

The Second Death Before Midnight



When midnight struck, auditor Shen Yan’s body fell from the clock-tower platform. The coroner proved he had been dead for at least twenty minutes—yet a guard swore he saw Shen Yan walk into the tower one minute before the bells.

Introductory / 10–20 min / 18 Resolve

The briefing

The charity banquet occupies the clock tower annex. Shen Yan planned to reveal three years of maintenance accounts at midnight.

Both exterior doors were guarded. A staff-keyed service lift connects the annex to the tower interior.

Heavy rain left the courtyard dim. The guard saw only the entrant’s clothing and silhouette.

ANSWERS BELOW / COVER THIS STRIP UNTIL YOU ASK

Q8 YES	Q7 NO	Q6 NO	Q5 YES
Q4 YES	Q3 YES	Q2 NO	Q1 NO

Choose your questions

Mark each question once. Unlock groups: + = all / or = either.

- ☐ **01 Was the person the guard saw before midnight really Shen Yan?**
Unlock: Available from the start
- ☐ **02 Was the guard deliberately lying for the killer?**
Unlock: Available from the start
- ☐ **03 Did a living person intentionally impersonate Shen Yan?**
Unlock: (Q1 or Q101)
- ☐ **04 Did the impersonator rely mainly on similar clothing and poor visibility?**
Unlock: (Q3 or Q102)
- ☐ **05 Was the body’s fall from the platform deliberately staged?**
Unlock: Available from the start
- ☐ **06 Was the fall the true cause of Shen Yan’s death?**
Unlock: Available from the start
- ☐ **07 Did the clockwork directly cause his death?**
Unlock: Available from the start
- ☐ **08 Did Shen Yan actually die from poison?**
Unlock: (Q6 or Q107)

Resolve: _____ Conclusion: _____

People

Lin Duo / Clock-tower manager

Keeps the staff key and manages the maintenance accounts and service lift; remained on site.

Qiao Yin / Banquet florist

Had banquet access but no staff key; left at 11:20 p.m.

Gu Wei / Victim’s driver

Waited outside the east gate and had neither banquet nor tower access.

Luo Lan / Gate guard

Guarded the main gate and could enter the foyer, but had no access to accounts or logistics.

Places

Charity Hall / First scene

The last place Shen Yan was confirmed alive. Both exterior doors were watched.

Outer Platform / Body-drop site

The body fell here after midnight, although death occurred at least twenty minutes earlier.

Service Lift / Internal route

Connects the annex logistics area to the tower and requires a staff key.

ANSWERS BELOW / COVER THIS STRIP UNTIL YOU ASK

Q16 NO	Q15 NO	Q14 YES	Q13 NO
Q12 YES	Q11 YES	Q10 YES	Q9 YES

Choose your questions

Mark each question once. Unlock groups: + = all / or = either.

- ☐ 09 Was the poison delivered in a drink at the banquet?
Unlock: (Q8 or Q108)
- ☐ 10 Was Shen Yan’s body moved into the clock tower after death?
Unlock: (Q5 or Q103)
- ☐ 11 Did the killer avoid both guarded exterior doors while moving the body?
Unlock: (Q10 or Q104)
- ☐ 12 Was the service lift used to move the body?
Unlock: (Q11 or Q105)
- ☐ 13 Was a vehicle used to transport the body into the tower?
Unlock: Available from the start
- ☐ 14 Were the impersonation and staged fall parts of one continuous plan?
Unlock: (Q3 or Q102) + (Q10 or Q104)
- ☐ 15 Was the murder improvised?
Unlock: Available from the start
- ☐ 16 Was the primary motive a romantic or family dispute?
Unlock: Available from the start

Resolve: _____ Conclusion: _____

Objects

Shen Yan’s Coat / Personal item

A dark long coat—the clearest identifying feature in rain and darkness.

Shen Yan’s Glass / Banquet evidence

The drink left at Shen Yan’s seat and sealed with the other evidence.

Maintenance Ledger / Disclosure file

Three years of maintenance spending that Shen Yan intended to reveal.

Staff Key / Access item

Starts the service lift and is publicly known to be held by the manager.

How to play

Play solo or together. Choose a printed question, mark it as asked, then turn the sheet to read only that numbered answer. Start with 18 Resolve. Each new inquiry costs 1; No costs 1 more. At zero, the investigation ends. Reading, notes and rereading answers are free.

Question prerequisites refer to questions already asked, regardless of their Yes/No answer. “or” means either question; “+” means all groups are needed. Questions may unlock across sheets. Cover the answer strips with another piece of paper to avoid seeing neighbouring answers.

ANSWERS BELOW / COVER THIS STRIP UNTIL YOU ASK

Q104 YES	Q103 YES	Q102 YES	Q101 YES
Q20 NO	Q19 YES	Q18 YES	Q17 YES

Choose your questions

Mark each question once. Unlock groups: + = all / or = either.

- ☐ 17 Was the motive connected to the maintenance accounts Shen Yan planned to reveal?
Unlock: (Q15 or Q110)
- ☐ 18 Was Shen Yan about to expose the killer’s embezzlement?
Unlock: (Q17 or Q111)
- ☐ 19 Did the killer have access to the accounts, staff key, and service lift?
Unlock: (Q12 or Q106) + (Q18 or Q112)
- ☐ 20 Did the killer need an accomplice?
Unlock: Available from the start
- ☐ 101 Does the arrival silhouette differ from Shen Yan’s last confirmed appearance?
Unlock: Available from the start
- ☐ 102 Do the guard’s description and the banquet sightings place two different people in Shen Yan’s clothing?
Unlock: (Q1 or Q101)
- ☐ 103 Do the platform traces indicate that the body was pushed over after death?
Unlock: Available from the start
- ☐ 104 Does the body’s route begin in the banquet annex rather than on the platform?
Unlock: (Q5 or Q103)

Resolve: _____ Conclusion: _____

Write one complete conclusion while Resolve remains: who, how and why. Compare it with the final sealed solution sheet only when you are ready to end the case. This self-check edition ends on that one conclusion; it does not reproduce the browser rating or repeated verdict checking.

Choose your conclusion

Who?

- Lin Duo
- Qiao Yin
- Gu Wei
- Luo Lan

How?

- Fatal fall
- Poisoned drink and service lift
- Clockwork mechanism
- Vehicle transfer and staged accident

Why?

- Romantic dispute
- Inheritance

ANSWERS BELOW / COVER THIS STRIP UNTIL YOU ASK

Q112 YES	Q111 YES	Q110 YES	Q109 YES
Q108 YES	Q107 YES	Q106 YES	Q105 YES

Choose your questions

Mark each question once. Unlock groups: + = all / or = either.

- ☐ 105 Can the annex-to-tower route be completed without crossing either guarded exterior door?
Unlock: (Q10 or Q104)
- ☐ 106 Do the transfer traces connect the body to the service lift?
Unlock: (Q11 or Q105)
- ☐ 107 Does the coroner’s timing put death before the platform fall?
Unlock: Available from the start
- ☐ 108 Does the toxicology finding account for death before the fall?
Unlock: (Q6 or Q107)
- ☐ 109 Does the residue in Shen Yan’s banquet glass match the poison in his body?
Unlock: (Q8 or Q108)
- ☐ 110 Did the preparation for moving the body begin before Shen Yan died?
Unlock: Available from the start
- ☐ 111 Was the threatened disclosure about the clock tower’s maintenance accounts?
Unlock: (Q15 or Q110)
- ☐ 112 Would the missing maintenance money be exposed by Shen Yan’s planned audit announcement?
Unlock: (Q17 or Q111)

Resolve: _____ Conclusion: _____

ASK THE TRUTH / PRINT & PLAY

- Conceal maintenance-fund embezzlement
- Create public panic

ANSWERS BELOW / COVER THIS STRIP UNTIL YOU ASK

Q113 YES

Choose your questions

Mark each question once. Unlock groups: + = all / or = either.

- ☐ **113 Do the account duties and lift-key permissions overlap in the same person?**

Unlock: (Q12 or Q106) + (Q18 or Q112)

Resolve: _____ Conclusion: _____

SEALED SOLUTION / STOP HERE UNTIL YOUR CONCLUSION IS WRITTEN

Fold this sheet with the text inside before playing. Turn it only after the investigation ends.

The Second Death Before Midnight

Culprit: Lin Duo

Method: Poisoned drink and service lift

Motive: Conceal maintenance-fund embezzlement

Manager Lin Duo had been stealing maintenance funds. Before Shen Yan could expose the accounts, Lin poisoned his drink, moved the body through the staff-only lift, wore Shen Yan's coat past the guard, and dropped the already-dead body from the platform to create a second false time of death.