscent of the trees they dug up earlier.

But the danger didn't end there. Yang Jian's ghostly eye surveyed the surroundings and spotted a terrifying number of figures standing clustered in the front courtyard.

Each figure wore black clothing, their sizes and heights varying.

They weren't stationary either, gradually advancing toward the mansion.

"We can't stay here any longer. Let's head back to the red coffin in the rear hall," Yang Jian declared, retreating.

This situation was already beyond their capacity to handle.

Even Yang Jian couldn't repeat the feats of the previous day, where he used the Firewood Knife to dismember ghosts one-on-one.

The sheer numbers were overwhelming.

Even if he managed to dismember the ghosts, the resulting supernatural phenomena might easily kill everyone.

"This time, it's probably impossible to survive the night. There's just no way to handle a quantity like this. Even if Headquarters sent every captain here, they'd likely all be buried," Zhou Deng shuddered.

He had thought the ghosts on the haunted bus were numerous enough.

But compared with this mansion, that was child's play.

Zhou Deng didn't hesitate. He grabbed the Human Skin Mask and donned it, shifting his identity to that of a ghost.

Once his identity changed, he could blend in with the ghosts and avoid being attacked.

Even if a ghost targeted him, he would still be safe.

While wearing the mask, his ghostly identity would bear the brunt of the assault—not his living self.

This identity shift granted him immunity in the most perilous of environments.

Once he wore the mask, Zhou Deng's aura turned cold and sinister, his appearance entirely transformed. He stood still against the wall in the main hall, planning to endure this day unquestioningly.

Beside him.

Yang Xiaohua floated lifelessly, devoid of a presence.

The Hawk was even more decisive—finding a corner to sit in, tossing two dice onto the floor, his expression calm.

The Eight-Tone Music Box's curse allowed him to dice away the day alongside the ghosts.

Winning or losing—it didn't matter, as long as time passed.

Others dared not take such risks; they lacked similar, robust survival measures. Even the mourning robes couldn't guarantee their safety completely.

Additional precautions had to be taken.

They returned to the vicinity of the coffin.

While the group acted, the stranger didn't react.

He stood there, his breath icy, unmoving.

Chapter 974 Halt

The day of mourning had arrived, and danger surged like a tidal wave, catching everyone off guard.

The ghost handler who had been speaking earlier was now lifeless, standing motionless as if transformed into a corpse. He didn't even have time to use his supernatural power before he died.

Clearly.

He had been killed by a ghost.

As for whether he was killed by the eerie infant or some other ghost, no one could be certain.

No one had the luxury of worrying about his life and death at this moment.

Everyone was trying to figure out how to survive the dangers of the day, which could potentially wipe out the entire group. Not even Yang Jian could guarantee he'd make it out alive.

Yang Jian, Li Yang, Da Qiang, and Fan Xing.

The four of them, clad in dirty, peculiar mourning clothes, quickly entered the rear hall.

The red coffin remained stationed there, unchanged.

But today, the rear door—no one knew when—had mysteriously shut. Perhaps it had been blown shut by the wind, or maybe some rule of the ancient house had activated, sealing the door and cutting off all escape routes.

"That guy just died. Did you see it as you left?"

"Saw it. Died in a very strange way. Was it the infant's doing?"

"No idea. What's certain is that the ancient house is extraordinarily dangerous right now. Any slight disturbance could be deadly. Now that the rear door is shut, it looks like we'll be stuck here for the entire day."

Inside the rear hall, the group gathered around the red coffin, murmuring softly.

All of them were draped in filthy, stinking white cloth, resembling ghosts themselves. They could only peek through the tattered holes in the cloth to observe the surroundings outside.

Their breathing grew heavier.

The anomalies within the ancient house had multiplied to an unbearable degree, so much so that the place had become unnervingly lively. Compared to this, the vigil on the second night seemed trivial—a mere ripple against a raging wave. If precautions and methods had made survival possible on the second night,

on this fourth day, such hope seemed impossible.

It appeared that the number of ghosts within the ancient house was enough to drown a person entirely.

"Keep quiet. The ghosts have already entered the main hall," Yang Jian said, his face grave. He gestured to the others to remain silent.

At that moment,

the two paper effigies that had been rigidly stationed on either side of the courtyard unnoticedly appeared in the central area of the main hall. The effigies' feet were not separated, crafted out of solid sheets of paper with colorful portrayals drawn in the middle—a design inherently incapable of movement.

Their eyes were the most terrifying, roaming around with an unsettling gaze, making everyone's skin crawl.

Beyond that.

Diverse "figures" began to emerge, resembling the dead unearthed from graves to roam once more. Yet no one knew why they could still perform actions.

These figures looked distinct but shared the common feature that all their clothing was black.

Even if their garments weren't black, their skin was—a blackness born not from natural complexion but from decay, the residue of supernatural corrosion.

"These are not human. They're all vengeful ghosts teetering on the brink of resurrection. Previously buried within Old Lin's forest, some force had trapped them, preventing movement. But now, they've broken free," Yang Jian said, keeping his ghost eyes activated, even if it meant tightly shutting his human ones to avoid triggering deadly paranormal laws by mistakenly locking gazes with some ghost.

The ghost eyes, being spectral, could bypass certain paranormal dangers.

"Something's wrong."

Even amidst the heart-stopping atmosphere, Yang Jian did not lose his rationality. The ghosts continued flooding in, their advance unceasing. In just a short while, they'd cross forbidden boundaries and invade the rear hall directly.

This made no sense.

On mourning day, no one was permitted to enter the rear hall.

Yang Jian glanced at the red coffin beside him, furrowed his brow, and murmured, "Something's changed. All the ghosts are converging here. If this continues, the rear hall will be completely blocked, leaving us no space to maneuver. I think we should move this coffin out—only then can we stop the further intrusion of the ghosts."

"Four days have passed. If the elderly corpse inside the coffin is on the verge of supernatural resurrection, then by now there should be some signs."

"Captain, you want to use the old man's body to fend off these ghosts?" Li Yang whispered cautiously. "Isn't this too risky? If your judgment is wrong, the elderly figure might resurrect prematurely."

"We have to try. Otherwise, when the ghosts fully invade the rear hall, we won't even have the chance to test this theory," Yang Jian replied resolutely, his instincts screaming that this coffin was crucial to their survival.

By the fourth day, there were dead ends everywhere in the ancient house.

The lanterns extinguished, the incense ceased burning, the rooms became uninhabitable, ghosts filled the main hall, and the rear door was sealed off completely.

Only the red coffin had yet to fulfill its intended purpose since the start.

Yang Jian suspected its role would come into play today.

"Fine, let's give it a shot. The four of us will carry it outside together and see if it does anything," Fan Xing gritted his teeth and agreed.

"And this way, we'll confirm whether the mourning clothes we're wearing have any effect," Da Qiang added with visible unease, cold sweat already beading upon his forehead.

The moment was pivotal—a matter of life and death.

Everything they had done up until now was based on mere conjecture, unverified. This was the moment to test those guesses.

A single misstep could get them all killed in an instant.

"Move!" Yang Jian issued the command firmly.

Everyone held their breath, extending their hands to lift the heavy red coffin off the ground.

The coffin was extraordinarily heavy, as if the body inside wasn't merely a corpse but an entire coffin full of stones—or even heavier than stones, defying common logic.

"This weight..." Da Qiang staggered, nearly collapsing as his body trembled uncontrollably.

He had already exerted his utmost strength.

Yang Jian didn't say a word. Instead, the ghost shadow on the ground rippled, supporting the bottom of the coffin and alleviating a significant portion of the weight, ensuring their safe lift of the heavy red coffin.

Had they been unable to lift it due to insufficient strength, their deaths would have been for nothing.

Slowly and with great difficulty, the red coffin began its trek toward the main hall.

Thankfully, the distance wasn't far. By holding their breath and summoning all their strength, they managed to barely endure. Yet beyond the physical exertion, the greater concern lay in what dangers awaited them once they exited.

That was an unknown.

Their fates hinged entirely on what came next.

Even Li Yang, a seasoned veteran, had tightened his face into an expression of utmost strain, his body trembling faintly.

Yang Jian, however, remained composed. He even had the presence of mind to hold the cracked spear in one hand, pinning down the eerie infant to preempt its revival and eliminate additional threats.

Upon entering the main hall.

The air turned icy and stale, flooded with the stench of decaying corpses.

One after another, shadowy black ghosts began appearing, surging like waves of humans, flooding nearly the entirety of the hall and continuing to press forward.

Yang Jian and his group carried the red coffin into this oppressive atmosphere, the weight of the moment bearing down on them. Fan Xing's breathing grew labored, Da Qiang broke out in a cold sweat, and even his limbs began stiffening at the overwhelming stress.

Thankfully, their appearance didn't provoke ghostly attacks.

Remarkably, none of the ghosts seemed to notice them.

"The mourning clothes are working."

The same thought surfaced in everyone's mind. It was self-evident, as otherwise, one of them would have already become a victim. With that many ghosts present, surely one would have noticed.

The four men seemed invisible, as if they didn't exist at all, escaping detection by any of the vengeful entities.

Slowly, they deposited the red coffin in the center of the main hall.

The others turned their gazes to Yang Jian, remaining silent. Yet the eyes revealed beneath their white cloths made their mounting unease unmistakable.

Why were the ghosts still advancing?

Yang Jian's eyes flickered.

In his estimation, the appearance of the red coffin should have caused the ghosts to freeze in their tracks, halting their invasion of the ancient house. How could there be no reaction?

Such stillness implied an incorrect assessment.

The coffin failed to exert dominion over the ghosts or achieve the necessary balance to mitigate the uncanny dangers of the day.

Yang Jian said nothing. Instead, he motioned for everyone to draw closer to the coffin, reasoning that its surroundings might still offer a safe zone.

But shortly afterward,

this assumption proved flawed.

The ghosts advanced ever closer. Although they hadn't yet attacked the group, their growing proximity tightened the men's space, threatening encroachment. Once entirely surrounded, even with the guise of invisibility offered by the mourning clothes, the sheer density of ghosts would surely result in attacks.

"Should we retreat to the rear hall?" Da Qiang suggested hesitantly, unable to withstand the mounting pressure.

But the moment his voice echoed,

several eerie figures immediately paused mid-step, lifting pale faces, their menacing eyes locking onto the group with an unyielding stare.

Da Qiang's complexion turned ghostly white, his breath halted in fright.

Speaking was out of the question.

Even a single word risked alerting the ghosts.

The mourning clothes didn't grant complete immunity from ghostly attacks; they merely masked one's presence, preventing detection.

But absolute silence was imperative. Producing sound would still expose oneself.

The figures frozen in vigilance faltered, seemingly disinterested in launching an immediate attack—possibly because the brief sound was insufficient to trigger their aggression.

Nevertheless, the vulnerability felt palpable.

Should any further slip-ups occur, the glaring ghosts would seize upon the opportunity for slaughter.

Realizing the gravity of his mistake, Da Qiang now stood petrified, not daring to utter another word.

"Under such circumstances, retreating to the rear hall should be avoided. The mourning clothes can obscure the ghosts' senses, but they cannot repel paranormal attacks. If confined in a tight space, direct encounters with the ghosts would prove fatal, no matter the invisibility afforded by the mourning clothes," Yang Jian explained, his sharp eyes flickering decisively.

Da Qiang's comment had exposed danger but had also confirmed critical intelligence.

Information pivotal to their survival.

"So what do we do now?" Yang Jian thought anxiously. Amid his calculated deliberation, no solution presented itself.

Allowing the ghosts to come too close spelled certain doom.

Yet the red coffin seemed impotent, failing to halt their advance.

As a messenger, an inevitable death situation couldn't possibly occur, even under the most harrowing trials. There must always be a way to avert demise. This was only the fourth day, after all. Ergo, the red coffin was undeniably useful—their failure lay in unearthing the proper approach.

Was its placement incorrect?

An unlikely possibility.

The solution might lie in one action: opening the coffin.

Yang Jian's mind flashed with inspiration. He recalled that in mourning rituals, attendees must pay their respects by viewing the deceased.

Keeping the coffin sealed prevented the elder from presenting his visage. Thus, the ghosts would not stop.

"We'll test this," Yang Jian resolved, abruptly reaching out to shove the coffin lid.

Thud!

The heavy, red-lacquered lid crashed onto the ground, emitting a loud boom.

Had he really opened the coffin?

His companions froze in shock.

Surely such an action would risk unleashing the elder prematurely due to paranormal influences?

But before they could voice their fears,

the corpse of the wrinkled, spot-covered elder inside the coffin suddenly sprang upright, influenced by some unknown supernatural force.

Simultaneously, the once-serene expression on his elderly face twisted into one of fierce, grave anger—as though he had died unavenged. Despite the dead man's still-closed eyes and lifeless aura, his transformed demeanor was unmistakably terrifying compared to his previous peaceful repose.

His sudden movement and altered visage caused sweat to pour from his companions' palms as they nearly turned tail to flee.

Yet Yang Jian remained immobile.

His calm prompted the others to stay rooted in place. Even if Li Yang, Fan Xing, and Da Qiang were quaking with fear or grappling with overwhelming anxiety, they refrained from budging.

Just then, an unprecedented phenomenon unfolded.

The influx of ghosts into the ancient house halted abruptly. Their collective invasion came to a standstill as eerie cries of terror ceased. The clinging shades vanished like dissipating smoke, and the intense gust of chilling winds retreated to near-calm.

The pair of blackened paper effigies at the forefront reverted to their inanimate appearances—no longer swiveling their cranial gazes curiously, they froze in stillness.

Various paranormal manifestations appeared deterred, even suppressed, as if nearing extinction.

And yet,

the ghosts lingered.

Though halted momentarily, they remained present, far from departing.

The elder's rigid, upright corpse rested inside his coffin, his weathered features stern and frightening.

Between them and the lingering ghosts, an uneasy truce formed.

"This... actually worked?" Fan Xing's eyes widened in disbelief.

A mere corpse capable of obstructing the ghosts?

How was this even possible?

The elder was far from an ordinary cadaver—it resembled a spectral artifact capable of exerting control over spirits.

"A correct guess. The elder's corpse was already in the initial stages of paranormal resurrection on the fourth day. Survival today hinged on releasing the spectral energy from the corpse, fostering resistance against the invading ghosts—as though hosting... a mourning ceremony."

"The red coffin had sealed the elder's paranormal power. Opening the coffin was essential," Yang Jian discerned unequivocally.

This was how to navigate the fourth day's peril.

But this fragile balance was far from absolute. While the bulk of ghosts were held at bay, those exceptions still lurked.

Through his ghost eyes, Yang Jian observed the enigmatic, unmoving crowd.

He glimpsed shadowy figures moving through the masses, undistracted by the elder's paranormal force.

And their numbers weren't few.

Among them, one stood out distinctly in Yang Jian's spectral lens.

It flashed prominently—dressed uniformly in vivid red, striking and inexplicable.

Chapter 975

The dangers of the condolence day far exceeded imagination.

The ghosts ignored certain restrictions of the ancient mansion and surged directly inside. If the red coffin that was placed in the back hall hadn't been moved to the main hall in time, there might not even be any standing space left.

The corpse of the old man inside the red coffin underwent an unexpected and terrifying change. The moment the coffin lid was opened, the corpse actually sat up straight. Just days ago, the old man's corpse had shown no signs of activity at all.

Additionally,

the old man's face, once serene even with its wrinkles, now appeared stern and vicious.

This subtle change in expression on a deceased face carried an indescribable creepiness.

But the good news was that the appearance of the old man's corpse maintained the balance of the condolence day.

The ghosts halted their movements.

The supernatural forces also ceased their invasion of the ancient mansion.

The group, wearing tattered and foul-smelling mourning clothes, barely managed to preserve their lives, avoiding death by ghostly attack.

The space left in the back hall was less than five meters. The vengeful spirits ahead were so close they could be seen clearly with the naked eye.

Though they did not move,

their oppressive presence was enough to make breathing feel impossible.

"The situation has improved."

"The old man in the coffin and the vengeful spirits invading the main hall have struck a balance, causing most of the ghosts to stop moving."

"But does this really mean we're safe?"

Fan Xing, Li Yang, and Da Qiang all had the same doubts running through their minds. None of them dared to speak. Earlier, Da Qiang had merely said a single sentence and caught the attention of a ghost. If not for the protection of the mourning clothes, he would already be dead.

But Yang Jian's judgment was accurate.

The mourning clothes were not omnipotent.

They could only block the perception of vengeful spirits and prevent triggering their kill patterns. However, if the main hall became so crowded that there was no space to stand, the mourning clothes would most likely fail as well.

Therefore, the key to survival today rested with the old man's corpse in the red coffin and the mourning clothes.

Both were indispensable.

"The dice have stopped rolling. The ghost hasn't continued gambling with me. The danger is temporarily suppressed."

The Eagle, sitting in a corner, noticed the black die on the ground had stopped moving. He knew that Yang Jian's precise actions had reestablished balance within the ancient mansion.

Even the ghost had ceased its dice game, indicating the surrounding area was currently safe.

If danger were present, the die would undoubtedly still be rolling.

Meanwhile,

Yang Xiaohua's corpse remained suspended mid-air by a red balloon, neither floating away nor falling. The special yellow paper was still firmly stuck to her face.

Zhou Deng, wearing the Human Skin Mask and masquerading as a ghost, stood in a vacant corner at the back.

He wasn't pretending to be dead and could move freely.

Yet, at this moment, he didn't dare act recklessly or approach the surging ghosts. Earlier, he had suffered at their hands, being recognized by a ghost and nearly dying in the old forest. Now, he chose to stay low-key.

"I didn't see it wrong. Just now, when all the ghosts stopped moving, there was a red figure among them—fleeting, but distinct. That ghost is special; it can still move under these circumstances."

Yang Jian didn't waste time celebrating or feeling relieved at this point.

His eyes scanned the surroundings and locked onto a particularly unusual figure among the "crowd."

But the moment he tried to look closely, the figure vanished.

It seemed the eerie red figure deliberately evaded Yang Jian's search, using the presence of the dense, peculiar crowd to conceal itself.

Although his Ghost Eyes were no longer suppressed by the ancient mansion, the ghost still blocked their vision, preventing him from seeing through its body to what lay behind it.

"The dangers of this ancient mansion are even more complicated than I anticipated. Even though I managed to achieve a temporary balance, this balance will eventually be broken," Yang Jian thought, glancing again at the eerie old man sitting upright in the coffin.

The old man's aged face was twisted with a heinous expression, grim and menacing, as if he were about to awaken as a vengeful spirit.

But in the end, the old man did not fully awaken.

After all, it was only the fourth day; there were still three days left until the seventh.

"Is it safe now?" Suddenly, Zhou Deng walked over and spoke.

His voice was dull and heavy, layered with an eerie undertone, as if two people were speaking in unison—the other voice chilling enough to make the hair on one's skin stand up.

He dared to speak?

Da Qiang looked at him, astonished. Zhou Deng's boldness was borderline outrageous—who gave him the courage to act this way?

However, Zhou Deng's words didn't seem to trigger anything unusual.

Yang Jian glanced at him and responded, "Not yet. Most of the ghosts have stopped moving, but a few are still active. And any vengeful spirit capable of moving in this environment could be unimaginably terrifying. You should know this by now."

Zhou Deng nodded, "Any ghost unaffected in this situation must be of an extremely high Terror Level. Being targeted by such a ghost almost guarantees death."

"Aren't you afraid of your ghost mask reviving after using it so often?" Yang Jian asked, his Ghost Eyes scanning the surroundings without letting his guard down.

Zhou Deng touched his face, "You mean this mask? Lucky find. I picked it up under a seat on the supernatural bus. It seems the previous user left it behind after dying. Because it's been sitting on the bus for a while, the Human Skin Mask has entered a 'dormant' state. Although it could awaken, I believe I can still use it for some time."

"Is that so?" Yang Jian frowned.

He hadn't expected Zhou Deng to have such an encounter. The Human Skin Mask, originally left on the supernatural bus by a previous ghost wielder, had entered a dormant state from being on the bus too long.

"What else did you expect? Ghost wielders are both cursed and lucky. Without a bit of luck, people like us wouldn't last very long," Zhou Deng said nonchalantly.

"That's true. Survival often comes down to luck—it's irreplicable," Yang Jian admitted.

Yang Jian's own survival had often hinged on fortune: awakening after hanging himself, surviving through his spiritual tablet, and reviving from within the coffin. Each instance was unique, and another person walking the same path might not survive.

Zhou Deng continued, "This balance won't last long. It's still just the beginning of the fourth day. Do you have any plans? If not, I'll keep pretending to be dead."

"Just don't stir up trouble. I need you for something," Yang Jian said.

"We're colleagues. Just say the word, Captain," Zhou Deng replied.

Yang Jian glanced at him and said, "Stand here and monitor the situation. Notify me if anything unusual happens. I have a personal matter to deal with."

"Didn't you just tell me not to act recklessly?" Zhou Deng gave him a strange look.

Yang Jian said, "I'm not like you—I act with caution. You're just obsessed with collecting supernatural objects. I think you've grown addicted to picking up items like that Human Skin Mask. But these objects are all heavily cursed, practically equivalent to ghosts. Hoarding too many of them is pointless and will only get you killed."

"If I die, remember to burn some incense for me," Zhou Deng said with a carefree laugh.

It seemed he had long since cast aside his fear of death and acted without the slightest hesitation.

"I will," Yang Jian said before walking over to Li Yang. "I need the doll."

Previously, he had lent it to Li Yang to ensure his survival during an attempt to retrieve the white lantern. Now, Yang Jian needed it more urgently.

"Be cautious, Captain. Don't forget the critical retreat point," Li Yang whispered.

Yang Jian nodded, taking the old doll from him.

He immediately began moving.

Armed with the cracked long spear, he attempted to exit the main hall by hugging the left wall.

The path ahead, however, was blocked by countless eerie figures, leaving no space for passage. But this presented no real obstacle for Yang Jian.

He stepped onto the wall.

His body moved along the wall in a manner that defied common sense.

Yang Jian was now the Ghost Shadow; his body was merely a vessel for his supernatural powers. In theory, he could survive even by transferring his consciousness to another body, though he would lose abilities like the Ghost Hand and Ghost Eyes.

He didn't want that.

It would be a form of weakening himself, offering no real benefit.

"It's time to open that room. While the supernatural forces are suppressed, this is the perfect opportunity," Yang Jian thought to himself.

Even if the room contained danger, the old man in the coffin would suppress it. This served as a layer of protection for him.

Additionally, if the room truly harbored a ghost, the current situation didn't warrant introducing another one.

The group watched as Yang Jian walked along the wall, departing. Confusion and unease spread among them.

He dared to act now?

His approach was completely different from his earlier cautious tactics, now uncharacteristically bold.

Though the main hall was densely packed with ghosts, the hallway was eerily empty. A heavy darkness blanketed the area, but no figures lingered.

Yang Jian leaped off the wall, landing in front of a locked wooden door.

The door was tightly shut, with several bullet holes from Zhou Deng's earlier gunfire. Blood seeped from the holes, staining half the door in a grotesque red.

"The Ghost Cabinet's trade mission should be completed here. All it required of me was to unlock this door—no additional requests," Yang Jian recalled the details of the trade.

After verifying this, he took out an old bronze key.

The key's design was ancient, reminiscent of styles from the Republic of China Period—not a modern artifact.

Yang Jian acted decisively, inserting the key into the door's bronze lock.

As expected,

the lock and key were a match. With a soft click, the lock was opened.

The Ghost Cabinet's trade was complete.

Yang Jian paused momentarily, meticulously observing his surroundings. Everything appeared normal—unlocking the bronze lock hadn't triggered any horrifying events.

He exhaled slightly in relief.

Removing the bronze lock, he stored it away.

He reasoned the bronze lock could itself be a supernatural object. Why else would such a lock be used to secure a regular wooden door in this environment?

Without the bronze lock,

Creak!

The wooden door emitted a scraping noise as it slowly cracked open.

Yang Jian's eyelid twitched, sensing something abnormal.

From within the ajar door, a red glow emanated, bathing the interior in a scarlet hue that seemed to lead into another world.

A Ghost Domain? Yang Jian thought immediately.

The dim red light spilled out from the room, casting a crimson shade across the gloomy hallway.

"Should I turn back and avoid unnecessary risks, or step inside and take a chance?" Yang Jian pondered calmly, weighing his decision.

He had concerns.

He feared opening this room might disrupt the fragile balance in the ancient mansion on the fourth day.

Yet the Ghost Cabinet's trade intrigued him greatly.

Why was unlocking this particular room necessary?

What was meant to be released from here?

And what exactly was hiding inside?

All these unresolved questions gnawed at Yang Jian, pushing him to uncover the truth of the supernatural—to understand the past, to seek answers, and, above all, to find a way to survive.

"If I leave now, I may never get the chance to return," he concluded.

Yang Jian's deliberation was brief.

This was his defining trait: though often indecisive, he resolved quickly and rarely second-guessed his decisions—whether right or wrong, he would see them through to the end.

Without hesitation,

he pushed open the wooden door.

A red room appeared before his eyes.

The walls were painted a vivid crimson, with red wooden flooring below. The ceiling was adorned with red cloth strips, and red lanterns hung from above.

It resembled a bridal chamber, seemingly decorated for a wedding celebration.

"No bed..." Yang Jian's gaze fixed on the center of the room.

Originally, a red canopy bed should have occupied that space, but now it was completely empty, as if someone had moved it away.

In that moment, he recalled the supernatural events of Room 301.

One of the chambers in Room 301 had housed a crimson canopy bed, starkly incongruous with its surroundings.

He hadn't dared to touch the bed at the time because an old man lay upon it—the owner of Room 301, deceased but teetering on the brink of ghostly resurrection. Yang Jian had narrowly escaped death during the Room 301 incident, surviving only through a reboot.

"Was that bed also taken from this place?"

Yang Jian speculated, gathering his courage to proceed further and inspect the room.

He soon noticed that this room was missing more than just the bed. There was another conspicuously empty space, perfectly sized to accommodate the Ghost Cabinet.

"The Ghost Cabinet was also taken from this room. Someone must have infiltrated the ancient mansion and removed it," Yang Jian thought, his expression darkening.

Finally, he understood why both the red Ghost Cabinet and the red canopy bed shared the same color.

They originated from the same place.

"And it doesn't stop there. So many other items are missing too," Yang Jian observed.

He noticed an empty red clothes rack, as if a garment had been taken.

He spotted a dressing table missing several makeup tools, including a mirror.

He saw a red table without a matching bench, as if a red stool had also been removed.

...

Everywhere he looked, the room seemed incomplete, riddled with gaps where objects had been removed.

"All these red supernatural objects must have come from here. Without proper oversight, they were taken bit by bit, eventually scattering outside," Yang Jian concluded.

Suddenly, his expression sharpened, and his entire body grew tense.

A tall, shadowy figure appeared at his feet, extending inwards from the doorway.

Chapter 976: The Consciousness of the Republic of China Period

The content of the Ghost Cabinet deal was merely to let him open the door to this room, without the requirement to enter.

However, out of curiosity and the pursuit of truth, Yang Jian stepped into this mysterious room.

Surprisingly, the room did not present the imagined dangers. Instead, it resembled a bridal chamber, adorned in festive red. But due to the age of the items, this bright red conveyed an unspeakable sense of discord, amplifying the eeriness.

Moreover, Yang Jian noticed through observation that there were many vacant spots in the room. For instance, the place where the bed should be was missing a red canopy bed, and the empty space next to it seemed to fit a wooden cabinet. There was also the absence of a red bench and even a makeup mirror or makeup box on the vanity table...

Things seemed normal at a glance, yet many crucial elements were missing.

Just as Yang Jian was observing the room.

A tall figure cast a shadow at the doorway, with the shadow falling at Yang Jian's feet, slightly dimming the red glow of the room.

Was there someone at the door?

At this moment.

Yang Jian was startled, knowing perfectly well that the figure at the door couldn't be Li Yang, Fan Xing, or Zhou Deng, because if they were looking for him, they would make some noise or sound.

So.

The thing standing at the doorway behind him... was a ghost.

"Bang!"

Suddenly, Yang Jian made a move. Without turning around, his ghost eye opened abruptly, and in a manner defying normal human capabilities, he instantly threw the cracked long spear in his hand.

The section of the coffin nail was still pinned to a terrifying baby corpse, not yet removed.

However, if the coffin nail could pierce two ghosts at once, it could also restrict both ghosts together.

But there's a prerequisite.

That is to not squeeze out the second ghost, otherwise, the coffin nail would lose its efficacy.

With a loud noise.

The cracked long spear flew directly over the doorway, piercing into the opposite wall, deeply embedding inside,

at the doorway.

The figure twisted and wobbled for a moment, then disappeared.

Yang Jian turned around.

No one was behind him.

His sudden attack failed to pin down that thing.

As he was about to turn and swiftly rush out to see the situation outside, Yang Jian got stuck again.

In the room, someone had appeared at some point unexpectedly.

A woman, wearing a red cheongsam, sat with her back facing him at the dressing table. Because there was no makeup mirror on the dressing table, Yang Jian couldn't see the front of this red silhouette, not even with his ghost eye peering, as it was interfered with by supernatural powers, unable to penetrate the woman's body.

"Someone came into the room..." Yang Jian's heart sank.

Perhaps the owner of this ancient mansion had originally sealed this room to prevent malicious ghosts from invading.

Now he had found the key and opened the door.

There's a possibility that some irreversible event might occur.

"That red cheongsam... looks familiar, it's the one Leuk Qingqing was wearing." As Yang Jian observed, he took a few steps back, grabbing the cracked long spear nailed to the wall.

However, when he retrieved this weapon.

The head of the coffin nail.

The terrifying baby corpse had already disappeared.

It seemed that due to exerting too much force earlier, it pierced through the opposite wall, flinging out the pinned baby. After all, the baby's body was too small, even if pierced through, it wasn't as secure as imagined.

It was a mistake.

Yang Jian only glanced slightly but didn't pay much attention.

The loss of that terrifying baby was insignificant here.

Ghosts were everywhere here; one more or less didn't make a difference.

What was more concerning was the intruding entity in the room.

"Could it be Leuk Qingqing? The back looks somewhat like her, yet there's an inexplicable sense of unfamiliarity. I seem to see another eerie silhouette on her." Yang Jian's ghost eye stared intently.

In the vision of the ghost eye.

A vague silhouette overlapped with the back silhouette before him.

As if there was a double image.

But this overlap was very discordant, almost as if... possessed by a ghost.

Yang Jian's nose moved slightly at this moment.

He smelled something.

A fragrance.

This scent was quite familiar, it was the same as the smell emitted by the three incense sticks in front of the red coffin earlier.

Now this fragrance reappeared in the room.

It seemed to be emanating from the woman's body.

"Fragrance?" Yang Jian's expression changed.

He recalled the second ancient tomb indirectly destroyed by Zhou Deng earlier. According to Zhou Deng, a woman was buried in that second tomb.

So indeed.

Was this the female ghost from the ancient tomb?

"The six-layer Ghost Domain, once more, whether it's Leuk Qingqing or the female ghost from the ancient tomb, let's nail it down first to avoid endless trouble." Yang Jian stared at the graceful silhouette in the red room.

Even though there was no movement.

But Yang Jian wasn't naive enough to assume this thing posed no threat.

Without the slightest hesitation.

The ghost eye abruptly opened.

The six-layer Ghost Domain overlapped, this layer could pause everything within the Ghost Domain.

Only this way could ensure that the coffin nail would successfully restrict that thing.

After the Ghost Domain activated.

Everything before him seemed to plunge into silence, yet Yang Jian himself could move, as he was clever enough this time to only lock everything before him within the six-layer Ghost Domain, while positioning himself outside of it.

In so doing, everything within the Ghost Domain was immobile, but he could act.

However, just as he was about to move.

An incredible scene occurred.

In the red room, the strange woman sitting in front of the dressing table stood up slowly.

With a tall stature and long legs, the red cheongsam was strikingly vibrant, and the high heels beneath were also red, making this bizarre ensemble unforgettable at a glance.

"Can still move?"

Yang Jian widened his eyes at this moment.

Although he knew that the more powerful the ghost in the six-layer Ghost Domain, the quicker they could regain mobility, such free movement was unprecedented.

He hesitated with the long spear firmly in hand.

No need to throw it out.

Since even the six-layer Ghost Domain couldn't confine it, there's no way to nail down that fierce ghost.

The first failure had already proven all this.

"Disassemble it, then detain." Yang Jian immediately changed tactics, no longer aiming for a one-time success, but deciding to use the Firewood Knife to dismember it.

After lowering the terror level of the ghost, it was feasible to nail down the fierce ghost with the help of the six-layer Ghost Domain and the coffin nail.

The Ghost Shadow shifted, not covering the front but instead targeting the spot behind at the doorway.

This ghost had stood at the doorway before, leaving a medium... hold on, where's the medium?

Yang Jian found that where the Ghost Shadow covered, it left no medium at all, as if all traces were erased.

"Are the red high heels the reason? Preventing leaving a medium in the form of footprints."

He understood at this moment.

Why wearing red high heels was necessary.

The high heels only left half a footprint, while a complete footprint was needed to trigger a medium. Even the slightest incomplete aspect couldn't work, making the use of the Firewood Knife for attack impossible.

"Unable to ensure it's nailed with the coffin nail, unable to create a medium for the Firewood Knife, unable to confine it with the six-layer Ghost Domain... It's forcing me to confront it directly." Yang Jian's eyes flickered.

His methods weren't limited to these.

He could dismember it directly with the Firewood Knife after approaching, or use the Ghost Hand to grab it, utilizing a spot for suppressing a ghost.

But approaching posed dangers.

"Facing away from me prevents me from using the strange doll, otherwise I could utilize that supernatural tool." He took a deep breath, feeling troubled.

The ghost was right before him.

Even with nothing done, it rendered nearly all his methods ineffective.

It felt as though it thoroughly analyzed all his tactics.

Yang Jian understood, it wasn't that his intelligence was leaked, but that the ghost's terror level was too high, similar to when he faced the Ghost Envoy in the past, seeming to have some tricks yet having no use for them, only surviving by finding the ghost's killing pattern.

Unexpectedly, he faced a similar situation today.

"Hold on."

As Yang Jian moved his steps, poised to approach despite the risks, he suddenly realized something.

Why should he confront this ghost directly?

His goal was to deliver a message and survive here. This fierce ghost appearing in the house, why not let it stay there?

If he acted now, it might require risking his life.

"Risking for confining a fierce ghost with an unknown terror level is unwise. There are numerous dangers in this ghostly place. Since it appeared, there's no need to pay heed; ultimately, it may not even invade the real world."

Yang Jian considered retreating.

Not that he feared confrontation.

But fearing being trapped in this ancient mansion after all the struggle.

He hadn't forgotten, within this ancient mansion, many ghosts had already awakened, and the old man in the coffin was also a huge threat.

There were countless things to handle, beyond counting.

Yang Jian's face darkened as he looked at everything in the room, even knowing these might be supernatural tools, he didn't covet them.

Greed could be lethal at this moment.

"Time to go."

He withdrew from the room.

Yet just as he was stepping out, the woman in the red cheongsam abruptly turned around.

It was a blurred face; no, not blurred, but from Yang Jian's perspective, it looked like two faces merged into one, quite similar yet somehow distinct. One face was familiar, belonging to Leuk Qingqing, yet her eyes were closed.

The other face belonged to an unfamiliar woman, equally beautiful and flawless, with pitch-black, bright eyes but lacking vitality, akin to a dead gaze.

"It's indeed Leuk Qingqing's body, she has been invaded by a fierce ghost." Yang Jian took a slight breath.

The moment he saw the red cheongsam, he already had such thoughts, yet wasn't certain enough.

Now, it was almost confirmed.

This was indeed the ghost who emerged from the ancient tomb, the intense fragrance on her body attesting to it all.

"Yang Jian!"

Suddenly.

A female voice sounded, it was Leuk Qingqing's voice, but not her tone, rather that of a stranger.

"It's speaking? What a joke." Yang Jian's hair stood on end at this moment.

The ghost seemed to have invaded Leuk Qingqing's consciousness, stealing her memory, even recognizing him.

Or rather.

Leuk Qingqing was still alive, using her remaining consciousness to communicate with him?

"Who are you?" Yang Jian said coldly, without fear.

"Someone who died long ago." Leuk Qingqing spoke again, still with the stranger's tone, evoking a chilling, unwelcoming aura.

"You still have consciousness?" Yang Jian questioned further.

Leuk Qingqing said, "I only have the time of one incense stick. After one incense stick, I will disappear, and by then, she will wake up again."

She referred to the original Leuk Qingqing.

One incense stick's time?

Yang Jian's face tensed, "How long is one incense stick's time?"

"Depends on the situation." Leuk Qingqing replied.

"So then, you were a ghost-handler during the Republic of China Period? Awakened by someone due to some special reason for the very last time of consciousness through an incense stick, but it won't last long, to be completely devoured by the ghost in the body, resurrecting utterly." Yang Jian understood the meaning behind those words.

"That's right, you are clever. Each of us retained the time of one incense stick, to be awakened at a crucial moment; yet, this is our final time, eventually leading to death, never appearing again in the world." Leuk Qingqing said.

Yang Jian's face shifted slightly, "It's incredible to think people from the Republic of China Period could even achieve this, preserving one's consciousness to awaken during a certain time, reclaiming control over their body once more."

"But why did you leave the time of one incense stick?"

"To deal with the unexpected, just never thought I would be the one awakened this time." Leuk Qingqing replied, "Too early, I shouldn't have awakened so soon."

"No point, let's change the subject. I assume you have many doubts; I can tell you some things you wish to know." Leuk Qingqing spoke.

Yang Jian's expression shifted.

Perhaps today he could unravel many mysteries.

Chapter 977 Time is up

A Ghost Tamer from the Republic of China Period allegedly used a single stick of incense to awaken a lost consciousness and come back to life again.

It was unimaginable.

This kind of resurrection was far harder than traditional resurrection because the resurrected person had to regain control over supernatural powers.

Yang Jian stared at Leuk Qingqing.

No.

At this moment, it shouldn't be Leuk Qingqing anymore but the consciousness of an unfamiliar Ghost Tamer from the Republic of China Period.

The identity of this person didn't matter.

What mattered was that this person was genuinely from the Republic of China Period, and was a part of that era's supernatural circle. The information and secrets they knew must be beyond imagination. Now the critical question was whether they were willing to divulge them.

"Who is the old man in the ancient mansion?" Yang Jian directly asked the first question.

Leuk Qingqing smiled, her expression slightly eerie: "Someone from the same batch as me. Just like you all now, some of us survived, while others died. The living stayed behind in supernatural places, and the dead prepared for their afterlife. He was much stronger than me, but even he had his limits."

"How do you solve the problem of vengeful spirits reviving?" Yang Jian's gaze was cold as he asked the most critical question directly.

Leuk Qingqing replied, "You can't solve it. If it could be solved, we wouldn't have died. So, I won't tell you how to control vengeful spirits. Every era has its own characteristics. Perhaps the people of your time will find a unique path that surpasses us."

"Didn't someone among you survive till now?" Yang Jian frowned and asked.

"You've survived till now, haven't you?" Leuk Qingqing responded.

"I understand."

Yang Jian grasped the underlying meaning in Leuk Qingqing's words.

In every era, there would always be some Ghost Tamers who went far. Those paths couldn't be replicated. They were the results of the collision between death and luck. Even if someone told you the method, it would amount to no more than a story; that kind of success couldn't be duplicated.

Take Old Qin, for instance. Born as an anomaly from the womb—can you replicate that method?

Or take Wang Chaling, who directly inherited the Wang Family's vengeful spirit legacy across generations. That's also not something you can study.

Thus, Yang Jian stopped dwelling on this question and instead asked, "What is this place? It doesn't exist in reality; you can only reach it via the supernatural bus."

"In terms you can understand, this is a Ghost Domain, separated from reality. However, the balance here will eventually fail, and it will re-emerge in the real world. The supernatural bus is merely a tool to traverse such special regions," Leuk Qingqing slowly began pacing around the room.

She touched her head.

The part that had been dented after being struck by that blood-stained wooden mallet was now quickly regenerating.

Soon.

Leuk Qingqing's body was once again flawless.

Seeing this, Yang Jian's expression shifted slightly as he continued asking, "Why do ghosts exist in this world?"

Leuk Qingqing hesitated for a moment, then laughed, laughing joyfully, covering her mouth as though witnessing a farcical joke.

"Is that question so funny?" Yang Jian frowned.

Leuk Qingqing approached him, her red high heels clicking with each step. Her long legs moved gracefully; her posture was elegant and exuded a touch of classical beauty. She stopped in front of Yang Jian and smiled, asking, "Haven't you ever heard a ghost story before?"

"I have, but they were all fake," Yang Jian said.

"How do you know they were all fake? Stories get passed down, and the truth is hidden within them. Besides, your current level is far too low to even ponder such questions. Live for three more years, and then you can wake up the person connected to the second incense stick. He'll answer your question for you," Leuk Qingqing said.

Too low a level?

For someone like Yang Jian, a top-tier Ghost Tamer who had controlled three vengeful spirits, turned into an anomaly, mastered self-rebooting, and possessed the Coffin Nail and Firewood Knife, to be judged as "too low level" was astonishing.

"If you don't want to share any information, why bother talking to me?" Yang Jian asked coldly.

He suspected that figures from the Republic of China Period had not all perished, nor were they incapable of passing on their knowledge to future generations. Rather, it seemed as though this knowledge had been deliberately buried.

If they truly wanted to share the truth, there were countless ways to do so.

Therefore.

Wang Xiaoming's earlier words proved correct—chasing after the past was meaningless.

The past being buried signified its failure. Pursuing a failed era was merely a waste of time moving forward.

"I woke up too early. I had planned to go somewhere, but since he is dead, I chose to linger in this ancient mansion. Yet, I didn't expect you to open this room," Leuk Qingqing said.

"What's special about this room?" Yang Jian asked. "I came here because of the Ghost Cabinet."

Leuk Qingqing replied, "This room is a ghost. To be precise, these red objects are a puzzle piece of a vengeful spirit trying to revive."

"Is that all?" Yang Jian stared at her with a skeptical expression.

Would containing a single ghost really require elaborate preparations, detaining it with so many items?

Coffin nails, gold artifacts, or even just a coffin.

Such similar measures should suffice.

"As far as I know, yes. After all, I didn't create these things," Leuk Qingqing said, seemingly casting herself as a participant rather than a mastermind.

Yang Jian fell silent.

He wasn't able to gather much useful information from this Republic of China-era individual.

He couldn't pinpoint the origin of vengeful spirits, nor find methods to curb their revival, and hadn't unraveled many supernatural mysteries either.

"What's on the fifth floor of the Ghost Post Office?" Left with no choice, Yang Jian gave up on lofty questions and instead asked something more immediate.

Leuk Qingqing laughed again: "There's a sixth floor above the fifth; that's the core of the Post Office. However, only one person can enter the sixth floor, and whoever does so can never leave the Post Office for the rest of their life."

"Why?" Yang Jian's eyelids twitched.

This information was highly significant.

"Because that person will control the Post Office. Does that answer your question?"

Leuk Qingqing continued, "Your questions are becoming more naive. Many things you can uncover for yourself. Asking me here is meaningless. You should leave. The Post Office gave you a seven-day task to complete within this ancient mansion. Only by finishing it will you earn the right to enter the fifth floor of the Post Office."

She seemed to lose interest in answering, turning and walking deeper into the room.

"What seems naive to you represents life-or-death struggles for us. Your arrogance is the reason you died and were buried back then. With such an impulsive personality, it's no surprise you didn't survive," Yang Jian coldly remarked.

His words appeared to strike a chord with the Republic of China-era figure.

She halted her steps, and the room's atmosphere instantly turned icy cold.

This wasn't an illusion—it was a palpable chill.

As though a vengeful spirit was awakening, supernatural power began invading the surroundings.

Yang Jian's Ghost Shadow flickered as he resisted the influence, standing firm with his cracked spear in hand: "Angry now? That's better. Since your time is running out anyway, why not hand over your memories to me? I could live longer in this world, go further, and solve more supernatural events."

Yang Jian wasn't satisfied with the answers this woman had provided.

He decided to take matters into his own hands.

To gamble.

If he won, he would inherit the memories of a top-tier Ghost Tamer from the Republic of China Period.

If he lost...

Perhaps he would be buried here within this ancient mansion.

It seemed reckless.

But Yang Jian didn't see it that way, because he couldn't guarantee how long he'd have to wait for a similar opportunity if he let this one slip away.

Leuk Qingqing turned around slowly: "How do you plan to steal the memories of a living person from a vengeful spirit?"

"As I thought, you're an anomaly too?"

Yang Jian's sudden impulse immediately subsided.

Her brief awakening was, in essence, still tied to a vengeful spirit—only temporarily cleared by the power of the incense. Once the time ran out, her consciousness would dissipate again.

Inexplicably, this was reminiscent of Yang Jian's own situation.

If his Ghost Shadow fully awakened one day, his consciousness would also be suppressed, devoured by the vengeful spirit. But that consciousness wouldn't vanish entirely—there would still be ways to reawaken it under certain conditions.

However.

Memories controlled by vengeful spirits couldn't be stolen.

When supernatural powers clashed with one another, the result was nothing but mutual malfunction.

So, Leuk Qingqing was warning Yang Jian that even if she didn't resist and allowed him to attempt memory extraction, he wouldn't succeed and might die as a result.

"My time is almost up."

Suddenly, Leuk Qingqing spoke again. She raised her arm, which was once flawless but now began to wither, showing signs of decay and corpse spots.

Her skin began to darken.

Even her cheongsam lost its former vibrancy.

The fragrance in the air started to mix with a faint hint of rotting stench.

Evidently.

The incense was fading away, and soon she would fully transform into a vengeful spirit.

"You should leave. Before I lose control, I'll settle things within this room. This person won't die; she'll live on, and I'll even leave her with a gift."

Leuk Qingqing turned her head back one last time, then slowly walked to the dressing table and sat down, completely ignoring Yang Jian's presence.

Seeing this, Yang Jian ultimately chose to leave it alone.

He didn't make a move against Leuk Qingqing.

It was no longer meaningful.

If he couldn't extract her memories, there'd be no benefit to acting rashly.

She was already on the verge of reviving as a vengeful spirit, and any further provocation would likely shorten the time granted by the incense.

At that point, it wouldn't be a human he'd be facing but a full-fledged, horrifying vengeful spirit.

Despite this, Yang Jian was unwilling to leave empty-handed.

His eyes scanned the celebratory yet eerie room, searching for something, anything, worth taking away.

He didn't want this trip to be in vain.

"Take this with you. It might help you if you encounter that ghost someday."

The cheongsam-clad woman spoke again. She opened a drawer in the dressing table, retrieved an item, and threw it backward carelessly.

It was a jade bracelet.

The jade was black, but its interior had a vivid red hue, as though blood had seeped into it.

The bracelet hit the ground with a crisp sound but didn't shatter.

This was a supernatural object. No matter how fragile it appeared, as long as it retained its supernatural power, it wouldn't break.

"What is this thing used for?" Yang Jian asked.

The woman didn't reply but instead hummed a tune—a classical opera melody filled with nostalgia and sorrow.

Her dark hair began to fall, and her once-lustrous cheongsam turned dingy.

It was as though everything about her was rapidly aging and decaying.

Yet, this was merely an afterimage. The real Leuk Qingqing remained seated, her eyes closed, entirely motionless, unaffected by the illusion.

Only Yang Jian's Ghost Eyes could discern the subtle difference.

To ordinary people, the afterimage and Leuk Qingqing were indistinguishable—just a single person, unified.

Yang Jian kept silent, picking up the red bracelet from the ground before turning to leave.

The situation was dangerous.

There was no need to tangle with someone on the brink of revival.

Before leaving, he even closed the door behind him, though he didn't lock it; he intended to take the lock with him.

"Yang Jian, we'll surely meet again, won't we...?"

A soft murmur echoed in the red room, laced with faint laughter.

"The Ghost Cabinet task is complete. The Post Office still has a sixth floor. And I've obtained a red bracelet... This journey doesn't seem like a loss," Yang Jian thought as he glanced back.

He dared not approach the room again.

Because the next time the door opened, Leuk Qingqing would no longer be inside—it would be a true vengeful spirit.

That room would become a taboo, a place no one should ever set foot in again.

At this point, locking the door was irrelevant.

Having determined there was no more value in staying there, Yang Jian retraced his steps quickly, avoiding the eerie crowd as he returned to the main hall.

"Yang Jian, you're back? What happened over there just now? Why was it so quiet?" Zhou Deng was still standing there, curiously asking.

However, his eyes lingered on the red bracelet in Yang Jian's hand as he spoke.

"Quiet? It shouldn't have been. I encountered Leuk Qingqing there, but it wasn't the real Leuk Qingqing. She was eroded by supernatural powers. A consciousness not her own was conversing with me. Didn't you hear anything?" Yang Jian asked.

At such close distance, they should have heard it.

But not just Zhou Deng, even the nearby others shook their heads, indicating they didn't hear anything.

Yang Jian's expression changed. Activating his Ghost Eyes, he looked back toward the corridor.

The once-locked room had vanished.

There was only a blank wall, with no trace of a locked door.

"Vanished? Was this the work of that Republic of China woman? Did she want to take everything away and find a place to settle her posthumous affairs?" Yang Jian's eyes flickered as he speculated internally.

"Looks like you ventured somewhere unknown, Yang Jian. Supernatural interference probably prevented us from perceiving anything. Since that's the case, won't you share what you found?" Zhou Deng asked, his eyes fixated on the bracelet in Yang Jian's hand.

It seemed he wanted to seize upon this moment to pry information out, hoping to track down that place for himself later.

"Nothing much happened. Let's just say I stepped away briefly. Don't ask further questions. The Seventh-Day delivery task isn't done yet; danger still looms. Don't busy yourself with irrelevant curiosities," Yang Jian took a deep breath, stepping back from his thoughts.

Choosing to treat the earlier events as nothing more than an unusual experience.

The priority now was stabilizing the current situation.

After all, the Ghost Cabinet transaction and the letter delivery task were two separate things, with no interference between them.

"Not talking, huh? You must be planning to hoard it all to yourself," Zhou Deng muttered under his breath.

Chapter 978 The Severed Finger

When Yang Jian walked away for a short while, the bizarre happenings seemed to be known only to him.

Even being this close, Li Yang, Zhou Deng, Fan Xing, and Da Qiang were completely unaware, as if kept in the dark, not even hearing a single sound.

However, the events in that room did not disturb the mansion's supernatural balance.

Now, with the room gone and all the hidden threats neutralized, this was good news for everyone.

But that was all it amounted to.

No new dangers were added, but neither was it of much help. The peril of the mansion's head-seven ritual still awaited those remaining.

But now.

There weren't many survivors left.

"Don't dwell on what happened just now. The dangers of the Day of Mourning persist, and this balance certainly won't last forever. So, the priority is to focus on yourself, not on insignificant things," Yang Jian said, looking at Zhou Deng.

This guy—ever since finding the Human Skin Mask—had become addicted, incessantly seeking out paranormal artifacts everywhere.

Zhou Deng didn't respond. He simply stood there, his eyes constantly shifting.

His gaze left Yang Jian and darted among the eerie figures frozen in the hall.

These were not humans—every single one was a vengeful ghost. They might not be complete entities, but they undoubtedly possessed supernatural properties, unlike the Ghost Slaves encountered before.

Indeed, the "people" here—any of them taken outdoors—would each become a chilling paranormal incident.

At this moment.

All the ghosts had congregated in the hall, remaining calm only due to the elder resting in the red coffin.

"There's still a long night ahead. Surviving peacefully until morning is practically impossible, so no matter what danger arises next, we must face it head-on. If we can hold through, only then will we see the light of day. Fail, and there's no need for me to elaborate," Yang Jian said bluntly.

He was dressed in a filthy mourning robe, which could isolate the ghosts' senses.

The others looked at him and nodded with deep agreement.

In the corner, the Eagle played with the Ghost Dice before him and said, "The fourth day is the Day of Mourning, the fifth day the Ghost Banquet. Those three bowls of rice will be key, perhaps on the fifth day we can use them to send away the ghosts flooding the hall. So not only must we survive, but we need to keep those three bowls intact—don't use them prematurely, nor lose them."

He spoke openly.

Cursed by the Eight-Tone Music Box and Armed with the Ghost Dice, he could handle most vengeful spirits in paranormal incidents. Although not necessarily capable of resolving them completely, it was enough to survive.

Though not for long.

"Your point is valid," Yang Jian conceded, agreeing somewhat.

Perhaps the three bowls of rice on the fifth day were crucial for sending away these vengeful spirits. Otherwise, the ghosts lingering in the mansion would eventually obliterate everyone—none would live to see the seventh day.

"Stay calm for now. Let's slowly wait it out. As long as there's no anomaly and the ghosts don't attack us, we can ignore whatever happens elsewhere. Just guard the red coffin," Yang Jian said as he withdrew.

He rested beside the coffin along with the others, biding time in silence.

Time passed bit by bit.

Everyone remained silent.

Though wearing funeral robes, their hearts were far from calm. In front of them were nothing but vengeful spirits, each adding immense psychological tension. Any slip-ups, and they could be devoured by the ghosts.

Meanwhile, Yang Jian was lost in thought over the previous incidents.

Specifically, about the Ghost Post Office's sixth floor.

"If this task concludes successfully, everyone who survives will advance to the fifth floor. That woman from the Republic of China Period mentioned that the Ghost Post Office has a sixth floor. The sixth floor only allows one person entry, and whoever enters never comes out—it becomes the Post Office's wielder."

"I definitely don't want to dominate such a Post Office. I don't want to be confined to one place forever."

"So I must arrange a successor before this matter concludes."

Yang Jian scanned the room, glancing briefly at the others.

The Eagle was immediately ruled out—cursed by the Eight-Tone Music Box, he wouldn't survive after the delivery task. The remaining options were Li Yang, Da Qiang, and the missing Yang Xiaohua.

To be honest, the most suitable choice was Li Yang.

But he didn't want to trap Li Yang in such a place forever.

"We'll see when the time comes. Maybe an acceptable candidate will emerge from the fifth floor's couriers," Yang Jian mused.

Truthfully, he did desire control of the Post Office, as it was undeniably significant. Despite placing a premium on freedom, mastery over such an unimaginable paranormal domain ensured survival in a world drowning in supernatural resurgence.

The position was important.

He couldn't assign it recklessly—choosing wrong could create a massive threat down the line. He had to promote someone trustworthy to the sixth floor.

Just as these thoughts developed.

An anomaly emerged within the mansion again.

"Rustle... rustle..."

The familiar sound of the eerie radio suddenly began. At first, it was faint, but soon it grew louder, growing increasingly clear, its sound uneven and shifting through the hall. Pinpointing its exact location was momentarily impossible, as though it moved constantly.

"The ghostly radio again?"

The others recognized it, showing no shock but rather a darkened expression.

The mysterious radio seemed capable of drawing other vengeful spirits.

During the second day of the vigil, it led ghosts to discover the back hall, nearly killing everyone there.

Even after one radio was destroyed, another appeared.

No matter how thoroughly it's damaged, new ones emerged—Yang Jian's Coffin Nail and Firewood Knife proved futile.

As the radio was merely a medium, not the actual ghost.

Moments later.

The radio's noise finally reached a stationary point, remaining fixed at one spot.

Suddenly.

Yang Jian quickly identified the radio's source of sound, focusing on its location. Everyone's faces changed drastically.

It was behind the black Taishi Chair, next to the coffin.

The old radio had silently appeared on the chair—no one had detected its arrival, as if it had walked itself there, or perhaps been placed by an invisible ghost.

In any case.

The paranormal medium had revealed itself.

"The balance is crumbling? Or are the mansion's internal supernatural phenomena surfacing?" Yang Jian thought. "Or maybe the elder in the coffin can only suppress threats outside the mansion, unable to contain the vengeful spirits within."

At this moment, the static from the old radio suddenly ceased.

Receiving what seemed like a signal, a bizarre voice emerged: "Hello, hello? Is anyone still alive? Where are you? I can't find you. Hello... hello..."

"Damn it, pulling this stunt again," Fan Xing cursed through clenched teeth.

The thing was indeed deceptive.

It had tricked them before, uncovering their location and swiftly pursuing them into the back hall.

Now, having learned their lesson.

No one dared respond anymore.

"Heh, heh-heh... I know you're here. Stop hiding. Come out quickly..." The voice from the radio continued, as if trying to engage in friendly conversation.

Yang Jian remained silent and approached the radio.

He reached out his blackened Ghost Hand, grabbing the radio, and dumped it into the red coffin.

The old radio landed directly on the elder's corpse.

"Ah~!"

A sharp, shrill scream echoed from the radio, followed by another cut-off signal. Then static resumed briefly before finally disappearing altogether, leaving complete silence in its wake.

It seemed.

The radio had triggered something far more dangerous, sustaining enough damage to be suppressed.

"This noisy damn thing. Should've done this sooner—let it serve as a burial offering and join the elder in the afterlife after the seventh day," Yang Jian said coldly.

"Aren't you worried about unexpected consequences?" Zhou Deng asked.

Yang Jian replied, "Unexpected consequences are endless. At this point, I don't care. I just want these irksome ghosts gone."

"That's the right attitude," Zhou Deng said approvingly, stroking his chin.

"Let's rest up."

After temporarily dealing with the eerie radio, Yang Jian resumed quietly waiting.

But he couldn't shake a foreboding feeling.

The radio's appearance—did it signal that the other spirits from the second day were about to reemerge?

For example, the origin of that dark Ghost Domain?

Or perhaps the dismembered, unclothed corpse?

Or even the terrifying ghost Li Yang encountered?

But only moments later.

A cry disrupted the silence within the mansion.

"Waah... waah..." The sound of an infant crying pierced the air, echoing loudly.

"Is it that baby? The one I lost before? I pinned it down, but during the fight with Leuk Qingqing, it slipped away," Yang Jian thought.

Yet before long.

The crying abruptly stopped.

The infant seemed to have encountered something, its final wail mixed with a chilling scream.

The sounds faded entirely.

The anomaly seemed to dissipate alongside it, yet a chilling tension gripped everyone's hearts.

Something more malicious had entered the mansion.

For now, the entity that had overpowered the terrifying infant had yet to make itself known, still wandering within the mansion's walls.

As time ticked on toward 6:00 AM.

In the dense crowd of figures, an oddity emerged.

The crowd began splitting apart, accompanied by the eerie sound of something being dragged across the floor.

Soon.

A black Taishi Chair appeared amidst the uncanny gathering, forcing the other figures away and moving to the forefront.

Behind the chair loomed a patch of darkness—it seemed a Ghost Domain, or perhaps a winding, shrouded path stretching endlessly into shadow.

A pair of withered, blackened hands with unnervingly long nails were pushing the black Taishi Chair forward.

"The black Taishi Chair is still here? Wasn't it previously damaged?" Yang Jian frowned.

He remembered hearing the sound of a chair breaking during a blackout in the hall, but later saw no broken fragments nor the ghost.

"Ghosts inside the mansion remain unaffected by the elder in the coffin. The real danger comes from within, not outside," said the Eagle, who remained indifferent. He had no ability to intervene and simply watched the unfolding scene.

Atop the black chair, the eerie hands began retracting slowly.

Little by little, disappearing back into the darkness.

But the next instant.

Something horrifying unfolded.

Da Qiang, clothed in mourning attire and believing himself safe from the senses of ghosts, felt a pair of withered hands grasp his shoulders.

"It's targeting me?" Da Qiang felt a bone-chilling terror wash over him, his face turning pale with dread.

Those gnarled hands exerted an otherworldly, overwhelming force, pressing down on his shoulders and forcing his body into a seated position.

"Yang Jian!"

Da Qiang screamed with all his strength.

In that crucial moment.

Yang Jian sprang into action.

Using his Ghost Eyes to perceive everything, he spotted the skeletal hands behind Da Qiang.

The sixth-layer ghost domain burst forth.

Everything froze.

The ghostly hands ceased movement.

Immediately, Yang Jian swung the Firewood Knife, and though unable to fully exploit mediating objects, it still sliced through the ghost's fingers with ease.

At the same time.

The skeletal hands recoiled swiftly—a movement slowed but not halted by the ghost domain's influence, allowing Yang Jian ample time to react.

The knife landed.

Three withered, elongated fingers were severed, and the hands vanished.

Disappearing from Da Qiang's shoulders.

But Da Qiang's face had already gone ashen—lifeless.

He was dead.

Chapter 979: The Imbalance of Speed

No matter how the firewood knife is used, it carries a strong curse.

After Yang Jian chopped off the ghost's five fingers, wounds appeared on his hand as well. The wounds were deep, resembling decay, yet they were very regular.

His fingers fell off one by one.

This decay penetrated deep into the flesh and bone, irreversible, and spread rapidly.

But these wounds did not spread further and soon halted.

"Trading your wounds for the dismemberment of a ghost is clearly a gain." Yang Jian said expressionlessly, indifferent to such wounds.

He picked up the two severed fingers, not wanting the ghost to reassemble the puzzle.

He tossed the fingers into the Red coffin.

Using the Red coffin's ability to suppress the supernatural, he rendered the ghost's fingers useless.

After doing all this, Yang Jian withdrew.

The ghost did not continue to attack the others here, so he did not dismember the ghost further.

There were too many dangers here; Yang Jian could not use all his strength to deal with just one ghost.

"Da Qiang is dead." Eagle observed the situation and said silently while looking at Da Qiang's body.

Another messenger from the fourth floor was dead.

How many messengers are left now?

There's the life-and-death uncertain Yang Xiaohua, himself on the brink of death from a curse, and Li Yang and Yang Jian.

In other words, excluding the two powerful intruders, Li Yang and Yang Jian, the original messengers were nearly all dead.

"He was a bit unlucky, targeted by the ghost, triggering some inevitable deadly rule of the ghost."

Yang Jian glanced over, his face cold, and said, "Funeral clothes aren't guaranteed to repel ghost attacks; they can only repel most of them, just like the old man's corpse in the coffin."

"Now, when it revives and sits up, it can only suppress the majority of the supernatural; the remaining gaps we need to fight against."

"So today's mourning, even if we did everything right, the danger still exists, though it's better than before. In this context, Da Qiang is the only one who shouldn't have died. The others died because the balance was broken."

Eagle said, "At this rate, I'm afraid only you and Li Yang will make it to the fifth floor. You have the strength to reach the fifth floor; even the Red delivery mission won't be difficult for you."

"No, there's one more person," Yang Jian said.

"Is it me? I'm cursed by the Eight-Tone Music Box, and I won't live long," Eagle said.

He was now less fearful and taboo; he spoke when necessary, asked when necessary.

Yang Jian looked in a direction and said, "Leuk Qingqing isn't dead yet; she's still alive."

"But the first seven days haven't passed, even if she's alive somewhere, it's only temporary." Eagle sighed, feeling physically and mentally exhausted.

Because this delivery mission was really too difficult, too difficult.

Although in theory, any ordinary person could complete the task and successfully deliver the letter, the conditions were too harsh. One wrong step, and correcting it would require a heavy price, perhaps total annihilation.

Yang Jian did not answer him; instead, he went to Da Qiang's body, picked it up, and directly threw it out of the courtyard, vanishing from the ancient mansion.

But before that, Yang Jian took off the funeral clothes he was wearing and threw them to Zhou Deng.

"Don't say I didn't take care of you; I need your Supernatural Power for the next actions, but if you act recklessly, I'll chop your head off without hesitation."

He did not give any face, continuing to warn Zhou Deng.

Because Yang Jian feared that once Zhou Deng got the funeral clothes, he would start causing chaos again.

Now that there were only a few people left dead, they could not afford any more trouble. Moreover, as the seventh day approached, the ancient mansion grew more dangerous, and even Yang Jian was uncertain if he could fully handle the following days.

"You're still not reassured with me, Yang Captain?" Zhou Deng asked with a smile after taking the funeral clothes.

"It's okay; anyway, you won't have a second chance to mess around." Yang Jian said.

If he dared to mess around in the last few days, he would take action, without hesitation.

"Keep holding out; I don't believe we can't make it through today."

Yang Jian said to the remaining people.

After the supernatural incident earlier, the ancient mansion regained calm. It was clear that the ghosts capable of moving had been dealt with by him, and the ghost resting its hand on the black Taishi Chair could no longer move.

It lacked five fingers; the puzzle was broken; its Terror Level was obviously reduced.

Now it couldn't even push the black Taishi Chair, standing like the other ghosts, motionless.

As long as the ghosts don't act out of line, the situation is safe.

Even if the ghost and Yang Jian were only a few meters apart.

Waiting on one hand, keeping an eye on the time on the other.

Six in the morning, seven, eight...

An hour after another passed, yet inside the ancient mansion, the passing of time could not be felt. Whether it was night or day, the environment remained dim and oppressive, so time could only be confirmed through watches, phones, and other timing tools.

On the early tenth day.

A small, unsettling thing happened.

The old man's corpse sitting in the red coffin tilted, no longer sitting up so straight, slightly leaning back as if about to lay back down.

However, the old man's corpse did not lay back; it held a strange posture, leaning backward.

Moreover, after this anomaly appeared, the balance inside the ancient mansion was broken.

All the ghosts took almost two steps forward.

Darkness surged, pressing in once again.

"What's going on?" Zhou Deng was startled, quickly stepping back.

Yang Jian, with his ghostly eye observing everything, icily said, "The old man in the coffin can no longer suppress these ghosts; the ghosts are still invading."

"It shouldn't be; wasn't the old man in the coffin supposed to grow stronger as the seventh day approached because his corpse was in a state of revival?" Zhou Deng said.

Yang Jian said, "The old man is reviving, and the ghosts here are reviving after losing constraints. Now tell me, is the old man reviving faster, or are these ghosts reviving faster?"

"Everything is calculated. On the fourth day, the old man's ghost revives, and the other ghosts appear on the fourth day. So, initially, the old man is strong, and the other ghosts are weak. But as time goes by, this balance shifts and finally breaks. That threshold should be midnight tonight."

"Hence, the Ghost Banquet begins on the fifth day."

"As the ghosts revive, the ancient mansion becomes a death trap, and everyone will die miserably, like a ghastly feast belonging to the ghosts."

Upon hearing these words, the remaining people's hearts sank to the bottom, cold and bleak.

"Now, my biggest concern isn't these ghosts but that the old man won't hold until midnight, and the uncontrolled situation will occur prematurely, even half an hour, no, ten minutes earlier, and we'll all be wiped out here." Yang Jian said gravely.

"If everything is calculated well, then there shouldn't be a problem, right? The fact that the old man hasn't laid back into the coffin yet shows that the resistance is ongoing." Zhou Deng said.

Yang Jian's ghostly eye turned: "If it's just the ghosts inside and outside the mansion, the old man's presence should suffice to maintain balance. But don't forget, when we got off the bus, there was an external paranormal intrusion, so the external paranormal force could very well be the last straw."

What he was obsessing over was the medium triggered earlier.

The granny with the basket.

Suspected to be the ghost that got off the bus, consistent with the ghost source in the Dachuan City 301 incident.

Moreover, that granny had already entered the ancient mansion; this was something Yang Jian was sure of.

This was a lurking danger.

As to when this danger would erupt, that remained unknown.

"External paranormal, huh?"

Li Yang's expression also tightened upon hearing this, and he, too, thought of the granny with the basket.

Previously, when he retrieved the lantern and passed through the courtyard, he caught a glimpse of the eerie granny.

Although it was just a fleeting glance, he would never forget it.

However, now, Li Yang could no longer spot any trace of that granny's figure, as if she vanished upon entering the mansion, yet he believed this terrifying ghost was still lurking in the mansion.

The sudden baby crying sound heard before, which then disappeared, was very likely related to that granny.

As time went by.

Every passing hour, the old man's corpse in the red coffin leaned back a little more. While at first the movements were minimal, after noon, the upright old man was nearly laid into the coffin completely.

The cost of the failing balance was an even deeper incursion of ghosts into the mansion.

The five-meter safe distance was gone.

Only a little over one meter remained.

It seemed that if much more time passed, the mansion would be completely overrun.

"This speed of imbalance definitely can't hold until midnight."

Yang Jian, Zhou Deng, Li Yang, Fan Xing, and even the eagle in the corner all realized this. They all knew the calculations; no matter how you estimate, it can't survive today.

Chapter 980: The Eerie Entrance

The group assessed the speed at which the ancient mansion was losing balance.

The result was despairing.

According to the current situation, the old man inside the red coffin cannot maintain balance for twenty-four hours. After six o'clock this afternoon, it is possible that danger will begin to arise, and the ghosts within the mansion will continue to activate. By then, everyone remaining inside the mansion will be devoured by the ghosts.

Even Yang Jian cannot survive under such circumstances.

The reason for the imbalance, the group speculated, was that the ghost from the bus entered the mansion, causing the scales to tilt.

Although it wasn't obvious at first, as time goes by, the consequences of this imbalance will become more and more severe. Once that critical point is breached, it will be uncontrollable.

"Is there any way to reverse this situation?" Fan Xing asked, looking anxious and extremely pale.

Li Yang's eyes flickered slightly: "To reverse this situation, there is only one way, which is to find the ghost causing the mansion's imbalance, and then catch it, detain or restrict it, preventing it from affecting this place. Only then will balance be restored, but this is only treating the symptoms, not the root cause."

"Because the balance has already started failing, which means the ghosts inside the mansion will act sooner. If it advances by half an hour, we'll need to withstand the ghost's attacks for half an hour."

"If it advances by an hour, then we need to withstand it for an hour."

"How is that even possible, half an hour, an hour? We couldn't last ten minutes during the night watch, and today is much more dangerous than the night watch."

Fan Xing was shocked: "Let's just escape. While the mansion hasn't lost control yet, we should leave here. Maybe there's still a chance to survive."

Li Yang didn't say a word, just looked at Yang Jian.

Whether to flee or fight, it was up to Yang Jian to decide.

He trusted the captain.

It was precisely because of this trust that he had survived until now, without dying. If even the captain could not think of a way, or lacked confidence, then others wouldn't be able to either.

Yang Jian was silent; he thought for a long time before he said, "There is a way."

"What?" Fan Xing was even more shocked at this moment, looking at Yang Jian as if he had seen a ghost.

This is already a desperate situation, yet there's still a way?

Are you joking? Or are you saying this on purpose to stabilize people?

But there are not many people left here now, most of the ten or so people who entered the mansion have died, so there should be no need to stabilize anyone.

"What do you have in mind?" Zhou Deng rubbed his chin, speaking calmly, not anxious at all.

He had a good attitude, seeing through life and death, looking indifferent.

This kind of mentality is one of the reasons he was nominated as the captain.

Yang Jian looked at Li Yang and said, "Open that door and send all the ghosts inside the mansion in, as many as we can, while the mansion hasn't completely lost balance."

"Keeping the door open for too long will release the ghosts. If we use it today, and too many ghosts gather behind the door, we won't be able to use it easily on the seventh day." Li Yang's face changed drastically.

He understood the captain's thinking.

This idea was good and the key to breaking this deadlock.

However, it came with a price.

The cost is abandoning our backup plan for leaving the mansion, an all-or-nothing strategy. If we can't hold on in the following days, then we really are going to die here.

"Can't worry about that much, just have to take it step by step. If we don't use the door now, the mission will most certainly fail today, and we still have the letter to retreat. Maybe it can work, not leading to complete despair." Yang Jian said, "Li Yang, don't hesitate. Do it now."

"Since the captain has decided, I have nothing more to say." Li Yang gritted his teeth and took out an old door handle.

Red paint, mottled and peeling, this door handle seemed somewhat familiar.

Yang Jian's eyes flickered as he glanced at the disappearing room over there.

Ghost Gate.

Could it be the door of that room?

Li Yang walked over to the wall, directly cutting open his wrist, letting thick blood flow out.

He used the thick blood to draw a door on the wall.

Except for the door handle, he left the position empty.

Originally, this door was drawn on him, but to be safe, he did not do that and drew the door on the wall instead.

After the door appeared on the wall, Li Yang took out the old wooden door handle and directly installed it on the empty spot.

A bizarre and incredible scene occurred.

The blood-drawn door actually surfaced from the wall, a real door appeared, and through the door handle, the door could actually be opened.

Under the influence of Supernatural Power, even this drawn door could turn real, defying common sense and understanding.

"Captain, it's ready. Should we open it?" Li Yang asked, somewhat nervous.

This door is not safe.

Because once opened, vengeful spirits will attempt to come out, and the longer it's open, the more ghosts that emerge, and the more terrifying they become. Therefore, this door can only be used to escape in critical moments, or temporarily contain ghosts in emergencies, and it's not suitable for long-term use.

Fortunately.

Li Yang has the codename Ghost Door Blocker.

He can use his supernatural power to close this door and prevent the ghosts from escaping.

"Open it directly, I need to throw the ghost inside. Keep an eye on the situation behind the door on your side, and alert me immediately if there's anything unusual; I'll pause the operation," Yang Jian said.

"Okay."

Li Yang nodded, then took a deep breath and, gripping the old wooden doorknob, slowly opened the door.

Behind the door was pitch black.

It was so dark that you couldn't see your hand in front of you, like an abyss without boundaries, as if it was an entrance leading to hell, with a chilling aura rushing toward their faces, no one dared to enter that place.

At this moment, Yang Jian moved.

He directly held a cracking spear and pierced through a strange person standing still in front of him, forming the suppression of a Coffin Nail, then casually tossed it.

The corpse flew out, was thrown directly into the open door, and disappeared into the darkness behind the door.

There was no sound of it landing, nor any other noise, as if it evaporated into thin air without a trace of movement.

Yang Jian acted quickly; after throwing the first corpse, he immediately threw out the second one.

Time is crucial.

Because Li Yang cannot keep the door open indefinitely, Yang had to send away all the ghosts in the hall as quickly as possible.

"Can the Ghost Domain transfer them?"

While working, Yang Jian simultaneously attempted to use the Ghost Domain.

His Ghost Domain covered the front and connected with the open door, trying to transfer all the ghosts in the old house in one go.

A very greedy approach.

However, the result was that the dense, eerie crowd was indeed reduced by at least a dozen figures, but the other figures remained motionless, unaffected by the Ghost Domain.

"Supernatural interference, the Ghost Domain can't transfer all the ghosts directly, but it has some effect. Not all ghosts are that terrifying; the ones at a general Terror Level were transferred by me," Yang Jian thought to himself.

This action brought back some balance to the old house.

The old man's corpse, which was about to lay down, slowly sat up a bit straighter again.

"It's useful, the number of ghosts reduced, and the uncontrolled situation has improved," Fan Xing said joyfully.

Although the effect was not particularly significant, continuing like this could slow down the imbalance's pace and successfully make it through today.

Yang Jian did not waste a single second at this moment; he used the Ghost Domain to transfer some of the less terrifying ghosts. Those he couldn't transfer, he personally nailed down with a Coffin Nail, then tossed the corpses inside.

He stood beside the open door, his hand on the door, ready to close it at any moment.

"So that's what it is, the Ghost Gate from headquarters? I didn't expect that thing to end up in your hands," Zhou Deng immediately understood. "I'll help as well."

He quickly walked over, grabbed a stationary corpse, dragged it, and threw it into the pitch-black door.

Not as efficient as Yang Jian, but still effective.

"I can help too," the Eagle stood up from the corner.

"No, you stay back. This isn't something someone of your level can participate in," Zhou Deng immediately reached out to stop him. He rolled up his sleeves, revealing two bruises on his arm, which were spreading like corpse spots.

"Although the ghosts can't move for some reason, their supernatural power remains. It might not kill you, but it can erode your body. You've only survived the Eight-Tone Music Box's curse, not become immune to bodily decay."

The Eagle halted his steps. "So that's how it is."

He realized and refrained from going over to help.

"Are the vengeful spirits still a threat under such conditions?" Fan Xing also wanted to help to increase his survival chances but hesitated upon seeing this.

Nevertheless, after a moment of hesitation, he gritted his teeth and prepared to act.

He reached out and grabbed a black paper figure, intending to throw it behind that door.

Because he felt this paper figure was very dangerous, very eerie, and his sense of unease was exceptionally strong.

However, the moment Fan Xing touched the paper figure, it suddenly turned its head, and the strangely painted face on the paper stared fixedly at him.

"Can't move it?" Cold sweat instantly broke out on Fan Xing.

He felt that the paper figure was rooted, surprisingly heavy, and couldn't be lifted.

And what scared him the most was that the paper figure's head was slowly inching forward, getting closer and closer...

He wanted to retreat, but found the paper figure had grabbed his arm, preventing him from breaking free.

Fan Xing saw the expression on the paper figure had changed.

The paper figure was laughing.

With an exaggerated smile, just like how it was drawn, such an expression is impossible for a human to mimic.

"This ghost, even the ancient mansion can't suppress it, can only temporarily limit; once approached, this ghost still has the ability to kill..." Fan Xing was startled at this moment.

He had underestimated the terror level of these ghostly things.

Indeed.

If these ghosts were ordinary, then Yang Jian would've already sent them away using the Ghost Domain without having to confront each one.

"Am I going to be killed?" Fan Xing felt his arm fracturing, breaking.

Even though the arm of this thing in front of him was made of paper, it could still crush a normal person's arm.

But then.

A cracked long spear suddenly struck, piercing through the paper figure's head, nailing it to the wall.

The black paper figure released its grip.

Fan Xing retreated in shock, trembling as he looked aside.

"Don't create trouble if you're lacking in power, just stay vigilant on the side. Many have died today; if this continues, I'm afraid there won't be enough people to carry the coffins on the last day."

Yang Jian spoke coldly, he pulled down the long spear, casually flinging the paper figure like trash into the darkness of the door, where it disappeared immediately.

Fan Xing was both shocked and relieved at this sight.

Indeed, Yang Jian's ability was terrifying; combined with that Coffin Nail in the supernatural realm, he was one of the top figures, able to handle even such high-level ghosts with ease.

The number of ghosts was rapidly decreasing.

These ghosts didn't vanish, nor were they suppressed; they were merely transferred to another place, sent by Yang Jian from the ancient mansion behind that Ghost Gate.

As for what consequences this might provoke, or what risks it might bring, Yang Jian didn't know and was unwilling to care.

"The elder's corpse has sat up again, the balance is being restored, the effect is quite obvious now." The Eagle said with a note of surprise.

After all, with Yang Jian's intervention till now, at least twenty ghosts in the hall had been reduced.

With such a considerable number being diminished, there surely would be results, it's impossible for there to be no response.

Li Yang suddenly said anxiously at this moment: "Captain, we can't continue anymore, there's a... no, there's a ghost trying to invade back."

"So soon?"

Yang Jian frowned, he didn't turn around, the ghost eyes watched the Ghost Gate behind him.

In the shadow beyond the door, he saw a pale human face with closed eyes emerging, seemingly only a face, with no body, no head.

This pale, dead face seemed like it wanted to walk out from the door.

Becoming more prominent.

A mangled, decayed corpse came flying over, crashing against it.

The face disappeared.

But soon it emerged again, this time there were two pale, dead faces, also with closed eyes.

Only the second face looked different, the expression on the second face seemed somewhat angry.

Zhou Deng also seized the opportunity to throw out a bizarre corpse, which struck the two strange faces.

The two rows of strange faces disappeared.

Next moment. In the darkness beyond the door, four strange faces emerged.

The latter two faces seemed increasingly angry, carrying wrath, even their eyes were about to open.

The walls were shaking.

No.

It was the drawn door shaking.

"Close the door." Yang Jian, after throwing in one last fierce ghost, appeared directly next to the door, closing it.

The limit of opening the Ghost Gate was reached.

The ghosts in the darkness were drawn over, wanting to use this door to exit, return to reality.

So the door must be shut immediately after being opened for a while.

This time limit is uncertain, maybe a minute, maybe five, influenced slightly by luck too.

Because after the door is opened, ghosts finding the door's position also takes time, if unlucky, upon opening the door, fierce ghosts are lingering nearby and rush out immediately; if lucky, no fierce ghosts linger behind the door, taking quite a while for any ghost to appear.

"Looks like this is as far as we can go." Zhou Deng patted the dirty mud on his hands, saying.

The door was shut.

"Bang!"

A loud crash sounded from behind the door.

The enormous impact nearly forced the door open, Li Yang hurriedly used the ghost door blocker supernatural power to forcibly seal the door.

The crashing continued.

Strange face contours appeared on the door.

It seemed some fierce ghost was banging its face against the door, leaving marks.

"Erase the drawn door." Yang Jian immediately instructed.

The two quickly smeared the fresh blood on the wall, destroying the shape of the door.

Soon.

The door protruding from the wall rapidly disappeared, as if sinking back into it.

The crashing from behind the door grew more terrifying.

The door originally sunk into the wall was forced to reveal itself from being hit.

Even though there was no longer any outline of the door, not meeting the requirements to open the Ghost Gate, it was forcibly influenced by supernatural power, being pulled back.

Li Yang broke into a cold sweat.

This ghost is fearsome, the Ghost Gate can't even seal it, seems today is incredibly unlucky, with a ghost behind the Ghost Gate that defies common logic.

Yang Jian didn't speak, he immediately reached out and forcibly removed the old door handle from the wall.

Without the maintenance of supernatural power, the door began to quickly disappear.

But the fierce ghost behind that door was unwilling to return to the darkness like this, faces began floating one after another on the wall, seeming determined to invade even without a door.

"Without the door handle, supernatural power can still influence here... This ghostly thing is terrifying."
Yang Jian stood firm holding the cracked spear, his face tense.

Should this thing dare invade, he would deploy every method to restrict it.

Otherwise, if this thing was let loose, the balance in the ancient mansion would completely break, and everyone would perish.

The contours of faces emerging on the wall multiplied, straining and twisting, like movie projections wanting to change from a plane to a three-dimensional image.

Yet the next moment.

All the face contours stopped struggling.

Followed by a rapid disappearance.

The eerie phenomenon on the wall subsided, leaving only remnants of several face contours.

The supernatural presence within the Ghost Gate eventually retreated without successfully invading.

Yang Jian let out a sigh of relief, he glanced at the red coffin.

The elder's corpse sitting within, at some unknown point, had turned facing this direction, its face still severe, harsh, and eerily enigmatic.

"Was it ultimately the elder's corpse that helped? Or did moving so many fierce ghosts away leave the elder with extra supernatural power to interfere with other ghosts invading the mansion?" Yang Jian mused silently.

It seemed.

The key to surviving today was ensuring this elder's corpse remained without anomalies.

Ghosts could handle ghosts.

The elder's corpse capable of dealing with so many fierce ghosts, how terrifying could it be?

Will the seventh day truly be uneventful?

Yang Jian felt that the previous days might just be appetizers, ultimately facing the elder's corpse.

"On the seventh day, this elder likely must be buried with my Coffin Nail; otherwise, he won't be suppressed."

Such a thought couldn't help but emerge in his mind.

If not sacrificing a Coffin Nail.

Should the elder's fiercest ghost revive on the seventh day, who could withstand this?