

DETENTION: THE NIGHTMARE RETURNS

返校：惡夢再續

A grisly campus thriller, adapted from the international megahit game

A storm is approaching on the evening eight youngsters head out to test their nerve in the old abandoned schoolhouse.

This is Greenwood Middle School, the site of a fatal incident during the days of the White Terror in Taiwan. After one student informed the authorities about the secret circulation of forbidden books, the subsequent crackdown resulted in jail or execution for those who didn't flee or take their own lives. Rumors have abounded ever since of wrathful spirits lingering within, unable to depart.

It doesn't take long for those eight foolhardy youngsters to realize that the rumors are very much true. Bullet-riddled faces throng the auditorium; a mutilated baseball player with otherworldly strength patrols the sports field; and anyone who dawdles in the corridors risks being turned into a meat puppet.

Their attempts to escape are thwarted by the ghosts lurking in every corner. What happened here, all those years ago, to make them feel such rage? What do the ghosts want? And will the survivors still be able to trust one another as their numbers start to dwindle?

The original PC game *Detention* soared to the top of the Steam store charts in Taiwan on its release in 2017, and within three days it had reached the number three spot internationally. The movie and TV rights have also been sold; filming starts on the movie in 2018, under the supervision of Lee Lieh (producer of *Monga*) and Aileen Li (producer of Luc Besson's *Lucy*).

Text by Ling Jing 苓菁

Known as "The Queen of Supernatural" in Taiwan, Ling Jing is famous for her portrayal of the darker side of human psychology and her unflinching examination of society. A bestselling author and blogger, her works include the *Urban Legends*, *Bad Fairytale*, and *Dark Dark Sounds*.



Category: Fiction

Publisher: Sharp Point

Date: 2/2017

Rights contact:
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Pages: 304

Length: 105,000 characters
(approximately 735,000 words in English)

Material: Sample

Story by Red Candle Games 赤燭遊戲

The Taiwanese studio Red Candle Games drew inspiration from George Orwell's *1984* in producing the acclaimed horror game *Detention*. Their next title will be a platformer entitled *Stay With Me*.

Illustrated by Pegehoho

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By Ling Jing

Translated by Eleanor Goodman

The shaky beam of a cellphone flashlight shone through the plastic bag and the heavy rain, revealing a boy in a baseball uniform. There wasn't a drop of rain on him as he walked. He gripped a baseball bat tightly in his right hand, and the bright red blood on it hadn't been washed off by the rain.

Whose blood was it? Chia-Hsiang stood frozen, staring at the boy. His body was riddled with holes and soaked with blood, and his left eye had been ripped out of the socket! Bare bone poked out behind the flesh.

"You were the one who told, weren't you! It was you!" The boy howled the words, throwing a ball up and whacking it with the bat. "I just wrote the coach a letter. I never ratted us out!"

The ball whistled towards them, and Chia-Hsiang quickly ducked as it whizzed by his head. "Han-Chen! Be a man and stand up!" he yelled from his crouch.

Han-Chen set his teeth and strained to get up. Chia-Hsiang swore under his breath, but went over to help, pulling Han-Chen's arm around his neck to help support his useless leg.

"You're not going anywhere!" the boy screamed.

From the second floor of the nearby building, Yun-Ta and the others had seen it all.

Chia-Ni screamed at them not to turn around. "Run! Just run!"

"I have to go help them!" Yun-Ta suddenly said, turning around and rushing for the door.

"Don't!" Panicked, Chia-Ni grabbed onto him, holding him back with everything she had. "You can't go! Don't leave me here!"

Yun-Ta felt her hands gripping his waist. He tried to pull them off, but she was too strong.

"I'll go. You stay here with them." Tzu-Hung tried to sound calm as she forced a smile.

"What? Tzu-Hung..." Yun-Ta wanted to stop her, but the arms around his waist were squeezing him tightly and showed no signs of letting go. "Chia-Ni, let go!"

"You said you'd protect me!" she said, starting to cry.

Shu-Chi fearfully put her head in her hands as she sat on the floor. She was trembling behind a window that had been shattered with a baseball, too afraid to look outside or to listen. At least staying low was supposed to be the safest way to hide.

Yun-Ta couldn't shake Chia-Ni off. He could only turn around and look back down. But now he'd lost sight of I-Lin and Hui-Ling.

"Agh!" A precisely aimed baseball slammed into Han-Chen's right leg.

Chia-Hsiang couldn't keep him upright, and they both tumbled to the ground.

Tzu-Hung had dashed into the outdoor passageway and turned on her flashlight. She waved it frantically, signaling the direction for I-Lin. "Over here! It's Tzu-Hung, come this way!"

The bright LED light shone through the rain and told I-Lin the right direction. They burst into the passageway with such force that I-Lin ran straight into Tzu-Hung.

"Oh!" She was pushed backward, but finally stopped him. "It's okay! It's okay now."

I-Lin hugged her, wrapping her body tightly with his.

A moment later, Hui-Ling came in. She was unsteady on her feet, skidding in on the rainwater.

Tzu-Hung calmed I-Lin down. Her job as a lighthouse wasn't over yet, and she hurried around Hui-Ling to shine her light outside once more. Where were the others?

"Chia-Hsiang...Han-Chen!" she shouted raggedly. "It's Tzu-Hung!"

Chia-Hsiang caught sight of the signaling light and stood up. "Come on, Han-Chen!"

Han-Chen's legs had gone numb, and he struggled to get to his feet. He fell down, and a baseball whipped past between them, scaring Chia-Hsiang back several paces.

"Run! Run!" Yun-Ta's voice came from above them.

"Don't leave me here!" Han-Chen reached out his hand. "Chia-Hsiang!"

The boy with the ravaged head had kept a set distance from them the whole time, and now he raised the bat again....

Chia-Hsiang gulped. He couldn't die here with Han-Chen!

"You were the one who told! It was you, wasn't it!" As he pointed at Chia-Hsiang, the boy sent another ball screaming toward them.

"It wasn't me!" Chia-Hsiang dove for cover, but he could still feel the ball whistling through the rain.

"Run!" I-Lin suddenly shouted over Tzu-Hung's shoulders. "Chia-Hsiang, run! Forget Han-Chen, it isn't worth it! It's not your responsibility!"

"Yes..." Chia-Hsiang shut his eyes tightly. "I've fulfilled my duty, Han-Chen. I'm sorry!" He turned around and made a dash for it.

"Damn you, Chia-Hsiang!" Han-Chen screamed with terror. "How can you leave me behind! You heartless traitor!"

"Traitor!" A clatter came from behind him. "You're the traitor, aren't you!"

From the ground, Han-Chen looked up, and saw the hideous figure of the boy in the dark rain. What had happened to his head? His brain was oozing out of his skull. Had he fallen? Or been shot? Where had all of the wounds on his body come from?

Han-Chen shook his head. "You're wrong, it wasn't me! I wasn't the snitch, I was trying to catch the snitch!" With a burst of adrenalin, he leapt to his feet and fled toward the LED light.

As I-Lin caught Chia-Hsiang at the entrance to the passageway, he saw a baseball slam into Han-Chen's right shoulder. He was close to them now, and in the light of the flashlight they could see the rain was momentarily splashed bright red.

Blood gushed from Han-Chen's shoulder and was washed away in seconds.

What was going on? Tzu-Hung didn't understand how a baseball could make someone bleed like that.

Han-Chen crawled forward and tried to stand up again as another ball slammed into the back of his head, or rather, the left side of his head. He didn't even have time to scream. The baseball hit his left temple, and sheared off part of his eye socket as it implanted itself in his

brain. The severed bone landed only fifty centimeters away from where Tzu-Hung was watching.

The reddened ball slowly dropped out of his head, dragging hair and tissue with it.

Hui-Ling let out a piercing scream.

Han-Chen's head slumped forward, but his remaining eyeball stared at them...or perhaps it was focused on the light in Tzu-Hung's hand. He collapsed, and Tzu-Hung thought she saw a splatter of water from where his knees hit the ground, except it was red...

"I just wanted to play baseball with you! I just wanted to play ball!" Coming from somewhere, ball after ball slammed into Han-Chen's back. "I was never a traitor! How bloody are your hands now, snitch? I was innocent, I was innocent!"

Blood flew, and in the light from the flashlight, Han-Chen's body shook as though he were being shot.

At last he dropped to the ground.

Tzu-Hung was frozen in place. She stared at Han-Chen where he had fallen, only a few meters from making it to safety...the bone from his eye socket was so close she could have gone and picked it up.

The ball had already been washed clean of his brains.

Hui-Ling was crying with terror and dread. Chia-Hsiang was stunned. He sat there on the ground, motionless...until the boy turned his glare on him.

The bloodied boy slowly raised the baseball bat and pointed it at them.

"Why did you want to hurt me? Who was it? Who said that I had contact with the Communist Party?" He savagely pointed at each of them. "Was it you? Or you? Or was it you?"

I-Lin suddenly shuddered and leapt to his feet. "Run...run, all of you!"

A baseball suddenly appeared in midair, and with a swing of the bat it hurtled toward them.

They were prepared this time and dove for cover, and the baseball hit the wall of the passageway, embedding itself in the wall.

Hui-Ling crawled back down the passageway, while Chia-Hsiang gritted his teeth and stood up, backing away from the door.

The passageway was separated from the main school building by a door, which they could shut behind them.

"Tzu-Hung!" Chia-Hsiang shouted. She didn't move.

God...Tzu-Hung's hands were tightened into fists, and tears rolled down her cheeks. She gritted her teeth and faced the angry boy. Then she turned and suddenly dashed out onto the playing field.

Shocked, Chia-Hsiang turned back around. What was she doing?

Tzu-Hung ran to Han-Chen's battered head, and grabbed the ball that had been washed by the rain. She dashed back into the outdoor passageway and dug the ball out of the wall. The sounds of baseballs rang out behind her, and she ducked toward the left, dodging a ball meant for her head, and ran back toward Chia-Hsiang.

"Are you crazy?" He grabbed her and pulled her into the passageway, not believing what she had just done.

Hui-Ling and I-Lin hurried to pull the door shut, but the rusty sliding door wouldn't move. They were afraid that the baseballs would fly in and shatter the old glass, but all they heard was a roar from the playing field, along with the unceasing crack of the bat hitting the baseballs.

"Why did you frame me? I just wanted to play ball!"

Crack! Crack! Crack! Crack! The sound of the bat didn't stop, but the boy didn't come inside. Although it never ceased, the sound seemed to be moving away from them.

"Is everyone here?" Chia-Ni's voice came from the second floor. Right, the second floor!

"Let's go!" Tzu-Hung brushed the rain off herself. "We can get to the second floor from the back."

As she spoke, she pushed them toward the back of the building, and then headed in the direction of the principal's office.

Chia-Hsiang rushed to stop her. "Where are you going now?"

"I'm getting some candles. It's dark, and we can't just keep using the flashlight on the cellphone. If it runs out of power, we can't call for help." Tzu-Hung's voice was calm. "You guys go up first, and I'll follow you with the candles."

No one offered to go with her. Hui-Ling only wanted to be with the other students again, and I-Lin was already staggering in the direction of the back of the building. Chia-Hsiang watched Tzu-Hung as she smiled her usual sweet smile and headed to the principal's office.

There was something terrifying, Chia-Hsiang thought as he took Hui-Ling's hand to leave, in the fact that Tzu-Hung could still smile in a moment like this....

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In her hurry, Tzu-Hung slipped on her wet shoes as she burst into the principal's office and landed on her back between the desk and tea table. It hurt so much that for a moment she could only lie there and try to collect herself.

Frightened, she started to cry. She clapped her hand over her mouth, but she was unable to blot out the thought of what had just happened to Han-Chen. His whole body and head had been beaten with baseballs. What kind of force could send a baseball into a cement wall? Was the boy not human? As she thought about it, she sat up, hugging her knees and trying to stop crying. The strange boy's body had been covered in blood, and the left side of his face had been battered to a pulp. The wounds on his body looked like bullet holes, but he was just a student at Greenwood Middle School! What could have happened to injure him so horribly?

Stay calm...she wiped away her tears. She had come to get candles. Wincing in pain, she got up, and saw that the candles on the altar hadn't yet burned out. There was a faint red warmth in the office as she pulled open a drawer and grabbed some candles, then turned around—Oh! Someone was standing outside the window.

Tzu-Hung covered her mouth and bit her palm so she wouldn't cry out. She broke into a cold sweat as she leaned against the toppled desk, watching the person outside.

The person just stood there, head lowered.... It couldn't be Chia-Ni or Shu-Chi – they wouldn't dare go outside. It couldn't be Hui-Ling either, since she'd just fled up to the second floor and didn't even have time to cry, just like Tzu-Hung now.

If it was one of her classmates who had come looking for her, they would have called to her and wouldn't just stand there outside.

She heard the sound of crying and she clutched unconsciously at the table. "I didn't...I really didn't..."

She didn't know him! Her legs started to shake. If it wasn't one of her classmates, it had to be a Greenwood Middle School student! One of the lingering spirits who were unable to depart!

"I can't get to it. Why did they put it in here!" There was a sound of wretched crying. "I'm begging you..." The figure outside straightened up, as though looking right at Tzu-Hung!

What was going on? She looked at the figure...wait, something wasn't right! With the darkness outside, how could she see the figure at all?

When did the lights go on in the passageway?

"Help get it for me, ok?" The voice was aimed at the room...but she was the only one there!

Tzu-Hung stared at the figure. Was it talking to her? No, no, no, she wasn't there! She didn't know who the figure was!

Poof! In an instant, the figure disappeared. Or, it wasn't that it disappeared, but that the light outside went out, so she couldn't see a thing.

How could she leave the office now? Her heart beat fast and furious. Everything outside was dark and chaotic, and who knew what would be waiting for her if she left now. What if a baseball came out of nowhere and brained her!

She didn't dare leave. She bit her lip so she wouldn't cry. She just wanted to go upstairs to be with her classmates. She just wanted...