



Illusions, Lies, Truth Volume 1: **Human Doll Contract (Part 1)**  
Original novel in Chinese by: [御我 \(Yu Wo\)](#)  
Translated by [Prince Revolution](#)

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## Illusions, Lies, Truth Volume 1: Human Doll Contract (Part 1)

Original novel in Chinese by: 御我 (Yu Wo)

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## Prologue: Prologue

Viewing the website order page, I finally clicked the button to confirm my payment. Just like that, a sum of money that was really not a small amount landed in another person's pocket.

A giant wail rang out... Not from me but from the mouth of the golden-haired man beside me.

"You're definitely doing it on purpose!" the golden-haired man roared angrily. Then, he turned around and vanished just like that.

I pursed my lips. "What a child, really!"

Another man, a black-haired one, stood on my other side, a gentle smile on his face. His expression looked like that of a mother looking at two children who were having a fight... *Don't be ridiculous! I'm the mother, and you are the "child," got it?*

However, saying that a mature man who was near a hundred and eighty centimeters in height was a "child" was something I wouldn't even be able to convince myself of. After all, I didn't even reach a hundred and sixty, and when I stood in front of him, I could only see the red tie on the front of his chest.

Back to the main topic, what I had just ordered was called a Ball-jointed doll, abbreviated as BJD. The Chinese name was qiú tǐ guān jié rén xíng (球體關節人形, ball-jointed doll). It was a kind of doll that could imitate a human's movements to a large degree and was very popular at the moment.

Since word had even reached my ears, they were definitely super popular.

The doll shown on the webpage had a gentle smile and looked very similar to the black-haired man in front of me. In addition, I had chosen a wig that was identical to his hairstyle. After I put it on the doll, it would definitely look even more like him!

"Do you like it?" I asked, despite already knowing the answer.

As expected, the black-haired man smiled as he replied, "It is very much to my liking. I am extremely grateful to you, my lady."

The man seemed to look very happy, yet I didn't feel any sense of achievement at all. That was because this black-haired man was a butler. A true butler would never oppose their master. *Even if I ordered a Barbie doll with ample breasts and a slim waist for him, the corners of his mouth would probably still be pulled into a smile as he said that he liked it?*

This really makes me feel a little disgruntled. *If I were to buy the golden-haired one a doll, his ecstasy would probably make me feel a greater sense of achievement?*

No, no. I believe that the golden-haired man wouldn't be that happy either. After all, what he wanted in the end was not a doll but an actual body. The reason why he had been so angry that he ran away was only because he had lost against Mr. Butler and hence was off to throw a tantrum... Even though Mr. Butler had absolutely never competed against him for anything.

Actually, ordering another doll for the golden-haired man wouldn't make too much of a difference. After all, I had just received my salary recently!

Purposefully not ordering one for him was just a slight punishment for him. That despicable and shameless golden-haired man had deployed who knows how many despicable and shameless methods just so that I would call his name. Thankfully, I, this old woman right here, knew him all too well and my defenses against him were as deep as the Pacific Ocean; hence, he never got his way.

What? What's the big deal about calling their names?

Don't joke around. Their names cannot be called casually. Since the past, names have had a kind of magical power. Although the passage of time means that this power has been largely forgotten, for "things" like Mr. Butler and the golden-haired man, names still possess great power.

Don't ever call their names, because—

**Calling their name once would wish them into illusion, calling them twice would change them into lies, and calling their name thrice would make them come true.**

The golden-haired man and the black-haired butler were already "illusions," and following that, one had to be even more careful. One must not casually call their name, or else, if they were to accidentally be upgraded, then it would become a big issue.

"All of you are really such troublesome things!"

After saying that, a glance showed that the black-haired butler was still standing beside me. I hurriedly tried to mend the fold after the sheep had been lost, saying, "You are an exception!"

The butler maintained his smile, but I wasn't sure whether he believed me or not. However, what I said was the truth anyway. That was because the butler was simply too useful!

Though I didn't dare let him become "true" and did not even have the guts to change him into a "lie," I still couldn't help but find something for him to reside in. The ball-jointed dolls that were very popular recently really couldn't be more suitable... Excluding the price that was extremely unsuitable. It was simply so expensive that I was in agony. However, as long as Mr. Butler had something that he could reside in while he was here, then without me calling him, he could even come out by himself to help me clean, cook, and wash clothes. He was more useful than whatever automatic washing machine or vacuum cleaner there was. Thinking like this, that doll's price was simply too cheap!

The only thing that was slightly more troublesome was that I still had to personally take out the trash. A butler who was only an "illusion" simply didn't have the ability to walk up to the alley to throw away the garbage without causing a series of shrieks... After all, everything below his thighs was all translucent.

In the past, during a cold spell, I had nearly called the butler's name one more time for the sake of not wanting to go outdoors to take out



the rubbish. Thankfully, the garbage only needed to be taken out once a week, but I still could only barely manage to endure it.

"If there were a doll for you to reside in, would you have any way to make feet appear?" I inquired, attempting to try to even save on the effort of having to take out the trash once a week.

"For a short period of time, it should be possible. Moreover, this... " Mr. Butler looked at the order page, praising, "This doll is really amazingly human. This would make it even easier to maintain a disguise."

"Yeah, it's really like a human." I shot a glance at the doll on the webpage.

Wasn't it so? None of the muscles on the doll's body looked different from a human's, and there were even veins on the skin. Really, it was too much like a human.

## Chapter #1: Xiao Xue Part 1 – The Extra Girl

All along, Jiang Ziya had thought that the only abnormal person in the house was himself.

*Hm...* Perhaps there was also that father who had named his son Jiang Ziya<sup>1</sup> who then, on a certain day, said that he was going to become an apprentice to a master to become immortal and had since vanished. However, they had always treated it as though no such person ever existed in their family.

*However, right now, this current situation is...*

His twin sister Jiang Yu<sup>2</sup> was currently busy feeding wheat porridge to her two daughters. She fed them left and right and was truly very busy.

His brother-in-law Jiang Qibing<sup>3</sup> was eating while he looked at the report in his hands. Occasionally, he would turn to talk to him and ask him questions such as how it was at school and whether his recent grades were good and the like.

It all looked very normal, and the atmosphere was rather harmonious and happy with everyone getting along with each other. Looking at this picture, it could be said that this was a warm family.

However, there was one thing that made Jiang Ziya suspect whether this happy family had gone insane, or if it was himself who had gone crazy?

Jiang Yu had undoubtedly given birth to only one daughter.

At least, when he had gone out to go to class in the morning, it had still been one daughter. However, when he returned home in the evening, he saw a pair of sisters.

Upon returning home and opening the door, he had stared blankly at the two children, and the two of them even said in great unison, "Yaya-gēge,<sup>4</sup> you're back!"

At the time, Jiang Yu had been in the kitchen busy cooking, as though it wasn't odd at all that there was an extra child. When Jiang Qibing-jǐěfu<sup>5</sup> returned from work, he even asked one of the little girls whether she had helped mommy take care of her little sister.

Jiang Ziya then started to suspect that he had gone insane. He started trying hard to remember how many little girls there were in this family.

One of them was definitely a daughter of this family, for he was very certain that he had made a cup of milk for one of them to drink this very morning. Then, when she was burping, she had even vomited on him, forcing him take a shower and change his clothes, so that he wouldn't have the smell of milk all over him. In the end, it resulted in him being late for class, causing the professor glare at him for an entire lesson.

However, the other was very foreign. With a pair of large, watery eyes that were blue, silvery white hair that was long and wavy, filled with a brilliant luster, and skin as white as snow, she was so cute that she would be loved by all. She was even more beautiful than the babies in

television advertisements!

*But is this a Taiwanese child?*

No matter how you looked at her, she was like a foreigner! However, Jiang Yu and Jiang Qibing were definitely black-haired, black-eyed Taiwanese people who were born and bred in this very country. If they gave birth to a white-haired and blue-eyed kid, the first thing that they would do was probably a DNA test!

"Sis... Is this kid from next door?"

*Even though there is only a strange woman next door.* She seemed not to go outdoors at all, and he had never seen any visitors at her door. She was definitely a legendary female shut-in. Don't talk about a child, the only human that would go to her door was probably the postman.

Once he said that, the entire family's harmonious and happy aura suddenly disappeared.

Jiang Yu's hand that was holding a spoon stopped in mid-air, and Jiang Qibing's smile too froze on his face. The adults suddenly becoming still could still be considered normal, but the two children had also stopped at the same time. Their big eyes didn't blink at all, expressions frozen on their faces. At this moment, the two of them looked like a set of dolls, cute and charming, but not alive.

Under this silence, they slightly tilted their heads to the side. Their motions were so identical that they seemed to be carbon copies. They



appeared to be looking at him, yet they lacked focus in their eyes. It was as though two lifeless objects were staring at him.

A chill abruptly broke out on his back. Jiang Ziya was nearly about to jump up from his chair, but then, everyone continued moving as though nothing had happened. Jiang Yu even gave him a glare and unhappily said, "Stop joking around, don't you usually like to rub Xiao Xue's cheeks? Yet you're actually saying that she is a different family's child. Be careful, or else, she might cry for you to see!"

*—What Xiao Xue?*

He certainly liked to rub the cheeks of the other child, the normal Taiwanese one with black hair and black eyes! Her name was also not Xiao Xue<sup>6</sup> but Jiang Jiang.

When they had first named her, this pair of husband and wife had been ridiculously happy, saying that the name used both of their surnames, and when you read it, the repetition makes it very cute and the like.<sup>7</sup>

*There is no Xiao Xue at all!*

However, just now, the two children's motions had been exactly the same. It wasn't just Xiao Xue who was strange. There also seemed to be something wrong with Jiang Jiang.

*—That's not possible!* He undoubtedly remembered Jiang Jiang: the way she looked when she was born, how she grew up bit by bit...

At this moment, the white-haired, blue-eyed Xiao Xue stared at him with a pair of wide eyes in incomprehension. She shouted, “Yaya-gēge, what’s wrong?”

*Simply too darn cute!* Large eyes, soft cheeks, and a slightly pouting small mouth. They were both three-year-olds, but she was definitely ten times cuter than Jiang Jiang beside her!

However, Jiang Ziya didn’t have any urge to rub her hair or pinch her cheeks. That was because she was too beautiful. She looked like a model baby from a poster—no, even model babies were not this cute. Actually, she resembled a beautiful doll more, giving people a feeling that they should not carelessly touch her, in fear of destroying her perfection. Better yet, she should be shown inside a display window! Jiang Ziya hesitated for a moment, but he still closed his right eye and used only his left eye to glance at Xiao Xue.

Since young, he had known that his left eye was a little strange... Don’t be mistaken, it’s not the ghost-seeing eye, though he too had wondered before whether he had the ghost-seeing eye. However, that didn’t seem to be the case. Though his left eye could certainly see some kinds of things, they were usually not ghosts... A large amount weren’t anyway.

His father and Jiang Yu had taken him to see a doctor, and the doctor had said that it was hallucinations. Then, he had asked him whether he had received any psychological trauma between the time he was a kid until now, but he had never received any such trauma, other than how his dad had named him Jiang Ziya, causing him to be called Grand Duke Jiang<sup>8</sup> since young.

At the time, the doctor had resolutely and decisively said that this was the reason for the illness. The cause of the hallucinations was this psychological trauma. However, when he heard it, he only wanted to beat the doctor up so much that he would have psychological trauma! He first snuck a peek and felt that something was off, but this one glance wasn't enough to let him see what was so strange. Hence, he could only brush his hair a little to cover his right eye. Only after doing so did he shut his right eye, so as to avoid looking too strange with one eye open and the other closed, which would draw Jiang Yu and Jiang Qibing's attention.

Through his left eye, Xiao Xue's face was still unbearably cute: a pair of watery eyes that were large to the point of it being scary, long lashes, two deeply carved double eyelids, and soft, peach-colored lips. They were extremely small, smaller than most little girls'... *That's not a real human's face.*

*Xiao Xue is a doll!*

He wasn't so silly as to jump up and start screaming. Since he was young, he had already been treated as a mental case several times by his classmates precisely because of that. At this kind of time, the best thing to do was to stop, don't look, and don't listen.

However, this time, it was a little different. This was his home! He couldn't just watch as a doll became his niece, could he?

"Xiao Xue, after you have eaten your fill of dinner, Gēge will bring you to the park, okay?" Damn! Why did he feel like a strange uncle who

kidnaps little children?

Jiang Jiang immediately protested, "Not fair, Jiang Jiang wants to go too!"

Jiang Ziya immediately submitted. Anybody who has taken care of children before would know that children were the fussiest. If one child had something and the other didn't, the other one would definitely make a racket to the high heavens! It was also best not to waste your time reasoning with them because three-year-old kids would definitely not use logic with you!

He hurriedly said, "Okay, okay! You can go too."

Jiang Qibing felt a little strange and asked, "The sky is already dark. Isn't it a little late to go to the park?"

Jiang Ziya could only force himself to lie, "I heard that there is a mini night market there..." He leaned close to his brother-in-law's ear and whispered, "If I bring them out to play, then Jiěfu, you can conveniently go out to watch a movie with Sis."

Jiang Qibing's gaze shifted, and he quickly replied in a small whisper, "Thanks!"

Jiang Ziya only smiled, not daring to say "You owe me one" or take advantage of the situation to say "Help me write my report" and the like as he usually did. After all, he had an ulterior motive and wasn't actually trying to help him look after the kids.



"What are you two men whispering about?" Jiang Yu purposely pretended to be unhappy as she said, "Can't females listen?" As she spoke, she even purposely pulled the two little girls to her side, and the three of them looked at Jiang Ziya and Jiang Qibing with three pairs of watery eyes.

*Simply really cute...* But Jiang Ziya had realized that Xiao Xue was a doll just now. Although Xiao Xue looked normal to him most of the time, she would frequently accidentally show the ball-joints of a doll. If he looked from the left side, he would even see a complete doll... Yet it was moving!

Tiny fingers clutched the fork, and rosy lips that shouldn't be moving opened and closed. Her eyes that were so large that they were inhuman were blinking and blinking... He started to suspect that later on, would he really have the guts take her—No, take it out all by himself?

Although he had seen many mysterious and peculiar things since young, to go out holding hands with a doll which appeared out of nowhere... He really felt a shiver from the depths of his heart, all the way until goose bumps broke out on his skin.

Unfortunately, there wasn't an option for him to change his mind. After they finished their dinner, the husband and wife left to watch a movie holding hands, so lovey-dovey that he almost had the impulse to punch his own sister and her husband.

The two of them had been glittering and so lovey-dovey that he couldn't stand it, while they threw him a ghost doll to take care of. *Is*

*this right? Is this right?*

Whether it was right or not, in the end, that glittery couple had not waited a moment longer to leave after finishing their dinner.

“Let’s go.” Jiang Ziya summoned up his courage.

Actually, he too wanted to bring the two children out as soon as possible. To stay alone in the same room with a doll that could walk and talk was simply too scary! He almost didn’t dare to look at Xiao Xue. If Jiang Jiang weren’t around, he would have bolted out of the door long ago!

*Anyway, let’s hurry and go out! Looking at the time, the garbage truck should be here soon?*

When he walked out of the front door, he still remembered to lock the door. Jiang Ziya had a new understanding of how calm he could be, and it wasn’t really good news.

“Let’s go! We’re going downstairs,” Jiang Ziya said without looking back and then proceeded to walk down the stairs.

“Where are you taking me?”

Jiang Ziya instantly stood still. Just now, Xiao Xue’s voice was simply not like a child’s manner of speech in the slightest bit. Most importantly, the light in the staircase had abruptly vanished. He could only see halfway down the flight of stairs, and further below, it was so dark that it looked like there weren’t any stairs there. It looked as if it

was a black hole, and if one fell down it, it was highly possible that you would scream for a good three minutes before you hit the bottom.

Jiang Ziya looked at the black hole and fell silent for a long time. In the end, he admitted that he really didn't have the courage to go down. Suddenly, someone pulled the corner of his beach shorts. He was so frightened that he nearly fell down the stairs. By reflex, he turned his head back to look. The two little girls were each grabbing one corner of his shorts.

Currently, Xiao Xue looked completely like a doll. However, she and Jiang Jiang still had their hands linked. They no longer looked like a pair of sisters, but rather, a little girl with her doll.

Yet, the doll's expressions were actually more animated than the little girl's. Her eyes kept blinking, and the plastic eyeballs rotated flexibly. On the other hand, the little girl was as expressionless as a doll. Regardless, whether it was the expressionless little girl or the lively-looking doll—*they are both equally damn scary!*

Jiang Ziya became completely petrified. Going down was something he couldn't do, but going home and staying at home by himself was also equally scary. Just as he was trapped without any way out of this dilemma, the neighbor's door abruptly swung open. He had a feeling of being rescued, and he hurriedly turned his head over to look.

*Though the strange woman who lives next-door is also weird, she is definitely a hundred times better than a living doll!*

However, the person who came out was not a woman, but a man who

was so good-looking that he looked like he had walked out from a magazine's cover. His clothes also looked like clothes seen in magazines. He was wearing a white dress shirt, a black vest, and even a red bowtie. However, in his hands, he was carrying two rubbish bags that did not match the rest.

Jiang Ziya didn't know what kind of wild impulse took over him, but he spontaneously covered his right eye and used only his left eye to look at him.

A male doll who was the same height as the rubbish bags was holding onto two rubbish bags... It was a little funny, but after feeling so, he felt panic kicking in. He was so panicked that he had difficulty breathing, and even his scalp had gone numb.

Had he gone crazy? Could it be that this world had actually started to replace humans with dolls since a long time ago?

Jiang Ziya put down his hand and tried hard to use only his right eye to look at that man, asking, "The w-woman next-door, is she there?"

The man revealed an extremely gentle smile, as he answered smilingly, "Mistress? Yes, she is in..." He suddenly gave a light gasp, for there was a familiar sound coming from downstairs. With an apologetic smile, he said, "The garbage truck is here. My apologies, I have to go bring out the trash first."

After the man finished speaking, he instantly rushed downstairs in a hurry. Jiang Ziya didn't dare stop him either. Although he really wanted to open his mouth to request that he help throw away the doll



Xiao Xue too, since the other party was also a doll, he really didn't dare ask!

After taking in a few deep breaths, Jiang Ziya turned around to look at Xiao Xue and Jiang Jiang. The doll appearance of Xiao Xue had vanished again, and the two little girls held each other's hands as they both lifted their heads up to look at him. They looked just like a pair of sisters who got along very well.

"..."

Jiang Ziya gritted his teeth and then pulled back the corner of his shorts and pushed Xiao Xue aside. Picking up Jiang Jiang, he kicked open the door of his neighbor. After he dashed in, he even shut the door with all his strength and used his back to block the door. He hoped that the scene he had imagined with the doll knocking down the door wouldn't really come true!

As he panted heavily in his anxiety, he saw a woman sitting in the living room. She was wearing a loose singlet and shorts, as well as black-rimmed glasses. In her hands was a cup of coffee and a catalog of who knows what. Then, she lifted her head to look, stunned, at the person who had suddenly intruded.

Jiang Ziya hurriedly covered his right eye and looked with his left eye...  
*Thank heavens! She is human!*

"You're from next door?" The woman had obviously recognized him. Although they had not interacted, they did live next door to each other, after all, and would still see each other quite often. Most of the time, they would meet when they were taking out the trash.

"I-I... Anyways, let me hide here for a while!"

The woman tilted her head to look at Jiang Jiang and put down the coffee cup in her hand. Then, she took up a dagger that was on the coffee table at the side, before she said, "Not that I want to say this, but you really look like a strange uncle who is kidnapping a kid. Can I call the police?"

*Where did the dagger come from?*

Only now did Jiang Ziya manage to clearly see that that catalog was actually a weapons catalog. There were a bunch of handguns drawn on it. *This place... F\*\*\*!*

There were two machetes displayed crisscross on the wall, and on top of the television cabinet, there was a katana. On the coffee table beside her, not only were there daggers on top of it, there was even a gun. He completely couldn't tell whether that was a real gun or not, but anyway, it looked pretty real.

*Who is this woman? A terrorist? Could it actually be safer to go out and stay with the doll Xiao Xue?*

At that moment, the woman picked up the phone, looking as though she was really about to call the police.

"Don't call the police!" Jiang Ziya immediately said, "I didn't kidnap her! She is my sister's child! She lives next door together with me!" When he finished speaking, he suddenly remembered something important and asked in a hurry, "R-Right, do you remember how many

kids there are in my family?"

The woman shook her head, saying, "Kids? Don't know."

Jiang Ziya's face looked defeated. At this moment, Jiang Jiang, who was in his embrace, squirmed a little, saying, "Yaya-gēge, Xiao Xue is outside. She says that she also wants to come in. Gēge, let Xiao Xue come in! Let Xiao Xue come in!"

When she was speaking, she even had an adorable smile on her face... This smile made Jiang Ziya feel that she looked more like a doll than a human. It really felt very strange. He couldn't help but put Jiang Jiang on the ground.

At this point, the woman abruptly and coldly said, "I didn't let you in, scram!"

Jiang Ziya was stunned for a moment, but an earth-shattering cry suddenly came from Jiang Jiang. It was so loud that his ears started to hurt, and his brain became blank. He could only hold his ears and try to endure that head-splitting pain. He held on with difficulty until the shriek vanished, and when he looked up...

*Jiang Jiang is gone!*

"Where's Jiang Jiang?" Jiang Ziya completely couldn't understand what was going on, but Jiang Jiang was his sister's daughter! He roared, "What did you do to Jiang Jiang? Hurry and return her to me!"

He didn't imagine that the woman would actually be even more

enraged than he was as she shouted, "You barged into my place carrying that sort of thing, I still haven't gotten even with you for that, yet you still dare to ask me for something first?"

"T-That sort of thing?" Jiang Ziya really became frantic. "She's- She's my sister's child. That sort of thing is outside. Xiao Xue is the one who's a doll..."

The woman tilted her head to one side, saying, "Your sister is the housewife next door right? When I was taking out the trash, I met her before. She said that she has a twin brother. If I see a boy with a blue patch in his left cornea, then that would be you."

Jiang Ziya nodded his head. Not only did his left eye let him see strange stuff easily, but even its appearance was rather strange. On the upper-left corner of his black pupil, there was a tiny patch that had turned blue in color.

"She even said that she had gotten married a long time ago, and her partner was a high school teacher. At that time, matters had gotten out of hand, and her husband had even lost his teaching job because of it. After she graduated from high school, she got married to him. She really does love to talk. Not that I want to say this, but in that short time waiting for the garbage truck to come everyday, I'm already about to understand all eight generations of her ancestors!"

*Errrr...* It was true that his sister loved to chat. Jiang Ziya nodded his head

The woman tilted her head to one side, and with a shadow of a smile

on her face, said, "However, I don't remember that your family had children."

Jiang Ziya froze.

"Children should be very noisy, right?" As if she was considering something, the woman said, "However, I have never heard any children's voices coming from your place. I did, however, hear that she herself really likes kids. But after a check-up, they found out that her reproductive organs are very weak, and it's very difficult to keep a child. She had a miscarriage once and was considering adoption. However, I don't think you can adopt that kind of thing just now from an orphanage?"

At this moment, the front door swung opened. This made Jiang Ziya so frightened that he jumped, thinking that Xiao Xue had really knocked down the door and come in. He didn't imagine that he would instead see the man he had seen just now... *That man who is also a doll!*

He opened his eyes wide. Though he wanted to escape, that man just happened to be blocking the only exit. *There isn't much point in retreating further inside the house, is there?*

"H-H-He.... What exactly is he?"

The woman froze for a moment. She observed Jiang Ziya's expression and answered as though she was deep in thought, "You really can tell the difference? How can this be? I thought that this butler's disguise was already very perfect."

Jiang Ziya was stunned for a while. At this time, that butler walked up to him with two more steps, frightening him so much that he dashed behind the woman's back, screaming, "Don't come over!"

The woman gave a sigh, and with a helpless tone, said, "Sit down. Do you want tea or coffee? I'll make the butler leave the living room to prepare the drinks. That'll be fine, right?"

"... Cola."

"We don't have that!"

## Notes On The Chapter

<sup>1</sup> **“Jiang Ziya”:** (姜子牙) It is actually the name of a famous Chinese military strategist. Which is, needless to say, a very odd name to name your child. It’s like naming your child Cao Cao/Zhuge Liang. For those who still don’t get it, it’s pretty much naming your child Sun Wu Kong /Monkey D. Luffy /Hitler or something.

<sup>2</sup> **“Jiang Yu”:** (姜玉) Both of the twins use the surname “姜” (Jiang), which is a common surname and doesn’t really have much meaning to it. That means that her first name is only one character long, 玉 (Yu), which means jade.

<sup>3</sup> **“Jiang Qibing”:** (江其兵) Jiang Yu’s husband uses the surname “江”, which is also Jiang, and means river. Their surnames sound exactly the same but are written with different characters.

<sup>4</sup> **“Yaya-gēge”:** (牙牙哥哥) Yaya comes from duplicating the last character of Ziya’s name. It’s something that children tend to do, and it sounds cute. As for Gēge, it means brother in Chinese. Since this story is set in Taiwan, we will be keeping all Chinese names and Chinese honorifics.

<sup>5</sup> **“Jiěfu”:** (姐夫) It is Chinese for “brother-in-law” and is used both as a title and an honorific.

<sup>6</sup> **“Xiao Xue”:** (小雪) It’s very common for Chinese to attach a “Xiao,” which means Little, to girls’ names. So basically her name means Little Snow. (If you have read ½ Prince, remember Xiao Lan?)

<sup>7</sup> **"Jiang Jiang":** (江姜) Jiang Jiang's name is formed using the surnames of her father and mother, 江 and 姜.

<sup>8</sup> **"Grand Duke Jiang":** (姜太公) It is one of the nicknames for Jiang Ziya. (the ancient militarist) It seems to be a pretty commonly known nickname too.



## Chapter #1: Xiao Xue Part 2 – Yu Shu

Immediately after the butler left, the woman sat down. She seemed to have no inhibitions at all as she stretched out both legs on the sofa, acting as though there was no one in front of her. Then, she gave a self-introduction. "I am Yu Shu, a novelist."

"Yu Shu? I haven't heard that name before."

"...The door is behind you, on your left."

Jiang Ziya immediately corrected himself, "Yes, yes! I seem to have caught a glimpse of your books in the book store before. You wrote that, that... *Harry Potter*!"

Yu Shu bitterly growled, "That was written by J.K. Rowling! If I had written such a book, do you think that I would still be living across from your apartment? At the very least, I would be living in Dibao<sup>1</sup>— Okay, enough about me. Name yourself! Having to say 'you, you, you' constantly is really inconvenient!"

Jiang Ziya nodded his head, and then the words came out of his mouth. "My name is Jiang Ziya."

"...The door is behind you, on your left."

Seeing Yu Shu look at him as though she was looking at a madman, Jiang Ziya felt entirely speechless.

What was most detestable was that even he himself would admit that

if someone introduced themselves as Sun Wukong,<sup>2</sup> he would also tell the other person to turn around and exit through the door on the left.

The name Jiang Ziya was not any better.

In a situation like this, the simplest and most clear-cut method of solving this would be—presenting his identification card.

Yu Shu took the ID card and looked. The name printed on it truly was “Jiang Ziya.”

She scratched her face and returned his ID card, saying, “So your name really is Jiang Ziya... The world is full of extraordinary things. Sorry about that!”

Jiang Ziya nodded his head expressionlessly, and then pocketed his ID card.

“So... Grand Duke Jiang, what brings you to my home?”

“What an outdated gag!” Jiang Ziya immediately growled, “I just knew that you were going to call me that! Ever since I was a kid, people have always been calling me Grand Duke Jiang! Hmph. Aren’t you an author? How can you actually be this uncreative and even dare use such an old joke!”

“I am the queen of old gags! So what?” Yu Shu didn’t seem to mind in the slightest as she said, “I even opened a nursing home for elderly gags! I can’t do that? Grand Duke Jiaaaaang, if you have the guts, bite me!”

Jiang Ziya gritted his teeth in hatred, feeling his teeth itch in response. But he couldn't possibly get up and actually bite her! Especially since this person even had a butler that he was still uncertain as to whether it was a human, a ghost, or a doll!

However, the way Yu Shu kept laughing nonstop really pissed him off...

"Making fun of other people's names is not right! Didn't your parents teach you that? Don't think that just because you have a normal name, you can discriminate against those with uncommon names!"

"I'm not discriminating against other people. I'm only discriminating against you!"

"You..."

At this point, the butler came out with the drinks.

He smiled gently at Jiang Ziya, saying, "There is no cola in the apartment, so I have made milk tea with black tea and milk instead, then added ice cubes to it. Would that be to your liking?"

Hearing the butler's words, Jiang Ziya was a little touched. He quickly took the milk tea and gave his thanks. Once he drank a mouthful of the milk tea, his eyes immediately doubled in size. *Thick, fragrant, and rich...* This milk tea was so good it rendered him speechless! Who knew how many times better it was than the ones from drink stalls outside?!

He couldn't resist finishing it in one go.

"Would you like another one?" The butler asked with a gentle smile on his face.

Jiang Ziya nodded his head vigorously.

As the butler poured him more milk tea, Jiang Ziya secretly observed him.

Although this butler's true identity was that of a doll, he didn't look frightening at all. He was so handsome that there wasn't anything to criticize, and he was extremely gentle. He always had a smile on his face, and most importantly, he brewed really good milk tea!

"Why do you keep staring at my butler?" Yu Shu coldly said, "Even if you have fallen in love with him, I won't hand him over to you. Dream on!"

Jiang Ziya promptly turned around and roared, "Like hell I fell in love with him! If he were female, I might have considered it!"

"You don't think he's scary anymore?" Yu Shu drank her coffee, and said in a relaxed tone, "You seem to be able to accept stuff pretty easily."

Jiang Ziya grumbled, "I have seen a whole lot of strange things since I was young. I wouldn't have been able to cope if I wasn't this flexible, right?"

Yu Shu nodded, saying, "This is called adapting."

"We don't have time to be drinking milk tea!" Jiang Ziya had finished the milk tea he held once again, and then had abruptly remembered that he had not come here to drink tea. He jumped up and roared, "My family's Jiang Jiang..."

"Jiang Jiang isn't part of your family."

"Nonsense!" Jiang Ziya immediately yelled, "I still remember what she looked like when she was born. How is it possible that she isn't part of my family! Don't speak such nonsense. Hurry up and return her to me!" Faced with the enraged Jiang Ziya, Yu Shu continued to look nonchalant and even stretched. She then asked, "If so, do you remember what you were doing when you received the news that your sister was about to give birth?"

Jiang Ziya froze, and while trying hard to remember what he had been doing at the time, realized that he could not actually remember.

*Jiang Jiang is three years old.* If it was three years ago, he would have still been in high school. However, he didn't seem to have any recollection that he had ever left class halfway or run straight to the hospital after class. *Could it have been a holiday?* Then he would have followed them to the hospital, but he didn't remember doing that either...

"People's memories are really amazing. Normally, one isn't able to remember the details of most incidents, so instead one would naturally replace them with a 'plausible scenario.' Then, they act as though that is what had actually happened.

"People's memories are as unreliable as they can get!"

Yu Shu gave a cold laugh and said, "You should remember something like your sister lying on the hospital bed, and then the nurse carrying over a wrinkled new-born child. After that, you cautiously took her from the nurse's arms and cradled her... Some scene like that, right? Is there any difference between that and a scene from a television drama about a new-born child?"

*After hearing her describe it, there really doesn't seem to be any difference.* Jiang Ziya frowned. But the memory did not feel like it was a fake. He had obviously really experienced it!

Yu Shu lazily said, "It seems that although your eyes can see the truth, your brain is still very ordinary."

*What is that supposed to mean!?* Jiang Ziya unhappily asked, "Are you saying that I'm stupid?"

"No, an ordinary brain is the brain of an ordinary person. Don't randomly misinterpret what I mean!" After Yu Shu scolded him, she continued explaining, "Because you have the truth-seeing eye, but only an ordinary brain, you did not suspect Jiang Jiang, who had already become real. However, Xiao Xue, whose form is still that of a doll, could not deceive your eyes."

"Become real?" Jiang Ziya asked, blanking out.

"Calling their name once would wish them into illusion, calling them

twice would change them into lies, and calling their name thrice would make them come true.”

Jiang Ziya turned around to look at the butler. The latter still had a faint smile on his face. However, what the butler had just recited made him feel thoroughly confused. He didn’t comprehend its supposed meaning.

The butler smiled at him, saying, “I am an ‘illusion’ who has had my name called once by my mistress. Please pay attention to me for a moment.”

Hearing that, Jiang Ziya instantly stared at him with wide eyes.

The butler performed a very strange motion and gradually “drifted” to one side. In his original position, there appeared a male doll around seventy centimeters tall. Its appearance and clothes were almost exactly the same as the butler’s. When the butler stood beside the doll, the two didn’t look any different at all... Other than the fact that there was nothing below his thighs.

Jiang Ziya’s eyes grew even wider than before.

The butler explained patiently, “I am currently residing in that doll. For a short period of time, I can make myself look like a human. Only then can I help my mistress take out the trash.”

“So... you are a ghost?” Jiang Ziya relaxed a bit—*no wait! A ghost isn’t any better than a doll!*

"Of course not!" Yu Shu said unhappily, "Simply put, he is someone that I imagined and created. Do you understand now? Your family's Jiang Jiang must also be the product of someone's imagination!"

*How can something imagined possibly appear in real life...* Jiang Ziya felt like his brain had been scrambled up, and could only ask, "Then what about Xiao Xue?"

Yu Shu seemed deep in thought as she said, "Xiao Xue's situation is a little weirder. Do you remember anything involving dolls?"

Jiang Ziya unhappily replied, "How would I know... Wait!"

He stopped, abruptly remembering that his sister Jiang Yu had a doll. It was... a past birthday present that their father had bought for her!

That doll looked like... a little girl with white hair and blue eyes!

Jiang Ziya screamed. "So Xiao Xue is really a ghost doll?"

"That's not it!" Yu Shu roared angrily, "I already told you this has nothing to do with ghosts! My butler is not some ghost that appeared after some guy died! Forget it. I'm too lazy to explain it to you. Your brain is really too ordinary and is much worse than your eyes."

*Right now, this "ordinary" is definitely insulting me that I'm stupid!*  
Jiang Ziya felt very aggrieved.

"So are you going to return Jiang Jiang or not?" He shouted, "Jiang Jiang has gone missing! How am I supposed to explain this to my



sister and my brother-in-law?!”

“That’s weird. Don’t tell me that your Jiang Jiang will walk away by herself?” Yu Shu found it funny as she said, “I’m afraid it’ll be much harder than that to get her to leave!”

Hearing that, Jiang Ziya began to realize that things were not looking good. If Jiang Jiang really wasn’t a real girl, then it probably wasn’t a good idea to keep her at their place.

After considering this, he lowered his head and tried his best to lower his voice. He pleaded, “At least help us remember that our family doesn’t have those two girls. Please, considering how we are at the very least neighbors, you wouldn’t want to live across from two ghost dolls either, right?”

“... Did you forget I also have a ‘ghost butler’ at my place?”

*That’s right!* Only at this point did Jiang Ziya remember that in Yu Shu’s house, there was already a ghost butler that could help brew tea and even take out the trash! So what if there were two ghost dolls living across from her?

Yu Shu observed Jiang Ziya’s panicked and stumped expression for a while, until she was certain which one of her books she would insert a description of this expression in. Only after that did she say, “At your place, there is definitely someone whose ‘calling ability’ is very strong. Especially since you have an ability called the ‘truth-seeing eye,’ there is a high possibility that the others may also exhibit strange abilities. Usually, these kinds of abilities are passed down through the family.”

“What exactly is the truth-seeing eye?”

Jiang Ziya had never met someone who could discuss this with him before. Even if they were his classmates who were rumored to have ghost-seeing eyes, he still could not discuss it with them. That was because his eyes were similar to ghost-seeing eyes, yet different at the same time.

Occasionally he would see things that looked like ghosts, but most of the time he did not see such ghostly things. Even if he found someone who claimed to have ghost-seeing eyes, the other party would still treat him as a mental case!

“Truth-seeing eyes are, are... This is really hard to explain. Sigh, in any case they are eyes that can see the truth!” Yu Shu finished her explanation, a little frustrated, and then asked in curiosity, “Speaking of which, what have you seen before?”

“Things like, like birds that sing the latest popular songs when they open their beaks, strange mucus slimes or half-transparent angels flying in the sky. I know it sounds really crazy, and I’ve often thought that they were hallucinations. The doctor said that I had mental trauma, which is why I can see these kinds of things...”

After he had summoned up his courage to finish his words, he waited in despair for Yu Shu’s laughter, or for her to look at him as though he was a madman.

In his opinion, the chances of her bursting into laughter should be

higher.

After all, this woman kept a ghost butler in her house, so she was unqualified to call others crazy!

Unexpectedly, Yu Shu only raised an eyebrow. Then, she asked him something completely unrelated, "Have you ever told anyone else about the truth-seeing eye?"

Jiang Ziya was stunned for a moment and said, "I didn't know this is called the truth-seeing eye, but about my eye, I did mention it a few times before when I was still in elementary school. However, I was reprimanded by both the teacher and my classmates for speaking nonsense and was brought to see an ophthalmologist, as well as a psychiatrist. Afterward, I never dared to talk about it again."

"Very good." Yu Shu nodded her head and warned, "If you want to continue living a normal life, it is best that you never admit to having the truth-seeing eye. More importantly, don't tell anyone what kinds of things you can see with your eye, got it?"

Jiang Ziya froze and nodded his head. The truth was, he was already doing exactly that!

"Okay! Anyways, having the truth-seeing eye isn't a big deal. Back to the topic of the little girl at your place! In conclusion, there is definitely someone in your family who has a strong calling ability. Making an illusion become 'truth' is not something that you can easily do. There are quite a few people who can call illusions forth, but to call out lies is very difficult, let alone the truth! That really is just too powerful!"

Jiang Ziya looked stunned for a moment, but he quickly asked, "What happens if it becomes true?"

Yu Shu gave him a conflicted look and said, "If what became true is an ordinary little girl, then nothing should happen... Probably!"

*Probably?* Jiang Ziya absolutely refused to believe that nothing big would happen. Yu Shu's expression clearly implied that there would be big trouble!

"Since the thing that has appeared is a 'daughter,' and moreover many of these sorts of abilities are inherited, I think the one with the calling ability is most likely your sister. Besides, a mother's calling ability is usually stronger than the average person's, especially when it comes to matters concerning their children."

Hearing that, Jiang Ziya's mind went blank. It had never once crossed his mind that his sister would also have a strange ability.

"Regarding Xiao Xue, this is still easy to settle. All you have to do is destroy the doll. As for Jiang Jiang, there really isn't any way to deal with her since she has already come true. That is, unless you want to kill a person or abandon a little girl in cold blood."

Jiang Ziya was greatly alarmed. "Then what should I do?"

"Don't do anything!" Yu Shu shrugged as she said, "Anyways, as long as your family believes that Jiang Jiang is real, she will be real. As long as none of you suspect her, nothing will happen."

"But if we suspect something?"

Yu Shu gave him a sideways glance, and patted his shoulder as she said, "Try your utmost best to stop your sister and your brother-in-law from suspecting anything!"

*What is that supposed to mean?*

Jiang Ziya's eyes widened, but at this moment, the doorbell suddenly rang.

Startled, he turned his head and looked at the front door, fearing that the one pressing the doorbell was the doll, Xiao Xue.

The butler glanced at Yu Shu. After she gave a nod of her head, he went to open the door, a gentle smile on his face.

From the door, a familiar voice rang out. "Xiao Shu... Eh? Who are you? Xiao Shu! Is this your boyfriend?"

The one who poked her head in was an extremely excited Jiang Yu. However, at the sight of her, Yu Shu's face immediately fell. She casually admitted, "Mmh, that's right. Boyfriend and butler in the same package."

"Aiyah! Your boyfriend is so handsome!" Jiang Yu held the butler's hand tightly, and started introducing herself passionately, "Hi, hi, I'm Jiang Yu, and I live just across from here."

*Boyfriend?*

Jiang Ziya gave Yu Shu a look of extreme suspicion. *Whose boyfriend would wear a dress shirt, waistcoat with suit pants, and even sport a red bow tie while visiting their girlfriend? It's not like he came here to propose!*

Yu Shu gave him a deadly glare, mentally telling him to shut up. Jiang Yu happily smiled as she said, "I'm really happy Xiao Shu has finally gotten a boyfriend! I was initially very worried that she never went out. Whatever would I do?! I didn't think that she was secretly going out with such a handsome boyfriend! May I know how to address you, Mister?"

The butler continued to maintain a smile on his face, but he didn't reply. Yu Shu quickly cut in. "He's called House Keeper!"

"Eh?" Jiang Yu asked in astonishment, "House Keeper? As in the housekeepers that wealthy people have in their homes in television dramas?"

"Right! That housekeeper! His name is House and his surname is Keeper." Yu Shu nodded her head with matchless seriousness.

*... You could at least have named him properly!*

Jiang Ziya felt extremely sorrowful for this butler named House Keeper.

This name felt even worse than his own.

After hearing her explanation, Jiang Yu didn't seem to find it too weird. Then again, her own daughter's name was Jiang Jiang!

"What a unique name! Mr. House Keeper, nice to meet you!"

The butler had a gentle smile on his face as he said, "This is the first time we have met. Nice to meet you. You are welcome to come in and take a seat."

Hearing that, Jiang Yu smiled even more elatedly, and promptly said, "I won't bother you and Xiao Shu anymore. I'm here to find that rascal from my place."

After saying that, she turned around to look at Jiang Ziya. Her expression changed from one of happiness to one that could almost spit out fire.

She roared, "As expected, you were here! You actually dared to just abandon Jiang Jiang and Xiao Xue like that! They are still so young. What if something happened to them? Let me tell you, your brother-in-law is also furious. This time, he definitely won't help you out!"

In the presence of his sister who looked like she would eat him alive, Jiang Ziya could only lower his head and admit his mistake. After all, to his sister, Xiao Xue and Jiang Jiang were neither things that had their names called and became true nor were they dolls, but rather a precious set of twin daughters!

"You're still not coming home with me?! Don't stay here and be a third wheel!"

Hearing that, Jiang Ziya could only stand up and follow his sister home. Before he left, he seized the moment when his sister turned around and was not looking at him to turn his head back. He shot a pleading look at Yu Shu.

However, Yu Shu only wordlessly mouthed, "Burn the doll."

*It sure is easy for you to say!*

Jiang Ziya wanted to cry but no tears came out. He could only follow his sister home... Back to the home where there were two little girls.



## Notes On The Chapter

<sup>1</sup> **"Dibao"**: This is an expensive neighborhood in Taiwan.

<sup>2</sup> **"Sun Wukong"**: Also known as the Monkey King, this character is the main character of the Chinese classical novel "Journey to the West." In the novel, he is a monkey born from a stone and gets superpowers. He tries to rebel against heaven, but fails and is imprisoned under a mountain by Buddha. Afterward, he is freed by monk Xuan Zhang and accompanies him on his quest to retrieve Buddhist sutras from India. (Trivia: Son Goku is the Japanese name for this. We believe Dragonball fans and Saiyuki fans will know this well.

## Chapter #1: Xiao Xue Part 3 – Twins

Once Jiang Yu and Jiang Ziya returned home, they were faced with two enraged little girls and a father with his arms crossed over his chest. The three of them looked like a panel ready to judge him for his crimes.

“Gēge is a meanie!” Xiao Xue shouted while pouting, the first to start the wave of attacks.

“Meanie!” Jiang Jiang joined in too.

“It’s Jiùjiu, Uncle, not Gēge,” corrected Jiang Qibing. However, he was resigned to the fact that the two little girls had already identified Jiang Ziya as their brother. Since young, they had been calling him “Gēge.” Moreover, Jiang Ziya himself liked being called that, and would always refer to himself as “Gēge.” The result was that the two girls had become fixed in their habit.

Faced with three people ganging up to accuse him... Oh, that’s not right. He still had to add in his sister, who was behind him. So faced with four people, Jiang Ziya could only summon up his courage to apologize, “S-Sorry. I didn’t do it on purpose.”

“Really, just what is the matter?” Jiang Qibing had a gentle nature, and since his two daughters had stayed at home obediently without getting into any sort of trouble, he couldn’t find it in himself to stay angry for long. Confused, he asked, “You weren’t like this in the past. Didn’t you dote on Jiang Jiang and Xiao Xue a lot?”

“Jiěfu, think about it! This one here is called Jiang Jiang, but the other

is called... Xiao Xue? Don't you think that her name is strange?"

Jiang Ziya tried to get his brother-in-law to snap out of the illusion. According to what Yu Shu had said though, there was also a problem with Jiang Jiang. Still, Jiang Jiang at least resembled a human. Xiao Xue, on the other hand, was a doll. Therefore, he would prefer to get rid of Xiao Xue rather than Jiang Jiang.

Jiang Qibing froze for a moment, and then scratched his head as he said, "What are you talking about? Did you forget that Xiao Xue is called Jiang Xue? It's just that Jiang Jiang and Xiao Xue are easier to pronounce, so we have always been calling them that."

*So it was like that...No! Why are you having a sudden burst of realization? There wasn't any such matter!* Jiang Ziya knocked on his own head.

Jiang Yu walked forward and rubbed her little brother's head, feeling a bit of heartache as she reproached, "What did you hit yourself so hard for? Ziya, you're being really weird. Have you fallen sick?"

Jiang Ziya could only use that excuse to step out of the limelight, mumbling, "I guess so. My head kind of hurts today." *Actually, it's more like I'm so stressed that my head hurts.*

Jiang Yu placed a hand on his forehead, and after confirming that he didn't have a fever, nagged, "Then, go rest already!"

"Okay." He had just finished speaking when he felt someone tugging at the corner of his pants. He looked down and saw Xiao Xue standing

right by his feet.

"Gēge, bath!" Xiao Xue shouted. Following that, Jiang Jiang also threw herself at him, for fear of being abandoned.

Jiang Yu reproached the two little girls, "Don't play around. Gēge has a headache!"

*It's Jiùjiu!* At the side, Jiang Qibing could only shake his head helplessly. Even his wife was calling him that. It was a given then that the children would continue to call him Gēge non-stop... *Forget it, forget it, just treat it as if you've gained an extra son!* He sat on the sofa and opened his laptop to continue his unfinished work.

Jiang Ziya lowered his head and looked at Xiao Xue. Her cheeks were snow white and delicate, and she was so cute that she didn't look human at all. *Her body should also be as perfect and flawless, right?* As he imagined this, he felt goose bumps crawling all over his skin. He was just about to reject her when Xiao Xue grabbed onto the corner of his pants again. She stared at him with large eyes, as though she had something to say.

*Is this the so-called "eyes that you can get lost in?"* Jiang Ziya felt a little at a loss for words. Other people used the phrase to describe beautiful ladies, but he could only use it to describe a ghost doll. The difference between these two was way too large!

"That's enough! Let go of your Gēge now!" said their mother, giving them a final warning.

Jiang Ziya took a deep breath, and then said, "It's fine! I was about to shower anyway, so we might as well all bathe together."

"Is it okay? Doesn't your head hurt?" asked Jiang Yu, a little worried.

"That was then. It's much better now!" Jiang Ziya fibbed casually, "Just treat it as my atonement for leaving them at home. Otherwise, who knows what I would have to do to get the two of them to forgive me."

Jiang Yu observed Jiang Ziya's face. Only after confirming that his complexion was normal and that he wasn't in pain or feeling sick did she nod and agree.

As he brought the two little girls into the bathroom, Jiang Ziya didn't feel as afraid as he did before. After all, Jiang Qibing and Jiang Yu were both right outside. Moreover, if something really were to happen, at most he would just drag his sister and brother-in-law to Yu Shu's place opposite theirs!

*The adult butler, who is also a doll like her, should be able to defeat a little girl, right?*

*Come to think of it, to actually hope that the big doll living in the apartment opposite would defeat the small doll in my home, should I feel lucky that there's a big doll opposite or should I cry because there are dolls everywhere, both inside and outside my home?* As Jiang Ziya thought this, he felt a bit like crying, though he had no tears to shed. Shutting the bathroom door, Jiang Ziya lowered his head to look at the two girls. The two girls lifted their heads and likewise stared at him.

The three people stared at each other with six eyes. He hesitated, and then started to help the two of them undress. Of course, he started with Jiang Jiang. Then, with his skin crawling, he helped Xiao Xue undress.

Thankfully, if he didn't specifically use his left eye to look at her, Xiao Xue's body still looked relatively normal. She looked like a pale and delicate little girl, and was even extremely cute!

Jiang Ziya heaved a sigh of relief. Following the same procedure as he usually did for giving Jiang Jiang baths, he too removed his clothes and filled the bathtub with water. Then, he picked up the shampoo to wash the two girls' hair. *Being able to stay composed like this is really not a good thing.*

"Sit on the stool. I'll shampoo your hair."

As Jiang Ziya rubbed shampoo into their hair, he grieved over his level of composure that had increased by leaps and bounds.

As he rubbed their hair, he thought, *Though Xiao Xue's hair color is a little strange, her hair feels soft and fine, no different from Jiang Jiang's hair.* With this, Jiang Ziya felt more and more reassured.

After all, Xiao Xue looked like a little girl. Her mouth didn't suddenly rip open all the way to her ears, nor did her nails suddenly extend to killer lengths. Therefore, he grew increasingly unafraid of her.

"Gēge... Xiao Xue won't hurt Bàba and Māma, and also won't hurt Gēge."

From the front, a quiet child's voice rang out, and it even sounded shy. Jiang Ziya fell silent for a moment. He felt that something wasn't right. The previous ordeal had already reduced his fear by half. Now, hearing Xiao Xue's pitiful voice, he couldn't help but feel overwhelming sympathy for her...

*I really want to slap myself!* Jiang Ziya sighed inwardly and asked, "What about Jiang Jiang? Can you guarantee that you won't hurt her and won't want to replace her?"

Xiao Xue turned around and immediately scolded, "Gēge is an idiot!"

"Idiot!" Jiang Jiang giggled, a slightly devious expression on her face. However, because she was a little girl, that kind of expression was still extremely cute.

*Jiang Jiang's expressions seem to have become much more animated?* Jiang Ziya was a little surprised, but this made him feel more at ease. He even purposely rubbed the girls' soap bubble-covered heads, and started to play with them. He shouted, "How am I an idiot? To actually say that your Gēge is an idiot, realize your crimes~."

Jiang Jiang laughed merrily and said, "Jiang Jiang is more powerful than Xiao Xue! So Xiao Xue cannot harm Jiang Jiang!"

*F\*\*\*! Yu Shu was right. Something is wrong with Jiang Jiang as well.*

Jiang Ziya felt a little helpless, but his hands continued to busy themselves, helping the two little girls wash away the shampoo in their

hair, and then with lathering soap and showering...

"Xiao Xue, you look kind of weird. Could you change your appearance a little?"

While the three of them were soaking in the bathtub, Jiang Ziya finally admitted to himself that he couldn't do something as evil as "stuffing a little girl into the garbage truck." Therefore, he could only start to accept her as part of the family. *Just treat it as if I'm raising a pet!*

Xiao Xue didn't seem to understand what he meant as she asked, "What's so weird?"

*Everything is weird!* Jiang Ziya grabbed a lock of white hair and explained, "Take your hair color for example. In Taiwan, there aren't any little girls with white hair! Look at Jiang Jiang. She also has black hair!"

Xiao Xue seemed to understand yet not understand at the same time. She nodded her head, saying, "As long as it's black, it's okay?" As she finished speaking, her white hair actually turned black.

Jiang Ziya's eyes shone. This way, Xiao Xue really looked much more normal. Immediately, he suggested, "Eyes a little smaller, mouth just a bit bigger, skin not that white, and slightly yellower. Not that kind of banana yellow! Look at Jiang Jiang's skin color... That's right, you might as well change your appearance to look exactly like Jiang Jiang's. You two are the same age, so you can be twins!"

This way was much simpler for him, saving him a lot of time and effort.



Xiao Xue nodded, and her appearance gradually became more similar to Jiang Jiang's. In the end, the two girls had become a pair of twins.

Seeing how Xiao Xue finally looked like a normal Taiwanese child, Jiang Ziya heaved a sigh of relief. However, once he relaxed, he couldn't help but feel unsure whether to laugh or cry. Why did he feel like he was adjusting a character's looks while playing a game?

After helping the two girls dry and put on their clothes, Jiang Ziya then discovered that the two pajamas were almost identical. The only difference was that one was pink and the other was a baby blue.

"Why are there two matching sets of clothes?" He was a little doubtful. "Could it be that these also 'appeared?'"

Jiang Jiang shook her head and answered, "Jiang Jiang likes pink and blue, and always buys two sets of clothes!"

He truly didn't know about this. Now as he tried to recall, he didn't seem to be very clear on the specifics regarding Jiang Jiang... Jiang Ziya shook his head. No matter what, he didn't want to suspect Jiang Jiang. This was his sister's only child!

*Only child...* He looked at Xiao Xue. The two girls were currently having a great time playing. *Now it has become "only two children."* He momentarily felt a little weak.

As he lay in bed, reading a storybook to the girls, a thought abruptly hit him. *Not only did I not burn Xiao Xue, I helped disguise her, and even coaxed her to sleep. Yu Shu won't choke me to death, will she?*

*Hmph! A person raising a ghost doll as a butler isn't qualified to choke others!*

## Chapter #2: Jiang Jiang Part 1 – Those Things that Cannot be Remembered

“Oh no! I’m late again!”

A tragic cry came from the second floor, and it was so loud that it could practically shake the heavens. Thankfully, by this time, it was already past nine in the morning. Among the neighbors, those who were employed had already gone to work, and those who were studying had already left for class. Not many people were at home.

Jiang Yu had originally been a little worried about waking up Yu Shu, who was next door, because she seemed to be a night owl. However, she had asked her about it once when she was taking out the trash. Yu Shu’s reply was that during the morning, she would always sleep very well. Even if there was a temple parade outside, with gongs and drums, along with firecrackers being set off, she would still be oblivious.

“Ziya, breakfast.”

Jiang Yu had already become very accustomed to this, and she had already packed up her little brother’s breakfast. Once she heard Jiang Ziya running down the stairs with loud thuds, she stood right at the end of the stairwell and held up the Kraft paper bag with his breakfast in it. When her brother passed by like a gust of wind, he conveniently whisked away his breakfast.

Jiang Ziya put on his shoes while shouting, “Morning, Sis. Bye!” and then dashed out of the door.

Jiang Yu shook her head, and then returned to caring for her two daughters, who were in the midst of eating breakfast.



After dashing out of the apartment, Jiang Ziya hopped on his motorbike. Though he was in a terrible hurry, he didn't dare exceed the speed limit. If he were to receive a speeding ticket, their house would have to eat porridge and cabbage for an entire week. For him, having to eat that was a small issue, but he couldn't stand forcing his sister and brother-in-law to eat them along with him.

As for the two little girls at home, even if the three adults were unable to eat a proper meal, they would still think of any method they could to let them eat their fill and dress warmly.

"Why is there a traffic jam?!" He was so anxious that he was on the verge of vomiting blood. There was roll call in class today!

*A motorcycle is actually unable to squeeze past, Jiang Ziya couldn't help but mutter in his heart. What is going on? Isn't Taiwan's traffic a little too horrible...? Right now, it's not even morning rush hour... Huh, an accident?*

The muttering stopped in an instant. Jiang Ziya wanted to turn back, but it was already too late. Although he did not usually see things that were commonly called "ghosts," it was unavoidable that they would appear at the scene of an accident. Therefore, he always tried very hard to avoid certain terrifying photographs and scenes where accidents had taken place. Because of this, he had even gained the title of "King of Cowards."

But, he would rather be cowardly than see those kinds of things. However, now that he was in a situation where there were cars in front of him and scooters behind him, it was difficult to advance or retreat. There was no way he could avoid the scene, and he could only steadily go forward with the flow of cars. He wanted to turn his head away, but he had to keep his eyes on the road ahead, and he couldn't possibly stop himself from seeing the accident out of the corners of his eyes—not to mention that it was impossible to overlook something of that size!

The accident seemed to involve a car and a scooter. The crash was very serious, and fragments of the scooter covered the ground. There was even a large pool of blood. The victim wasn't there. The ambulance had probably already carried the person away. However, this didn't stop Jiang Ziya's accursed left eye.

It was a girl. Who knew? She might even be a student at the same university as Jiang Ziya.

The enormous, black-colored death god was as tall as two people. It wore a ragged black robe, faintly exposing its skeleton and decaying flesh. It had a nauseating rotting smell, and within its eye sockets, there were even two blood-shot eyeballs!

A girl knelt in front of that thing. In comparison, the girl looked like a newborn lamb. On her ankles were many thorny shackles. She was then dragged away by the death god.

Her screaming never ceased. Her body was sprawled on the ground,

and as she was dragged away, a trail of blood was left behind. Both of her hands were desperately trying to cling onto something, but all that surrounded her was the asphalt road surface. She could only use her fingertips to try and grip onto the bumpy tar.

Her fingernails fell off, the skin of her fingertips became chapped and raw, and the white bones of her fingers made a sharp screech as they scratched against the ground...

Jiang Ziya turned his face away. He had seen all kinds of strange things, but the ones that he had the hardest time accepting were always the things like this.

He took in a few deep breaths and continued slowly advancing forward with the flow of cars. Whether he would be late or not was an issue he no longer cared about. At least he was still alive, thank the heavens. When he arrived at school, class had already been dismissed. If the roll call had been done during the first period, then even if he went to his second period, it would be of no use. However, he did not mind. Just being alive was good enough.

"Why are you putting on such a dead face so early in the morning?" A bold voice asked straightforwardly.

Jiang Ziya flung his bag on the table and lazily sat down. He asked, "Have they taken attendance?"

"Count yourself lucky. They haven't." Lu Yang also sat down. The two of them had been good friends since high school. The reason why the two of them got along was because there was something

strange about both of them.

Lu Yang was of mixed blood. Having a head of brown hair wasn't an issue, since there were many people who dyed their hair nowadays. However, he had a pair of green eyes and pronounced facial features. As for Jiang Ziya, he had a blue patch in his left eye and behaved strangely. Therefore, the two of them had naturally grown close. It had been like this since high school.

Jiang Ziya helped Lu Yang with his homework so that he wouldn't fail, and Lu Yang, who was trained in wrestling, helped Jiang Ziya keep trouble seekers away. It had always been this way.

However, the other classmates had always found it very strange. Lu Yang had a refined appearance and didn't look in the slightest like someone who would beat people up. Jiang Ziya was even a little taller than him. In addition, Jiang Ziya, who skipped lessons so often that he seemed on the verge of getting kicked out of school, didn't seem like someone who was good at studying.

Jiang Ziya opened up his breakfast and took a look. It was a club sandwich, milk, and a tea egg. Because his sister's cooking was always very good, it smelled delicious. He then shoved his breakfast at Lu Yang.

"What's wrong?" Lu Yang asked, "Did you see something strange again?"

Jiang Ziya nodded his head, feeling a little weak. He was hungry, but after seeing that kind of horrid scene, he simply did not have the

confidence to say that he could stomach a breakfast that had meat and tomato sauce in it.

"O.K. Swap!" Lu Yang didn't persuade him to eat, and only threw him a bag of potato chips. Jiang Ziya shot a grateful look at his good friend.

"It's that, right?" Lu Yang ate as he asked, "I heard that one of our first year female students got into a car accident."

*As expected, she was from our school, huh...* Jiang Ziya's heart sank.

"But I heard that she seems to be alive!"

"Is that true?" Jiang Ziya felt a little surprised. Usually, if he were to see a situation that horrible, the person was dead.

"Yeah, my junior sent the news to me. She seems to be unconscious still, but not dead." Lu Yang swallowed the sandwich, and as he fiddled with his phone, said, "I heard that she's a beauty and also runs a blog. She's considered to be a web beauty with a bit of fame... Look! She looks pretty good, doesn't she?"

Lu Yang turned the phone toward Jiang Ziya's face. On the screen, there was a big-eyed beauty, and he could faintly see cleavage that had been squeezed out on purpose.

Jiang Ziya's eyes widened.

Lu Yang asked seriously, "Your expression doesn't seem like you saw a beauty but a ghost. What's wrong? Did something appear in the



classroom?”

“There’s nothing in the classroom. It’s just that, the one I saw at the scene of the accident wasn’t her...”

*Just what on earth is going on?*

“Hm?” Lu Yang looked at the girl displayed on his phone and said, “It’s probably because of the angle! Nowadays, girls like to take pictures from above, so the photos and the actual person actually look quite different.”

Jiang Ziya shook his head and replied, “They’re completely different. The person I saw had black hair, no make-up, and was wearing jeans with sneakers. This person has brown hair and is wearing thick make-up with fashionable clothes. They’re simply two different people.”

Lu Yang scratched his head and said, “Then, they should be two different people. The person that I heard of isn’t the type who would go out without make-up. Perhaps what you saw was something that happened in the past?”

Jiang Ziya felt that it was a little peculiar. Since he had seen a girl being dragged away by a death god, then it should have been something that had just occurred. However, he had no intentions of thinking too much on this issue. Anyways, it was impossible for him to find out the real truth of the matter, so he just shrugged his shoulders and said, “I guess so! Since she’s fine, I guess it doesn’t matter.”

At this point, a strange smile crept across Lu Yang’s face. This made

Jiang Ziya feel alarmed. *This smile...*

"Help me write my reflection report. I have to hand it in this afternoon."

*As expected!* Jiang Ziya rolled his eyes at him and unhappily asked, "What did you do last night? Just once while I'm still alive, can I see you do your own homework?"

"Definitely, definitely! Before you die, I will definitely do it once."

"... Damn you!"



With his head down, Jiang Ziya worked hard at writing the reflection report during lunch. Lu Yang, the owner of the homework, was instead sitting opposite him and eating a bowl of Yangchun noodles.<sup>1</sup> As he had no appetite, Jiang Ziya only had bread.

To be eating while another person did his homework made even Lu Yang start to feel a little embarrassed. He said, "Are you free tonight? I'll treat you to a meal. I know a place with pretty good seafood stir-fry."

Jiang Ziya rolled his eyes as he commented, "Is there an offer now that if I collect the points from doing your homework five times, I get a meal in return? I would rather see you do your homework obediently."

Lu Yang shrugged his shoulders and said, "Can't do that. I'm too busy!"

"You're helping out with family matters again?" Jiang Ziya tried

inquiring.

“Yeah.”

Hearing this simple response, Jiang Ziya didn't continue his line of questioning. Since high school, he could tell that Lu Yang was reluctant to mention his family matters. Therefore, Jiang Ziya didn't ask much. Occasionally, he would ask about it, testing whether the two of them were close enough for Lu Yang to share the issue. However, since it always failed, he didn't continue asking further.

“Is it unfair?” Lu Yang seemed a little awkward as he said, “You have already told me about the issue with your eye, but I—”

“Nothing of the sort,” Jiang Ziya interrupted him. “The issue with my eye was something that I wanted to tell you. The fact that you are willing to believe me already makes me want to thank the heavens.”

Lu Yang's expression turned mushy and he shouted, “Ziya, I love you so muuuuuch!”

“You love that I help you do your homework!” Jiang Ziya threw the assignment at the other person's face, causing a series of exaggerated screams of pain, though Jiang Ziya didn't believe them in the slightest.

“Nonsense. My love for you is even taller than the mountains and deeper than the seas. Especially before final exams...”

“Go die!”

After horsing around for a while, Jiang Ziya started to feel a little hungry. With one hand, he messed up Lu Yang's fashionably gelled haircut into something that resembled a bird's nest. Afterward, he said, "I'm going to buy another bread bun."

Lu Yang made a face like he was going to wail, but since he was holding homework that someone had just finished for him, he could not put up any objections. He only gave an "Okay," and then took out his mirror to try and salvage his messed up hair.

Biting on unpalatable bread leftover from the lunch crowd, Jiang Ziya walked while concentrating hard on memorizing English words. This was his habit. It was not because he was very studious, but rather because he wanted to stop himself from looking around and seeing things that shouldn't be seen... However, because of this, his chances of walking into a wall were also greatly increased.

However, there were benefits too.

Because of his habit, his grades were always excellent. Of course, another reason for that was because Jiang Ziya refused to risk failing a subject. He didn't have the money to attend summer classes, and summer was an important time for him to work part-time!

Suddenly, someone bumped into his left shoulder, and following that was a voice exclaiming, "Sorry, sorry!"

Jiang Ziya replied reflexively, "It's okay—"

Halfway through his words, he was stunned.

The other person was a girl holding a cup of cola and a Big Bite. Her black hair was tied into a ponytail, and she was wearing a simple T-shirt with jeans and sneakers. The key thing was, her face looked about eighty percent similar to the girl who had been dragged away by the death god this morning...

However, Jiang Ziya couldn't confirm whether it was true or not. After all, at the accident scene this morning, that girl's face had been completely contorted, so it simply wasn't easy to recognize her. The girl was extremely awkward as she said, "My cola spilled onto your pants."

Jiang Ziya checked, and on his back pocket, there really was a small wet patch. He shrugged and said, "Jeans only require a bit of washing. It's fine."

The girl observed Jiang Ziya carefully. Seeing that he truly did not mind, she gave him a grateful smile.

"Lin Zhixiang, hurry, hurry! There's a spot here!" Another girl waved frantically from a table close-by.

The girl turned to shout "Coming," and then politely gave an apology of "I'm really sorry about that" to Jiang Ziya again. Then, with her cola and Big Bite, she left the scene cautiously, deeply afraid of bumping into someone again.

Watching the girl's back, Jiang Ziya hesitated. However, he still didn't go up and ask her. While he was growing up, he had already made a

fool of himself too many times because of that eye of his.

Since the other person was still standing here perfectly fine, and the junior who had gotten into a car accident was also still alive, everyone was fine, so everything was good. He didn't need to create trouble—the fact that two little girls had suddenly appeared at home was already enough to deal with.

Thinking about the two girls at home, he realized that he could and ask Lu Yang about it! Jiang Ziya was a little curious as to Lu Yang's answer of how many girls there were at his place. He had talked to Lu Yang about his family before, so Lu Yang should remember.

He walked back to the table in a hurry and saw that Lu Yang was currently looking at his smart phone with his head down.

"Smart phone addict, be careful of getting a double chin!"

Jiang Ziya was simply unable to understand the joy of staring at a cell phone.

However, perhaps it was also a case of sour grapes. He had to admit that he could not afford something like that, so he naturally would not know the joy of it.

Lu Yang lifted his head, and with a grave expression, said, "The junior woke up. However, I heard that she might have been shocked out of her wits. She keeps saying some crazy stuff."

"Are you an information broker?" Jiang Ziya gave his classmate a

strange look. "Why are you always the first to know these kinds of things?"

Previously, it was all gossip, so he didn't pay it any attention. This time, to even know about an accident... It made him start to consider whether his classmate from high school was hiding some kind of great secret.

For example, maybe his father was the head of the Secret Service Agency... But did Taiwan have a Secret Service Agency?

"That's simple. She is my junior's roommate!"

Jiang Ziya frowned as he asked, "Your junior's roommate? Last time at the meeting, didn't all her roommates come? I don't remember this woman being there..."

"I have more than twenty female juniors."

"Once again, I shall represent the 'Go Die' group to tell you again, 'Go die!'"

Lu Yang lifted his head and starting sizing up Jiang Ziya. His gaze made Jiang Ziya's skin crawl. Then Lu Yang said, "With a bit of dressing up, if you wanted to have more than twenty female juniors, it wouldn't be hard. Your face is pretty decent, and you're tall. That you aren't too muscular either is considered pretty rare. Right now, your kind of looks is considered 'in.' Go get a haircut and style your hair with some hair gel?"

"No money," was Jiang Ziya's blunt reply.

Lu Yang enthusiastically suggested, "How about I give it to you for your birthday this year? It saves me the trouble of having to think of a gift."

"Forget it. I have no interest in dressing up."

"If you're like that, you won't be able to get married off to someone."

"It's fine to not get married off to... Your mom!"

Lu Yang rubbed his jaw, saying, "My mom might actually be very happy."

Jiang Ziya stuffed the plastic wrapping from the bread into Lu Yang's mouth and sat down to eat the bread. He got through half of it before he remembered to ask Lu Yang about the girls, and quickly questioned, "Lu Yang, do you remember how many kids my sister gave birth to?" Lu Yang seemed blank for a moment, and asked back, "Wasn't it just Jiang Jiang? Did she have another one?"

Lu Yang knew Jiang Jiang, but he didn't know about Xiao Xue. Jiang Ziya couldn't help but start to hesitate. *From the looks of things, could there really be something wrong with Jiang Jiang?* He was still unable to believe so, but even Jiang Jiang herself had admitted that she was stronger than Xiao Xue.

Assuming his sister had never given birth to Jiang Jiang, then since when had the problem started?



“Lu Yang, when did you find out about Jiang Jiang being born?”

Lu Yang frowned and felt that the question was a little strange.

However, seeing how serious Jiang Ziya’s expression was, he tried to earnestly recall the situation, and answered, “Let me think. Jiang Jiang is three years old, which means she was born when we were still in high school. Hm... We became closer in the second half of our first year... What day and month is Jiang Jiang’s birthday?”

Jiang Ziya froze for a moment, his brain a complete blank. Then, a date flickered in his mind, and he let his mouth slip, “The fifteenth of May.”

Lu Yang turned on his smart phone, lowered his head, and started fiddling around with it. After a moment, he said with a quiet voice, “It’s actually not there.”

“What isn’t there?”

“There actually isn’t anything recorded in the perpetual calendar of my phone. You weren’t absent that day. In those few days, I didn’t hear about your sister giving birth either.”

Lu Yang had been a serious cell phone addict ever since high school, and he had a habit of recording things on his phone. Jiang Ziya was also very aware of that. After all, Jiang Ziya had secretly warned Lu Yang “The teacher is coming. Quickly hide your phone,” innumerable times while they were in high school.

"No way. There's nothing at all..."

Jiang Ziya asked with furrowed brows, "What now?"

Lu Yang frowned as he replied, "On my phone, there are no records at all of you talking to me about 'Jiang Jiang.'"

*As expected, something is wrong!*

Jiang Ziya feigned being relaxed as he said, "Perhaps you missed it. There are so many things happening every day. You couldn't possibly write everything down."

Lu Yang flatly denied the possibility, "That's impossible. As long as it involves you, I would definitely have recorded it down!"

"... If you say it that way, it sounds really disgusting."

Lu Yang gave him a roll of his eyes as he said, "What are you so grossed out about? I even keep records of more than twenty juniors. Having your record is not strange at all."

Jiang Ziya decided never to tell Lu Yang any embarrassing things in the future to avoid them being recorded down and passed on for a thousand years.

Lu Yang started muttering, "When exactly did I learn about Jiang Jiang... That's strange, that's really strange..."

*Oh no, now Lu Yang's suspicions have been raised. Jiang Ziya started*

to feel that things were not good.

Lu Yang pondered silently for a long moment, and then suddenly said,  
“Ziya, I seem to remember your sister had a miscarriage before?”

Jiang Ziya was shocked for a moment.

*That’s right!* Roughly a year ago, when his sister had just found out that she was pregnant, everyone was ecstatic. Though his sister was still young, his brother-in-law was not as young anymore. The two of them liked children and had decided to have one after their financial status had stabilized a little more... At that time, they didn’t have Jiang Jiang yet!

Jiang Ziya had an epiphany. That was his sister’s first pregnancy, and everyone had been full of anticipation. Therefore, at that time, Jiang Jiang couldn’t possibly have been there!

That’s right! Just what exactly was he thinking?

He was twins with his sister, and three years ago, they were both high school students. Moreover, it was only until after graduation that she got married. It was completely impossible for her to already have been pregnant with Jiang Jiang at that time, so Jiang Jiang really didn’t exist—

**—Gēge, don’t!**

## Notes On The Chapter

<sup>1</sup> **"Yangchun noodles:** For those curious, you can read up on Shanghai cuisine [here](#). Yangchun noodles feature thin noodles in clear soup without a lot of other ingredients.

## Chapter #2: Jiang Jiang Part 2 – Those Things that Cannot be Seen

“Jiang Jiang?” Jiang Ziya was shocked and jumped out of his seat. He looked around in all directions, but there was no trace of Jiang Jiang in his surroundings. There were only a few students currently staring at him with mystified looks, shocked by his actions.

“Ziya, what are you doing?” Lu Yang stood up too, a little worried about him.

Jiang Ziya returned to his senses, and he forced a smile as he said, “It’s nothing. I just thought that someone was calling me. It seems like it’s almost time for class. Let’s go! If I skip class again, the professor will probably flunk me for real.”

Lu Yang slowly got ready and said, “The professor wouldn’t bear to flunk you. He praised the English paper you submitted last time for an entire half a lesson!”

Jiang Ziya didn’t agree and said, “Nothing of the sort. Why would I not know about it?”

“That day, you skipped class to work part-time, so I was the one who helped you hand in your homework. So, after he spent half of the lesson praising you, he spent the other half scolding you.”

“...”

Lu Yang shook his head and said, “You’re really too much! If your

sister and brother-in-law were to find out that you were skipping classes to work, it would be strange if they didn't get angry! If it's because you don't want to ask them for money, I can lend some to you first. Then when we're on summer vacation, you can pay me back after you work part-time. Will that work?"

Jiang Ziya kept silent, and Lu Yang knew that it was a lost cause. Jiang Ziya's personality was actually very easygoing, but once it came to his principles, there was no negotiation!

Only if his family was urgently in need of money would there be the likelihood that Ziya would borrow money from him. Probably.

"Do you know the girl sitting there?" Jiang Ziya chose to avoid the topic and pointed at the girl who had bumped into him earlier. *I think she's called Lin Zhixiang?*

Lu Yang raised an eyebrow and said, "Of course I don't know her. Who do you think I am? Do you think if you were to point at a random person, I would know them? As if!"

"If you don't know, then forget about it." Anyway, he'd only wanted to change the subject.

"Forget about it? I can't do that!" Lu Yang coldly snorted and said, "I'll give you her info before school ends!"

Jiang Ziya rolled his eyes and said unhappily, "Why are you so persistent? I was just asking casually."

"No way! It's rare that you would actually ask about certain 'female life forms,' so I will definitely help you investigate!"

"You seem to be able to find out everything. If it weren't for the fact that you are Taiwanese, I would almost think that your father is an American FBI agent!"

"... Did you forget that my father isn't Taiwanese?"

"Oh yeah, you're of mixed-blood! So, your father really is an American FBI agent?"

"Special agent, my ass!" Lu Yang rolled his eyes at him and said, "My father isn't American. He's Anglo-Australian! Also, he's lived in Taiwan longer than you've been alive. Let me tell you, he might even be more like a true Taiwanese than you are!"

Jiang Ziya said casually, "Yes, yes. Anglo-Australian, we should go to class."

Lu Yang angrily shouted in Taiwanese, "I am a true Taiwanese person!" Jiang Ziya had to admit that Lu Yang spoke Taiwanese much better than he did, even though it didn't match at all with his appearance of mixed descent. However, other than his looks, Lu Yang was indeed born and bred on this land. None of his actions were like a foreigner's at all.

"Alright, true Taiwanese person. Now, let's go to class--"

Before he could finish speaking, a small commotion occurred in the

vicinity. Jiang Ziya turned to look and realized that the female classmate who had bumped into him earlier was sprawled on the table, motionless. The friend by her side was so frightened that she kept calling the unconscious girl's name.

"Zhixiang! What happened to you? Why did you suddenly faint? Don't scare me!" She shook Lin Zhixiang and was so anxious that she was about to burst into tears.

Jiang Ziya frowned and looked at their surroundings. Though everyone's expressions were hesitant, no one stepped forward to help. He exchanged a look with Lu Yang and walked up to them.

"What's wrong? Do you need some help?" Lu Yang started asking first, filled with concern for the two people.

The girl said in a panic, "Zhixiang, s-she suddenly just fell over."

"Don't worry, let me take a look." Lu Yang went to skilfully touch the side of the unconscious girl's neck. It looked like he was checking her pulse, which made Jiang Ziya ogle him briefly. He momentarily felt as though his friend truly might have something to do with an investigation bureau. This action was exactly the same as what was done in the TV series, CSI Crime Scene Investigation... However, the people CSI usually dealt with were all dead ones.

"Relax, she should be fine. Maybe she's too tired. I'll bring her to the infirmary!"

After saying that, Lu Yang gently adjusted the girl's position a little. He



then lifted her up in one go. He was as laidback as if he was carrying a pillow. All the surrounding people stared at him with disbelief in their eyes.

Jiang Ziya was the only one who was not surprised. Since high school, he had seen a lot of what Lu Yang was capable of and was already used to it. He would only be surprised if Lu Yang started flying one day!

Lu Yang called out to him, "Ziya, are you going to class by yourself first?"

After thinking about it, Jiang Ziya said, "I'll just follow you."

Normally, if he weren't of any help to the situation, he really would go to class by himself. That way, he would avoid the chance that the professor might not make allowances for him and would count it as another skipped lesson. However, the person in question this time was just too special. The horrifying image from that morning was simply overwhelming. He was unable to just leave and pretend no such thing had happened. Even if he weren't of any help, he still intended to follow and check out the situation.

Lu Yang was carrying her, and Jiang Ziya had nothing to do. He could only talk to the female classmate beside him to prevent her from being so nervous that she would become the second person to faint.

"I am Jiang Ziya. That's right, it's that Grand Duke Jiang who fishes. What's your name?"

The girl laughed and said, "Li Yao, the Yao of Chiung Yao.<sup>1</sup>" After that, she added, "She is Lin Zhixiang. Which course are you two from?"

"Department of Foreign Language. You two?"

"Mathematics."

Both sides were a little speechless. Everyone knew that there was a pitiful amount of males in the Foreign Language department, and there weren't many females in the Mathematics department either. However, they just happened to be guys from the Foreign Language department and girls from the Mathematics department, against all expectations.

Because neither party knew the other, after introductions, they could not think of anything to say. After a long period of silence, Li Yao then cautiously said, "That... Really, thank you two so much. Otherwise, I really wouldn't know what to do. I don't even know where the school infirmary is!"

"You don't have to thank us." Jiang Ziya pointed at Lu Yang walking up ahead, and said, "If you really want to thank someone, you should thank him instead. I'm not doing anything."

Li Yao smiled broadly and said, "Aiyah, I'll thank both of you!"

Jiang Ziya had a favorable impression of her. Only then did he really size her up. That Lin Zhixiang just now was wearing a blouse and jeans, and though she had beautiful facial features, her attire cost her several points. This Li Yao was a little better. She wore a short skirt and sandals and was probably wearing light make-up. Her complexion

looked pretty good.

"I am Lu Yang." From up front, Lu Yang introduced himself amiably as well.

"Lu Yang?" Li Yao exclaimed in surprise. She asked, "Could it be that you're the famed department grass<sup>2</sup> from the Foreign Language department, who is of mixed-blood?"

Coughing sounds came from the person in front.

"It's true that he is of mixed-blood." Jiang Ziya rolled his eyes at the back of his good friend and commented sarcastically, "However, in our department, across all four grades, there isn't even a total of forty men. So, being the department grass of the Foreign Language department isn't that difficult."

"What did you say? " Lu Yang didn't even turn his head to look back as he said, "I'd be the department grass no matter where I went!"

"Yes, yes, you're a grass anywhere."

"Who's grass, you're grass—" <sup>3</sup> Halfway through his words, he abruptly became conscious of the fact that there was a girl here, and his "You're grass, I'm grass" simply did not sound too different from "I'm crass, you're crass," and he quickly swallowed his words.

Li Yao burst into laughter.

Seeing that she had laughed, Jiang Ziya felt a little more at ease and

glanced at Lu Yang. He had walked such a long distance while carrying a girl in his arms, and at the same time he even chatted and cracked jokes. He still didn't look the least bit exhausted.

Seeing that, Jiang Ziya gave up on his intention of asking Lu Yang if he wanted to switch. If he were to walk one corridor and have his strength give up on him, causing Lu Yang to have to carry the girl again, he would embarrass himself. Embarrassing himself would still be considered a small matter. However, moving around the unconscious girl and making her even more uncomfortable was a big issue.

Therefore, Jiang Ziya decided to continue his great cause of chatting. "Is your classmate in poor health? Does she faint like this often?"

Li Yao didn't seem very certain as she replied, "Zhixiang's personality is very quiet, and there doesn't seem to be anyone in the department very close to her. Originally, we weren't too close either. We only started working together recently to write our reports because we're in the same group. I don't know whether she used to faint regularly in the past. I hadn't paid attention."

She seemed a little embarrassed as she said, "If she were to just fall over like this in class, everyone might have thought that she had fallen asleep and not that she had fainted."

Lu Yang nodded his head in understanding, "Forget class, even if Ziya was halfway through eating and suddenly just fell over, I would go and cover him with a blanket."

"I think that you're more likely to kick me—"

In the middle of his words, a sudden "pzzzz" noise attracted the trio's attention. They lifted their heads to check the origin of the sound. It was a wall lamp, and perhaps it was broken. It was currently flickering non-stop, unlit one moment and lit the next. However, because it was daytime and the light was positioned right next to the window, the flickering was not very obvious in the current bright sunlight. If it weren't for the sudden sound, they probably would not have noticed that small wall lamp.

"Is the light broken?" Li Yao looked at that lamp a little doubtfully. Lu Yang looked at the lamp, frowning. His expression seemed to have turned a little darker. However, when he turned to face the others, his expression was calm as he said, "It looks like it's broken. When we go back, we should report this to the school. The sound we heard just now wasn't quite right, and if the light bulb were to explode and hurt someone, that would be terrible. Ziya, help me remember this."

Jiang Ziya agreed casually, but he didn't remember what Lu Yang had said at all. He only noticed that the wall lamp's flickering had become more obvious, unlike before when it was very difficult to notice due to the bright daylight.

His surroundings seemed to have suddenly turned much darker. However, what was strange was that the sun still continued to shine brightly outside the window. It seemed as though the sunlight could not shine into the corridor, but transparent glass should not be able to block out the sun.

Jiang Ziya looked at the scenes outside and inside the window. The two scenes were of completely different brightness.

"It's so quiet. Has class started?" Li Yao asked in doubt. "I don't think I heard the bell ring though?"

Jiang Ziya's heart clenched. He was very certain that the bell had not rung. This was a lively university campus, and even until ten o'clock at night, there would still be club activities going on. Moreover, it was currently afternoon break time. It would be amazing if the noise didn't shoot through the roof, so how could it possibly be silent?

Although the situation seemed a little strange, Jiang Ziya still wondered if he was being overly conscious about it. His left eye had always seen some strange and mysterious stuff. If he were to rate this on a scale of one to five stars, this kind of situation where it was only a little darker and quieter would at most rate only two stars, and even that was pushing it. However, this time it felt like something was a little different. He kept feeling that something was not quite right. So what exactly—

"Let's go quickly." Lu Yang abruptly opened his mouth to say, "My arms are tired."

Jiang Ziya felt a little astonished, but he still volunteered. "Then, should I take over?"

Lu Yang shook his head, and his tone was little hasty as he said, "There's no need. Let's just hurry and go."

Hearing this reply, Jiang Ziya felt that Lu Yang's behavior today was really not quite right. He couldn't help but furrow his brows and observe Lu Yang's expression. Although Lu Yang had said that his arms were tired, judging from his expression, he didn't seem in the least bit like he was pushing himself. He even turned back to peek at the window from time to time. Rather than his hands being tired, it seemed more like he was worried that a man-eating monster would jump through the window—could it be that Lu Yang could also see?

He just knew that there had to be something off about Lu Yang. How could a normal person accept his words about those kinds of things so easily? Since childhood until now, only Lu Yang was willing to believe him. He must also be able to see—

"Why is it a little dark? Is it because the light is broken?" Li Yao's voice held traces of fear. Her intuition told her that something was wrong, but she could not tell the reason why. She merely felt that it was dark and cold, and a chill kept running down her spine.

Jiang Ziya frowned. *Li Yao can see it too?*

Looking at the window once again, he finally realized what was off about the situation. Because only his left eye was abnormal, when he saw peculiar things, his vision would always be a little blurry, and it was hard to gauge distance due to having his left and right eye perceiving different things. However, this time he was able to see it as clear as day. On top of that, both Lu Yang and Li Yao seemed to have seen it.... *What kind of situation is this now?*

"Let's hurry!" Lu Yang anxiously urged. He turned to leave, but a quick

look backwards told him that Jiang Ziya was still staring at the window blankly. "Ziya? Why aren't you coming—?"

He abruptly stopped in the middle of his question because Jiang Ziya's expression looked off. Remembering that left eye of his, no further words were needed. *Ziya must have seen something!*

At this moment, Jiang Ziya was currently staring with wide eyes at the shadow steadily covering the window. He wanted to follow Lu Yang's advice to turn and immediately leave this strange place. However, his body felt as though it had entered an icehouse, and his legs were like two ice pillars frozen to the ground—they couldn't move at all!

He could only look on as the darkness covered the entire window, and then a long tendril of shadow extended outward. Like a hand, it tried pressing against the glass window, as though it was testing the waters. Upon discovering that it could not go through, it still did not give up, but merely continued to use more strength. A faint crackling sound came from the glass, like it was under excessive pressure.

*Not good!* Jiang Ziya instantly shouted, "Get down!"

As he shouted, he pounced toward Li Yao, and without any hesitation, Lu Yang got down while hugging the girl in his arms. The four of them had not even touched the ground when the glass window exploded. The fragments flew in all directions, and as luck would have it, the notice board on the wall also had a glass frame. After the glass fragments hit it, it actually exploded into pieces too.

The sound of the explosion was mixed with screams from Li Yao. The



three of them stuck closely to the wall. Their surroundings were a complete mess. Even the picture frame hanging on the wall had around ten sharp glass fragments sticking through it. It definitely wasn't a simple matter of a window breaking. Saying that it exploded was more like it!

Glass shards were scattered all over the floor. Although the explosion had already ended, Jiang Ziya continued to hug Li Yao while keeping a tenacious grip on Lu Yang, not allowing him to get up. Lu Yang's reaction was at first doubtful, but following that, his expression changed. He followed suit. Each of them hugged the girl in their arms tightly and kept their bodies pressed to the wall.

Above their heads, a black shadow crept through the window, and the shadow covered the four of them...

Jiang Ziya felt his whole body stiffen, and he could barely glance at Lu Yang through the corner of his eye. He did not have to ask. Just by looking at Lu Yang's expression, he was certain that Lu Yang could see it as clear as day. This time, it truly wasn't something that only his accursed left eye could see!

The shadow became thicker and thicker, and the thing above his head was within his vicinity. Jiang Ziya told himself repeatedly not to look upwards at all costs. According to his personal experience, pretending not to have seen it was definitely the best way to deal with the situation. Especially for this kind of thing that felt very abnormal, because they loved to follow people who could see them. Therefore, one must never look up at it!

However, it bent over and lowered its head, looking down at everyone present.

Jiang Ziya finally understood what the thick shadow was. It was actually its black robe.

It was the death god from this morning.

Its disproportionately large skull was buried in its enormous and thick black shadow. In its eye sockets that were like deep cavities, two bloody eyeballs swivelled around. First, it stared at Jiang Ziya, their eyes meeting each other. However, in the next moment, it turned away to look at the others, seemingly having no interest in Jiang Ziya.

*Since our eyes have already met, it's probably too late to pretend that I can't see it, right?* Jiang Ziya felt a little like fleeing right away, but he still had a girl in his arms, and the thing above him was simply too frightening. What he was afraid of was agitating the death god if he started running, while staying still might be safe. If he angered it, being stomped to death might even be a possibility!

Jiang Ziya could only hope that the death god would quickly leave by itself. However, the more he hoped so, the more it appeared otherwise. The death god seemed to have finally found its target. It moved, and a clacking sound passed by his ears. By reflex, Jiang Ziya lifted his head up to look toward the window, and then he immediately regretted it. The clacking had actually been the sound made by its skeletal hand that had been propped behind the window. Because he was too focused on the shadow just now, he hadn't noticed that there was something even more terrifying right beside him.

That hand steadily came down, and Jiang Ziya could only shift to the side desperately. However, once Jiang Ziya's hand touched the floor beside him, he felt a sharp pain. The floor was covered in glass shards. Only the area under the window where they were lying was somewhat cleaner.

With no escape routes, Jiang Ziya could merely turn back to see whether the skeletal hand would capture him soon. With this glance, however, he discovered that he wasn't the target of the death god at all. Its claws reached in the direction of Lu Yang—

Without any hesitation, Jiang Ziya reached out to grab the sleeve of the death god. However, he was not able to grab anything. The shadow robe was actually like fog and scattered the moment he touched it. He became anxious and could only pounce on that skeletal palm—

"Don't touch it!" Lu Yang shouted out sternly. "Ziya, you'd better retreat!"

Jiang Ziya was stunned, and his hand froze in mid-air. However, he didn't want to just look on as the death god came for Lu Yang. What should he do if it really dragged Lu Yang to hell?

However, he didn't expect that the hand's target wasn't Lu Yang either. It kept pointing at the girl who was currently in Lu Yang's arms, Lin Zhixiang!

Lu Yang first moved the girl away from the hand to avoid the death

god. Following that, he made a motion that completely puzzled Jiang Ziya. His index finger and his middle finger on his right hand were put together, and he raised them up straight. His thumb then connected with his ring finger...

"Natural order of Heavens and Earth, disperse the foulness from the air, mighty gods of the eight cardinals, cut down demons and bind evil..."

To think that he even started an incantation!

As an incantation, the kind that Jiang Ziya had only ever heard of in movies, rolled out from Lu Yang's mouth, Jiang Ziya stared dumbfounded at his good friend. Moreover, Lu Yang was chanting such a long piece, yet every word was clearly audible. It didn't seem at all like the work of someone who was on death's door and was just randomly chanting, "Buddha bless me, Guan Yin help me."

"... Let the evil impurities dissolve away, let Taoism last for all eternity, let this imperial decree of Taishang Laojun<sup>4</sup> be heard—obey!"

Lu Yang showed no signs of fear, and both his fingertips pointed at the hand of the death god. Jiang Ziya was just about to break into a scolding of "Do you not want your hand anymore—?" when he saw a silver light appear from the side of his fingers. Once this silver light appeared, the skeletal hand actually flinched.

Lu Yang turned his fingers, and the silver light too turned along with him. The light gradually manifested into a long shape, and it actually became a sharp elongated blade of a sword. As it continued to extend,

the front became a sword tip and the back a hilt. It then contracted and solidified, becoming a real sword; or at least to Jiang Ziya, it was real enough.

As Lu Yang commanded it with his fingers, the sword too started dancing as well. It swung at the death god's hand, but the death god managed to dodge in time. This attack only cut through the black robe and didn't land on the hand at all. However, what was hit was the section right above its hand. Logically, it should have cut through his arm. Instead, there was nothing there, as though the hand floated by itself in mid-air, without any arms to support it.

Even so, the slash seemed to have an effect on it. The death god actually did not dare to approach anymore.

Lu Yang raised his fingers in front of his chest, and his sword moved in front of everyone, protecting them, as though it was a bodyguard. Once again, he started chanting, "Natural order of Heavens and Earth, disperse the foulness from the air..."

All thanks to that sword, the incantation seemed to have even more of an effect. The hand of the death god did not dare get any closer, and it steadily retracted the upper half of its body. This continued until Lu Yang finished his last line of "Let this imperial decree of Taishang Laojun be heard—obey!" With a serious expression, he pointed both his fingers at the death god, and the sword tip stabbed straight at the death god's chest.

However, Jiang Ziya felt that the death god seemed not to mind this attack as much as the last one. When Lu Yang had attacked its hand

just now, it seemed to have pulled back a lot more. Its bloody eyeballs had stared at the sword without moving, rather like it was restraining its fear. On the contrary, when the attack landed on its chest, it stopped drawing back and seemed as though it didn't mind much.

"Ah Yang, don't attack its chest. Aim for its face!"

Lu Yang paused and tilted his fingertip. The sword immediately moved upwards and pierced its way toward the skull.

Jiang Ziya stared fixedly at the expressions and movements the death god was making—though there was not much left of its face, once the sword had changed directions and aimed at its head, it immediately opened its mouth and let out a roar. Jiang Ziya actually did not hear any sounds, but he could at least tell with his eyes that its two rows of teeth had spread open wide, probably wide enough to even be able to swallow a human's head whole.

*Attacking its face was, as expected, the correct choice!*

Just as the sword was about to hit it, the surroundings suddenly erupted in light. It was so bright that it hurt Jiang Ziya's eyes and rendered him nearly blind, especially in his left eye. The sudden light caused him to start tearing up.

*So did the blow connect or not? What is going on with this light?  
Please don't let Lu Yang be the one who was hit...*

## Notes On The Chapter

<sup>1</sup> **“Chiung Yao”**: The penname of a popular Chinese romance novelist based in Taiwan. One of her most famous works is 還珠格格 (huánzhūgé), otherwise known as “My Fair Princess,” “Return of the Pearl Princess,” or “Princess Returning Pearl.” For more information, see [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chiung\\_Yao](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chiung_Yao).

<sup>2</sup> **“Department grass”**: In Chinese, the most beautiful girl in the school, the school beauty, is called the school flower (校花). In companion to that, the handsomest guy of the school is called the school grass (校草), though it is not used as often as school flower. Lu Yang is considered the handsomest guy in his department, so he is called the “department grass.”

<sup>3</sup> **“Who’s grass, you’re grass”**: There’s a crude pun here because in Chinese, the word used for grass sounds exactly the same as the word for f\*\*\*. So to Li Yao, what it sounds like they’re saying is “I f\*\*\*, You f\*\*\*.”

<sup>4</sup> **“Taishang Laojun”**: Literally translates to “The Grand Supreme Elderly Lord.” It actually refers to one of the Taoist deities. (For more information, please visit: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daode\\_Tianzun](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daode_Tianzun))

## Chapter #2: Jiang Jiang Part 3 – Jiu Ge

“Ah Yang!”

“I’m here, Ziya. Take a look around. Is it gone?” Lu Yang remained vigilant as he asked.

Jiang Ziya rubbed away the tears welling in his eyes, and then he used his hand to cover his right eye, looking around only with his left. However, there weren’t any death gods in the room, and the room had even returned to its former brightness. Sunlight was shining in through the transparent windows, so hot that it could make people sweat.

It was almost like the shocking incident just now had been an illusion. If it weren’t for the broken shards of glass covering the entire floor, it would completely seem as though nothing had happened earlier—other than the fact that Lu Yang still had a sword hovering in the air beside him.

“It’s gone.”

Once he heard those words, Lu Yang gave a sigh of relief and put his fingers down. Oddly enough, the moment he lowered his fingers, the sword started rotating. With every spin, it became a bit fainter, and with a few rounds, it had turned into light and disappeared into thin air.

Jiang Ziya stared fixedly at Lu Yang. He felt that today he had just truly come to know this “old friend.” If he were to say that he didn’t mind the fact that Lu Yang had been hiding these things from him, then he would really be kidding himself.



Being stared at like that by Jiang Ziya, Lu Yang could not even pretend to feign innocence. He merely said with an extremely awkward expression, "Ah, that was my dad's... No, that was the Purifying Heaven and Earth incantation that my mom taught me. Nothing much to it!"

*Purifying what incantation? Even if your mother really taught it to you, would a normal teenager go and remember such a long chant?*

"I saw a sword appear beside your fingers," Jiang Ziya could not help but blurt out. "Moreover, it looked like a Chinese sword from those period dramas!"

Lu Yang froze and let slip, "You can actually see it that clearly?"

Once the words were out, he seemed to regret it. Seeing this, Jiang Ziya did not want to force his good friend, so he straightforwardly changed the subject. "Li Yao, are you okay?"

Currently, the entire floor was covered in shattered glass and looked extremely terrifying. Thankfully, Jiang Ziya had warned everyone in advance, so they had all managed to avoid it in time. As a result, they didn't seem to be greatly hurt. Jiang Ziya had originally shown concern for Li Yao for the sake of changing the topic, but he discovered that she had actually fainted from fright. He did a quick check with his eyes and determined that she was probably not injured.

"Let's take them both to the infirmary." At the moment, Jiang Ziya couldn't care less whether Lu Yang had used a sword or a gun. He was

just worried whether he would be able to carry Li Yao without her falling out of his hands halfway, injuring her heavily when she was originally uninjured.

Lu Yang nodded his head and picked up Lin Zhixiang effortlessly as he stood up. However, Jiang Ziya did not have such an easy time. He tried his best to pick Li Yao up. Although piggybacking her would be less strenuous, securing a fainted person on his back was really difficult!

*Those movies I've seen in the past with people carrying unconscious people on their backs must be lies!* He didn't even know how to make the other person stick to his back without them sliding off and falling headfirst. That would really cause a serious injury!

Just when Lu Yang was almost unable to continue watching, there was a hubbub in the surroundings. Urgent footsteps and shrieking filled the air. Lu Yang and Jiang Ziya were both stunned and looked around. From a distance not too far away, there were many classmates currently gathering around in shock. Although some wanted to come over and help, the glass on the floor made them hesitate and not know how to approach.

"For them to arrive so slowly, could there have been a barrier dimension..." Lu Yang muttered softly. But he was not even halfway through his words when he suddenly heard a groan from his arms. He looked down and realized that the female student in his arms had already woken up.

Lin Zhixiang gave two groans, and upon opening her eyes, suddenly

saw a stranger's face. She also realized in shock that she was currently being carried, so she immediately shouted, "Who are you? Put me down, put me down!"

She struggled to try to get to the ground, and Lu Yang could only try his best not to let her fall directly onto the floor. Landing on broken glass would be no joke!

The moment she was on the ground, she stepped on broken glass and received a shock. She blanked out for a long while and then suddenly noticed that the person in Jiang Ziya's arms was actually her classmate. She immediately broke into a shriek, "Li Yao! You—you let go of her!"

Jiang Ziya really wanted to do so, but his conscience wouldn't allow him to drop a living person onto broken glass. Lin Zhixiang rushed over to him and grabbed Li Yao. Jiang Ziya was more than happy to let go.

"Oh, Zhixiang, you're awake?" Being grabbed like that, Li Yao also woke up from the shock. She was thoroughly confused as she asked, "Eh? Why am I lying on the floor? Just now, what—"

Lu Yang immediately interrupted, "Just now, the glass exploded. The sound was really loud, so you probably fainted from shock."

Hearing that, Li Yao said hesitantly, "But I-I thought I saw... Never mind, I guess I fainted." In the end, she gave up pursuing the matter and chose to turn a blind eye to it.

Seeing Li Yao's attitude, Lin Zhixiang's tone softened. She asked gently, "What happened just now?"

Li Yao explained, "When we were in the cafeteria just now, you suddenly fainted. These two classmates were helpfully taking you to the infirmary, but mid-way, the window suddenly exploded."

Hearing this explanation, Lin Zhixiang also recognized Jiang Ziya as the person whose pants she had spilled Cola on. She awkwardly said, "Sorry..."

"It's okay." Jiang Ziya shrugged and said, "We'll take you two to the infirmary."

"I'm fine." Instead of agreeing, she shook her head.

*Your face is completely pale, but you still say you're fine?* Jiang Ziya frowned. The more he looked at her, the more certain he was that the outfit that Lin Zhixiang was wearing was exactly the same as what the person in the car accident today had been wearing. Now that even a death god had appeared, who would believe that there was no connection?

Lin Zhixiang was unexpectedly stubborn and persisted in saying, "I'm really fine. Li Yao, when you go to class, help me inform the professor. I'll just go home to rest."

Li Yao gave a sound of agreement, but then she said in worry, "Text me when you're home."

"Sure." Lin Zhixiang turned around and thanked the two boys politely,  
"Thank you so much for your help. I'm extremely sorry to have made  
you late for your class—"

Before she could finish, an anxious and angry roar came from the side.  
"What exactly happened here!"

The four turned to look. A familiar-looking director was currently  
staring at the floor covered in broken glass with his mouth hanging  
open.

In the end, even if they wanted to go home or to class, they could only  
follow the director.

Jiang Ziya made a wry face and merely hoped that a reason like "I was  
on my way to take a classmate to the infirmary when the glass  
exploded" would satisfy the professor of his class—but no matter how  
you sliced it, it was as lousy a reason as the bus's tires going flat!

He was planning to discuss countermeasures with Lu Yang beside him,  
to see whether they should beg the director to give them the day off.  
Instead, he saw Lu Yang staring at Lin Zhixiang, who was ahead of  
them. His fingers seemed to be drawing something in the air, and he  
was chanting an incantation. He probably did not want to attract  
attention, so he was chanting very softly and quickly.

Once he finished, Lu Yang turned and saw Jiang Ziya staring at him.  
He quickly explained, "It's just a protective incantation. My mom  
taught it to me."

*I really might secretly ask Lu Yang's mother about that!* Jiang Ziya had a feeling that Lu Yang's mother would definitely not say the same thing!

Lu Yang said awkwardly, "I was just testing it. You said that you saw her at the car accident, and something strange just happened. I thought this might be useful, like the protective charms from temples!" "Uh huh."

Jiang Ziya didn't ask further, nor did he mention that when Lu Yang had been chanting, Jiang Ziya saw him draw a charm with his fingers. The charm, emitting a faint yellow light, had flown toward Lin Zhixiang's back, but when it was about to stick on her, she had turned a corner in the corridor. The charm then missed and vanished before it could even hit the ground.

Since Lu Yang didn't want to talk about it, Jiang Ziya thought that he should just forget about it. He flung his bag over his shoulder and took the lead to follow them. "Let's go. They're so far ahead already!"

There was silence behind him for a while, until Lu Yang softly said out of the blue, "The sword is called 'Slay.'"

Jiang Ziya smiled faintly and shouted, "Let's go!"



As Jiang Ziya took the books and signed the parcel, he chatted with the distributor's salesperson. "Are there fewer books this time?"

In response, the salesperson couldn't help but complain, "Recently,

some writers haven't been releasing any books. I don't know what they're doing."

*When I get home, I'll help you ask Yu Shu. She might actually know.*  
Jiang Ziya silently answered in his mind.

The deliveryman looked around and asked, "Did your boss run off again?"

"Yeah. It's not like you don't know that once I come and take over, with someone standing behind the counter, my boss will immediately feel like running away."

The deliveryman chuckled as he said, "Bookstores are hard to run nowadays. Your boss sure is carefree, though business does seem pretty good."

Jiang Ziya also felt that this was a mystery. Since high school, he had been working part-time at this bookstore called Jiu Ge, "Nine Songs." He agreed that his boss was simply too laid-back. Every time he came to work right after class, the boss would say something like "toilet," "have to put the new books up on the shelves," or "got to buy a drink" and such. Then, even up until he closed the bookstore at night, he wouldn't see the boss again.

Thankfully, the boss seemed to have a very wide circle of friends. Many of his friends dropped by to buy books or stationery, though Jiang Ziya felt that his circle of friends was a little too broad. From time to time, people aged eight to eighty would come in to buy books, and would ask about an "Yi-shūshu," "Yi-gē," "Xiao Yi," "Yi laddie," and

there was even an "Is that bastard Ah Yi there." The wide variety of titles was really stunning.

When the boss had told him good-naturedly, "I am Fu Taiyi. You can call me Yi-gē," Jiang Ziya had decisively called him Boss.

"I'm done signing it."

Jiang Ziya tossed the receipt back to the salesman, who didn't check it and left after taking it. After all, they had been working together for a long time, and ten or so books was not particularly expensive.

At this moment, Lu Yang walked out from the back of the bookstore. He said, "New arrivals? Ah, I want this magazine. I'll help you shelve the rest."

"It's fine." Jiang Ziya tore open the packaging for the new books and said, "Help me stand behind the counter. I'll shelve these and take the chance to find a few books."

"Sure." Lu Yang walked behind the counter and casually flipped through the magazine. He asked, "Are you looking for reference books?"

"A novel."

Lu Yang asked in shock, "You read novels?"

"Not often, but that's because I don't have time to read, not that I don't like to read them."



Jiang Ziya placed the magazines on the shelf beside the counter, and following that, began looking around. As he did so, he raised his voice to explain to Lu Yang, who was still behind the counter, "The neighbor across from us is actually a novelist, so I wanted to take a look at her books... Found them!"

"Oh? What's the book's name?" Lu Yang shouted in curiosity.

"There are actually quite a few books."

In fact, there were more than ten books. Jiu Ge was only a small bookstore. Their book selection had never been as complete as a large bookstore's. For an author to have more than ten books occupying the shelves was considered a lot. *Can it be that Yu Shu can actually be considered an author with some fame?*

Jiang Ziya felt that this world was simply astonishing. With how the other person behaved, she simply didn't feel like a famous writer! *There must be a mistake somewhere. Perhaps it's because Boss happens to like Yu Shu's novels a lot, so he ordered a few?*

Not knowing which one to read, Jiang Ziya simply decided to take all of them in one go. He planned to flip through them behind the counter, and it would be best if he could find a familiar character—for example, the one who could brew a good cup of milk tea.

"Is it good?" Lu Yang picked up a book casually.

"Not sure, I've never read any before." Jiang Ziya kept his head

lowered as he flipped through the books, saying offhandedly, "Help me find which book has a butler character."

"Okay."

Although he agreed, Lu Yang put the book down. Jiang Ziya found it a little strange and raised his head to look at Lu Yang.

"What?"

"Ziya, regarding what happened today..." Lu Yang seemed to be at a loss as to how to begin. Even though they were good friends and asking a few questions was nothing, the main point was that he only wanted to ask Ziya questions but did not want to answer any himself.

"Could you tell me what exactly you saw?"

Jiang Ziya closed the novel and said without any trace of surprise, "I thought that you would pretend that there was no such matter. Do you mean 'that thing' I saw after the window broke?"

Lu Yang nodded.

"I saw a death god, the same one who had appeared at the scene of the car accident earlier today."

Lu Yang was shocked and blurted, "Are you certain that it was the death god from the scene of the car accident? How can you be sure it's the same one?"

Jiang Ziya blinked and said, "They don't look the same. Even if death gods appear frequently, each one has different features. The one today had a pair of bloody eyeballs, so it's very easy to recognize."

Come to think of it, he remembered that when he was much younger, if he accidentally came into contact with a place with dead people, he mostly only saw Heibai Wuchang, the black and white deities of death.<sup>1</sup> He couldn't remember exactly when it had turned into death gods.

Lu Yang muttered to himself, "So you really could see that clearly..."

"You didn't see it?"

"I saw a mass of smoke, and within it, there was a skull and a skeletal hand. It did indeed look a little like the death gods of the legends, and it had a red light in its eye sockets. But, I didn't see the eyeballs."

"My left eye is weird and always sees stuff. It's not like you don't know that."

"Yeah." Lu Yang frowned as he said, "But I didn't know you could see this clearly."

Jiang Ziya laughed and said in a relaxed tone, "Occasionally, there are some things that really look like humans, and also, isn't cosplaying very popular right now? So, I often end up treating fake things like real people, or those cosplayers like fakes. I've ended up making a fool of myself a lot of times."

"I don't feel like you've made a fool of yourself before."

Jiang Ziya fell silent for a moment before saying, "By the time we met, it was already high school. By then, I had already trained myself to keep my composure no matter what I saw. If I still got it wrong, then I would say, 'just kidding' and pass it off as a joke. Not many people would pay it much attention."

At this point, he was half-smiling as he said, "Except for you, this bored fellow who likes to get to the heart of the matter."

Lu Yang too smiled. Thinking of their high school days, the gap between the two of their personalities was simply too large, and they had not interacted at all with each other. Until that time—

*Drrrr, Drrr, Drrrr....*

Hearing the notification sound, Lu Yang immediately dug his phone out of his pocket to look. Jiang Ziya was about to sarcastically say "Smartphone addict" again like usual, when he noticed that Lu Yang's expression had suddenly darkened.

"What's wrong?" Jiang Ziya asked in worry.

"The condition of that female classmate who was in a car accident suddenly worsened. It seems that she has already passed away."

Jiang Ziya's eyes widened, and he exclaimed, "Wasn't she fine? How did it turn out this way so suddenly?"

Lu Yang shook his head, saying, "I don't know. It's news that my

junior sent to me. She doesn't know the exact cause either and is currently crying with the others.

"Ziya, if you see the death god again, stay away from it. The farther, the better!"

"... Who wouldn't stay far away when they see a death god?"

Lu Yang chuckled and said, "That's true. Hmm, I'll end my stay with you in the bookstore here. I still have things to do at home today, so I'll be leaving first."

After Jiang Ziya gave his reply of "okay," Lu Yang immediately turned to leave. Jiang Ziya felt that Lu Yang was leaving very straightforwardly today. *Normally, doesn't he like to hang around at the counter, refusing to leave?* Even when Lu Yang received messages from his family asking him to go home, he would usually hang around a little longer before leaving unwillingly.

Even the boss had said that it was as though he had hired two part-time students with the salary of one, a total bargain.

Jiang Ziya looked at Lu Yang's back. A faint, ancient sword had appeared by his side. Jiang Ziya suddenly had the feeling that something was amiss. He quickly called out and stopped Lu Yang, asking, "Hey! You aren't trying to find that death god, are you?"

Lu Yang paused and turned back with a smile, saying, "What? Who would go looking for a death god? Are you stupid?"

Jiang Ziya also hoped that he was just being dumb, rather than Lu Yang being dumb enough to seek out that death god.

*But, what exactly is the purpose of Lu Yang's ancient sword? Why has it appeared...*

"Give me a call tonight. I have something to tell you." Jiang Ziya still felt worried.

Lu Yang looked at him curiously, but he merely answered with an "okay" before hurriedly leaving. He actually didn't get to the bottom of the matter like usual, and he didn't notice even when he brushed shoulders with an elementary school student carrying a backpack.

The elementary school student turned his head, asking, "Where is he going in such a hurry?"

This was the boss's son, Fu Jun. Both Jiang Ziya and Lu Yang knew him.

"Going home to help out." Jiang Ziya casually asked, "You got out of school pretty late today, huh?"

"I was helping a classmate who had fallen behind in their studies with their math homework. Where's Taiyi?" Fu Jun looked around and said in dissatisfaction, "He ran off again?"

Unless it was in front of outsiders, Fu Taiyi and Fu Jun never addressed each other as father and son. When Jiang Ziya had first started working here, the boss had introduced Fu Jun as his son.

However, now that he was more familiar with them, the two didn't address each other as father and son in front of him anymore.

Fu Jun would always directly call his father "Taiyi," and the boss would very strangely call Fu Jun "Xiao Dong." Something about how it was his childhood pet name.

"What kind of excuse did he give for running away again?" Fu Jun said unhappily.

"None. When I arrived, I merely lowered my head to put my backpack down. Then, when I looked up again, he was gone."

"Not even giving an excuse anymore!" Fu Jun frowned and cursed, "This fellow is really getting more and more ridiculous. This morning, he wanted to stay in bed, so he called me to come and open the store, saying that it's no big deal even if I were to be late for school—"

*Drrrr, Drrr, Drrrr....*

Fu Jun frowned and took out his phone from his pocket. He lowered his head to look at it.

*Nowadays, it seems like everyone is a Smartphone addict.* Jiang Ziya sighed once again.

"Bastard!" Fu Jun gritted his teeth and scolded.

"What's wrong?" Jiang Ziya felt like he was asking a question that he already knew the answer to. Generally speaking, Fu Jun could be

considered a polite student. The only person that could make him break into insults nonstop would be his father, Fu Taiyi.

Fu Jun raised the phone to Jiang Ziya's face. What was written was, "Taiyi says: Xiao Dong Dong, I want to eat seafood noodles for supper tonight. Remember to help me cook!" Following that was even an animated sticker that was continuously giving out hearts.

*Drrrr, Drrr, Drrrr....*

"Taiyi says: Ah, I forgot to mention. Remember to wash my favorite shirt, the blue and black striped one. I'm wearing it tomorrow."

*Drrrr, Drrr, Drrrr....*

"Taiyi says: Also, don't forget to wash the matching suit pants!"

*Drrrr, Drrr, Drrrr....*

"Taiyi says: I want prawns in my seafood noodles!"

*Drrrr, Drrr—*

Fu Jun threw the phone at Jiang Ziya and said expressionlessly, "I'll lend you my phone for five days to play with. Don't return it to me. In a while, I'll give you the charger."

Fu Jun was probably the elementary school student who least wanted to own a Smartphone.



## Notes On The Chapter

<sup>1</sup> **“Heibai Wuchang”**: (黑白無常, literally “Black and White Impermanence”) They are two deities in charge of escorting the spirits of the dead to the Underworld. One of them is dressed in black and is known as the Black Guard. The other one is dressed in white and is known as the White Guard. For more information, see [here](#).

### Chapter #3: Jiang Ziya Part 1- Fuel

When he finished his part-time work and returned home, only his brother-in-law, Jiang Qibing, was at home. Like usual, he was seated at the study desk in the living room, using the computer. Jiang Ziya removed his shoes at the entrance and asked out of curiosity, "Where's Sis? And Jiang Jiang? They're not at home?"

Jiang Qibing raised his head and stared at him blankly, muttering, "Jiang Jiang? Who is Jiang..."

Jiang Ziya's eyes widened, but Jiang Qibing then nonchalantly said, "Oh, your sis brought them to the supermarket. Did you eat dinner properly before work? Are you hungry at the moment? Do you want me to call your sister and ask her to buy a late night snack on the way back?"

Jiang Ziya hesitated for a moment. His brother-in-law seemed to have suddenly forgotten Jiang Jiang... He immediately put the shoes he had been removing back on and shouted, "I'm going out for a bit."

Jiang Qibing froze and shouted, "Didn't you just come back? It's almost ten. Where are you going?"

"Just dropping by the neighbor's!"

Jiang Ziya rushed over, hammering on the door so hard that it could shake the heavens. The door opened by a small crack. House Keeper was standing behind the door as he asked, "May I inquire as to who our guest is?"

"G-Good evening! I'm the neighbor." Seeing House Keeper, who was wearing a dress shirt and a small vest, Jiang Ziya abruptly felt that he was being too impolite. He immediately stood up straight to greet him. House Keeper gave a faint smile, and as he opened the door, he politely returned the greeting. "Good evening. Please enter."

An angry roar came from within the room. "Who said I'm allowing that rascal in? Is he trying to break my door down?"

House Keeper explained with a smile, "The mistress has been rushing her manuscript all day and is still not done with it. She is not in a good mood at the moment."

Hearing that, Jiang Ziya immediately shouted into the room, "I read your book today!"

"... Come in."

When he went in, he was immediately greeted by the sight of Yu Shu sprawled on the sofa. Weapon magazines, from blades to guns, covered her body. If he didn't see wrongly, one of them was even about the evolution of tanks...

Yu Shu said in a commanding tone, "Say it! Which one did you read?" Jiang Ziya obediently recounted, "I flipped through all of them briefly. When I found the one with the butler, I read the whole book. I-I even bought it!" He quickly pulled the book out of his bag as proof.

Yu Shu said unhappily, "Stop being so interested in my butler! Save it,

I'm not going to marry him off to you!"

"He's not a woman!"

Yu Shu snorted and made eyes at him as she said, "So if he was a woman, you would have considered it? Not scared anymore?"

Jiang Ziya froze and lifted his head to look at House Keeper, who bent down and asked, "I will brew milk tea just like the other time. Will that be fine?"

Jiang Ziya immediately nodded his head vigorously. Although he was not here for the milk tea, it was simply too good. He couldn't resist nodding his head wildly. He snuck a peek at House Keeper's back as he left to the kitchen and asked Yu Shu in a whisper, "So he is the butler that you wrote about in your book. T-That vampire?"

He had to admit that after he realized that the butler was written as a "vampire" in the book, he had become even more nervous. However, once he saw him, this nervousness had vanished. House Keeper didn't feel like a vampire at all. He had kept on a faint smile all along and was gentler than the average person. He was also super good at brewing milk tea!

"No."

Jiang Ziya froze and asked, "Why not?" *Could it be that I picked the wrong book? Is there another one with a butler?*

"Even if it is the same book, everyone has a different impression when

they read it. Therefore, the butler that I summoned would definitely not be the same as one summoned by someone else. Even their looks would differ. For example, if a book were to say that a certain character is a 'handsome guy,' the handsome guy that would appear in your mind and mine are different, right?"

Yu Shu sat up and pushed the magazines piling on her to one side. She lazily said, "Since even their looks are different, who is the butler in the book, then?"

"Oh." Jiang Ziya could not resist saying, "But you are the author. The butler you summoned should be the one from the book!"

"At the very most, the character I summoned would probably be closer to the butler from the book. However, they will definitely not be exactly the same. In the book, the person the butler serves is a young master. However, his current master is me. Different life experiences will result in different people. Do you understand now?"

*So that is how it is.* Jiang Ziya nodded his head.

House Keeper brought out a pot of milk tea and two cups. Once Yu Shu saw that, she immediately shouted, "I don't want milk tea. Where's my coffee?"

As the butler put down the cup and saucers, he explained slowly, "For the sake of finishing your manuscript, you have already drunk ten pots of coffee within these few days. You once ordered me to restrict you from drinking too much coffee. Therefore, please switch to tea from now on."

"Tea also has caffeine, so there's no difference anyways!"

"This is made from tea bags with low caffeine."

Yu Shu immediately flopped back onto the sofa and covered up her face as she moaned in despair, "You might as well kill me!"

House Keeper continued to pour milk tea elegantly as he said, "Mistress, it is about time for you to go to the supermarket. This is already the last tea bag, and there are barely any vegetables left. There is only one pile of frozen meat left in the freezer. The rest of the refrigerator is empty. Also, I would like to trouble you to buy a tray. It would be convenient for serving tea or food."

Yu Shu hesitated for a moment and then tried to save on the effort to even go to the supermarket. She asked hopefully, "Since you can already go and take out the trash, then you can go to the supermarket too, right?"

House Keeper shook his head, saying, "There are too many people at the supermarket, and moreover, it is very bright. I would definitely be revealed, unless you intend to change me into a 'lie.'"

"Then forget it." Yu Shu immediately gave up.

Jiang Ziya asked, not understanding, "What will happen if he becomes a lie?"

"He would start to think too much and want to become a true living

existence. Then, there would be huge trouble!”

Yu Shu put both her hands on Jiang Ziya’s shoulders and said gravely, “You must know that the fee to hire a butler is terrifyingly expensive. I don’t have that kind of wealth to pay his salary, so I definitely can’t allow him to become an existence higher than a lie, and then demand a salary from me!”

Jiang Ziya nearly spat out the milk tea in his mouth. He said unhappily, “If you say that you won’t give him a salary right in front of him, won’t he think of demanding one from you?”

Yu Shu raised an eyebrow and said, “He is merely an ‘illusion,’ so he will only obey orders obediently and not demand anything from me.”

Hearing this, Jiang Ziya couldn’t help but glance at House Keeper. The latter merely gave a small smile and looked like he really did not mind people talking about him in front of him, much less question his salary.

Yu Shu forced herself to drink two mouthfuls of the milk tea, and she asked, “Stop asking about my place’s butler. He is my problem to deal with anyways. The question right now is, how is the problem in your family?”

“Ah! I came to look for you because of that. Today, when I recalled something about Jiang Jiang, she...”

Jiang Ziya froze. *What had I remembered about Jiang Jiang? That’s strange. It was evidently something important, but why would I forget it in a blink of an eye?*

Yu Shu laughed dryly and patted his shoulder as she said, "Forget it! As for Jiang Jiang, it's best for you not to think about her case. Concentrate on getting rid of that doll!"

*Getting rid of?*

Jiang Ziya's face twitched, and he said cautiously, "But Xiao Xue doesn't seem like she has any evil intentions. Wouldn't it be a little too cruel to get rid of her?"

"Xiao Xue, is it? Sounds very intimate..."

Yu Shu pounced and grabbed hold of Jiang Ziya's neck. She yelled in rage, "I told you to burn her, but you instead went and became so familiar with her. Do you not understand human speech?"

"I-I understand! B-But..." Jiang Ziya said with difficulty, "Since you say that Jiang Jiang is also fake, then couldn't we also let Xiao Xue become a real person?"

"Don't keep saying that Jiang Jiang is fake, or be careful that she would really turn into a fake, you idiot!"

Jiang Ziya froze, and he suddenly recalled that he seemed to have heard Jiang Jiang call him in school today. She seemed to have been shouting, "Don't," but what exactly didn't she...

He shook his head hard. He had a vague sense that it was not something good, so he decided to follow what Yu Shu had said, not to



think about Jiang Jiang's case—no matter whether Jiang Jiang was real or not, his sister and brother-in-law couldn't lose her!

*But Xiao Xue?*

Thinking about the other child, Jiang Ziya started hesitating.

Seeing Jiang Ziya's expression, Yu Shu understood that he had become too softhearted.

She let go of his neck and furrowed her brows. She then sat down cross-legged and said in a vexed tone, "Things aren't that simple. She is not something that originally existed, so it is very easy for her to be affected by others."

"Who isn't ever affected by others?" Jiang Ziya rubbed his neck that had been grabbed just now while muttering softly.

Yu Shu rolled her eyes at him and snapped, "Would you suddenly become a ghost doll because of someone else's influence?"

Jiang Ziya received a shock at that and shrieked, "Could it be that they will become ghost dolls?"

"It's she, not 'they!' Only Xiao Xue. Don't drag the other one into this."

Yu Shu rolled her eyes at him again, and then returned to the topic.

"On the day the lot of you feel that Xiao Xue is not a human, but a terrifying ghost doll, as long as this thought is strong enough, she would truly turn into one."

When he heard that, Jiang Ziya's face turned pale.

Yu Shu said indifferently, "To put it more gravely, if you guys firmly believe that she is a man-killing ghost doll, she would really be influenced to go and murder people. Do you really want to take this kind of risk?"

Jiang Ziya hesitated. He ought to shake his head immediately, but he was still hesitant.

Seeing his expression, Yu Shu understood that he was still unwilling to follow her instructions, so she could not help but roll her eyes. She felt a little lazy, to the point where she didn't want to take care of him anymore, but based on the fact that he was her neighbor, she made a rare decision to spend effort to persuade him.

"Listen to me. Jiang Jiang has already become true. There's nothing you can do about it anymore. Moreover, she's still young. As long as you don't remind her about these things, and she grows up like this, there is a high possibility that she will forget about the things that happened when she was small, and never find out that she is not a real person."

Yu Shu pointed at Jiang Ziya's nose and said, "Therefore, the best way would be for even you to forget about her case and treat her like a child that your sister gave birth to. Understand?"

*I have no problems with this!* Jiang Ziya nodded his head vigorously. Yu Shu then continued, satisfied, "But Xiao Xue has not come 'true' yet, so there's still time to get rid of her. Don't let her come 'true.' Your

family can't handle so many of them!"

Jiang Ziya gritted his teeth and said, "But I can't burn her to death!" He finally admitted that he wasn't able to burn Xiao Xue to death. So what if she was a doll? So what if he could see her ball joints? She could move, talk, and even call him Gēge!

How could he possibly burn her?

"I told you to burn her, what burn to death." Yu Shu rolled her eyes again, and said unhappily, "Don't say it as though I'm instigating you to commit murder and arson!"

*Aren't you?*

Jiang Ziya was not convinced, as he said, "Why don't you grab a random person on the streets and ask him to burn Xiao Xue. See if he would report you to the police for murder and arson!"

Yu Shu was so angry, she roared, "Reporting me to the police, huh? Very well, I couldn't care less how many hundreds of ghost dolls you live with. House Keeper, send our guest away... No, that's not right. Send this harbinger of bad luck away!"

"Don't! I was wrong, please help my family!" Jiang Ziya immediately bowed and admitted his mistake.

With such a large matter that endangered his entire family, it was a simple thing for him to bow and admit his mistake.

Face dark, Yu Shu continued to say nothing.

Seeing that, Jiang Ziya became a little flustered.

Although he was unable to deal a killing blow to Xiao Xue, that didn't mean that he wasn't concerned about the safety of his family members. Moreover, with two little girls who seemed like they weren't human in his family, if she really were to ignore him, then what would he do? She was the only person he could consult!

"Yu Shu, don't tell me that you really won't help? Aren't you pretty close with my sister? You wouldn't want to see her land into danger like this, right?"

Yu Shu gave a cold snort and said, "What do you mean by 'close?' It's just taking out the trash every day. Don't tell me that we should become trash friends?"

Despite her words, she furrowed her brows. She felt a little twitchy, for she really wasn't able to sit back and wait for the family across from her to appear on the social news.

"How troublesome!" Yu Shu said impatiently, "Originally, becoming friendly with the doll meant you would be able to deal with her more easily. But, you became too friendly with her!" After her complaint, she turned to ask House Keeper, "Do you think you can defeat that doll?"

House Keeper did a quick evaluation and shook his head, saying, "No, Mistress. The two of them act together. I have no chance of victory."

Jiang Ziya's face twitched. He had previously thought that the large doll across from home could win against the small dolls in his family, but as it turned out, size and appearances weren't everything. Their "age" was what was crucial.

"What if Jiang Jiang isn't there, and you're only dealing with one?" House Keeper reconsidered it, but he still shook his head, saying, "I still cannot win. She has existed longer than I have. Although she is still an 'illusion,' she will probably become a 'lie' soon. She is not something I can deal with."

Yu Shu received a shock and said in disbelief, "Whoa. Grand Duke Jiang, your sister is too formidable! One has already come true, and one is going to become a lie soon. Just how strong is her calling ability? Why hasn't such a strong power been—"

She abruptly stopped.

"Hasn't been what?" Jiang Ziya asked, puzzled.

"Nothing—" After she vaguely passed it over, Yu Shu suddenly pounced at Jiang Ziya and pinched his face with all her strength. She roared in rage, "If you didn't live across from me, so those two dolls might come charging over if anything goes wrong, I definitely would not care about you at all, you bastards!"

Jiang Ziya said in grievance, "How was I to know that when I came home one day, there would suddenly be another girl—"

"It's two!" Yu Shu corrected him vigorously.

Jiang Ziya felt even more wronged. He had originally thought one of them to be real, yet that one turned out to be a fake as well.

"Ah! That's not right. Treating it as only one extra is the right thing.

Ahhh—how irritating!"

She suddenly pulled at her hair agitatedly, scaring Jiang Ziya so much he didn't dare to move, thinking that she had gone crazy.

However, following that, Yu Shu suddenly turned back to House Keeper and calmly asked, "With the addition of that golden-haired fellow, can the two of you defeat one girl?"

House Keeper considered it for a bit and nodded his head, saying, "If you give him a body too, it should be possible."

*What golden-haired fellow? Jiang Ziya was stunned. Could it be that there's another ghost doll here besides House Keeper?*

*And which golden-haired one?*

When he was manning the bookstore, he had flipped through many of Yu Shu's novels. He had seen several golden-haired characters. Which one was she referring to exactly? Could it be the terrifying emperor of the world? Or was it the despicable head of the church? Or was it possibly the bad-tempered lightning elf—

*—Oh no, it feels like you shouldn't mess with any of the golden-haired characters!*

Yu Shu frowned and muttered, "He even needs a body? But ordering a doll takes a three month wait... Whatever, I'll look around in the auctions. Maybe there'll be one—Grand Duke Jiang, you have to pay me a hundred thousand!"

Jiang Ziya nearly puked blood at that. He roared, "A hundred thousand? This is robbery in broad daylight! You can buy dolls at a few hundred dollars!"

"Do you think it's a Barbie doll?! If House Keeper were to reside in a doll that doesn't allow for nimble motions, I guarantee that the milk tea he brews could poison you to death!"

*What do you mean by nimble! Things like dolls are not supposed to be able to move in the first place!*

House Keeper asked, not understanding, "Mistress, I remember when you ordered my body, it did not seem to cost as much."

"The rest is my compensation!" Yu Shu roared and then fiercely turned back to shout at Jiang Ziya, "Otherwise, you go and burn Xiao Xue yourself!"

Jiang Ziya was definitely unable to do something like that, but it was even more impossible for him to give a hundred thousand dollars. He said in dismay, "I don't have that much money, unless you let me pay in installments, at least ten installments."

"What installments, do I look like such a cruel person?"

Out of his expectations, Yu Shu calmed down and even drank a mouthful of her milk tea. She slowly said, "Rather than working part-time to repay your debt, you might as well help me with odd jobs!"

"What are the job contents?" Jiang Ziya asked. In his heart, alarm bells were ringing. Images of various kinds of perils like subduing monsters, wiping out demons, burning dolls, and cremating bodies appeared in his head on loop.

Yu Shu said with a small smile, "Many. Right now, the first thing is to let House Keeper make a list of household necessities. In the future, you will go to the supermarket every week to buy those things."

*So it was errands!*

Jiang Ziya gritted his teeth and said, "I'm beyond amazed! To be so lazy as to skip a weekly trip to the supermarket, you might as well plant yourself at home and not go out for the rest of your life!"

"Currently working hard toward this goal."

"..."

"Is it a deal or not?" Yu Shu said impatiently, "House Keeper is still waiting for his tray!"

"Deal!" Jiang Ziya could only agree with his teeth clenched.

He could only comfort himself with the fact that odd jobs like buying



groceries would be a lot better than vanquishing monsters and demons. It should only involve errands and wouldn't be dangerous at all.

Yu Shu clapped once and exclaimed, "That's more like it! House Keeper, in the future, seek him out to buy stuff!"

House Keeper nodded his head with a smile. He completely did not have any opinion on how his mistress would even delegate chores like going to the supermarket. He merely took out a piece of paper and handed it over to Jiang Ziya, saying, "The list is already done, and the items needed are on it. Because the prices in every store are a little different, if it is possible, I would like to trouble you to browse several stores."

He said with a helpless smile, "The mistress always finds it troublesome and would refuse to browse more than one store, so we would end up wasting a lot of money."

Jiang Ziya felt like puking blood. No wonder Yu Shu created a butler despite being so eager to burn Xiao Xue—even a doll was more human than her! Before she had House Keeper, this apartment definitely must have looked more horrifying than a rubbish-dumping site!

Jiang Ziya snatched the shopping list and cash. He angrily said, "I'll go and buy it now. Don't go back on your words, you have to..."

*Burn Xiao Xue!* But once the words were nearly out, he was unable to say them aloud.

"Hurry and go shop. My place only has frozen meat left!" Yu Shu didn't

ask about Jiang Ziya's unsaid words and lazily waved her hand. "Don't concern yourself with the rest. As a university student, just go and study obediently!"

Jiang Ziya nodded, his heart a little heavy. He tried his best not to think about Xiao Xue, especially the scene yesterday when they showered together, and her various calls of "Gēge."

When he reached the door, he hesitated for a moment. But he still turned to ask, "Yu Shu, you said that House Keeper and Xiao Xue are not ghosts. Then, are there ghosts in the world?"

Yu Shu shrugged and said, "If you think there are, there are. If you think there aren't, then there aren't."

He rolled his eyes at her and said unhappily, "That's not an answer at all. If I think they exist, but other people don't, then do they exist or not?"

Yu Shu suddenly turned solemn as she replied, "Then, that would depend on whether your 'they exist' is stronger, or their 'they don't exist' is stronger."

*What does that mean?*

Jiang Ziya felt a little stunned. *If they exist, they exist, and if they don't, they don't. You can even separate them into levels of strength?*

Yu Shu was frowning as she stared at his left eye. The graveness of her expression made Jiang Ziya feel that his left eye seemed to be

even more troublesome than House Keeper, a moving doll.

“Jiang Ziya, I’m warning you. Don’t look around randomly for no reason. Your left eye isn’t anything good, and it’s easy to stir up big trouble. Your left eye probably played a part in having the two in your family coming true and becoming a lie—no, I believe your eye is definitely involved. Otherwise, your sister would really be too powerful, and it wouldn’t have been possible for her to have avoided serious trouble all this time.

Hearing this, Jiang Ziya suddenly felt itchiness in his left eye. If it were something that he could throw away, he would have tossed it into the Pacific Ocean before he was even ten years old.

Yu Shu’s index finger drew a straight line in front of his eyes, and she said, “When you walk, keep looking forward, and turn a blind eye to everything else. Understood?”

Jiang Ziya nodded his head vigorously, but then he remembered the reason why he had stopped earlier. That already didn’t follow the principle of turning a blind eye to everything.

“Um, Yu Shu, this morning I saw a death god drag away a girl, and then the death god appeared in my school again later. It...”

Although Yu Shu immediately rolled her eyes at him, Jiang Ziya could not resist narrating in detail what had happened earlier. “In the end, I even saw my classmate create an ancient sword out of thin air and send the death god running away. T-This shouldn’t have all been caused by my eye, right?”

Yu Shu had said that his left eye wasn't anything good, making Jiang Ziya extremely nervous. If all of these things had been caused by his eye...

"Of course you weren't the cause." Yu Shu held her forehead like she had a headache and said, "Is this called 'birds of a feather flock together?' That Lu Yang classmate of yours—" She paused, her tone changing as she asked, "You are very close with him? He knows all about your left eye?"

Jiang Ziya nodded his head.

"Oh... But since nothing has happened to you, then it should be fine."

*What! Can't you say things a little clearer?*

Seeing Jiang Ziya's unconvinced expression, Yu Shu clicked her tongue and said, "Knowing less is better for you. Your classmate is a good person. Not telling you is for your own good."

Jiang Ziya remained silent.

Although he really wanted to know what Lu Yang was doing, what could he do after finding out? He merely had an eye that could see and was completely of no help at all. Rather than knowing but being of no help, perhaps it would be better not to know at all.

Just like before, when he didn't know that Lu Yang had so many secrets, he didn't have to worry about him seeking out a death god.

Now, although he knew more, he would worry whether Lu Yang was planning to pick a fight with a death god by himself, but he wasn't of any help at all.

Jiang Ziya said, depressed, "I got it. I won't ask. I'll go to the supermarket and buy the things you need."



After seeing Jiang Ziya shut the door, Yu Shu gave a sigh.

"What a strong fuel he is, to be able to transform a tiny spark into a large inferno. It would be bad just being seen by him! Too bad there just has to be a sister who specializes in lighting fires around. Even his classmate is setting things alight now too..."

Yu Shu crossed her arms across her chest, frowning. Although it was none of her business, the other person lived across from her home. If the fire was too large, her place would burn too!

To speak seriously, if those two really were to become killer dolls, she really would have to ask House Keeper to block them with only his doll body. This was why she was thinking about releasing the golden-haired fellow—she had to plan ahead.

On the other hand, House Keeper, the golden-haired fellow, and the two girls were actually not all that different...

Yu Shu shot a glance at House Keeper, who was beside her, and asked doubtfully, "Could it be that you were very happy that Jiang Ziya came over? I didn't ask you to brew tea this time, yet you actually went off

to brew it on your own. You even went to brew the milk tea that that guy praised endlessly last time.”

House Keeper’s expression did not change. He still had a faint smile on his face as he replied, “A butler’s duty is to entertain the mistress’s guests. This has no relation to one’s personal emotions.”

*Isn’t saying “no” good enough? To think that he would actually explain...*

Yu Shu suddenly felt a headache coming on—could it be that she was also one of the people setting fires alight right next to the fuel?

## Chapter #3: Jiang Ziya Part 2- Sparks

*Drrrr, Drrr, Drrrr....*

Jiang Ziya was stunned for a moment before taking the phone out from his pocket, a little unused to it. Once again, it was a message from the boss to Fu Jun. Although he wanted to turn the phone off and ignore him, he was worried that the boss might actually have urgent business and need to contact his son. If that was the case, at the very least, he could call the landline or go directly to his doorstep to tell Fu Jun.

Taiyi says: "Sob, I want to go back and eat seafood noodles already!"

Too bad the boss didn't have any proper business.

*Should I send a message to the boss to tell him that the phone is currently in my hands?* Jiang Ziya felt a little indecisive, especially since he wasn't very good at using a smartphone...

Jiang Ziya scratched his head at that. Suddenly, a child bumped into his leg. Since he was thinking about other matters, he wasn't able to tell who had bumped into the other. So, he casually said, "Sorry."

**Eh?**

The child stopped moving for a moment and turned to stare at Jiang Ziya with wide eyes.

*Oh no!* Jiang Ziya immediately put Fu Jun's phone to his ear, saying,

"Sorry! I'm almost there. Wait a bit more."

Hearing the "toot toot" sound of the phone, Jiang Ziya said a whole lot of nonsense like "I got delayed" and "Don't be angry." The child behind him followed him pace for pace for a while. Then, his attention was pulled away by the small items in a display window, and he did not follow him any further.

Only then did Jiang Ziya's frayed nerves finally relax. Thank goodness he had managed to bluff his way through. Really, his severe case of zoning out was all to blame. Otherwise, with "that kind of thing," no matter how you looked at it, there was a problem. There was no way anyone could get confused by it.

The other party only had one leg and moved forward by jumping. On his lone leg, he wore a straw shoe, and he was even carrying an oilpaper umbrella. Jiang Ziya did not dare to observe his face in detail and merely glanced at it. Other than a large eye in the center of the face, there was nothing else there.

To think that he could have mistaken even that, Jiang Ziya felt like punching himself on the spot. Thankfully, the streets tonight were still fairly crowded and drew the other party's attention away.

He recalled that, when he was younger, the city streets hadn't bustled with people like they did now. Jiang Ziya had really disliked going out at night then, for it was especially easy to see things that he should not see. Moreover, because there were few people on the streets, the moment he failed at covering up the fact that he could "see" them, there would always be something that would follow him endlessly, and



it would take a lot of effort to shake them off.

Unlike the current days, where even if a few “shadows” under the street lamps didn’t look quite right, and Jiang Ziya accidentally glanced at them one too many times, those “shadows” completely did not notice him due to the crowd of people.

*Drrrr, Drrr, Drrrr....*

Jiang Ziya just happened to see something else that could be human or not and was shocked by the sudden sound. He then remembered that it was the text notification sound of the phone, and now he thoroughly understood why Fu Jun had wanted to throw the phone away.

*The boss simply has too much free time! Sending messages non-stop, is he trying to scare someone to death?* Jiang Ziya angrily took out the phone and looked at it.

Si Ming<sup>1</sup> says: “The mistake has been fixed. However, a small accident occurred. The return was a failure. I will try once more.”

*It’s actually not the boss, but who is this? Could it be Fu Jun’s friend? But this way of speaking really doesn’t seem like an elementary school student’s, although Fu Jun doesn’t really act like one either.*

*Drrrr, Drrr, Drrrr....*

Si Ming says: “Sorry, Dong Jun. I sent it to the wrong person.”

*... I better turn this phone off for five days and then return it to Fu Jun!*

Jiang Ziya hadn't experienced the benefits of using a smartphone yet, but he already felt that the constant "Drrrr, Drrr, Drrrr..." was giving him a headache.

"Gēge!"

Jiang Ziya felt a pull on both of his legs. He looked down and saw that a pair of twins was each pulling at one of his legs. Their two little faces rose upwards to look at him in unspeakable cuteness. As for who was standing in front of him, other than his sister, who else could it be? Jiang Yu asked in surprise, "Ziya, why did you come here? I thought you would be home by now! I was just intending to go home and cook noodles as a late night snack for everyone."

"I'm making a trip to the supermarket for Yu Shu." Jiang Ziya obediently confessed, "She wants me to help her run errands every week, like buying groceries at the supermarket. She will pay me some wages."

Speaking of "wages" and thinking of the little girl who was climbing on his leg, Jiang Ziya abruptly felt his heart tighten. He practically did not dare to lower his head to face Jiang Xue.

"Is that so?" Jiang Yu smiled as she said, "The supermarket's not far away, so I'll go with you. It's so late already, so there aren't a lot of fresh fruits and vegetables anymore. I'll help you pick the good ones, and if there aren't any, I'm better at picking substitutes, too."

Jiang Ziya felt a little unwilling, but it wasn't due to his sister, but to

his own guilty conscience. He didn't want to face one of the girls clinging onto his leg. However, he didn't have any intentions to stop Jiang Yu. After all, he would still have to go home after buying groceries, and after returning home, he would have to face Xiao Xue all the same.

He nodded his head in agreement, and the two girls naturally held his hands as they walked, making his mood sink further.

After walking for a bit, Jiang Yu asked in worry, "Ziya, what's wrong? You look depressed."

"Nothing's wrong... Ah! When I was in school today, the glass along the corridor suddenly exploded." Jiang Ziya felt that it was better to tell his sister first. Otherwise, if the school suddenly decided to meddle and abruptly call home to show concern or the like, the crime of "intentional concealment" would make his sister and brother-in-law nag at him endlessly.

The moment Jiang Yu heard that, she became nervous. She shrieked, "What? Are you injured?"

"I'm fine, I'm fine." Jiang Ziya quickly added on, "I'm completely unhurt. It was just shocking."

After sizing up Jiang Ziya for a few moments, Jiang Yu finally relaxed. However, she still murmured in worry, "Is the school not maintaining their facilities well? To think that even the glass of the windows would break. How are people to feel at ease going to school?"

Jiang Ziya looked at Jiang Yu. Although she was his older sister, they were twins after all, so they were clearly the same age. However, he felt that Jiang Yu was a lot more mature than him. She was only just over twenty years old, but she was a housewife through and through already.

The group walked into the supermarket. The shopping list was already in Jiang Yu's hands, and she picked vegetables, fruits, and daily products from the various shelves with familiarity. Jiang Ziya could only follow her from afar, reduced to being the children's nanny.

"Idiot!"

Jiang Ziya lowered his head. Although the two girls were disguised as twins and looked very similar now, he could still tell at a glance that he was holding Jiang Jiang's hand in his right hand and Xiao Xue with his left. Xiao Xue's expression was a lot more mature than Jiang Jiang's, like a small adult's. The voice that had spoken just now seemed to have come from the left.

Xiao Xue immediately questioned, "What were you up to today?"

"Me?" Jiang Ziya was thoroughly confused. "What did I do?"

She looked puzzled for a moment and asked, "You don't remember? Jiang Jiang shouted 'Gēge' really loudly! Thankfully, Māma was in the kitchen washing up the dishes. We spent a lot of effort before we could convince her that Jiang Jiang had merely fallen down and was crying for her gēge."

"Jiang Jiang called my name?" Jiang Ziya felt a little puzzled. He did indeed seem to have heard... What had he heard?

"You really don't know?" Xiao Xue pouted as she said, "Okay, then forget it. Anyways, you're not allowed to bully Jiang Jiang in the future!"

"Okay." Jiang Ziya rubbed his nose. Although he didn't feel like he had bullied Jiang Jiang, he had a guilty feeling for some reason. So, he merely agreed.

Jiang Jiang didn't seem to have paid any attention to their conversation. She had a tired expression and rubbed her eyes. She then stretched out both hands and coyly said, "Gēge, carry me."

"Feel like sleeping?" Jiang Ziya picked up and carried Jiang Jiang. She buried her tiny face into Jiang Ziya's chest and immediately fell asleep.

While carrying Jiang Jiang, Jiang Ziya saw Xiao Xue when he looked down, and felt that he wasn't being very fair. So, he could only switch to hugging Jiang Jiang with one arm and extended a free hand to hold Xiao Xue's.

Xiao Xue was so happy that she was all smiles, and she instantly clutched onto him tightly.

Xiao Xue's hand felt a little strange to Jiang Ziya. Her fingers were jointed, unlike a child's soft and tender hands. Actually, Jiang Ziya was also able to see her ball joints. She looked rather strange, half-human and half-doll, but even so, Xiao Xue's blissful smile sent a sharp pain

to his heart.

Xiao Xue's peculiarity was so obvious, it made Jiang Ziya suddenly remember what House Keeper had said. He quickly asked, "If you come to a place like the supermarket, where it's so bright and crowded, wouldn't you be discovered? What if someone were to notice?"

Jiang Xue shook her head and replied, "I've already come here with Māma many times! It's fine even if someone were to notice. I can just hide behind Jiang Jiang, and everyone would think that they were mistaken."

Jiang Ziya pondered about it. It was true, for she was only a child and people probably would not pay her too much attention. Even if she seemed a bit off, people would treat it as the children playing around. For example, he often saw children running around in pants that had devil tails on them. However, House Keeper was an adult, and moreover, he was an eye-catching person. It would probably be very difficult for him to just pass it off.

"Gēge, today people from preschool came to ask if Jiang Jiang and I want to go to class! But Māma says that she can teach us on her own and would send us to school when we are five." Xiao Xue raised her head and asked expectantly, "Gēge, can I become like Jiang Jiang before I turn five?"

*You might possibly never become a real person. The butler is coming to burn...* Jiang Ziya shook his head and said, "I don't know."

Xiao Xue looked down in disappointment. She said, "If I can't become

like Jiang Jiang when I'm five years old, then I can only pretend to be sick and stay at home, and can't go with Jiang Jiang to school."

Jiang Ziya felt another stab to his heart and diverted the topic, "Where did your mother go? Didn't she say that she was going to get soy sauce? Why is she taking so long—hm?"

He abruptly saw a familiar silhouette. The other person was carrying a shopping basket, but there was nothing inside. She was standing like that in front of a shelf, her head raised. It was uncertain what she was looking at. Even if you were to say that she was choosing something, her eyes were looking ahead of her, dazed, so she didn't look like she was selecting anything at all.

*I remember she seems to be called Lin Zhixiang...*

Jiang Ziya felt that this female classmate seemed as though she was in her own world. She seemed rather inattentive. That afternoon, she had spilled cola on him, and now she was spacing out in the supermarket. Moreover, it was to the point where she didn't notice anyone around her. A few people had gone to the shelf she was standing in front of and taken items from there, and they could not help but shoot strange glances at her.

"Gēge, what's wrong?" Xiao Xue shook Jiang Ziya's hand and asked, "Weren't we looking for Māma?"

Jiang Ziya glanced at Lin Zhixiang again, and she was still in a daze. However, he dispelled the thought of going up to talk to her. Given that he still had not figured out what to do with the problems in his

family, and on top of that, he had just discovered that Lu Yang seemed to be harboring a great secret too, he simply didn't have the leeway to care about other people's problems.

"Yes, we're going to look for your mom."

He was just about to turn around, when Xiao Xue suddenly grabbed his hand tightly, shrieking, "Gēge!"

"Hm?" Jiang Ziya looked down. Before Xiao Xue could reply, the surroundings abruptly turned dark. However, it was not complete darkness, for the lights were still bright. It just felt as though there was a piece of black paper covering them, so the light was mostly covered, making the surroundings a little dark.

This situation was not foreign at all.

*Could it be...?* Jiang Ziya turned back to look. That spaced out female classmate was still standing at the same spot and had not noticed the strange situation. Other people around her didn't seem to notice it either. It looked like it was indeed something that only his "left eye" could see.

Xiao Xue cowered by Jiang Ziya's feet. This made him feel rather surprised. *Isn't Xiao Xue a ghost doll herself? What is there for her to be afraid of?*

"Xiao Xue, are you scared?" Jiang Ziya was at a loss as to what to do. He could still see her ball joints, but he could also see the fear on her face.



Xiao Xue nodded her head hard.

"Gēge, where's Māma? I want Māma!" He didn't know when Jiang Jiang had woken up, or whether she had noticed the strange situation, but she anxiously called for her mother.

Jiang Ziya then realized what the most important thing to do was. Without regard as to whether it would attract attention to them, he immediately looked all around and shouted loudly, "Sis, Sis! Where are you?"

Jiang Yu didn't appear. Instead, Lin Zhixiang woke up from her stupor. She looked at Jiang Ziya in surprise, not expecting that she would meet him here.

Seeing how anxious he was, she walked up to him and asked in a concerned tone, "Classmate, what's wrong?"

*I'm fine! You're the one with the problem!*

Jiang Ziya retreated a few steps. As Lin Zhixiang drew closer, the surroundings also grew darker. It was evident that the problem definitely originated from her!

*"Nothing, I'm just looking for someone." Please go to one side and become dark by yourself. Don't drag others into this!*

Xiao Xue was already completely hidden behind Jiang Ziya's legs. Even Jiang Jiang was getting nervous, though she wasn't as afraid as Xiao

Xue. Instead, she was more like a wild animal whose territory was being invaded and was currently looking at Lin Zhixiang cautiously.

"Ziya?" Jiang Yu walked out from the side of the shelves. She asked nervously, "What's wrong? Why did you shout so loudly?" She looked at the older one and the two young ones. They all seemed fine. She then relaxed a little.

"Jiang Jiang was looking for you."

Jiang Ziya immediately put Jiang Jiang into his sister's hands. He had a feeling that if something really were to happen, the one who would be the most capable of dealing with it would be Jiang Jiang. So, he definitely had to pass her to his sister as soon as possible, just in case. As for himself, he bent down and picked up Xiao Xue. She was so frightened that her whole body was shaking.

"What a cute pair of twins." Lin Zhixiang looked at Xiao Xue and Jiang Jiang curiously, and asked, "Are they your little sisters?"

"They are my daughters," Jiang Yu replied with a smile.

Lin Zhixiang's eyes instantly widened as she said, "Your daughters? Y- You're his girlfriend right? You guys had them so early—"

"What?!" Jiang Ziya interrupted unhappily, "She's my elder sister!"

Lin Zhixiang came to a realization, and then laughed embarrassedly. She apologized, "I'm sorry, I was mistaken. Your sister looks so young! I thought she was the same age as us."

*You're right, she's the same age...*

Jiang Yu didn't clarify it either and merely asked with a chuckle, "Ziya, you haven't introduced this person to me yet?"

"This is Lin Zhixiang, a classmate from school." After saying that, Jiang Ziya didn't know what else to say. He and Lin Zhixiang couldn't even be counted as acquaintances. He couldn't possibly introduce her as someone who specialized in spacing out and was also being pestered by a death god, could he?

*Come to think of it, it's not as dark anymore?*

Jiang Ziya raised his head and sneaked a peek at the light above. It really was much brighter. Only then did he finally feel less nervous. He watched Jiang Yu and Lin Zhixiang introduce themselves in a relaxed manner. It was rare that his sister could speak with a girl her age, so he wasn't in a hurry to leave.

Due to her having a relationship with a teacher, almost all of her high school classmates in the past were warned by their parents not to get involved with her. Although Jiang Yu would always say that it was something that couldn't be helped, and that she knew a lot of aunties and mothers in the market, so she wasn't too lonely, she was, after all, only twenty—no, at that time, she wasn't even eighteen yet...

Xiao Xue, who was in Jiang Ziya's arms, also seemed to have noticed that he had relaxed. She grabbed his collar tightly and whispered, "Gēge, let's hurry and go!"

*It's not over yet?* Jiang Ziya's heart skipped a beat, and he quickly said, "Sis, are you done? We need to rush back soon. There are some things that Yu Shu needs urgently."

Jiang Yu seemed doubtful as she asked, "Needs urgently?"

She looked down at the shopping cart. It was practically full of items like fresh fruits, soy sauce, table salt, and toilet paper. *Which one is urgently needed? Unless it's the toilet paper... If so, she should go and borrow some from her neighbors and not send someone out to buy it, right?*

Jiang Yu rolled her eyes at her brother. This excuse was simply a bit too flimsy.

"You can all go ahead." Lin Zhixiang could also tell that Jiang Ziya was in a rush to leave. She tactfully said, "It's late now, so I have to hurry and buy my things, too."

Hearing that, Jiang Yu sent Jiang Ziya a reproachful glare, and then politely bid her goodbye. "Then, I'll see you next time. I'll write down how to make the soup we were talking about and ask Ziya to pass it to you."

Lin Zhixiang glanced at Jiang Ziya. Although she could tell that the other did not wish to see her, she didn't know how to reject Jiang Yu. So, she could only nod her head and answer, "Okay."

Jiang Ziya had been silent all this time. He too knew that it was too

obvious that he was in a hurry to leave. He didn't want to hurt her like this either. However, Xiao Xue was grabbing his neck with a death grip. If he were to stay, he might become the first person in history to be choked to death by a doll.

Jiang Ziya quietly pushed the shopping cart to the cashier. He tried to endure the uncomfortable feeling in his heart, and as Xiao Xue urged him on, they walked to the entrance of the supermarket carrying lots of bags.

The moment they stepped out of the glass doors, Jiang Ziya could not resist looking back. He then inhaled sharply.

Lin Zhixiang was still standing in the same spot. Around her, it was as dark as a starless night. It didn't feel like she was in a bright supermarket at all. She was practically stuck in a black hole!

Jiang Ziya's gaze stayed there for a long time before Lin Zhixiang noticed him looking. She smiled and waved at him, but her eyes were lifeless, and her smile looked false. She looked as though she had lost her soul, completely unsettling.

*Regardless of how much peril this female classmate is in, this is absolutely none of my business. I don't know her, and besides, I'm not of any help!* Jiang Ziya desperately chanted to himself: *Stranger, turn a blind eye to it, not of any help, stranger, turn a blind eye to it, not of any help...*

"Ziya, let's go?"

Jiang Ziya turned around, and a blue, second-hand SUV was parked in front of them. His brother-in-law, Jiang Qibing got off the car and was walking over to help carry the bags.

Jiang Yu said with a small smile, "Even though it's not far from home, it's so late already and we have many things, so I decided to call Qibing to drive over and pick us up."

Jiang Qibing raised an eyebrow and asked, "Ziya, how did you go from dropping by the neighbor's to dropping by the supermarket?"

"Ah, Yu Shu asked me to help her buy some stuff."

"Shouldn't you tell us before going out?" Jiang Qibing said unhappily. Jiang Ziya gave an "oh" and didn't dare to say anything more. He really had forgotten to go home and report it first.

In the past, regardless of what the two siblings did, their father didn't care. So, he was not used to having to report to his parents before going off. He didn't think that he would now have a brother-in-law who was more than ten years older than him, and furthermore, who used to be their teacher. He instantly became "a brother-in-law slash father" and started to poke his nose into their business.

Jiang Qibing said in worry, "Although this market is very close, let me drive you all here in the future. The news recently has been terrifying, and I don't feel at ease when you all go out so late at night. Can't you come over during the day?"

*News...* Jiang Ziya couldn't help but think of the situation in the

supermarket. If he were to abandon this female classmate right now, and see her in the Society section of the newspaper the next day, would he really be able to treat this as something that was none of his business?

Jiang Yu said to Jiang Qibing with an apologetic smile, "Because there are a lot of promotions after nine o'clock at night, we came over at this time."

Hearing that, Jiang Qibing softened a bit, but still said persistently, "You can save on anything, but you can't compromise your safety."

Jiang Yu answered back obediently, "Got it."

"Alright, get in the car." After Jiang Qibing finished loading the things into the car, he called out to everyone to get on.

Jiang Ziya put one leg inside, but he could not put the second one in even after a long time.

*... Damn!*

He put Xiao Xue in one of the seats of the double baby car seat and shouted inside, "Sis, Jiěfu, you all go ahead. I remembered there was something I needed to tell Lin Zhixiang. I'll walk back later by myself." Jiang Yu gave a very long "ooh," and then replied, "Go and tell her something... Hehe! I knew that your attitude was funny. Hehe, okay then! No need to explain more, you're already twenty. If you want to, go ahead. Go, go!"

Looking at his beaming sister, Jiang Ziya felt truly powerless.

"It's too late." Jiang Qibing instead disagreed and said, "I'll give you ten minutes. We'll go buy a late night snack nearby and then come back for you."

"At least give me twenty minutes..."

If he could, Jiang Ziya would rather they didn't come back at all. However, he knew how stubborn his brother-in-law was, and to convince him to leave would be a huge hurdle. By the time he managed to do so, the girl inside would probably already have reported to hell.

Jiang Yu was deeply worried that her husband would ruin things for her brother, so quickly agreed, "Okay, okay. The steamed dumpling store that I want to eat at is very crowded anyways, so we would have to wait a while. Twenty minutes would be just right."

Xiao Xue suddenly grabbed Jiang Ziya's hand and shouted anxiously, "Gēge, don't go!"

"Xiao Xue, be good. Gēge has something to do, so don't bother Gēge," Jiang Yu quickly cajoled her daughter.

"Don't go!" Xiao Xue clutched onto Jiang Ziya without letting go and buried her face in his chest. She softly scolded, "Gēge is an idiot! Don't go!"

Jiang Ziya felt somewhat at a loss as to what to do, so he could only



say in a small voice, "I'm sorry. I'll just go and pull her out. I won't do anything else."

Xiao Xue fell silent for a moment. Then, she shouted, "I want to go with Gēge!"

"Xiao Xue!" Jiang Yu warned in a low voice.

Jiang Ziya quickly said, "It's fine. She can go with me."

"No way!" Jiang Yu made a face. She didn't want her daughter to be a third wheel.

"Sis!" Jiang Ziya went for broke and said with gritted teeth, "With Xiao Xue around, I would feel less awkward and have more conversation topics!"

Jiang Yu stilled and then covered her mouth as she laughed, "You're so big already, but you're still such a coward! Alright, Xiao Xue, go and support your gēge!"

The car drove off, and Jiang Yu even happily waved goodbye to the two of them from the car window.

Jiang Ziya stood at the roadside while hugging Xiao Xue. Behind them, it should have been a bright supermarket, but the road in front of them, which didn't have many cars, was actually obviously brighter than what was behind them...

"Idiot." Xiao Xue was on the verge of tears, but they wouldn't come to

her. She wailed, “Gēge is a big idiot!”

Jiang Ziya felt so too.

### Chapter #3: Jiang Ziya Part 3- Inferno

Lu Yang was squatting on the balcony when a vibration suddenly came from his chest. He first glanced at his cell phone, and then looked inside the apartment. Inside the apartment, it was still pitch black. He then calmly picked up the call.

"Fu Jun, why are you looking for me? Could it be that Ziya got into trouble?"

"... What kind of trouble could I get into?"

Lu Yang replied in shock, "Ziya? You're still at Jiu Ge at this time? Why are you calling from Xiao Jun's cell phone? Did your cell phone run out of battery?"

"I'm at the twenty-four hour supermarket on Zhongxiang Road. I'm not sure why, but only Xiao Jun's cell phone could make a call..."

Jiang Ziya's voice sounded a little cautious as he asked, "Lu Yang, do you think you could bring that sword over?"

Lu Yang blurted, "What did you see this time? Did you get involved with it?"

"The female classmate we saw in the daytime is here, and moreover"

"You're with her?" Lu Yang suddenly flew into a rage and scolded, "Jiang Ziya, are you stupid? Why did you go and find her? Wasn't the incident in the daytime enough to make you stay far away from her?"

"It was just a coincidence!" was the urgent reply from the other. Lu Yang issued an ultimatum, "I don't care how you met her! You better instantly, immediately leave that place!"

"Uh, it should be too late. I can't find the exit at all. The surroundings are too dark and ridiculously huge. This doesn't look like the inside of the supermarket. I have no idea where this place is—"

*Toot toot toot—*

"Ziya? Ziya!" Lu Yang was stunned, and immediately pressed redial several times. However, every time he did, he only heard a harsh computerized voice going, "The phone number you have just called is currently unavailable."

"SHIT!" Lu Yang cursed and shot a glance into the apartment. It was still pitch dark inside.

He had totally waited in vain! Trying to ambush her here like a fool! In the end, it was actually Jiang Ziya who met her in the supermarket, and coincidentally an incident had occurred... What kind of luck did he have?

The supermarket wasn't far, a mere two streets away. However, judging from Jiang Ziya's words, there probably wasn't enough time for him to dawdle around.

With one hand, Lu Yang grabbed the railings on the balcony and jumped off directly from the third floor. As he jumped, he did a spin in

mid-air and let go of the balcony. He landed on the railing of the second floor precisely, and then did a back flip and landed directly on the ground of the first floor. Following that, he shot out like an arrow.

It hadn't even been three minutes before he stood at the entrance of the supermarket. However, there was nothing strange about the supermarket's appearance.

Over the phone, Jiang Ziya had said that his surroundings were very dark. However, the supermarket seemed as bright as usual. Due to the late hour, there weren't many people inside, but there were still people carrying shopping baskets or pushing shopping carts.

Lu Yang stepped in, and a peculiar chill made him shiver involuntarily. A bone-chilling cold like this couldn't have been created by air-conditioning. However, despite looking around, he still could not figure out where the problem was.

At this kind of time, Lu Yang really wished that that left eye of Jiang Ziya's was on his own face. Unfortunately, he didn't have it, so he could only walk through the aisles one by one to search. At the same time, he made hand seals non-stop with all ten fingers, and muttered a chant, "Natural order of Heavens and Earth, disperse the foulness from the air, let the evil impurities dissolve away, let Taoism last for all eternity, let this imperial decree of Taishang Laojun—"

A sudden "bang" interrupted his incantation. Lu Yang took a step back warily, and shouted softly, "Slay, appear!"

If Jiang Ziya was here, he would have seen a large amount of light

appearing at Lu Yang's side once again. It spun around like a whirlpool, and in the end solidified and formed an ancient sword, floating to the right of Lu Yang.

A "thump" rang out. Lu Yang looked at the freezer beside him. He raised his hand, and the sword flew higher and tilted slightly downwards, entering a battle ready stance where he could send it out to cut down anything at any time.

Inside the freezer, there were various brands of dumplings for boiling. There was nothing strange about it. However, Lu Yang refused to believe that that was the case. He squinted his eyes suspiciously and finally noticed what was off. The reflection... The reflection on the glass doors wasn't right!

The glass doors were not mirrors, so the image reflected on it was very limited. If one did not pay close attention, it would be impossible to notice the peculiarities. However, under Lu Yang's scrutiny, he noticed that in the reflection, the goods were placed haphazardly, and several products had fallen all over the ground. It looked completely different from what was behind him!

Suddenly, a shadow flickered past. Lu Yang's eyes turned wide, and he immediately looked behind him. However, there was no one behind him at all. He instantly turned back to the glass to take a closer look, and this time he saw the shadow clearly. It was as though the other person was standing in the position where Lu Yang was currently standing, and he was currently looking at him in disbelief—it was Jiang Ziya!

The Jiang Ziya within the glass took a stride forward, and his expression looked very anxious. He seemed to want to tell Lu Yang something, but at this point, there was a sudden ripple across the reflection, which made it start to become blurry.

Lu Yang couldn't help but curse "SHIT" and then roared, "Slay, cut a passage through!"

The ancient sword reacted like how someone would when they were agitated—it started shaking madly. It spun and flew into a higher position, and then rushed straight toward the freezer, slicing it. The air actually tore apart like paper, and a giant crack appeared.

Jiang Ziya was standing right behind the crack, and he stared at Lu Yang with wide eyes. His appearance was a tragic sight. His shirt had a large rip in it, barely hanging on his body. Also, he was halfway blackened by smoke.

Lu Yang reached out, yelling, "Ziya, hurry and get—"

Instead, Jiang Ziya was even more agitated than he was and shouted, "Ah Yang, get out of there quickly!"

Lu Yang froze. He didn't think that Jiang Ziya would end up asking him to go over. What kind of turn of events was this?

Before he could understand the situation clearly, he saw that the crack was gradually shrinking and closing up. He quickly said, "What are you talking about? You should come over! Quick, the hole is getting smaller and smaller!"

Jiang Ziya then noticed the change in the size of the hole, and he immediately panicked. He stretched out both his arms and shouted desperately, "Ah Yang, come over! Please!"

Seeing Jiang Ziya's urgency, Lu Yang hesitated. According to logic, Lu Yang was the one who could deal with these kinds of matters, so they should listen to him. However...

"Lu Yang!" Jiang Ziya walked another step closer and growled, "You better get out of there right this moment! Otherwise, we won't be friends anymore!"

Hearing that, Lu Yang laughed and said, "If I said that we can break off all ties but you have to come over?"

"... I'll go over right now and punch you to death!"

Lu Yang gave a loud laugh. When the hole was barely as tall as half of a person, he squeezed through it and landed on the ground. After rolling, he stood beside Jiang Ziya without a single scratch, and even Slay was floating beside them cautiously.

After coming over, the first thing that Lu Yang felt was that it was very hot. On this side of the supermarket, it was practically ruins. Nearly half the shelves were collapsed, and there were damaged products all over the floor. Many places were even charred, like the result of a fire. The temperature of the place was indeed rather high, and smoke filled the air. Visibility was only extended to a few steps away. The entire place seemed like a fire site that had just been extinguished.



Lu Yang was so hot that his forehead began to sweat, and he started to feel that he had probably made the wrong decision and was going to accompany his good friend into a blazing hell. However, he abruptly realized that the bone-chilling cold that he had felt ever since stepping into the supermarket was gone!

Jiang Ziya broke into curses, "What were you standing there for? Just now, the shelves behind you were all displaying human heads and a bunch of organs stuffed in glass containers! There were even prices on them! Didn't you see them? I asked you to come over, but you were still there joking around. I really want to smack you, you scoundrel!"

The moment Lu Yang heard that, not only did he look at Jiang Ziya's left eye, he also exclaimed, "Ziya, that left eye of yours is really useful!"

"Useful, my ass!" Jiang Ziya's face was ashen as he said, "Why is it that the supermarket has already become like this but the police still haven't arrived?"

Lu Yang rolled his eyes at him. "Do you think the police office is just next door? I hurried here within three minutes of your phone call. Moreover, are you certain that the police wouldn't go into the place just now that was selling human heads if they came in?"

"Three minutes?" Jiang Ziya froze and said, "I'm not certain how long it has been, but I've been stuck here for at least thirty minutes. It definitely couldn't have been only three minutes!"

Hearing that, Lu Yang too realized that something was wrong. Jiang Ziya's clothes were torn and blackened all over. Moreover, over the phone, he hadn't mentioned the supermarket being destroyed. However, he looked like he had just survived a fire. To say that all of that happened within three minutes was indeed impossible.

"What exactly is going on?" Lu Yang started to think that things didn't look good. First of all was the space, and then it was the time. To think that there was a problem with both, the "person" behind it this time was certainly a little too alarming!

Jiang Ziya shook his head and said, "Leave that aside for now. Hurry and come save someone with me!"

Lu Yang nodded his head and said in understanding, "That classmate called Lin Zhixiang?"

Hearing that, Jiang Ziya froze, and then gritted his teeth as he said, "No, the one we have to save is Xiao Xue!"

"Who is 'Xiao Xue?'" Lu Yang did not seem to understand as he asked, "Did you meet her just now in the supermarket?"

"Xiao Xue is..." Jiang Ziya seemed to be a little at a loss as he continued, "She is my niece."

Once Lu Yang heard that, he immediately questioned with a frown, "Isn't that Jiang Jiang? Since when did you have another niece?"

Jiang Ziya really didn't know how he should explain, especially with Lu

Yang wielding an ancient sword like a demon-slaying character, and no matter how you looked at it, Xiao Xue looked like a type of monster! He took in a deep breath and said, "In short, Xiao Xue got trapped when she helped Lin Zhixiang and me escape. I have to go back and save her!"

Although Lu Yang was full of doubts, it only took one look at his good friend's stubborn attitude, and he said unhappily, "Got it. Where is she?"

Smoke filled their surroundings, so visibility extended to only a few meters. However, Lu Yang reckoned that Jiang Ziya might be able to see much farther than him.

As expected, Jiang Ziya pointed in a direction and said, "That way." Lu Yang took a closer look. In that direction, the smoke seemed to be a darker shade of black, which was actually different from the rest of the smoke. It was just that the environment here was really too terrible, and a mere variation in the color of the smoke was simply hard to notice.

After noticing the peculiarity of the smoke, Lu Yang then felt something ominous. He couldn't help but ask, "What do you see?"

"A black hole." Jiang Ziya said helplessly, "It's a hole that's deep and dark. I had just managed to gather my courage to step in when I suddenly saw you on the reflection of the glass. It gave me a huge scare, thinking that you had become a ghost!"

"Don't speak such nonsense in this kind of place!" Lu Yang rolled his

eyes at him, and said, "Let's go!"

The two of them headed toward the black hole that Jiang Ziya had spoken of. However, they didn't expect that it was actually still a distance away from them. This place was indeed too large to resemble a supermarket.

"Ziya, this place shouldn't be like this. Don't tell me that even you can't see the real supermarket?"

Jiang Ziya felt very puzzled by it too. He answered, "This place truly is like this. It seems like the after scene of a fire, but it's just too large. I also have no idea what's going on. Just now when I was trying to escape, I had to run for at least ten minutes before I found the exit."

"Since you found the exit, why didn't you go out!" Lu Yang had the urge to stab his good friend.

"That's because Xiao Xue helped divert those things away from Lin Zhixiang and me, and told us to escape first. She said that she would follow us afterwards, but she didn't. Moreover, Lin Zhixiang and I had even gotten separated midway. I had merely turned around to find the way, and when I turned back, she was gone. I can't possibly just abandon her, right?"

Jiang Ziya asked in a soft voice, "Ah Yang, can you really handle those things?" Although he didn't want to abandon Xiao Xue and Lin Zhixiang, he was even more unwilling to drag Lu Yang into trouble.

*Those... Not just one?* Lu Yang's heart skipped a beat at that. Of course,

he wasn't a newbie, but this time, he truly didn't have the confidence. The death god that had appeared in the afternoon; the way he had obviously stepped into a terrible place when he entered the supermarket; the time difference between three minutes and thirty minutes...

He said in a relaxed manner, "Do I look like I can't handle this?"

Jiang Ziya was between laughter and tears as he said, "You're wearing clothes that resemble those of a magazine model's, have facial features of mixed-blood descent, and you're paired with an ancient Chinese sword. You look even worse than a quack!"

"Congrats, the person that you're counting on to rescue others is worse than a quack!" Lu Yang teased, and then couldn't resist asking, "Ziya, you keep saying that Slay is an ancient sword. How does the Slay that you see look like?"

"Oh? The body of the sword is silvery white, and the hilt is an old, deep bronze color. The decorations on top of it look a bit like clouds. That kind of shape seems to be called ruyi? At the bottom, there's even a small jade ring with a red tassel hanging from it."

At this point in his description, Jiang Ziya couldn't help but ask, "Could it be that you can't see your own sword?"

"I can see it." Lu Yang glanced at Slay beside him, and his gaze automatically softened. His tone was a little regretful as he said, "However, the most I can usually see is Slay's radiance. As for the rest, I only know that the sword hilt is a dark color, and I can see the red

tassel. However, I can't see the ruyi cloud patterns or the jade ring you spoke of."

Jiang Ziya asked out of curiosity, "Since when did you own this sword... Ah! If that's something that can't be spoken of, then forget it."

Lu Yang scratched his face and answered, "I think I was born with it, but I only managed to summon it when I was twelve years old." He fell silent for a moment, and then said softly, "It's not that I intended to hide it from you on purpose. It's just that if I told you about these things, I was afraid that you would be dragged into these matters."

*It's exactly like how Yu Shu said it would be.* Jiang Ziya patted his shoulder and comforted him, "I know. It's not like I blame you. Anything that you can't tell me, just don't speak of it. Don't worry about it!"

Lu Yang instead shook his head, saying, "Now, I actually have to tell you some of these things. You have already been dragged so deeply into this, and can't be so oblivious to everything anymore. But..."

He stopped in his tracks and looked straight ahead, making Slay go into its battle ready stance. He said, "For now, let's settle this before we talk! Ziya, from this moment on, inform me of the surroundings and its peculiarities to the best of your abilities."

"Okay." Jiang Ziya didn't dare to be careless either.

The entrance to the black hole was right in front of the two of them. This hole looked similar to the crack that Slay had sliced through, but

unlike the crack where you could see the inside directly, it was just a mess of chaos and darkness within.

"I can't see what is inside the hole. It's too dark." Jiang Ziya sounded a little discouraged.

Lu Yang gave a nod of his head and said, "Then, I'll go in first. When you hear me say 'Okay,' then you can come in."

"No way!" Jiang Ziya protested strongly. "If you were to be ambushed when you go in, then I'll definitely not have a good end either. Why don't I go in first, and if anything happens, you can come in to save me!"

Lu Yang raised an eyebrow, and without a second word, dashed into the hole.

Jiang Ziya froze for a moment before coming back to his senses. He immediately ran two steps forward, shouting, "Hey! Lu Yang!"

A hand suddenly came out of the hole and dragged him in. Its strength was astounding, and Jiang Ziya was unable to react in time. He merely staggered two steps before he was pulled in. Once he entered the hole, abrupt light rays blinded him, causing him to be unable to open his eyes. However, he didn't stay idle but instantly swung his right fist—

"It's me!" His punch was blocked, and a familiar voice sounded.

After recognizing that it was Lu Yang, Jiang Ziya gave a sigh of relief. He could not help but curse, "What are you doing? Are you trying to

scare me to death?”

“Sorry, sorry. I was worried that you would run into some more trouble over there, so I pulled you over in a hurry.”

Although Lu Yang was explaining to him in a relaxed tone, his gaze was very sharp, observing the situation around them. His body was also wound tight, with Slay floating beside him, ready to be put into execution at any moment. He was completely in battle stance.

Jiang Ziya rarely saw Lu Yang with such a serious attitude. In the past, even when dealing with people looking for trouble, Lu Yang would usually pummel them while wearing a smile on his face. Jiang Ziya couldn't help but feel unused to seeing such a serious expression on him.

“Ziya, what I see around us is still the supermarket. How about you?”  
At the moment, Lu Yang trusted Jiang Ziya's eyes much more than his own.

*The supermarket again!* Jiang Ziya felt that he was going nuts. *What's going on?* Despite going here and there, they were still in the supermarket, just that it was slightly different.

“Yeah, it's a supermarket that hasn't been destroyed. But, it's a bit dusky, and there are thick layers of dust everywhere.” Jiang Ziya hesitated before he mentioned, “However, the size of the supermarket seems to have been restored back to normal. I can see the entrance.”

“I can see it too. Any peculiarities there?”



"No." Jiang Ziya observed carefully before answering.  
Lu Yang frowned and said, "Let's try going out first."

*Aren't we going to look for Xiao Xue and Lin Zhixiang inside the supermarket first?* Jiang Ziya wanted to ask that, but the stern look on Lu Yang's face stopped him from doing so. The other person looked like a specialist—no, appearance-wise, he didn't look like one. However, either way, he had a sword floating beside him, and Lu Yang's judgment was definitely better than Ziya's own.

They walked out of the supermarket. Outside were familiar roads and streets and a large number of buildings, and before them was an asphalt road and vehicles.

"It's snowing from the sky?" Jiang Ziya looked upwards at the sky in shock. Seeing the grayish-white specks falling continuously from the sky, he couldn't help but reach a hand out to catch them. However, what landed in his palm was not cold snow but a black lump of ash that was even still a bit warm.

"That's not right, this seems to be ash. Lu Yang—"

Jiang Ziya had practically never seen real snow before, so he was unable to confirm for sure. He turned around, intending to ask his good friend if he also thought that it was ash. However, Lu Yang's face was so pale that Jiang Ziya received a huge shock.

"Ziya, do you see it too? Is this place really that big? Is there anything strange about it? Can you see into the distance?" Lu Yang questioned him non-stop, seeming very anxious.

Jiang Ziya lifted his head up. This was the street near his home and could not be any more familiar to him. Lu Yang's terrible complexion made him observe his surroundings in greater detail.

It was a little dusky, like the result of severe air pollution, and ash was falling from the sky continuously. However, the visibility was not as bad as the supermarket's after the fire. He was still able to see rather far away.

The only thing that struck him as strange was the silence.

The familiar street was a place that was so crowded that even the supermarket had to be open for twenty-four hours, but it was currently a deafening sea of silence.

On the road, cars had stopped in front of the traffic lights, but even after such a long time, they had not moved. They merely remained on the asphalt roads. Naturally, there was no one inside the cars either. It was as though everyone had evaporated in the middle of driving, leaving only their cars behind. A thick layer of dust had even piled up on the cars.

"Yeah, I can see into the distance. Everything that should be here is here, just that there's a lot more dust, and there doesn't seem to be anyone around."

Although it was rather unsettling to see the city become so silent, Jiang Ziya felt that if someone were to appear in this kind of place, he probably wouldn't be able to think of them as human anyway.

"Come, we're going back into the supermarket!" Lu Yang instantly turned back, and instructed, "Ziya, observe around and look for the exit. We're going to leave this place immediately!"

Jiang Ziya froze and asked, "Then, what about Xiao Xue and Lin Zhixiang? We have to go look for them—"

"We can't afford to anymore!" Lu Yang seemed rather flustered and exasperated as he explained, "Someone who can create such a large and detailed 'barrier dimension' is definitely not someone I can deal with! If we don't go now, even we will be unable to leave!"

Hearing that, Jiang Ziya finally understood the gravity of the situation. However, Xiao Xue, and that female classmate...

Lu Yang grabbed his arm and anxiously pleaded, "This time, I'm the one begging you. Trust me, and let's leave quickly! You're the only family that your sister has left!"

"Is my dad dead in your mind..."

"How many years has it been since your dad last showed up? You and your sister have probably known me longer than you've known your dad!"

*That might actually be true.* Jiang Ziya felt a little depressed at that. Seeing that he had yet to agree, Lu Yang exasperatedly said, "Ziya, think about it. If something were to happen to you, how upset would your sister be?"

Jiang Ziya fell silent. He thought about his twin sister, and thought about what would occur if something were to happen to him—

Jiang Yu's face suddenly came to mind. However, it was a younger version of her. Her face was completely filthy, with tears and mucus flowing down it. The grime and the tears on her face blended together, making her a tragic sight. Her mouth opened wide, and she screamed as if shouting herself hoarse, so full of grief—

It was the incident from that time, that car accident...

"Ziya?" Lu Yang shouted in confusion. "What's wrong? Is something wrong?"

Jiang Ziya abruptly came back to his senses. There was no Jiang Yu in front of him, only Lu Yang, whose face seemed very worried.

He shook his head. Once he thought about how sad Jiang Yu would be, and for some reason recalled that scene, he really was unable to hold his stance any longer.

*Xiao Xue, I'm sorry...*

Jiang Ziya finally nodded his head and agreed, "Let's leave."

Lu Yang heaved a sigh of relief. However, he quickly turned worried as he said, "We still have to find the exit. We have to rely on your left eye—"

Jiang Ziya abruptly interrupted him and cautiously said, "Ah Yang, someone's there."

He pointed at the balcony opposite the street. Lu Yang had not seen a thing, but he was extremely confident in Jiang Ziya's eyes. Since he claimed that he had seen someone, then there was someone there without a doubt!

If it was the person who had created this place, then it would be difficult for them to escape even if they had wings! What exactly should they do in order to escape from this place? Or perhaps, there wasn't a way at all...

## Chapter #4: Lu Yang Part 1 – The Appearance of a Death God

“Who’s there?”

*We have to face the person sooner or later. Rather than being ambushed, we might as well face it head-on!* Lu Yang placed Slay in front of his chest, getting ready for battle, though he hoped that it would not come to that.

Jiang Ziya was at a loss as to what he could do, but he continued to stand beside Lu Yang. It seemed that Lu Yang preferred that he stand behind him, but although Lu Yang expressed that with his eyes several times, it was of no use. Therefore, Lu Yang could only just let Ziya be.

Under their scrutiny, a bark of laughter came from the window. “Really, to think that I would actually still get discovered. It seems like I underestimated the truth-seeing eye after all.”

Jiang Ziya felt blank for a moment. He didn’t think that he would hear this phrase coming from the other person’s mouth. Yu Shu truly had not deceived him; his left eye really was this “truth-seeing eye” thing, even though he didn’t think that his own left eye was worthy of that name. *Why would an eye that would always see various strange things be called the “truth-seeing eye?”*

The other person walked onto the balcony. He was dressed in a very elaborate Chinese robe. It was black-based with a golden trim. His hair was even tied into a bun, and he was wearing a similarly styled, black-based coronet lined with gold. It looked like an outfit from ancient

China, but it was simply difficult to tell which dynasty it was from. At least, Jiang Ziya and Lu Yang were unable to tell. The most the two could recognize was the clothing from the Qing Dynasty, and they could possibly vaguely recognize the female gauze clothing of the Tang Dynasty. As for the other dynasties, those fashions weren't even a blip on their radar.

The person was even wearing a golden mask on his face. It had designs on it as though it was mottled, and the nose was especially sharp, like a crow's beak. Although he was masked, he was probably male, judging from his figure.

He leaned on the railing in a relaxed fashion and said, "Don't be nervous. We are not the ones who created this place. We merely made a 'door' to here. I don't have a strong enough ability to create this barrier dimension." He muttered softly, "Not yet."

"What kind of person are you?" Although he asked in such a way, Lu Yang was unable to confirm if the other person was human.

"You don't need to know who I am," was the reply from the other. "This is not your goal, so there's no need to complicate things. Take what you want with you, and then forget it all."

"What I want?" Lu Yang was unable to understand this. All he knew was that Jiang Ziya had gotten into trouble, and he had come to help him out. Now that he was beside him, all that was left was getting out of here.

Jiang Ziya, however, understood what he meant. He shouted, "Are you

the one who captured Xiao Xue? Return her!”

The corner of that person’s mouth turned up, and he seemed to be in a mysteriously good mood. He raised his index finger and gestured behind the two of them—*the death god!*

“SHIT!” Lu Yang cursed. He already had an utter lack of confidence in handling the guy on the balcony. Now that an extra death god had appeared, he could only hope that the other person would follow his word and let them leave.

There was actually someone in the arms of the death god. The death god landed on the ground, placed the person it was carrying down, and then slowly moved back a step.

“It’s Lin Zhixiang!” Jiang Ziya immediately rushed out. Lu Yang was unable to stop him in time and could only follow.

“She’s still alive!” Jiang Ziya exclaimed as he bent down to check. He heaved a large sigh of relief at that. After all, he was the one who had lost her just now. If something really were to happen to her, he would probably have a guilty conscience for the rest of his life.

Lu Yang felt much more relaxed at that. Other than feeling happy that their classmate was still alive, he also faintly felt that the other person might truly let them go free. However, he still remained cautious as he watched the death god in front of him. He asked in a low voice, “What did you all do to her?”

He was unable to believe that they would make such a large move just



for the sake of taking away a girl for a few moments, and then return her unscathed.

Even if they were not the ones who had made this barrier dimension, it would still take a tremendous amount of effort to create a door to enter someone else's barrier dimension!

The death god remained silent as usual. Instead, it was the mottled masked man on the balcony who started to explain, "My family's Si Ming made a mistake by retrieving the wrong soul." He gave the other a reprimanding glance and then continued his explanation, "Therefore, he must make up for his mistakes and retrieve the right soul as well as return the wrong one."

*Si Ming?* Jiang Ziya froze. He seemed to have heard a similar name before from somewhere.

The masked man seemed apologetic as he said, "Because of carelessness on our side, a portion of this girl's soul has been taken away. The rest would not stay inside her body stably, so she was targeted by certain things. This resulted in today's events."

"When you say certain things, do you mean the things chasing us in the supermarket?" Jiang Ziya questioned, "Weren't those dispatched by you two?"

"Definitely not." The masked man replied sincerely, "When I discovered that you all had been trapped here, the only thing I did was make a 'door' and then get Si Ming to find you all. It's too bad that Si Ming only found the two of them. You're very good at hiding, so he

was unable to find you. Therefore, I made an exit, hoping that you would find it. Thankfully, things unfolded as I wished for them to.”

*Retrieved? Returned? Door?* Jiang Ziya really couldn’t understand a thing. Since Lin Zhixiang was fine, if Xiao Xue was also safe, then it would be—

Lu Yang angrily said, “Retrieved the right soul? So as expected, he was the one who killed the girl in the hospital?”

The masked man sighed as he said, “You are mistaken. Si Ming did not kill her. He merely retrieved her soul.”

“Merely retrieved?” Jiang Ziya stood up and roared in anger, “He dragged a girl away while she was still alive and kicking! She struggled so much that all her fingernails dropped off, and all the flesh and skin of her fingertips were worn down to nothing. She was using the bones of her fingertips to clutch at the ground, struggling not to be dragged away. Do you call this ‘merely retrieving her soul?’”

Lu Yang froze at that. He looked at Jiang Ziya unbearably. Although he had known that Ziya would see such things, Ziya had never described them in such detail, especially the more horrifying scenes. Every time he had asked Ziya about it, he would always say that he was used to it. However, how would anyone be able to get used to something like what Ziya had described just now?

Lu Yang made a decision on the spot that if they got out safely, he would make Jiang Ziya clearly tell him about everything, no matter what he saw, so that he would not bottle it up!

The masked man sighed.

"Retrieving souls is Si Ming's duty. However, how they leave the human realm is the decision of the humans themselves. This girl was sure that when she passed away, she would be dragged into hell cruelly by a death god, so a death god appeared and the scene you spoke of occurred."

He smiled faintly and said, "You have blamed the wrong person."

Jiang Ziya was stunned. He was unable to verify the truth of that statement and merely turned to shoot a glance at Lu Yang. The latter however was also frowning, deep in thought.

"As for the one in the hospital, it seems like the way she left was greatly different."

The masked man nodded at the death god. A gust of wind suddenly blew around the death god, making the robe-like or smoke-like darkness that cloaked him billow.

However, the death god did not approach them. He merely stood on the spot, and the billowing robe gradually gathered. The color became lighter and lighter, and his skull started growing skin and flesh. Pale white strands of hair appeared on top of his head, and then he actually became a person. He was wearing an outdated printed cloth outfit, with wrinkles covering his face. He was just like an elderly village woman who was currently looking amiably at Jiang Ziya and Lu Yang. Both of their eyes turned wider by twice their size.

With an air of amusement, the masked man said, "Oh, it seems like she had a very good relationship with her deceased grandmother and left together with her. It's a pretty good way to leave!"

*Deceased grandmother...* Jiang Ziya suddenly thought of his mother. If it were him, would he also follow his mother and leave? That seemed like a rather good way—no! He definitely wouldn't go. He couldn't leave his sister here by herself!

"Why must you retrieve her soul?" Jiang Ziya indignantly protested. He had a twin sister, while that girl must also have family members waiting for her!

"Why must humans die?" the man asked instead. "Do you know what will happen if her lifespan reached its limit but no one went to retrieve her soul? Could it be that the time that girl spent lying in the hospital bed was not long enough for you to understand the consequences?"

Jiang Ziya and Lu Yang were both stunned.

He sighed and continued, "The two of you may leave. You are unrelated to everything. As for this girl, there will be no further problems. She will not encounter such events again... Oh, wait, you can't leave yet—"

The masked man suddenly jumped down from the balcony. It was impossible to tell how he had moved, for they only saw a gray shadow rapidly moving in. He actually reached the two of them in the blink of an eye. Lu Yang immediately called for Slay, but the masked man raised a hand to stop him.

"Don't move. I have no ill intentions. All I merely wish to do is to return something to him." He pointed at Jiang Ziya.

Hearing that, Lu Yang instead put down Lin Zhixiang and immediately stood in front of Jiang Ziya. He had completely no intentions of allowing the man to meet with Jiang Ziya face to face. That person merely smiled faintly. He took out something and handed it over.

"I believe this should be yours?"

Jiang Ziya looked down at it. It was a doll with white hair, large blue eyes, and pale skin. On her body, she was wearing a finely made Western dress. Although the doll had been kept in good condition, she still had some unavoidable dirt and dust from contact. Overall, she looked like she had several years on her.

"It is mine. That's correct," Jiang Ziya calmly said.

Lu Yang turned to glance at him, finding it a little strange. However, he ultimately did not say anything. It was just that when Jiang Ziya walked out from behind him and extended his hand to take the doll, Slay was at his side, ready to slice things up at any moment.

As Jiang Ziya took back the doll, Lu Yang asked cautiously, "Can we leave now?"

The masked man gestured with both of his hands and answered, "Go ahead."

"Where is the exit?" Lu Yang asked, holding back his anger.

"Wherever you came from, you return the same way. Isn't that something very simple?"

Jiang Ziya automatically turned around. Inside the supermarket, it was well lit and looked vastly different from the world outside that was raining ash. He quickly patted his good friend's shoulder and exclaimed, "Lu Yang! There are people in the supermarket. They're real humans!" Lu Yang gave an "oh" and replied, "Let's go. Help me carry this girl."

Jiang Ziya was about to reply that he still had to carry Xiao Xue, but seeing how alert Lu Yang was, he merely placed the doll on Lin Zhixiang's stomach and then lifted her up.

"Are we leaving now?" Jiang Ziya tried asking.

Lu Yang urged, "Yeah. Go on ahead of me with her."

Hearing that, Jiang Ziya could only take the lead and go into the supermarket. The moment he walked in, he looked back with an expression that was full of shock. Ignoring the odd glances he got from the people around him, he placed Lin Zhixiang on the ground and attempted to go back. Although he went through the automatic glass doors, he did not manage to return to the area where Lu Yang was.

Jiang Ziya walked back into the supermarket once more. He stared at the glass door. Even though he was unable to reach Lu Yang, it seemed like he was able to see him.

"That idiot." Lu Yang couldn't hold back his smile as he shook his head.

He took a large step, intending to head over, but the person behind him called for him to stop.

“Don’t go yet.”

It seemed like this current crisis would not pass so easily. Lu Yang’s heart sank, but Slay slowly rose upwards. He turned around, already prepared to fight a large battle.

The masked man, however, remained unmoving. He looked like he had no intentions of fighting in the least. As for the death god to the side, he also continued to stay in his position, slightly further away, and did not come over.

The masked man said in a quiet voice, “You must have him stay away from inauspicious things. Those things chasing them in the supermarket weren’t originally that strong, but he saw them...”

“So what if he saw them?” Lu Yang could not understand and said, “Ziya didn’t do anything.”

A faint smile appeared on the other party’s face, and he looked to the side, saying, “Take a close look at your sword again.”

Lu Yang twisted his head to look at Slay and was shocked speechless. Although he had kept Slay by his side on alert all this time, he hadn’t had the time to observe it in detail until now.

Lu Yang couldn’t resist reaching out his hand to touch it. His fingers still went through it like usual. It was just that it felt a little strange, as

though the air there was especially concentrated, but he was still unable to touch anything.

But Ziya was right. The sword hilt really was ruyi-patterned.

Lu Yang finally understood that Jiang Ziya's eye seemed to not only have the power of seeing... He turned around to look at the person who had given him the reminder, but there was no one in his surroundings, just him and the silent world of falling ash.

*Bang!*

Lu Yang immediately turned his head. Behind him, Jiang Ziya was pounding on the door with his fists, and his expression looked extremely anxious. However, the moment he pounded the door, the automatic doors opened, making him even more panicked.

"Slay, give me strength..." Lu Yang couldn't resist muttering, "Give me strength!"



Once the automated doors opened, Lu Yang walked into the supermarket.

Jiang Ziya finally relaxed and immediately started cursing, "I was going to be scared to death! Why did you take so long to come out?"

Lu Yang patted his shoulder, then walked past him and told the people behind him, "My apologies, the person lying on the floor is our classmate. She suddenly fainted just now. Could I ask someone to



help call for an ambulance?”

Jiang Ziya looked back. Behind him was a supermarket employee with a downright awful expression, and a few customers who were looking at him strangely.

“I’m sorry. We didn’t know what to do, so we panicked.” Lu Yang requested with an apologetic expression, “Please help call an ambulance.”

Upon seeing that, Jiang Ziya immediately lowered his head so he would look apologetic. The store employee then glanced down at the girl on the floor, and his gaze softened. He nodded and said, “I’ll go make a call immediately.”

The whispers of the customers drifted over, “I thought that he did something to that girl. It’s good that they just need an ambulance. That man was really scary just now...”

Jiang Ziya’s face flushed red, and he didn’t dare to raise his head at all, until he heard Jiang Yu’s voice coming over the phone.

“Ziya, are you done? We bought late night snacks already!”

“My sister called to say that they’re at the supermarket, and they’re asking me to head out.”

Jiang Ziya felt that it was not right at all to just leave Lin Zhixiang and Lu Yang here, but... He peeked at the doll that was beside Lin Zhixiang. Before, when he had looked back and realized that Lu Yang had not

gotten out, he had placed Lin Zhixiang on the floor anxiously. The doll had fallen to the ground at that point.

Lu Yang gave an “oh” and answered, “You can go first. I’ll stay here and wait for the ambulance. Judging from her complexion, there shouldn’t be any problems. Don’t worry about it.”

“Okay, then I’m going ahead.” After saying so, Jiang Ziya immediately ran to pick up the doll. Faced with Lu Yang’s calm expression, he was a little at a loss as to what to do as he said, “Bye! Uh, this is a doll that my sister had from before.”

He gave Lu Yang his explanation, and thankfully Lu Yang did not question him further. He merely nodded his head and waved, saying, “Good night. I’ll see you tomorrow in class.”

“Oh, okay.” Jiang Ziya looked at him, finding it a bit strange. He thought that Lu Yang would definitely ask him about it, but in the end he actually managed to pass his inspection so easily.

Hugging the doll, Jiang Ziya stepped out of the supermarket under the odd gazes of the people behind him. He walked very slowly, and as he did so, he whispered, “Xiao Xue? Quick, turn back to your original form. My sister and the others have arrived!”

The doll in his arms suddenly twitched, scaring Jiang Ziya. He forced himself to resist the urge to throw away the doll. He continued to allow the doll to twitch in his arms.

“Slower... Gē, walk slower...” the doll in his arms tried her best to say.

Jiang Ziya felt that he was practically already walking at the pace of someone in outer space. From behind him, he could feel several looks of suspicion directed at him. The one with the sharpest stare was definitely Lu Yang. If he were to go any slower, he would probably be treated as someone who was zoning out on drugs!

He could only stop and look around, pretending to be checking where the car was parked, even though Jiang Yu had already mentioned earlier that they were parked to the left.

The feeling in his arms became stranger and stranger.

A doll and a real girl would feel completely different to the touch, but what Jiang Ziya was currently feeling was a mixture of the two very different feelings at the same time. Some parts were cloth and soft cotton, while some were instead smooth skin and bouncy muscle. There were even junctions...

Jiang Ziya tried his best to empty his mind. He didn't dare to look down. He didn't want to think of her "transformation" process every time he looked at Xiao Xue in the future.

"Are you done?" Jiang Ziya only dared to ask when he felt that it was about time.

"I'm done," Xiao Xue said softly.

Jiang Ziya looked down. In his arms, it was indeed a cute three-year-old girl—if you excluded the joints.

Xiao Xue turned around and hugged Jiang Ziya tightly. She sounded frightened as she said, "Gēge really came to save me!"

*Save her... Actually, I didn't do anything.* He abruptly recalled their next-door neighbors, Yu Shu and House Keeper, and remembered that the reason behind his trip to the supermarket was their promise. Jiang Ziya momentarily felt his chest clench.

"The two of you sure get along very well!"

Jiang Ziya raised his head. He saw his sister standing beside a blue SUV, smiling while hugging Jiang Jiang. The little girl stared at the two of them with wide eyes, just like a child who had no idea what just happened.

"You two get along so well. Take care that Jiang Jiang doesn't get jealous!" Jiang Yu said with her laughter held in.

Jiang Jiang pouted and protested, "Jiang Jiang has Māma! Not going to be jealous!"

"Sigh, one of them has Gēge and the other has Māma. Bàba is so sad!" Jiang Qibing, who had gotten out of the car, gave a large sigh. At the same time, he took Jiang Jiang from Jiang Yu and placed her in the child seat in the car.

"Bàba has us!" Jiang Jiang said earnestly, "Bàba has it the best. He has all of us!"

Jiang Qibing froze and roared heartily, "What Jiang Jiang said is right! I have a wife, a little brother, and a pair of precious daughters. Really, it's the best!"

Once Jiang Ziya heard that, his eyes grew moist.

Actually, their situation wasn't good at all. The siblings' financial situation had never been good. Although their father would occasionally send some money back, they still had to scrimp and save as well as do some additional part-time work in order to be able to pay for their living expenses, school fees, and the rent of the small apartment.

After his brother-in-law married his sister, not only did he take on the living expenses and the apartment rent, he even took on Ziya's school fees. The university's school fees were rather expensive. Even though his brother-in-law did not talk much about his current job, he was always working. If he wasn't outside working, he would be at home continuing his work.

Just looking at him made Jiang Ziya feel that it was extremely tough. However, he was unable to be of much help. He could only try his best to do well in school, and then occasionally do some part-time work to pay for his textbooks. Those accursed heavy foreign languages books were so darn expensive!

"Let's go, we're going home to eat our late night snack!"

Jiang Ziya placed Xiao Xue into the double child seater in the car as well.

The two little girls sat side by side. There wasn't much space left, and to Jiang Ziya, it was simply too small. He had to place his left arm around the cushion at the top of the child seater in order to feel a little more comfortable.

However, Jiang Ziya did not find it unbearable. He played and chatted with the two little girls beside him from time to time, while his brother-in-law focused on driving in front. His sister would occasionally speak to him, and she would occasionally turn to look at her brother and daughters, with a sweet smile on her face.

At that very moment, Jiang Ziya understood what his brother-in-law meant about his life being "the best." A life like this might be able to remain unchanged even without Xiao Xue. It was just that the child seat would change from a double to a single. *However...*

*Couldn't Xiao Xue really become a part of the family?*

## Chapter #4: Lu Yang Part 2 – Shriek

It was late at night, but none of the family had any free time yet. Jiang Yu was busy clearing the dishes after their late night snack, and Jiang Qibing went back to working. Jiang Ziya was in charge of coaxing the two girls to sleep.

“Xiao Xue, what do I have to do to make you come true?” He finally could not stop himself from asking that.

Xiao Xue froze and timidly answered, “I-I don’t know either.”

Jiang Ziya frowned and turned to the other girl in the bed. He asked, “Jiang Jiang, do you know? Since you have already come true, you must know what needs to be done, right?”

Confusion was written all over Jiang Jiang’s cute face, and she asked, bewildered, “Gēge, what are you saying? Jiang Jiang doesn’t understand.”

Jiang Ziya was originally planning to continue with his line of questioning, but he abruptly remembered Yu Shu’s warning—it was best to forget.

“It’s nothing.” Afterwards, he did not bring up the matter any further. No matter what happened, the bottom line was that they could not lose Jiang Jiang. “Be a good girl and go sleep now. Gēge still has things to do.”

The two girls agreed obediently. They were probably not used to

sleeping this late and were truly exhausted, for they were already fast asleep after Jiang Ziya stayed for a mere three more minutes.

He walked over to the living room. His brother-in-law was still working, and his sister was sitting beside him, accompanying her husband quietly. The moment Jiang Ziya walked in, they raised their heads and gazed at him.

"They're asleep already."

"Many thanks." Jiang Qibing finally closed his notebook computer and said in concern, "You should hurry and go sleep, too. You still have class tomorrow, right?"

"Yeah. The class is at ten o'clock tomorrow, so there's no hurry. I'm going to call Lu Yang."

Hearing that, Jiang Qibing only shook his head and said, "Youngsters sure like to stay up late."

After they left the living room, Jiang Ziya quickly dialed a number. Once the call went through, he immediately said hurriedly, "House Keeper, it's you, right? This is Jiang Ziya. Please don't tell Yu Shu that I called. Is she beside you?"

"The mistress is currently in the shower."

Hearing that, Jiang Ziya heaved a sigh of relief. He just knew that such a lazy person like Yu Shu definitely wouldn't take the initiative to pick up the phone. Moreover, he even ran into the timing where she was



showering and not around. This was truly a good opportunity!

"That's perfect. I have something to ask you. What do I have to do to make Xiao Xue come true?"

"Calling their name once would wish them into illusion, calling them twice would change them into lies, and calling their name thrice would make them come true."

Hearing this statement that he had already heard numerous times, Jiang Ziya felt momentarily helpless. "I've already called Xiao Xue's name several hundreds of times, let alone thrice. My sister is also calling Xiao Xue's name the entire day. So why is it that she still can't come true?"

House Keeper fell silent for a moment and answered, "It is not the regular way of calling."

"Then, how should I call her?" That was the question that Jiang Ziya had been wanting to ask.

House Keeper seemed troubled as he said, "I do not know... No, I do know. However, I do not know how to explain it. The gist of it is that you must believe in her existence."

"I do believe that Xiao Xue exists!" Jiang Ziya felt even more confused by that. *Xiao Xue stands right in front of me, so why would I suspect her existence?*

"You must forget that she is not human."

*Forget?* Jiang Ziya froze at that. *How could I possibly forget such a thing? No matter how forgetful a person is, they couldn't possibly forget something that's roving back and forth before their eyes, right? Moreover, I can even see her joints so clearly, so how could I forget—oh wait, I did forget about Jiang Jiang.*

*But is Jiang Jiang really a fake?* He was still unwilling to believe that. Although there was evidence upon evidence to prove it, he clearly had memories of Jiang Jiang. Moreover, there were so many products for little girls at home. *How could it be possible for Jiang Jiang to not exist?*

"Jiang... Ziya." House Keeper called a little hesitantly. He was unused to communicating with anyone aside from Yu Shu, and had practically never called anyone something other than "Mistress."

"This afternoon, you said that you have read the mistress's novels. Then, you must already know my true name. Isn't that so?"

When Jiang Ziya, who was currently deep in worry, heard this question, he casually replied, "Yeah, I know it. Isn't it Char—" He abruptly stopped, feeling cold sweat break out all over his back in that instance. A sigh came over the telephone.

"Please do not be worried. It is not that simple to call a name. All I want is to hear my 'name' once more."

*Once more?* Jiang Ziya blurted out, "Was it Yu Shu who has called your name before?"

"Indeed. The mistress called me forth, but I do not remember the name. All I remember was that when I heard it, it was as though I had come to life—ah, the sound of water has stopped. The mistress is most likely coming out soon. If you do not wish for the mistress to find out about this, I would probably have to hang up."

Jiang Ziya quickly asked, "Last question. Can we not burn Xiao Xue?"

"The mistress rarely pays heed to things outside of her novels. However, it appears that she is serious this time. I am afraid that it would be difficult to change her mind—the bathroom door is opening."

Over the phone, the "toot toot toot" sounds indicated that the call had ended, and there was nothing more that Jiang Ziya could do. The call had practically been a waste of time, for he still did not know how to make Xiao Xue come true.

Just as he was deep in thought, he suddenly saw a small shadow reflected in the glass of the picture frame hanging on the wall. He jerked his head back, only to see a little girl standing behind him, staring at him with unblinking eyes.

Although she did not say anything, Jiang Ziya still felt a little guilty. He said, "Jiang Jiang, why aren't you sleeping? It's already very late. Your mama will scold you for this."

The little girl answered obediently, "Wanted to pee."

"You're done?"

Jiang Jiang nodded her head, and Jiang Ziya walked up to her, saying, "Let's go, Gēge will bring you back to your room."

However, she did not respond. She said quietly, "Gēge, I like Xiao Xue."

Jiang Ziya fell silent for a moment, before he then answered, "I also like Xiao Xue."

Jiang Jiang smiled. She nodded her head vigorously, and then reached out both arms for a hug. Jiang Ziya picked her up and carried her back to the room, where Xiao Xue was still lying on the bed, sleeping peacefully—*do dolls also need to sleep?*

Jiang Ziya put Jiang Jiang on the bed. The two girls lay there, one on the left and one on the right. With their two identical cute faces, and wearing pajamas of the same style but in different colors, they truly looked incomparably adorable.

*Isn't it great that they're a pair of twins? Even if she isn't real, it should be fine, right? Yu Shu mentioned herself that as long as one forgets that Jiang Jiang is not real, and lets her grow up, it would be highly likely that there wouldn't be any problems. So why can't we do the same for Xiao Xue?*

As for killer dolls and such, Jiang Ziya had the confidence that he wouldn't think of such things. *Very well, tomorrow it is then!*

Tomorrow, he would head over to Yu Shu's and tell her that he didn't want to burn Xiao Xue anymore. If she tried to do so by brute force, then h-he would threaten her with calling the police!

He looked once again at the two adorable faces of the girls and felt firmer in his resolve. He turned off the light, changing it to a nightlight, and was just about to exit the room when he had an odd feeling—there seemed to be someone behind him.

In truth, he often had this feeling. He had also asked others before and found out that it was not anything strange. Everyone would have experienced it at some point of time—when standing in the darkness, it would always feel like there was a pair of eyes silently observing you. The only difference was that when other people turned around, there was usually nothing behind them, and they were just mistaken. Yet when he turned back, it would always be...

He drew in a deep breath, and quickly turned to look at the balcony—

“L-Lu Yang?”

After he recognized the other person, Jiang Ziya stayed speechless for a long time. He then recovered and quietly cursed in rage, “What were you standing behind me silently for? You nearly scared me to death—wait a moment, how did you get in?”

“I climbed up,” Lu Yang explained succinctly.

*Climbed... my home isn't on the first or second floor; this place is over ten stories tall! So not only can you vanquish demons, you can even leap onto roofs and vault over walls like a phantom thief?*

Jiang Ziya realized that his understanding of his friend was really

paper-thin.

At this point, Lu Yang's gaze shifted onto the twins on the bed. His expression was stern, which was not unfamiliar to Jiang Ziya. After all, when he had faced the death god, he had had the exact same expression.

Jiang Ziya tried to shift over to the front of the bed, blocking the twins behind him with his body.

"We'll go talk in my room for now," he said quietly, almost begging. What made him heave a sigh of relief was that Lu Yang did not protest and even took the lead and left the room first. Just now, Jiang Ziya had been really worried that "Slay" would suddenly pop out and be used to vanquish Xiao Xue without a word, giving him no time to even stop him.

Once they were in his room, Lu Yang launched into action. He interrogated, "Jiang Ziya, do you care to explain what that thing is?"

"What are you talking about?" Jiang Ziya still tried to hide the truth. Perhaps Lu Yang wasn't that sure and was possibly just testing him. Moreover, he was also unsure whether Lu Yang had just discovered that something was wrong with Xiao Xue, or if he had also found out about Jiang Jiang.

"The one lying beside Jiang Jiang!" Lu Yang reminded forcefully. *It seems like Jiang Jiang hasn't been exposed.* Jiang Ziya felt relieved at that, but he was also nervous about Xiao Xue's current situation. He quickly said, "She is my niece too, Xiao Xue!"

"Your niece?" Lu Yang flew into a rage, "She isn't human at all! Ziya, you've been tricked—"

At this point, he suddenly realized that something was off. He felt a little odd as he commented, "If even I can see it, there is no way for you to be tricked by her. She is not your niece, merely an artifact demon!"

*Artifact what?* Jiang Ziya froze. This was really the first time he had heard this term.

Seeing how he was unable to just let it pass, he could only try to defend Xiao Xue, "I don't know what that artifact demon you mentioned is, but Xiao Xue has never hurt me. She even saved me before! Just now, in the supermarket, if it weren't for her luring those things away, Lin Zhixiang and I would have been dead meat!"

Lu Yang furiously said, "She lured them away? How could you be so sure that it's not a trap that she set up?"

Jiang Ziya was startled by that. He truly had not considered that possibility. However, after thinking about it, he felt that it was not Xiao Xue's doing.

"She isn't even a 'lie'! Didn't you say that the person who conjured that supermarket was someone that even you can't handle? Xiao Xue absolutely doesn't have that kind of ability!"

Lu Yang froze, and his tone seemed odd as he said, "You actually even

know about 'lies'? Who told you that? When exactly were you dragged so deeply into this?"

Jiang Ziya felt perplexed at that too. Just a few days ago when he had returned home and realized that there was an extra girl, the world had changed. At first, only his left eye had been strange, but within these few days, he was starting to feel that perhaps it was the entire world itself that was strange.

"Or did you already know all these since a long time ago?" Lu Yang asked, a little hesitant.

Jiang Ziya said unhappily, "How is that possible? If that was so, would I still need you to come over and save me when we were in the supermarket? I would have just saved the whole world myself!"

"That might not be the case. No matter how I look at it, you're a support type character and not a combat type."

"Yeah, and I'm even a priest who will heal you! You think this is a game?!" Although Jiang Ziya had never come into contact with games before, he would at least know a few things just by listening to his classmates talk about them.

After this nonsensical exchange, the atmosphere between the two finally lightened a bit. Lu Yang sighed, "Ziya, you wouldn't be able to control her."

"I don't want to control her!" Jiang Ziya had never thought about that before. He continued, "I only want her to become my sister's daughter



as well. That's all."

Lu Yang seemed vexed as he said, "Please, you definitely can't keep that kind of thing at home. Maybe she doesn't want to hurt you right now, but artifact demons are always born out of a strong drive or desire. If it's not love, then it's hatred. Do you know which kind the one in your family falls under?"

*Of course not.* It had never occurred to Jiang Ziya as to how Xiao Xue had been "born." After he had found out that she was a doll that Jiang Yu used to play with, he had thought that she had come to life because of the passage of time... but if that was the case, then the entire world would be filled with dolls turned into humans, and that wasn't true, right?

For the sake of convincing Jiang Ziya, Lu Yang explained in detail, "As for the artifact demons I have met before, nine out of ten were born out of hatred. As for the remaining one, perhaps they would not hurt the one they love, but they would hurt anyone who comes close to their loved one." His tone became stern as he said, "Therefore, we must burn her!"

*Burn, burn, burn, why does everyone want to burn Xiao Xue!* Jiang Ziya glared at him in anger as he enunciated each word, "She saved me before!"

"But it's possible that she'll kill you!" Lu Yang was even more stubborn than he was, and he continued, "And your beloved family! The highest possibility being Jiang Jiang, because she can then replace her. The person she loves probably isn't Jiang Jiang, right? Although it's not

definite, artifact demons usually need a period of time before they can form, and Jiang Jiang is too young, so it wouldn't be her! Most likely, it's your sis?"

*What an accurate guess.*

Looking at his reaction, Lu Yang knew he had hit the nail on the head. He added on, "In order to monopolize your sis, there's a high possibility that she would hurt Jiang Jiang. Don't tell me that you're not worried for Jiang Jiang's safety?"

Jiang Ziya was unable to voice his reasons.

Based on what he had seen so far, Jiang Jiang would probably only need to wave her hands, and Xiao Xue would be turned into ashes. The one whose safety he should be worried about is Xiao Xue. He didn't need to worry about Jiang Jiang at all.

Lu Yang said in frustration, "I don't want anything to happen to you just because of a moment's soft-heartedness! Trust me, I have seen too many precedents. In the end, these artifact demons would only lead to a tragic end. I know that many of them didn't have any intentions to hurt others! But really, in the end, it always results in tragedy!"

Jiang Ziya stared at Lu Yang in a daze. *What exactly has he been through?*

"She saved me before, and my sis and the others really like Xiao Xue a lot!"

"They will not remember her. According to what you said, she is not even a 'lie.' Then logically speaking, she is unable to affect too many people's memories. Once she is not around anymore, your sister and your brother-in-law will regain their original memories and would not even remember her."

At this point, Lu Yang did not intend to drag things out anymore. He said, "I'll go deal with her. You wait here."

Jiang Ziya immediately rushed up to grab Lu Yang.

No matter what, he could not let him make a move immediately. Jiang Jiang was also there. If she did anything for the sake of protecting Xiao Xue, Lu Yang might find out that something was off about Jiang Jiang too.

Jiang Jiang was the bottom line.

His sister and brother-in-law needed Jiang Jiang, no matter what she was, so nothing must happen to her!

"... You don't believe what I said?"

Jiang Ziya looked at Lu Yang with a serious expression and answered, "I believe you."

Lu Yang's tightly wound face finally relaxed a little.

"But don't do it in my home. What if you wake up my sister and

brother-in-law, and they saw that scene? Just leave first. I-I..." Jiang Ziya gritted his teeth and said, "I'll trick her into going out, and you deal with her outside!"

Hearing that, Lu Yang felt that it made sense. Even if he ambushed her, he didn't have the confidence to defeat her within seconds. If Jiang Yu and Jiang Qibing were to see that, it would be really difficult to explain. After all, he didn't have the ability to manipulate memories.

He nodded his head in agreement and reminded Jiang Ziya, "Okay, but the sooner, the better."

*The sooner, the...* Jiang Ziya's heart immediately sank.



*Ding dong!*

Just as House Keeper was sweeping the floor, he heard the doorbell ring. He instantly drew the curtains closed to make the room a little darker, and then brought the seal over and opened the door. After all, nine out of ten times, the person coming to the door would be the postman.

Once the door opened, Jiang Ziya was standing outside, staring at him. House Keeper found it a little difficult to react in time, and the seal was still raised in mid-air. Then, he gave a small smile and greeted, "Good morning."

Jiang Ziya opened his mouth, but he found himself at a loss for words, so he merely greeted back, "Morning."

House Keeper stood there silently, waiting. Jiang Ziya shot a glance past him and said hesitantly, "Yu Shu is..."

"The mistress is still sleeping. She would only wake up when it is at least half past ten."

Jiang Ziya heaved a sigh of relief and promptly said, "House Keeper! Help me. What do I have to do so Xiao Xue won't have to be burned?" House Keeper tilted his head to one side and said, "If you made her come true, the mistress probably would not want to burn her anymore."

"How do I do that?"

"Calling their name once—"

"Fine, fine. I get it. No need to say the rest."

Jiang Ziya felt a little weak at that. Looking at House Keeper, he felt a little frustrated and could not help but say, "Both you and Xiao Xue are the same, right? Since Yu Shu herself called you out, then why must Xiao Xue be burned?"

House Keeper's expression did not change much. He judged the matter in a business-like fashion, "Most likely, it is because the mistress is able to control me. If I lost control, it is very easy for her to make me disappear. Therefore, there is no need to worry."

Jiang Ziya froze.

"Moreover, there are still some differences between me and 'Xiao Xue.' She is an artifact demon, and those are usually more dangerous."

*There are even different types?* Jiang Ziya asked in shock, "You mean you're not an artifact demon?"

"Indeed not. I remember that the category I fall into should be called illusory familiars."

Jiang Ziya's interest was piqued. He could not resist asking, "What is the difference between an artifact demon and an illusory familiar?"

After pondering it over, House Keeper said, "The mistress has not given me much knowledge on this topic. All I know is that I do not have an actual body. However, artifact demons are born from an actual artifact, which has usually existed for some time, so they would be stronger in comparison.

"Moreover, they are born out of a strong drive or desire. Therefore, they would already possess feelings at birth. Compared to an illusory familiar, they are more likely to become an existence stronger than a 'lie'."

"Do you not have them?" Jiang Ziya suddenly asked.

"What do you mean?" House Keeper stared at him in confusion.

"Feelings. Don't you have feelings?" Jiang Ziya simply could not believe it. A living person standing in front of him—um, although he would always accidentally see the truth with his left eye. But otherwise,

he was someone who could speak, could respond, and would smile.

*How is it possible that he doesn't possess feelings?*

House Keeper appeared troubled for a moment and then replied, "I believe that I do not possess them. When the mistress called me, she only imparted to me 'knowledge.' From what I know, there are very few examples of an illusory familiar being able to generate feelings. It is practically impossible for them to turn into an existence greater than a 'lie,' thus—"

"Thus they are not very threatening, and it is fine even if you don't burn them, because they can't turn into a 'lie.'"

Jiang Ziya froze at that. Yu Shu walked out from behind House Keeper, glaring relentlessly at him.

She menacingly asked, "Asking House Keeper these questions, what exactly are you planning?"

"I-I just..." Since he was caught red-handed, Jiang Ziya was at a loss as to what to do.

Yu Shu's face darkened, and she interrogated, "It can't be that you're thinking of keeping that doll, right? Let me tell you, no way! Today, I'm going to order a doll. Once the body arrives, I'll immediately go over and burn her!"

Hearing that, Jiang Ziya flew into a towering rage. *Burn, burn, burn, why does everyone want to burn Xiao Xue so badly? What exactly has she done? She hasn't even done anything bad!*

Jiang Ziya shouted in rage, "Why don't you go and deal with Xiao Xue yourself. Since you could summon House Keeper, then you should have a way to deal with her, right? What's the big deal, telling House Keeper to burn his own kind?"

"House Keeper already told you a lot. Don't tell me you still don't understand the situation? They're not the same kind!" Yu Shu's face sank and she said, "You don't want to burn her, but it's not like I want to hear her shrieks as she is being burned either!"

"She will shriek?" Jiang Ziya only heard the last few words, and he muttered, "She will feel pain? Can dolls feel pain?"

Yu Shu fell silent for a moment and answered, "Yes. She will shriek so loud, it would resonate to the heavens, and then she will finally turn quiet."

It was only a few words, but they practically rendered Jiang Ziya speechless.

Yu Shu said sternly, "But we still have to do it! If not, the one shrieking would be you and your sister. Take your pick!"

Yu Shu and Lu Yang, two people who did not know each other in the slightest, both said the same thing—burn Xiao Xue.

What else could Jiang Ziya do?

If it were just him, he could gamble on it. He could gamble that Xiao



Xue would not change. But at home, there was still his sister and brother-in-law. He couldn't afford to gamble!

Faced with this multiple choice dilemma, Jiang Ziya was truly flustered. He didn't want to murder anyone. Even if Xiao Xue technically wasn't human, which part of her didn't seem human?

"Why would all this suddenly happen? I don't understand... Why is it that I had merely gone home normally like always, but things turned out like this?"

Yu Shu snorted, "What are you complaining about? There are always many mishaps in life. Do you think that all those victims of car accidents wanted to be involved? Your accident was merely slightly different from a regular person's. Moreover, you still have room to make a choice. That's already pretty good!"

Jiang Ziya fell silent for long. He then said, "If... I'm just saying if! If I could control Xiao Xue just like you can, then—"

Yu Shu fiercely interrupted his words, "Even I only dare to turn House Keeper into an 'illusion,' and your Xiao Xue is already on the verge of becoming a 'lie.' You only have the truth-seeing eye, and it's only one eye to boot. Controlling her, my ass! Do you think you can turn your eyes into laser beams and glare her to death?"

"What happens if she becomes a 'lie?'"

*You sure have a lot of questions!*

Yu Shu's face was so sour, it resembled overnight leftovers. She forced herself to calm down as she said, "The difference between an 'illusion' and a 'lie' is roughly like a child becoming a gun-wielding special forces squad member."

*What kind of metaphor is this! The jump is too big!*

"Wait up, then what about those who have come 'true'?" Jiang Ziya suddenly felt that things didn't look good. After all, he had one at home!

If just jumping up a rank to "lie" would make it an armed squad, then what would the "truth" be? Superman?

Yu Shu frowned as she said, "For those who have come 'true,' I heard that they either turn into real, ordinary people, or they..."

Seeing Jiang Ziya's earnest expression while listening to her, she suddenly didn't feel like elaborating further. She said unhappily, "Why do you need to know so much? Anyways, your family's Jiang Jiang looks like she turned into a human, so you don't have to worry about it! Compared to worrying about something that you can't possibly encounter, worrying about whether you would lose control, slip, and fall while riding a motorbike would be more practical."

*Don't you think that you are contradicting yourself? What do you mean by can't possibly encounter? Isn't Jiang Jiang already one?*

Yu Shu waved her hand impatiently, saying, "Go to school obediently. I'll deal with your family's problems, so consider yourself lucky for

living across from me!”

After a moment’s hesitation, Jiang Ziya still decided to answer, “But my classmate also says that he will dispose her. He’s asking me to trick Xiao Xue and get her to go out.”

“Oh? Your classmate? Are you sure that he is really going to dispose her?”

“What do you mean?” When Jiang Ziya heard that, he thought that something wasn’t quite right with that statement.

Yu Shu gave a laugh and then replied, “An artifact demon that is on the verge of becoming a ‘lie’... If you had the means to sell her, in return you would receive a sum of money that you would never have seen in your entire lifetime. However, you are just an ordinary person, so it’s best if you don’t let others know too much. Otherwise, you would most likely only receive a large number of robbers.” She paused before she added on, “The kind that would kill for money.”

“Lu Yang is not a robber!” Jiang Ziya exclaimed with utter certainty. Yu Shu made no comment on that and merely made two “hmp” noises. She continued, “It doesn’t really make a difference as to who deals with her. Anyways, I will need about a week before I can summon another illusion. A week later, if you and your classmate haven’t settled the issue, it won’t be too late for me to make a move then.”

Even without Lu Yang, there was still Yu Shu. Jiang Ziya was struck with melancholy regarding Xiao Xue’s fate, for it seemed impossible to

escape.

"Go to class, university student!" Yu Shu gave a big yawn as said unclearly, "I'm going back to sleep. I haven't woken up so early in eight hundred years."

*Early, like hell! It's already over half past nine!*

"I'm leaving." Jiang Ziya angrily turned and left.

"Hey!"

He stopped in his tracks, looking back at Yu Shu in confusion. As for the other, she was currently leaning against the door lazily.

"It would be best for you to continue on like before and pretend not to see anything."

At the moment, Jiang Ziya really hated himself for being able to see so clearly. If he wasn't able to see, and he didn't know exactly what Xiao Xue was, then would he have been able to escape this current predicament?

"You said that she will shriek, so just not being able to see isn't enough, right?"

He would have to pretend to be blind, to be unable to see Xiao Xue. He would also have to pretend to be deaf, to be unable to hear her screams. If that wasn't enough, he would also have to throw his

conscience away in order to trick her into going out and pass her over to his classmate to burn.

## Chapter #4: Lu Yang Part 3 – Qing Wei Gong

“Umm... Ziya? Ziya?”

Jiang Ziya was in the middle of stocking the books on the bookshelf when he suddenly heard his name. He then automatically turned to look.

A man wearing an apron, with hair in a small ponytail and a pair of golden-framed glasses on his face, said helplessly, “You have already put that pile of books onto the bookshelves and taken it off numerous times.”

Jiang Ziya froze, and then quickly put the books back on the bookshelves. He said, “I’m sorry, Boss. I was zoning out.”

The person in front of him was the owner of Jiu Ge Bookstore, Fu Taiyi. He asked in concern, “What’s wrong? I seldom see you so absent-minded.”

“Nothing. Maybe I just slept too late yesterday...” Jiang Ziya said, feeling a little guilty. However, it was also the truth. Last night, thinking about the issue with Xiao Xue had made him unable to fall asleep, and he didn’t know how long he had lain there before he had truly fallen asleep.

Taiyi shook his head and sighed, “As a young man, to be this dispirited just from an occasional late-nighter, you’re too weak! Even this old man isn’t that feeble.”

*You better be an old man!* Jiang Ziya felt his face twitch at that. In truth, he didn't know how old the boss was. He already had a son who was in elementary school, so logically speaking, he should have some years on him. *However, he doesn't look any older than my brother-in-law. At most, he should only be in his thirties?*

In response to this guess, the boss had only said that he was baby-faced but refused to share his age, claiming that hiding one's age was a man's romance.

"What's wrong?" Fu Taiyi's face softened, and he inquired, "You're especially quiet today and look a bit off. Come and tell Fu-gēge what's wrong."

"... I'm fine."

Fu Taiyi still had a face of concern and gazed at him with an extremely gentle look. All that was left was for him to say, "If you want to cry, you can come cry in my embrace."

"I'm really fine!"

"Really?" Fu Taiyi was still a little unwilling to believe him and added on, "You can talk about anything! Especially about complications with the opposite gender. I, Fu-gēge, will be very happy to answer your queries!"

"..." *Does Xiao Xue count as a complication with the opposite gender?*  
"There's no such thing!"

Fu Taiyi sighed and lamented, "You can't continue on this way, or you'll end up as an old father!"

"I'm only twenty!"

"That's exactly when your body is strong and healthy, the best time to have a child!"

Jiang Ziya felt that his boss must have had a screw loose in his head since birth, and that was why he behaved like something was wrong with his head. Even Fu Jun, who was still an elementary school student, behaved more maturely than his father. Jiang Ziya sometimes felt that his boss was actually Fu Jun and not Fu Taiyi.

"Is Lu Yang coming over later today?" Fu Taiyi asked curiously, with a hint of mischief.

Jiang Ziya hesitated before he answered, "I don't know. He took the day off and didn't come to school."

"Is he sick?" Fu Taiyi seemed a bit surprised.

Jiang Ziya paused for a moment. *He shouldn't be, right? He was still fine yesterday.*

"You didn't call and ask?"

Fu Taiyi found it slightly strange, for these two frequently came in and left at the same time. It was almost to the point that he had started worrying whether their relationship was "too good." If it weren't for



the fact that Lu Yang would take part in group dates from time to time, he would really grab the two for a good lecture.

Jiang Ziya felt a little guilty. When he saw that Lu Yang had not come to class, he had heaved a sigh of relief. That was because this way, he wouldn't have to give an account for when he was going to trick Xiao Xue into coming out. Of course, he didn't call and ask after him either.

It wasn't that Jiang Ziya didn't care about him. He merely felt that he had still been fine last night, and nothing big should have happened within the span of one night. Therefore, he wasn't very concerned that he had skipped class.

But now that the boss had raised his concerns, he too realized that something was off. Although Lu Yang looked like a flirtatious playboy, the truth was that he seldom skipped class. Even though his grades weren't very good, he had never failed a class either. It was definitely very strange for him to suddenly skip class without any notification in advance.

"I'll call and ask now."

Fu Taiyi immediately nodded his head, and Jiang Ziya felt a little helpless at that. Other people's bosses wouldn't permit private calls in the middle of work, but his boss would enthusiastically encourage him to do so.

But then again, it was possible that the boss just wanted to get Lu Yang to come and look after the store, so that he could seize the chance to skip out on work.

"No one's picking up." Jiang Ziya frowned. He could feel that something was off. For such a severe smartphone-addict like Lu Yang, who could survive without anything as long as he had his phone, how was it possible that the call wouldn't connect?

"Go over to his house and take a look. I'll give you a day off!" Fu Taiyi patted his chest and promised, "But on the way back, remember to buy roasted chicken wings from the store that Xiao Dong likes the most."

Jiang Ziya awkwardly said, "But I've never been to his home."

"You've never been there?" Fu Taiyi seemed surprised as he said, "I thought that all that was left for you two to do was to propose."

*Boss, you definitely have more than a screw loose in the head!*

"I have Lu Yang's address, but I don't know how to get there."

If it were Lu Yang, he would probably start using the GPS on his phone. Although Jiang Ziya had Fu Jun's phone, he didn't know how to use those complicated functions.

"Let me look at the address."

Jiang Ziya passed his own phone to Fu Taiyi, and the latter frowned and said, "Oh, this address looks so familiar. I remember this place seems to be... Sigh, I might as well bring you over. Let's close the shop first—"

"Wait up! Fu Taiyi."

The two looked back and saw Fu Jun currently standing at the stairs with his arms folded over his chest. He seemed to be critical as he interrogated, "You're closing the shop to go where again?"

Fu Taiyi said earnestly, "I heard that Lu Yang didn't go to school today. I'm so worried for that kid, so I wanted to give Ziya a day off to visit his sick friend."

*Hold on, no one said that Lu Yang is sick, right?* Jiang Ziya was torn between laughter and tears as he looked at his own boss.

"But it just so happens that Ziya only knows the address but not how to get there, so I was thinking of spending some time to take him over."

*And then, you definitely won't come back to open the store!* Jiang Ziya was ninety-nine percent sure of that.

Fu Jun evidently was all too aware of that. He glared at his own father and said, "I'll bring Ziya-gē over. You stay here and man the shop!"

Once he heard that, Fu Taiyi immediately changed his face, like being struck by a bolt out of the blue. He exclaimed, "N-No way! You're still an elementary school student! How could you go wandering around at night!"

Fu Jun instantly glared at his father when he heard that, and he said,

fuming, "Then, what about that time when you asked me to go out by myself to buy roasted chicken wings for your late night snack? So I could wander around at that time?"

Jiang Ziya gazed at his boss with pitiful eyes. To think he even said that it was Xiao Dong's favorite store, when it was evident that he was the one who wanted to eat it.

No matter how thick-skinned he was, Fu Taiyi couldn't say that he was going over after that. He could only say grievingly, "Okay then. You go then. When you return, remember to buy the chicken wings."

Fu Jun nodded his head earnestly and replied, "Okay. You man the store obediently. Don't run away, and you have to work seriously! If I come back and you haven't sold a single book or piece of stationery, then I will finish the chicken wings by myself!"

Fu Taiyi's face looked as though disaster had struck again, and he wailed, "How could you do that? What if there really are no customers? It's not the weekend today!"

"I don't care." Fu Jun raised his chin and said, "If you don't sell anything, you won't get your chicken wings!"

Jiang Ziya knew he was right in thinking that the boss of this shop was actually Fu Jun.



"Are you sure this is the place?"

Jiang Ziya felt slightly dazed, his tone extremely uncertain.

Fu Jun said confidently, "Yeah! Taiyi says this is the place. The address on the door plate is correct too. If not, you can take a look yourself." He pointed at the door plate at the side.

Jiang Ziya had already spotted it, but he was still in disbelief that Lu Yang's house was actually—

A temple.

No wonder Lu Yang had never invited him over to his home before.

At the front of the temple, a plaque displayed, "Qing Wei Gong." Jiang Ziya couldn't tell what kind of temple it was, for he had always been the kind of believer who just picked up incense and started praying, without being able to name the statue of the god in front of him.

There were few people in the temple at night. Looking in from outside, he could only see a few old men who had moved a few wooden benches and tables to play chess by the wall and a few elderly women sweeping the floor. None of them looked like people who had come to pray.

Jiang Ziya could only force himself to be thick-skinned as he walked into the temple, and the combination of him and an elementary school student like Fu Jun immediately attracted everyone's attention. Jiang Ziya walked over to the nearest person, an old woman sweeping the floor, and asked, "I am looking for my university classmate. His name is Lu Yang. May I ask if he lives here?"

The woman looked to be in her seventies or eighties. The moment she heard what Jiang Ziya said, she beamed as she asked, "Are you Xiao Yang's classmate?"

Those elders sitting by the wall also stretched their ears, staring even more intently at Jiang Ziya.

Jiang Ziya nodded his head, feeling at a loss as to what to do. He did not have any elders at home, so he was not very good at associating with them.

"Granny, may I ask if Lu Yang-gēge is here?"

When the old woman heard that, she was immediately all smiles as she exclaimed, "What an adorable and obedient child! Xiao Yang left for class at around nine or so and hasn't returned yet."

Jiang Ziya's face darkened. *Lu Yang didn't go to school at all! So not only did he skip class, he even came up with an excuse to deceive his family members?*

No, it would have been more likely for Jiang Ziya himself to have done such a thing because Lu Yang unexpectedly enjoyed going to school a lot. Although his results were not considered top-notch, he had already mentioned that his family wasn't too concerned about his grades. Even attending university was already considered too much of an education and thus unnecessary.

*Come to think of it, could the reason he doesn't need a very good*

*degree be that he's going to take over the temple?*

Thinking about Lu Yang's mixed-blood looks, along with his fashionable clothes, even if you claimed he was a model, no one would doubt it.

*For him to become a... What's it called? An abbot?*

*The discrepancy is so large, it's practically record-breaking!*

*However, this abbot with a record-breaking discrepancy seems to be really effective...* Thinking about the sword that Lu Yang had, Jiang Ziya felt that he must never judge someone based on their appearance in the future. *After all, if there is already a mixed-blood model abbot, then what else could be possible?*

"You can call him!" The elderly woman reminded him enthusiastically, "He will definitely pick up your call! If he doesn't, then he'll call back." Jiang Ziya was in a bind. It was precisely because he couldn't get the call to go through that he came over! Now, he also couldn't tell whether or not Lu Yang had lied and skipped class. Although the possibility was low, Jiang Ziya didn't want to—

At this moment, Fu Jun suddenly said, "Pass me my phone."

Jiang Ziya searched for the phone in his backpack and handed it over to him, feeling a little relieved. He was slightly worried about losing such an expensive item, which would make him really want to cry. He still owed Yu Shu ten thousand and didn't even know how to pay it back!

"Auntie, do you know where Lu Yang usually goes after class?" Jiang

Ziya decided that there was no harm in calling her by a younger address.

The old woman smiled and said, "You can call me Granny like Xiao Yang does! I'm his grandmother!"

*So she's Ah Yang's grandma!* Jiang Ziya quickly added on, "Granny!"

The woman smiled even brighter than when she had been called "Auntie" just now. The few elders sitting by the wall laughed as they said, "Xiao Chun-sǎo just likes to go around taking in grandsons."

"It can't be helped. She likes children a lot, but there's only Xiao Yang at home!"

At this point, Fu Jun tugged on Jiang Ziya's clothes and handed him the phone, saying, "I managed to call through to Lu Yang-gē's phone."

Jiang Ziya froze and took the phone. He tried saying, "Ah Yang?"

Over the phone, he heard Lu Yang exclaim in a shocked tone, "Ziya, it really is you? How did you manage to call through?"

"Why not? Are you in a place with poor reception—"

Jiang Ziya suddenly stopped. He remembered that when he had been trapped in the supermarket, he could not call through either. Adding that with Lu Yang skipping class, he was momentarily struck with an ominous feeling. He immediately shouted, "Ah Yang, where are you? Could it be that you've encountered 'that kind of thing,' like I had?"



Over the phone, he heard a vague reply, "What are you talking about..."

Once he heard that vague tone, Jiang Ziya immediately made the judgment, "Lu Yang is trying to lie." He threatened, "Don't give me that bullshit, or else I'll immediately reveal that you didn't go to class today and are currently in danger! I'm telling you, I'm at your house right now!"

At the side, Fu Jun shot a glance at him. When Jiang Ziya had shouted that loudly, all those present had heard him. *It seems that he has already revealed him? Did he forget out of anxiety, or did he do it on purpose?*

"You're at my house?" Lu Yang sounded very surprised at that.

"Yeah! You didn't come to class, and your phone wouldn't connect, so I came over."

A deep intake of breath was heard over the phone. Lu Yang sounded very unwilling as he said, "Then, look for my grandpa, and tell him that I encountered a practitioner and have been trapped."

"You've been trapped?" Jiang Ziya received a shock and promptly questioned, "Where?"

"Go find my grandpa and get him to listen." Lu Yang said persistently, "Anyways, you wouldn't be of any help!"

Jiang Ziya angrily shouted, "At least, I have a left eye that isn't

useless, okay?”

“Don’t tell me you’re planning to use your left eye to help me glare things to death... Anyways, I will... Don’t do anything silly...”

A large amount of static suddenly came over the phone, occasionally obscuring Lu Yang’s words. Jiang Ziya could only hear bits and pieces of it, and he could only quickly shout, “Ah Yang, I can’t hear what you are saying. Ah Yang?”

No matter how he shouted, the call still disconnected. Jiang Ziya could only follow Lu Yang’s instructions and rapidly inquire, “May I ask where Lu Yang’s grandpa is?”

Xiao Chun-sǎo seemed worried as she said, “My husband has been out since yesterday! Calls haven’t connected for a day already.”

All the elderly present shook their heads and said, “This pair of grandfather and grandson is sure similar!”

*Ring, ring, ring—*

“Ah Yang?” Jiang Ziya immediately picked up. Then, a sudden wave of white noise came over, the volume loud enough that he reflexively shifted the phone away. However, he quickly pulled the phone back to his ear and anxiously shouted, “Ah—”

“Bring that artifact demon over to exchange for him.”

*This isn’t Lu Yang’s voice!* It was a voice that was a little low and

rough, and it sounded like the person had some years on him. Jiang Ziya was stunned and asked doubtfully, "Who are you?"

No answer came from the other person. He merely said coldly, "Bring over that artifact demon to exchange within an hour. Otherwise..."

The cold laughter that came over the phone made Jiang Ziya's heart sink further and further. *So the reason the person trapped Lu Yang is to obtain Xiao Xue?*

"You're the one who trapped me in the supermarket!" Jiang Ziya abruptly realized. What the death god and that masked man had said before was true. They really had not trapped him in there, and instead had saved Lin Zhixiang and made a door for them to escape.

*What is most important is that—*

*The reason Lu Yang was captured is because of me!*

*If the person wanted Xiao Xue, why didn't they come to catch me?  
Why capture Lu Yang?*

"I'll give you half an hour to trick the artifact demon into coming out. Half an hour later, I will inform you of the exchange point."

Once he said that, he immediately hung up. Although Jiang Ziya wanted to redial, he was unable to do so because there was no caller ID.

He was at a complete loss as to what to do. At this time, Fu Jun shook

his hand and shouted, "Ziya-gē."

When he looked up, he immediately saw the unblinking gazes of the elders, which were all so sharp that the elders didn't feel like old people at all. Jiang Ziya could only meekly answer, "Lu Yang has been trapped. The other person told me to bring... to bring..."

He didn't know how to explain the "ransom" to them. He couldn't possibly say that the kidnapper wanted him to bring his niece over to exchange for Lu Yang, right? *It would be weird if they didn't suspect anything!*

An elder sitting by the wall sighed. "That foolish child. Master Ah Lu already taught him a long time ago that demons and spirits are no match for corrupt human hearts. In the end, he was still tricked! That is simply foolish!"

"That is not the case." Another elder disagreed, "Although Xiao Yang is a little simple-minded, he usually does a good job!"

"Foolish?" Xiao Chun-sǎo manically shrieked at those present, "How foolish do you think my Xiao Yang is? One says that he's foolish, and another says that he's simple-minded. How dumb do you think he is, tell me!"

"Please excuse us! Xiao Chun-sǎo, we don't mean it like that!"  
Everyone quickly apologized.

Jiang Ziya was so anxious that he almost could not keep listening. If it weren't for the fact that they were all elders, he would have most

likely grabbed their collars and demanded them to quickly think of something. Instead, he asked, "Please, don't you all have a way to help Lu Yang?"

The elderly all shook their heads, sighing, "Although Xiao Yang is foolish—"

"Foolish?!" Xiao Chun-sǎo's shriek pierced through the entire temple.

The others all fell into a coughing fit one by one, as though they had suddenly gotten a serious disease.

Jiang Ziya felt despair at this situation. *What's going on with these elders! Lu Yang is in danger, but they still have the time to quarrel here!*

Most likely, Jiang Ziya's expression had simply looked so awful that one of them sighed and said, "Xiao Yang is truly skilled. If he is unable to break through, then we wouldn't be able to either! Unless his grandpa is the one going. However, Master Ah Lu isn't here. Even if he were, he would not care about Xiao Yang. If he knew that his grandson had been tricked by someone, it would already be good if he didn't curse him to 'go die!'"

"How could he curse Lu Yang like that?" Jiang Ziya simply found it hard to believe that a grandfather would actually curse his grandson to die.

"My husband used to live by the motto, 'It's every man for himself.' He, Xiao Yang's mother, and Xiao Yang, all three generations are similar in

that way.” Xiao Chun-sǎo deeply sighed as she lamented, “This is fate! Young man, do not be troubled. Xiao Yang is really very skilled, and can resolve the issue on his own. There won’t be any problems!”

Jiang Ziya said in frustration, “If he could resolve the issue on his own, then he would have come to class and wouldn’t have stayed trapped even now. He has already been trapped there since morning. Is this called resolving the issue on his own? Forget it, I won’t depend on you all anymore. I’ll think of something myself!”

He turned to leave, completely ignoring the person shouting behind him, “Wait up, you’re mistaken, young man—”

Fu Jun turned his head back to look, but realized that Jiang Ziya was moving ahead at lightning speed. He quickly ran over to catch up. Only when the two had run past the temple door for quite a distance did he shout, “Ziya-gē!”

Jiang Ziya then remembered that Fu Jun was still following him, and he had forgotten to think of him. He quickly stopped in his tracks and returned to Fu Jun’s side. The latter was panting a little from trying to catch up to him, and when he saw that, he felt even more that he was in the wrong.

He picked up Fu Jun, and the two jumped onto the motorbike. On the way, Jiang Ziya rapidly snaked through the traffic and even ran a red light when there were no vehicles. This made Fu Jun very shocked, for he knew that Jiang Ziya usually kept to traffic rules and wouldn’t miss signaling even once—that was because he did not want to be fined.

About mid-way, Jiang Ziya decided to drop off Fu Jun.

"Xiao Jun, go and buy the chicken wings for Boss. Be careful on the way, and don't follow strangers, got it?"

The way back from the chicken wing store to Jiu Ge was rather bright, and it wasn't far away. Since it wasn't too late yet, and Fu Jun was more mature than his age, Jiang Ziya felt it was okay to let him go back on his own.

He had to go home immediately. *One hour is simply too short!*

Fu Jun waved his hand to bid him farewell and said, "Bye, Ziya-gē! Remember to leave the phone on!"

Jiang Ziya then remembered that Fu Jun's phone had once again come back to his possession. He hesitated for a moment, and then recalled that the person mentioned calling again in half an hour's time. Most likely, he would be calling this phone, so he would not be able to return the phone yet. Moreover, only this phone could call through to Lu Yang, even though he didn't know why. There were also times he could not get the call to connect, but at least there was hope.

"Let me borrow this for a few more days." Jiang Ziya said, feeling apologetic.

Fu Jun nodded and replied, "I was originally intending to lend it to Ziya-gē anyways! Didn't I tell you not to return it to me within these next few days?"

Jiang Ziya shot him a smile of gratitude. Before he closed the door, Fu Jun suddenly called to him.

“Ziya-gē.”

He looked back at Fu Jun, feeling confused.

“Keep the phone on you at all times! I’ll give you a call.” Fu Jun said seriously, “I will call you using Taiyi’s phone. No matter what, you must pick up the call. You must.”

“... Okay.”



## Chapter #5: House Keeper Part 1 – A Deadly Invitation

*Doot doot doot—*

As the call cut off, Lu Yang stared at the phone and frowned, realizing that something was amiss. He had already been trapped here for a long time. If it weren't for the fact that he was carrying a plastic bag with breakfast and a can of milk tea inside, he would have died just from thirst!

The other person seemed to have no intent to face off against him, and instead had merely trapped him in this place, making him unable to act.

This was a small crossroad within the alleyways, its location extremely close to the university he was studying at. He was accustomed to taking this route to school, and this place happened to be a small back street. There simply weren't many people passing by, especially at nine o'clock in the morning, when those working would have already started work and those going to class might not come through here.

Therefore, it was definitely the best possible place to put a "barrier dimension."

This also happened to be his Achilles heel. In a fight, he had the confidence that he would be able to cut down most of his opponents with Slay, but as to this kind of method that used a "barrier dimension" to trap him, he simply had no way to deal with it. After all, the framework of the barrier dimension was perfect, and the perpetrator behind the scenes refused to appear. Therefore, he could only wait for

the opponent to lose the strength to continue maintaining the barrier dimension.

Lu Yang was simply not an expert at seeing through truths and lies. If Jiang Ziya were here—No! He mustn't drag ordinary people into this. That was the first thing that he had learned, and it must always be adhered to.

However, could Jiang Ziya still be considered an ordinary person?

In the past, he had merely had an abnormal left eye but wasn't involved in anything else. Lu Yang was fairly certain of this, for he had investigated him before.

When they had first entered high school, Jiang Ziya hadn't immediately caught his attention. He had kept a low profile and was quiet. Other than his outstanding grades, there simply wasn't anything attention-grabbing about him. As for Lu Yang, he had already started socializing with the other classmates since day one.

He had not noticed him until a few illusionary familiars had appeared in the classroom. Normally, Lu Yang would pay no heed to those low-level illusionary familiars. Simply put, there were too many to do anything about them. They were like cockroaches; although annoying, no one was bothered enough to wipe all of them off the face of the earth.

Jiang Ziya could see those illusionary familiars.

Although he had tried his best to hide that fact, having stuck

thoroughly to his motto of “turning a blind eye” to them, he could not help but expose himself on occasion. Whenever those things appeared, he would sometimes unconsciously shoot a glance at them, discovering their presence even faster than Lu Yang.

Lu Yang’s first thought was that he had encountered another practitioner of the path. Therefore, he had intentionally approached him in the hopes of finding out his background. In the end though, he realized that Jiang Ziya wasn’t a practitioner at all. He merely had a strange left eye.

After the investigation, the two of them had somehow become close. Jiang Ziya never pried into Lu Yang’s background, but he did like to talk about himself, especially because Lu Yang never questioned the things Jiang Ziya saw.

After seeing all sorts of strange things, Jiang Ziya had first suspected himself to be mentally ill. However, when he had gone for a checkup, even the doctors claimed that he was feigning sickness when they heard about his situation and found out that he was a student.

As a result, Jiang Ziya could only try his best to pretend he could not see them.

For the first time in his life, Lu Yang had thought someone to be in a worse situation than him when it came to not being able to voice any troubles. At least, he had his family who knew about these matters, but Jiang Ziya never uttered a single word for the sake of not worrying his sister.

The relationship between the two people of completely opposite personalities was very good, and this puzzled all of their classmates. What they did not know was that Jiang Ziya and Lu Yang were very similar. They could see the same things, just that one pretended not to see them, while the other would go and meet those annoying things at night—

“Come out, you bastard! How long are you planning to trap me here?”

Lu Yang was completely enraged. It wasn’t as simple as walking the same crossroad nine times—he had walked the entire day! But he still couldn’t find the weak point, and he was vexed by his own unfamiliarity with “barrier dimensions.”

However, he really had no talent in the area of “barrier dimensions.” Looking at the pages full of theories of their structures and the way to break them, he felt that he understood each word by itself, but once they all combined to form a sentence, it became a language that he could not understand. He would much rather go and spar with Slay for twenty-four hours, and then lay on the floor exhausted.

But as expected, those who don’t study hard will receive retribution. Lu Yang felt a little frustrated at that, just a little bit. Maintaining a barrier dimension wasn’t a simple task, and though this barrier wasn’t large like the ridiculous dimension with the falling ash from before, it had persisted for an entire day already. The other party should not be able to hold it any longer. Moreover, they most likely had little combat strength, so that was why they could only trap him in this barrier dimension.

Lu Yang silently prayed for Ziya to understand that no harm would come to him and hence not to come over.

After taking another two steps, he exited the alley—at least, logically, he should have exited the alley. Instead, he entered the alley again. Lu Yang decided he might as well sit down and save some energy. After all, the only thing he had to eat for the entire day was breakfast. This was a small alley, and both of the walls were made of bricks, uncommon in the city. Many trees poked out from behind the brick walls, changing as the seasons went by, so Lu Yang enjoyed walking along this path even though the length of his journey was increased.

Fifty meters ahead was a small crossroad, and turning right would lead to the university. Throughout the whole day, he had turned left, right, walked straight ahead, and walked backwards. He had even climbed the walls several times, but each time, he would return to the alleyway without being able to find a single weak spot.

There was something that Lu Yang was even more suspicious of. For each time he passed through, it would be a different season. The temperature wouldn't change much, but the trees on both sides would change continuously through the four seasons. This ought to be a weak point, but he was still unable to figure out what to do next.

"I'll wait it out with you!" Lu Yang said through gritted teeth. He was merely a little hungry and thirsty, but since the other had to maintain the barrier dimension, he must be in worse shape than him.

***Ah Yang...***

Lu Yang raised his head. He seemed to have heard Jiang Ziya's voice—*damn it, he still came after all.*

He stood up and shouted, "Ziya, where are you?"

"Next to you."

Lu Yang walked over to the wall. He had already jumped over the surrounding walls more than twenty times in hopes of finding the exit, but he believed that Jiang Ziya's eyes were more useful than his judgment.

"Are you okay?" He asked, feeling a little worried.

"Of course I'm okay. Aren't you the one who's not okay?"

Hearing that answer, Lu Yang heaved a sigh of relief. He started to feel that perhaps Jiang Ziya's arrival was a good thing. At least, he would be able to return home for dinner earlier. He was both hungry and thirsty, and though he could put up with it due to the training he had since he was young, it would of course be best if he didn't have to do so.

"How did you find me?"

"I went about searching for you by following the path you use to go to school..."

As Lu Yang walked, he listened to Jiang Ziya's reply and followed the source of his voice. In the end, he arrived at a wall, and his voice

sounded close, so it ought to be the right place.

Lu Yang praised, "I didn't know you were this smart. Sigh, that's not right either. You have always received good grades."

A familiar face popped out from behind the wall. Other than Jiang Ziya, who else could it be? He smiled and reached a hand out to grab hold of Lu Yang.

Lu Yang found it hilarious. With Jiang Ziya's arm strength, it might even be easier for him to climb up the wall by himself. However, he still grabbed onto his good friend's hand and joked, "You better not toss me off the wall on purpose—"

He abruptly stopped mid-sentence, realizing that Jiang Ziya's hands were so icy, they didn't seem like the hands of a human.

Lu Yang wanted to pull away, but it was too late. The other person had already grabbed hold of his wrist, and no matter how he struggled, he was unable to break free.

Jiang Ziya's smile grew wider and wider. The corners of his mouth split apart and went past a human's limits, finally extending to the ears. The mouth was slightly open, and the entire face looked as though it was torn in two, with sharp teeth filling the gap.

The hand grabbing hold of Lu Yang became even sturdier and did not seem like a human's hand made out of flesh and skin. It was tough and icy and secured Lu Yang's hand like a handcuff.

“SHIT!”

Damn, he had been tricked.

After maintaining the barrier dimension the whole day, for the other person to set an illusionary familiar trap... If this was done by one person, then that person must be toying with him out of extreme boredom.

Lu Yang knew that he had miscalculated. It wasn't *him*—but *them*!

“Slay! Cut down this hand!”

Lu Yang shouted angrily, but nothing happened. Slay did not appear at all.

“It's too late, big brother!” The voice that rang out was no longer Jiang Ziya's but a soft, child-like voice. The illusion's eyes narrowed as it smiled and grinned with its tattered mouth. It happily said, “You have already agreed! So come in and play with me!”

Lu Yang looked up at the other and knew that he had satisfied the conditions—grabbing its hand and agreeing to its invitation...



House Keeper was in the middle of clearing the potato chip packets that covered the floor when there came a series of anxious and violent knocks on the door. This time, he did not go and retrieve the seal. For someone to come at this late time, it was mostly likely not the postman. Furthermore, he had already guessed as to who was at the



door.

The only other person who would visit this place, in addition to the postman, would be the neighbor across the hall.

When House Keeper went to open the door, the one waiting outside was completely within his expectations.

Therefore, he took the initiative to state, "The mistress is currently out. It appears that there was something wrong with the manuscript, so she had no choice but to make a trip to the publisher. She should be back soon, so please wait a moment."

Jiang Ziya didn't have time to wait. He only had an hour! Moreover, would Yu Shu even be willing to save Lu Yang?

"T-Then, you can go with me!" Jiang Ziya couldn't think of another plan and considered simply taking House Keeper and Xiao Xue along. *A formation like that should be able to save Lu Yang, right?*

House Keeper seemed a little shocked and said, "I am unable to go anywhere without the mistress's orders. Moreover, it is highly probable that I will reveal my true form in a crowded place."

Jiang Ziya was so anxious, he was practically hopping from foot to foot. Ignoring whatever House Keeper was saying, he forcefully dragged House Keeper out of the room—House Keeper was abnormally light, not like an adult at all. It was very easy for Jiang Ziya to drag him along.

The two of them stood at the front door. Jiang Ziya was a little flustered as he said, "I-I have to go look for Xiao Xue. Can you wait here for me?"

After all, he couldn't possibly drag House Keeper into his own home. His sister and brother-in-law would definitely raise an eyebrow at that. House Keeper stood on the spot and answered, "Wait here for you? But you are not my master. I will not follow your orders. I—"

"Please!" Jiang Ziya gritted his teeth and said, "Don't you want to hear your name? If you help me, I will tell you your name!"

"Very well, I accept your invitation." House Keeper tilted his head to the side and turned to lock the front door.

Seeing that, Jiang Ziya heaved a sigh of relief, even though he felt that the word "invitation" had sounded very peculiar.

Now that he had dealt with House Keeper, following that was Xiao Xue's turn. He turned around to go into his apartment—Xiao Xue and Jiang Jiang were currently standing behind him. Both of them had the same expression and were looking at House Keeper with disgust as they pouted.

"Gēge, what kind of dangerous things are you up to again?" Xiao Xue shouted, discontent.

"Xiao Xue, please, help me save Lu Yang. Do you still remember him? That day, he came to the supermarket to save us. Now that he has been captured, I need to go and save him!"

Xiao Xue was unwilling and said, "The one who saved us in the supermarket wasn't him!"

Hearing that, Jiang Ziya was unable to retort. After all, it did seem like they hadn't been saved by Lu Yang, but by the man in the mottled mask and the death god that they had mistaken for an enemy. Back then, the two had made an exit for them to escape the supermarket.

"Perhaps the one you should ask is the other one." House Keeper gently reminded, "Although artifact demons are stronger than illusory familiars, they definitely cannot match those who have come true..."

Jiang Ziya flinched at that. After going through so much, he too had realized that the other girl was the true demon king. However, she was also the bottom line. No matter what, he would not let Jiang Jiang go!

The other party's aim was to obtain Xiao Xue. If they were to discover Jiang Jiang on top of that, then things would definitely take a turn for the worse!

Moreover, it was best if Jiang Jiang could begin being an ordinary girl starting now, without any connections to lies or illusions or fakes. She had to forget faster and grow up like an ordinary child.

"Xiao Xue, please..." Jiang Ziya could only beg Xiao Xue once more.

"Gēge, don't go." The reply instead came from Jiang Jiang. She shook her head and said, "It's too dangerous, don't go."

"He's my friend. I have to go even if it's dangerous!"

"Friend? What is that?" Jiang Jiang looked at him, perplexed. She asked, "Is it more important than Māma?"

*Friend or Māma ... No, for me, it should be sister. But would anyone compare them like this?* It was not like the two of them had fallen into the water, and he could only save one—If that were the case, he would definitely tell Lu Yang to quickly swim over and save his sister!

Jiang Ziya felt distressed as he tried to explain, "Friends are like... like you and Xiao Xue! If she were in danger, you would go and save her, right?"

Jiang Jiang tilted her side to one side and replied earnestly, "If it's not dangerous to save Xiao Xue, then I'd save her. If it's dangerous, then I wouldn't save her."

Jiang Ziya felt speechless when he heard that and could not help but shoot a glance at Xiao Xue. Although the latter was pouting, she did not say anything. It seemed as though she was not surprised that Jiang Jiang would say so.

"It's dangerous. Gēge, don't go."

Jiang Ziya shook his head, exclaiming, "No way! No matter what, I have to go save Lu Yang."

Especially since Lu Yang was captured because of him. Jiang Ziya

didn't dare to say these words though, since he could not say that the other party wanted to exchange Lu Yang for Xiao Xue. If he did, Xiao Xue might refuse to go.

Xiao Xue bit her lower lip and said, "Then Gēge, make a pinky promise with me! If I go and help, then Gēge has to help me come true!"

"But I don't know how to turn you into a human." Although he was hesitant, Jiang Ziya still told her the honest truth. He simply did not want to deceive her.

Xiao Xue pouted, not saying anything.

"Even if he did know, I am afraid that he would not be able to do it." House Keeper explained, "My mistress has once said that coming true is a very difficult feat. I do not believe that he can do it."

Hearing that, Jiang Ziya suddenly felt a little doubtful as to how Jiang Jiang had actually come true. Could that "calling ability" of his sister's really be that strong?

The phone abruptly rang, and Jiang Ziya felt his heart pound. *Has half an hour already gone by?*

He took the call, and as expected, it was the low and gruff voice again. "Come to your university's library rooftop. You only have twenty minutes to come over."

"What! Didn't you say half an hour?"

Jiang Ziya finished speaking, but the only answer was the “doot doot” sound of the phone being hung up. He could not help but shout in rage, “Bastard!”

“Shh!” Jiang Jiang put her index finger in front of her lips and reprimanded, “Gēge, be quieter. Bàba and Māma will hear you!”

Jiang Ziya felt that he was a complete idiot. Although the sound insulation of his place wasn’t that bad, it was still easy to be heard if one screamed directly outside the door. He really couldn’t even match up to two three year old girls!

Hearing some sounds coming from within the apartment, Jiang Ziya’s face immediately darkened. He had only wanted to quickly leave the scene. *But Xiao Xue...*

Jiang Ziya lowered his head to look at Xiao Xue, uncertain when she had walked over to his side in silence, but she reached out to tug at his hand.

“Okay! I’ll go with Gēge.” Her tone seemed a little unwilling, but she still grabbed onto her brother’s hand tightly.

Jiang Ziya suddenly felt like he was choking out words. “Xiao Xue, I don’t know if I can do it, but I will definitely try to make you come true!”

Xiao Xue smiled adorably and gave a happy “mhh.”

“Since Xiao Xue wants to go of her own will...”

Jiang Jiang waved goodbye to them and instructed, "Xiao Xue, you must protect Gēge! Otherwise, Māma will be sad."

There seemed to be a large leap in logic between these two sentences, though Jiang Ziya could still understand them. If something were to happen to him, his sister would naturally be sad. *But Jiang Jiang, do you only mind the fact that Māma would be sad...*

Jiang Ziya almost felt like crying.

Xiao Xue nodded and said, "Okay. I will protect Gēge."

Jiang Jiang was however not satisfied with that. She held out her pinky and said, "Make a pinky promise! You must protect Gēge, or you can't return home."

"I already said that I would protect Gēge." Xiao Xue muttered with pouty lips and made the pinky promise unwillingly.

Jiang Ziya felt a little confused watching them. Their relationship seemed to be a little different from what he had imagined—although truthfully, he had never managed to understand the full situation behind the two girls.

At first, he had thought that it was just that there was an extra Xiao Xue. Afterwards, he then realized that there was something off with Jiang Jiang too, and she seemed to hold even more mysteries than Xiao Xue...

*Right now, what is most important is Lu Yang! We're already out of time!* Jiang Ziya shook away all the useless thoughts, picked up Xiao Xue and dashed downstairs. All he could do was hope that these two helpers would really be enough to help him save Lu Yang.



## Chapter #5: House Keeper Part 2 – Jie

Jiang Ziya did not come to the library often, though the university's library was rather well-known. Not only did they have a large collection of books, the building was also fairly new, so every spot felt novel and comfortable. It could be said to be a great favorite among the students.

However, he would usually head straight to Jiu Ge for his part-time work after class. After finishing the stocking and cleaning, he would study as he manned the store. Therefore, he had completely no affinity with the library.

By this time, it was already past nine thirty. The library seemed to be closing, and the students were all leaving in groups. However, when they passed by Jiang Ziya, they all shot a few glances at him.

Jiang Ziya was carrying a large doll nearing seventy centimeters in his hands. It looked incredibly real, like a smaller scaled version of a human. The doll was wearing a shirt, a vest, and formal pants, appearing no different from a butler.

When he reached the highest floor of the building, Jiang Ziya intentionally waited until there were few people about before he sneaked to the door accessing the rooftop. The door wasn't locked, though he was uncertain whether it was arranged ahead of time.

He pushed the door open and saw a flight of stairs leading upwards. Due to the fact that it was very dark, he could only see the first few stairs and was unable to see the end of them.

"Please place me on the floor."

Jiang Ziya received a large scare at that, then realized that the one speaking was the "House Keeper" in his hands. He quickly followed his instructions.

Within seconds, the doll of seventy centimeters reverted back to a man of a hundred and eighty centimeters.

Jiang Ziya felt that he would never get used to it, even if he were to see it a hundred times more.

"Gēge, let him walk in front."

Jiang Ziya looked back, and Xiao Xue's head popped out from the backpack behind him. Of course, she was in the form of a doll. Though his backpack was not small, it was also not ridiculous enough to be able to stuff a child inside of it.

"Understood." House Keeper nodded his head without any objections and took the lead as he ventured up the stairs.

After walking up a few steps, Jiang Ziya felt that the way the darkness fell around them was strange. It wasn't like there was completely no light, for he was still able to see his surroundings, or at least he could still clearly see House Keeper walking in front of him. However, places about three steps away from him were completely shrouded in darkness, and he was even unable to tell how large this area was.

*Even though this place should obviously only be a staircase...*

"Don't step on it!" Jiang Ziya growled.

House Keeper's raised foot then paused in mid-air, unmoving.

Jiang Ziya quickly said, "Shift toward the side, and don't step on that place. A strange design flickered just now, so I think it's probably best not to step on it."

When House Keeper followed his instructions, a picture suddenly emerged from the place he was about to step onto. It was red like the color of blood, and was in the ominous shape of screaming faces. It then abruptly burst and became a pile of red-colored lights.

However, that was not the end of it. Many similar designs appeared on the way up, and then promptly exploded in one breath. In that instant, a blood-colored road appeared.

Xiao Xue gasped in shock, "Gēge is so awesome! You broke their entrance to the barrier dimension!"

*I broke what?* Jiang Ziya felt completely bewildered. He did not know what had happened in the slightest. He had merely felt that since the situation didn't look good for them, he should reflexively call for them to stop if he saw anything strange.

*In conclusion, it's a good thing, right?* Jiang Ziya felt a little uncertain.

"If we had become trapped in the barrier dimension that they had set up, we would have been unable to see the truth of the situation. Since

they had arranged to meet on the rooftop, they might have been harboring intentions for us to be deluded by the barrier dimension, and for us to then jump down from the rooftop on our own.”

House Keeper explained patiently, “However, even if we had not broken through it, the effect of the barrier dimension on you would not even be half of its original. Your eye can see through many things. If you were to practice well, barrier dimensions would be a joke to you. That is what the mistress said.”

Jiang Ziya decided that when he went back, he would cling to Yu Shu’s thighs and beg her to teach him how to make this “barrier dimension” a joke.

Since he had Jiang Jiang and Xiao Xue at home and then Lu Yang at school, Jiang Ziya felt that he was desperately in need of “a joke.”

What followed after went smoothly. The surroundings were no longer strangely dark and became just an ordinary staircase. Not long after, the door accessing the rooftop appeared in front of them.

House Keeper turned around and inquired in detail, “Are there any issues with this door?”

Jiang Ziya looked up and down the door several times, and then shook his head as he said, “Nope.”

Xiao Xue coldly snorted as she said, “Looks like they are fairly clever. They didn’t put the pathway to the barrier dimension on the door, which is the easiest to be checked, but instead placed it on the

staircase.”

*Pathway?* Jiang Ziya felt that this world was becoming even more complicated and confusing.

“Are we opening the door now?” House Keeper gently said, “Please be very careful. I am merely a low-level illusionary familiar and most likely would not be of much help.”

Jiang Ziya felt extremely nervous, but he could only force himself to boldly say, “Open the door!”

He pushed, and the door let out a creaking sound, having rusted for several years without repair. The sound was exceptionally ear-piercing in the silence of the night.

A shadow crawled over quickly, like a giant reptile’s. Upon closer inspection, Jiang Ziya then realized that it was a contorted human body, its limbs bending in impossible directions. It was crawling at an exceptional pace and was half-rotten, showing a large patch of flesh and white bone.

House Keeper stepped forward to block in front of Jiang Ziya, and the crawling corpse abruptly stopped. It looked at House Keeper in uncertainty and dared not approach carelessly.

Other than the crawling corpse, there was also a female corpse with her neck broken, and her head was lying on her shoulder horizontally. There was also a scarecrow with a torn mouth, and a pair of living human eyes was rolling around on its face.

If one were to see these three in the middle of the night, even being scared to death was a possibility.

*As expected, it's "those things" that appeared in the supermarket!*

When Jiang Ziya had been trapped in the supermarket, he was so scared that he could only escape with Lin Zhixiang and even had to rely on Xiao Xue to lure them away. Only then did he manage to escape with his life. However, at the moment, he felt that these three things didn't seem as terrifying anymore.

They were merely the same kind of thing as House Keeper, just that House Keeper was much more handsome than they were!

Also, was it due to the fact that they had broken that barrier dimension or something? Jiang Ziya felt that there were too many weak points about these things. He could see that the crawling corpse's rotten skin was a fabric texture. There was even cotton wool coming out of its eyes. *This is actually a broken burlap sack with cotton stuffing, isn't it?*

The scarecrow was a real scarecrow, and the eyeballs were also real. However, they did not move and were gray, resembling the eyes of a dead creature. Jiang Ziya hoped that they weren't human eyes.

As for the female corpse, it was just a plastic model!

"Hehe, your guts sure have improved a lot."

A figure emerged from the shadows. He was a middle-aged man who looked to be in his fifties. He had no distinctive features and was the type that you wouldn't remember even after you saw him.

He coldly said, "Hand the artifact demon over."

Jiang Ziya suppressed his anger and said, "Where's Lu Yang?"

The other pointed behind his back.

A figure was hanging beneath the elevated water tower. Jiang Ziya had seen it the moment he stepped onto the rooftop.

"Nonsense. The one hanging there isn't Lu Yang. Do you think I'm blind?"

The person froze and blurted, "You can tell the difference?"

Jiang Ziya flinched and remembered what Yu Shu had said before, not to mention the "truth-seeing eye"...

"I have already broken through your barrier dimension. Who wouldn't be able to tell the difference!" He forcefully blathered, "Your skills are just too lousy!"

The middle-aged man's face turned dark. He said, "So it seems I have underestimated you and thought that you were just an ordinary person who had lucked out and gotten your hands on an artifact demon. Now, it appears that you are also a practitioner. However, even if we're in the same profession, I'm definitely getting that artifact

demon! Hand it over, unless you don't care for your companion's life?"

Jiang Ziya angrily shouted, "I want to see a living Lu Yang! Otherwise, there will absolutely be no negotiation!"

Though the fake person had been seen through, the middle-aged man did not dwell on it. He gestured to the scarecrow and the female corpse, and the two walked to the side of the building and pulled up something from each side.

It was Lu Yang.

Both his hands were kept in handcuffs, and the chain in the center wrapped around the railing, keeping him hanging on the outer edge of the building. Because all of his body weight was supported by his wrists, the area around his wrists had already turned bloody.

"Lu Yang!" Jiang Ziya immediately shouted.

But the latter had his head lowered and did not reply.

Jiang Ziya glared at the middle-aged man fiercely.

"He is still living." The man coldly continued, "However, it would be hard to say so if he continues hanging there. Hand over the artifact demon and I'll leave and give you the keys to the handcuffs."

Xiao Xue was hiding right in Jiang Ziya's backpack, not moving a single bit. Jiang Ziya couldn't imagine how she felt upon hearing this. Would she think that he really would exchange her for Lu Yang?



Jiang Ziya had already given up on the option of “exchanging her” long ago. He didn’t know when it had happened, but he was certain that he was unable to do so. Even if Xiao Xue wasn’t human, other than those ball-joints that proved otherwise, which part of her didn’t seem human?

Jiang Ziya started considering. *What if I pretended to hand Xiao Xue over to get the keys to the handcuffs first, and then snatched Xiao Xue back?*

*No, it still won’t do.* He only had House Keeper at his side, and the other person had three illusionary familiars... *Wait, if the one dangling under the water tower is included, then it’s four!* He didn’t have any confidence in snatching Xiao Xue back from the other person’s hands. *Then, what should I do?*

“I’ll give you ten seconds. Give me the artifact demon!”

As the guy urged in front, a barely audible voice came from behind and reminded him, “Gēge, if you personally agree to hand me over to him, then it will be a contract, and I will really become his. But as long as you don’t agree, he will not be able to take me away.”

Jiang Ziya froze. He then understood the reason why the other had not gone ahead to snatch Xiao Xue even though he had four illusions at hand.

He was completely in a dilemma, stuck between a rock and a hard place. However, he was very clear regarding his decision. He merely

could not accept that fact, for Xiao Xue herself had just followed him here so unguarded...

The middle-aged man did not start counting down. Instead, he reached into his possessions and pulled out a gun.

Jiang Ziya's eyes turned wide in shock. In the course of these few days, he had always been living a "surreal" life. For a "very real" handgun to suddenly appear, he actually felt more shocked and afraid than seeing spirits and demons.

After all, regarding those things, as long as he understood them, they wouldn't be as scary anymore. But for something like guns, even if he understood them, he would still die if he got hit by a bullet!

The middle-aged man pointed his gun toward the edge of the building, which was also where Lu Yang was. Jiang Ziya understood what he was about to do.

"Ten, nine, eight..."

Jiang Ziya slowly removed his backpack, his hands trembling as he placed it on the ground. He spoke softly, "I'm so sorry, Xiao Xue. I'm so sorry..."

She did not pop her head out, but soft sobs could be heard from within the backpack.

Glee showed on the man's face and he asked, "So you're giving the artifact demon to me?"

Jiang Ziya was about to nod his head and agree, when a sudden ringtone came from his chest. He could only feel vexed at that. *Who would be in the mood to pick up a call at this kind of time!*

"Toss the phone over!" The man flew into a towering rage as he roared, "Or else, I shoot his hand off!" He pointed the gun at the outer edge of the building.

"Don't! I'll toss it over immediately!"

Jiang Ziya dug out his phone, making a pose to throw it over, but in an instant he suddenly remembered what Fu Jun had said. He said that he would give a call, and he even said—

*You must pick it up.*

Jiang Ziya pressed the receive button without any hesitation.

**In the name of the God of the Eastern Sky, pledged by the word of the God of the Eastern Sky, thou spirits and familiars art free, thou shalt not serve under any master, from this moment henceforth!**

A loud voice erupted from the phone, to the point where Jiang Ziya got a massive headache as well as a ringing in his ears. For a long time, all he could do was crouch on the floor while hugging his head. When he came back to his senses with much difficulty, Xiao Xue was clutching tightly to his leg, but he still heard cries and sounds of gunshots.

The crawling corpse, the scarecrow, and the plastic model were actually attacking that man!

The man had been tackled to the floor and could only open fire at them to no avail.

However, guns seemed to have no effect on those illusions. Even when their bodies were shot to pieces, they continued to use their mouths, their hands, and all kinds of methods, determined to tear the man to pieces and gobble him up!

Upon seeing this bloody scene, Jiang Ziya was scared stiff. House Keeper stepped forth, blocking him with his body so as to prevent Jiang Ziya from getting hit by a stray bullet.

Following that, he heard a series of gunshots, and Jiang Ziya finally realized what the man's goal was in firing the shots—that was where Lu Yang was! To think that he wanted to drag others down even on his deathbed!

*And his accursed marksmanship is even very accurate!* Jiang Ziya pushed aside House Keeper, making a mad dash toward the edge of the building.

"Gēge!"

Xiao Xue jumped out from the backpack and ran toward Jiang Ziya. However, a series of gunshots caught them off guard. Everything felt as though it was in slow motion like a movie. Xiao Xue collapsed on the floor, and Jiang Ziya received a large blow to his left shoulder,

sending him flying.

Coincidentally, he landed beside the railings, and he grabbed onto Lu Yang's hand with his right hand. It was practically impossible to get a steady hold of him with only one hand. Thankfully, the handcuffs helped.

The chain between the two handcuffs was now barely connected. Lu Yang's hand was covered in blood, and it was so slippery that he could not get a good grip on it. Jiang Ziya could only hold onto the cuffs, and he even shoved his fingers into the gap between the handcuffs and the chains. Otherwise, he was truly afraid that his grip would not be enough.

At this point, he realized that he was burning in pain from his shoulders to his fingers. His left shoulder had already become numb from pain. He could not bring out any strength in his arm. His right shoulder was pressed against the railing tightly, supporting Lu Yang's entire weight, and was hurting to the point that he felt like it would break.

He would not be able to hold out much longer. He turned and looked around, wanting to seek help, but he saw Xiao Xue sprawled on the floor, unmoving.

*Xiao Xue...*

"House Keeper, quickly come over and help me!"

Hearing the call, House Keeper stepped forward but did not extend a

helping hand. He only said in apology, "I am merely an illusionary familiar who is residing in a doll and cannot even compare to Xiao Xue. Therefore, I am unable to move anything above a certain weight. The two garbage bags that I normally help the mistress throw away is already my limit."

Hearing that, Jiang Ziya felt his heart go cold.

House Keeper urged him with good intentions, "I advise that you let go of him and go to the hospital quickly. Your shoulder was hit by a bullet and is bleeding profusely."

"Lu Yang!" Jiang Ziya was unwilling to do so and desperately roared, "Hurry and wake up, Lu Yang! You bastard, stop sleeping while you're dangling in mid-air!"

There was no reaction at all from Lu Yang.

A sense of despair washed over Jiang Ziya.

He already had no more strength in his completely numb arms. By this point, the fact that Lu Yang was still hanging there was almost completely thanks to the handcuffs that were stuck. But he definitely could not let go. This was the rooftop, and the damn school library was actually seven stories high!

Lu Yang was still unconscious. If he fell down, he would definitely lose his life. Unless he was still hiding a secret like having a diamond-hard, indestructible body—his wrists were already all bloody, so no way was he indestructible!

"House Keeper, help me wake up Xiao Xue. The two of you can help me drag Lu Yang up. Please..."

House Keeper shook his head, saying, "I am afraid that she would not be able to help either. Though she is able to do many things, based on her type and the abilities that she has shown, I believe that strength is not one of her strong points."

Once he heard that, Jiang Ziya thoroughly lost all hope.

"My utmost apologies." House Keeper kept his head down, looking completely apologetic as he said, "I wish to help, but I truly have no means to do so. Even if I reached out to grab him, he would only fall." Seeing that, Jiang Ziya gave a wry smile.

"I believe you. Your expression really does look very apologetic... very like a human."

House Keeper froze.

"How are you all not human? Xiao Xue even blocked a bullet for me! How are you all not human? How many humans would block a bullet for another?"

Jiang Ziya was on the verge of tears.

First, he had sought out someone to burn Xiao Xue. Then, he had sold out Xiao Xue. However, Xiao Xue had blocked the bullet for him in the end—he really was a huge bastard!

However, now was not the time for tears yet. He held them back as he instructed House Keeper, "If anything happens to me, please tell my brother-in-law that I leave my sister in his hands."

House Keeper opened his mouth but didn't know what to say in response to that. He was a little puzzled as to why he was hesitant. *At this point of time, wouldn't an "understood" be fine?*

Jiang Ziya tried his best to stand up. This was an extremely difficult task, especially when one was grabbing hold of another in their hands. The only fortunate thing about the situation was that the sensation of pain wasn't as strong as before, though he was uncertain whether it was due to blood loss or because he had become numb due to extreme pain—hopefully it wasn't a last spurt before death.

The gap between the railings was narrow, so he could not squeeze Lu Yang through them. Therefore, he had to raise him up above the railings and then grab him from the top and over the rails.

After exhausting all his strength, Jiang Ziya finally managed to stand up, and Lu Yang was raised mid-way up the railings. However, he felt his whole body going cold, and there was already no feeling in his left shoulder. Most likely, he didn't have much time left.

He pressed himself onto the railings. In order to grab Lu Yang and pull him up, he could only bend over the rails and reach for him. However, he had greatly overestimated his own strength, or perhaps he had just run out of energy. Either way, Lu Yang wasn't raised upwards. Instead, Jiang Ziya felt his feet leave the ground, and only his stomach was still



pressed against the railings. However, this would not stay for long.

In that instant when his whole body started tilting downwards, the only thing that Jiang Ziya could think of was to shout, "House Keeper, your name is Charles!

"Charles Endelis!"

Jiang Ziya slid down—

At this time, the only thing he could do was close his eyes tightly. But though he waited, the sensation of falling did not come.

*Could it be that I'm dead already? Was it that quick?*

Jiang Ziya opened his eyes, perplexed. He immediately saw House Keeper's handsome face, which was so gorgeous it could belong to a magazine model.

House Keeper was grabbing onto him and Lu Yang.

Moreover, his strength was unbelievable. With one hand, he held onto Jiang Ziya, and with the other, he held onto Lu Yang. However, he did not seem like he was forcing himself, and he could even give the two a gentle smile. Then, he carried both of them up safely and put them on the ground steadily.

Jiang Ziya sat on the floor for a good long while. His brain was still a complete blank from the scare just now, and he raised his head to look at House Keeper. He asked in a daze, "Didn't you say that you can't lift

us?”

House Keeper was currently studying his hands with his head lowered. On his face, a shocked expression appeared—shocked but happy.

Seeing that, Jiang Ziya understood too. “You leveled up?”

“Indeed, I believe I have ‘leveled up.’” House Keeper broke into a smile and could not hide his happiness as he said, “I have become a ‘lie,’ and this is all thanks to you.”

After saying that, House Keeper turned to look at the four illusions who were eyeing them. He merely gave a faint smile, but it was enough to terrify them into fleeing.

*This sounds like a good thing.*

House Keeper’s expression was much more human than before, and he even took the initiative to protect them by scaring off those demons. However, Jiang Ziya had a feeling—Yu Shu would definitely strangle him to death! Absolutely!

“It hurts a lot, Gēge...”

Nearby, Xiao Xue slowly crawled to her feet as she cried. Jiang Ziya then finally fainted, with a smile on his face.

## Chapter #5: House Keeper Part 3 – The True and False World

It was rare for Yu Shu to step out of her own apartment. This time, she had a reason, though it wasn't a very good one. Her neighbor was in the hospital, so she was going to pay him a visit—conveniently bringing along a packet of salt to sprinkle on his wounds.

House Keeper had followed her. In the journey between her apartment and the hospital, he had attracted the gaze of females from eight to eighty years old. All of them stared intently at him. There were also a few that had directly rushed over to give him their contact number, completely ignoring that he had a female by his side.

Even before reaching Jiang Ziya's hospital room, Yu Shu decided that she would come over again. Next time, she would bring chili powder.

When she walked into the room, only Jiang Ziya was in. He was flipping through an original novel with much difficulty. His entire left arm was in a cast and bandaged, and he wasn't able to move it a single inch. Even his right hand was wrapped firmly in bandages, and several gauzes were pasted on his face—which had been injured when he had fallen down.

The moment he saw Yu Shu, his expression immediately turned into one of alarm.

Yu Shu looked about the room and seemed puzzled as she asked, "Jiang Yu isn't around?" It seemed like she could really sprinkle salt on his wounds then.

"My sister went shopping." Jiang Ziya cowered as he said, "Ah... That... matter regarding House Keeper, I really didn't do it on purpose..."

"I know. You did it *deliberately*," Yu Shu sat at the side of the bed and coldly replied.

Jiang Ziya had no way of explaining himself.

House Keeper walked to the side of the table. A fruit basket meant for sick visits was placed there, so he picked up an apple and started peeling it. The peel was so thin that it was even transparent.

Yu Shu's face was icy and promised a horrible death for Jiang Ziya with her sharp, piercing gaze. It didn't take too long before she couldn't hold in her curses.

"Your Xiao Xue is a little girl, and my House Keeper is a vampire. If you were to pick one of the two, you should let Xiao Xue become a lie and not my House Keeper! Do you want to add a vampire race to the world? Do you know that vampires are above humans in the food chain? If you want to be food, go ahead, but I don't want to be sucked dry!"

Jiang Ziya felt wronged as he said, "The only thing I did was call his name. I didn't know that he would level up just from that! I shouted Xiao Xue's name numerous times already, but she didn't level up. Who knew that House Keeper would level up from only being called once?!" Yu Shu roared in a frenzy, "The way of calling is different!"

*In what way was it different?* Jiang Ziya felt that he really was wronged to no end. He didn't know how this call had differed from the others. *Can it be that shouting as you jumped off a building is more effective?*

However, even if he had known that calling House Keeper would turn him into a lie, Jiang Ziya would probably still have done it. If he hadn't, two lives would have been lost, and one of them was even his own. As the saying goes, better a live coward than a dead hero! Moreover, if anything were to happen to him, his sister would...

"You super-duper trouble magnet! Even disregarding the fact that you have the truth-seeing eye, you even have the calling ability as well... No wonder your family even has a 'truth' already. You're 200% part of the reason!"

Jiang Ziya froze. *So besides my eye, even my mouth is a problem?*

"Hold on, the 'truth' in your family is...?" Yu Shu paused, and then shook her head. She continued to roar in rage, "Anyway, I'm warning you, don't ever come to my place again. Moreover, don't look at House Keeper with that eye of yours. And most importantly, absolutely never call his name! Even if you're about to die from a thousand cuts, you're absolutely forbidden from calling his name. You hear that!"

*Can't go over to Yu Shu's place?* Jiang Ziya opened his mouth wide at that. He was originally thinking of clinging onto Yu Shu's thighs and begging her to teach him.

"I got it." Since she had already said so much, Jiang Ziya could only

agree to it.

Yu Shu snatched the apple that House Keeper had peeled, with absolutely no intentions of giving it to the patient. Under Jiang Ziya's aggrieved gaze, she finished the whole apple before she then said with irritation, "You're responsible for taking out the trash, got it?"

"Huh?" Jiang Ziya froze, and asked in confusion, "What trash?"

Yu Shu emphasized, "After you get out of the hospital, you're responsible for taking out the trash and waiting for the garbage truck. You hear me?"

*The time waiting for the garbage truck...* Jiang Ziya nodded his head vigorously.

"Then, that's that."

Yu Shu threw the apple core onto Jiang Ziya, brushed off her butt, and got up to leave.

Lu Yang walked in, and just happened to brush past Yu Shu and House Keeper. He stared at the two, a little shocked. However, the other party seemed to have no intentions of stopping to say hello to him, so he could only walk to the side of the bed, rubbing his nose.

Both of Lu Yang's wrists were still wrapped in heavy bandages. However, compared to the heavily injured Jiang Ziya who could still only lie in bed even now, he was already able to run around freely since a while ago. He helped Jiang Ziya flip the page of the book in

passing, and then asked in doubt, "Who are those two people who just left?"

"The neighbors living across from me."

"Oh, that man sure is handsome. His looks can compete with mine!"

"... I should have let you hang there for another twenty-four hours."



Once she reached home, Yu Shu felt extremely relieved. It was good to be home. If she could, she would really want to rot at home for the rest of her life.

She suddenly frowned, and turned to ask, "Jiang Jiang is the 'truth' in Jiang Ziya's family, right?"

House Keeper diligently nodded and answered, "Indeed."

"Damn it!" Yu Shu cursed with irritation stemming from the bottom of her heart as she said, "Once I walk out of the apartment, I almost can't remember even the fact that Jiang Jiang is a 'truth!'"

*To think that I can even forget something that's just next door!* Yu Shu couldn't help but feel panic rising in her heart.

*Just how much truth is left in this world?*

Even if she avoided stepping out of her apartment as much as she could and closed herself in this barrier dimension, just how much of

the world she remembered was true? Just how did the original world look—

“Forget it, why do I want to remember it so clearly for? I’m not going to think about it anymore—not anymore! Thinking about it is of no use anyways! Even if I remember a lot, in the end, one still can’t tell the difference between what’s true and what’s false! Life still goes on as usual, and there are still manuscripts to rush!”

Yu Shu rolled all over the apartment, screaming, kicking, and clutching her hair.

“Alright, you may drink an additional cup of coffee today.” House Keeper said helplessly, “I will go and brew it right away.”

She fell silent.



“To tell the truth, it is very hard for me to understand what you are all thinking.”

Yu Shu held her coffee and reclined on the sofa lazily. Though she would rather die than turn House Keeper into a lie, she still had to admit that after House Keeper had turned into one, he had become better at understanding others and was more fun to chat with.

“House Keeper, how does it feel to know that you are a figment of someone’s imagination and not a real existence?”

“Mistress, I am merely a lie, and am not real enough to suspect my



own existence.”

Hearing such an answer, Yu Shu felt a strong twitch in her heart. She looked at House Keeper who seemed to always be smiling, and let out a long breath.

“I am now starting to understand what part of a ‘lie’ is more real than an ‘illusion.’ To be able to say something like that, I am now suspecting that you are lying to me! Do you truly not understand the concept of ‘self?’”

“Indeed, I do not understand.” Even when he was being accused of lying, House Keeper still kept his smile on as he replied.

However, Yu Shu didn’t believe a word of it. She gave a cold snort, and said as though she was vowing, “No matter what, I will absolutely never let you come true. Don’t even dream of taking back your name, ‘House Keeper!’”

“As you wish, my mistress.” House Keeper only continued to smile.

## Epilogue: Terminology

### **[Illusions, Lies, Truth]**

Calling their name once would wish them into illusion, calling them twice would change them into lies, and calling their name thrice would make them come true. The process of evolution from a “non-existential state” to an “existential state.”

### **[Barrier Dimension]**

An illusory space that is able to delude human eyes.

### **[Pathway]**

A necessary procedure to enter a barrier dimension.

### **[Illusionary Familiar]**

Illusions born out of other’s imaginations, stories, legends, and such. Extremely low-leveled, seeming to have little power. It is very difficult for them to become an existence greater than a lie.

### **[Artifact Demon]**

A demon born from ancient artifacts. They possess various types of abilities, depending on the type of artifact as well as the way they were born.



## Epilogue

In the series *Illusions, Lies, Truth*, many characters from other novels are mentioned. These are indeed existing novels, and they are other novels that I have written. However, it's not a problem even if you haven't read them.

As Yu Shu has stated, the characters here are already not the original characters from their series. Because a different person imagined them and they had different encounters, the characters that appear here are different. Therefore, please treat them like new characters.

I remember when I first started posting a trial version online, a reader asked me this: The female author in the text is obviously you, so why did you not use "Yu Wo" directly and instead use "Yu Shu?"

That was because I was trying to draw a line between me and the female author in the book, though in vain. This is to prevent people from turning their rage on me when they keep calling their favorite character but can't call them to life.

Please remember! The female author in the series is Yu Shu, not Yu Wo! If you want revenge, please seek her out!

Another thing was that though I had pondered over it several times, I still decided to set the place in Taiwan directly. Even though it would be more convenient to just make a fictional place, after thinking it over, I thought that I would just state directly that the story takes place in this very country that we live in.

The difference is just that a few specific names of roads, schools, and places have been conspicuously covered up by tweaking them slightly to avoid people taking things personally. They are already not the original school or road names! Everyone, you don't have to go search them out, and no matter what guesses you make, I won't confirm them!

Actually, this book was originally planned to be a horror story.

But after I finished the start, it already deviated. When I reached the middle of the story, it already went into an alternative universe. Moreover, looking at the situation, it looks like it will still continue deviating; therefore, even I'm embarrassed to say that it's a horror novel anymore. As for what genre it falls under, it's hard to say, so I might as well just shove it under the self-created "nonsensical novel" genre as usual.

Therefore, please don't shake your head and tell me that this is not a horror novel, this is not a horror novel, this is not a horror novel!

Actually, even the number of novels has become different from what I intended. *Illusions, Lies, Truth* was originally planned to be one-shots, whereas the format is that the main characters are the same, but each volume features a different incident.

Therefore, Human Doll Contract was supposed to be one volume. In the end, I couldn't wrap it up in one volume, so it became Part One.

I believe that it is because it's the first volume, so all of the characters and terms have to be introduced. Therefore, there are more things to

address, and I need two parts in order to wrap up the whole incident of Human Doll Contract.

As for later volumes, they will also probably follow such a format, with each incident taking up around one to two volumes (I don't dare to claim that it will end in one volume anymore). As to what kind of incidents they will encounter, I ask for everyone to please watch over Jiang Ziya and Lu Yang's fantastical life!

Actually, there's this question that I have really wanted to ask: Do you prefer Jiang Ziya or Lu Yang more?

Because this book is situated in the real world, yet also escapes reality (what kind of nonsense is this), I will give a disclaimer as usual:

"The contents of this book are purely fictional. Please just enjoy the book, and don't go around calling out names! Especially those people who are usually spacing off, and have unusually strong imaginations... Please don't mess around!!"

Okay! Lastly, I hope that everyone will like this novel. Let's meet again in the next book!

I can finally end work now. Charles, there's no more coffee. Brew me another cup.

What? I can only drink two cups a day, and I have already reached my quota for the day? Don't do this! I just finished a book today, so can't I have another cup in celebration?

I want coffeEEEE~ And don't you dare try and fool me with low  
caffeine coffeEEEE~

By Yu Wo



### Character Introductions



## **Jiang Ziya**

### **[Biography]**

Overall, he is a normal, optimistic university student. With the exception of his left eye, he doesn't have many worries, but that left eye alone causes him enough trouble. In addition to the dab of mutated blue in the upper part of his eye, his left eye holds another secret—it can see things that should not be seen.

Most loved: his family

Most hated: the things seen with his left eye

Love and hate: Lu Yang

Specialized weapon: mutated left eye

### **[Overview of Stats]**

Battle Stat: 30

Physique Stat: 60

Support Stat: 99



## **Jiang Jiang**

### **[Biography]**

She is a three-year-old girl, Jiang Ziya's niece. However, things don't seem to be that simple. There is a huge secret involving the little girl that must be forgotten. Once remembered...

Most loved: her mother

Most hated: getting scolded by her mother



Love and hate: Jiang Ziya

Specialized weapon: ???

### **[Overview of Stats]**

Battle Stat: ???

Physique Stat: 30

Support Stat: 10

### **Jiang Xue**

### **[Biography]**

She seems to be a doll from Jiang Yu's childhood. She has currently taken the form of Jiang Jiang's twin. At the start of the story, she is already an existence that is close to a "lie." It is unknown how long she has existed or why she has come to exist.

Most loved: Jiang Jiang

Most hated: being forgotten

Love and hate: Jiang Yu

Specialized weapon: shapeshifting

### **[Overview of Stats]**

Battle Stat: 40

Physique Stat: 10

Support Stat: 60



**Lu Yang**

**[Biography]**

He is Jiang Ziya's classmate since high school to university. He has brown hair, green eyes, and foreign blood. Because his foreign appearance and Jiang Ziya's strangely colored left eye are both strange, they have become good friends. However, this good friend seems to possess a number of secrets as well...

Most loved: his parents

Most hated: demons and spirits

Love and hate: his grandfather

Specialized weapon: Slay

### **[Overview of Stats]**

Battle Stat: 90

Physique Stat: 90

Support Stat: 10

