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Ruyu nodded cautiously and replied with a hint of embarrassment, “My father always said that alcohol clouds the mind, weakens judgment, and hinders one’s cultivation...”

She originally wanted to say it interfered with her training, but with Tawana present, she held back from speaking too directly.

charlie Wade understood her meaning and smiled. “Sometimes, as you said, alcohol can have a negative effect—it can cloud judgment and slow the mind. But at times, it also helps people relax, feel joy, and even spark inspiration. Mental fatigue often can’t be relieved by physical rest alone. A few drinks can sometimes do the trick.”

As he spoke, he poured one glass of red wine and two glasses of white liquor. He handed the red wine to Tawana and one of the white wine glasses to Ruyu, saying with a smile, “Alcohol is a kind of energy, but compared to you, its power is minimal. Don’t resist it—just let it flow through your body naturally.”

From the moment charlie Wade met Ruyu, he could tell she had never lived a normal life.

She was cold, ruthless, and could kill without hesitation, treating human life as disposable—practically a professional assassin raised from childhood.

The Song family had also burdened her heavily, expecting her to bring honor and prosperity to the clan.

Raised under such pressure, Ruyu lacked ordinary emotions and desires. Though she now appeared obedient, if she remained in this emotionless state, she would be nothing more than a weapon molded by others.

But charlie Wade didn’t need someone to kill for him.

What he needed were companions who shared his vision.

He wanted to free Ruyu from the psychological chains that had bound her since childhood.

So, charlie Wade raised the wine glass in his hand, gave it a small shake toward the two of them, and said with a smile, “Let’s start with a toast—just a gesture of respect.”

With that, he downed the entire glass in one go.

Tawana took a sip of the red wine. Though it wasn’t as refined as the top-tier wines she was accustomed to, she still followed charlie Wade’s example and finished it in one gulp.

Ruyu hesitated slightly as she smelled the strong aroma of the white liquor. After a moment, she too drank the entire glass.

Having trained since childhood, she possessed an acute awareness and control over different forms of energy. As soon as the liquor entered her stomach, she endured its harsh, burning sensation—but her body immediately became alert.

This was because the white liquor carried an energy that clashed with her own.

To a certain extent, alcohol is no different from poison. While alcohol numbs or damages nerves and consciousness, poison takes life more directly.

So the moment she drank it, Ruyu instinctively sensed danger. Her first impulse was to use her spiritual energy to block and expel the alcohol from her body.

But she quickly recalled charlie Wade’s advice not to resist it deliberately. So she suppressed the urge and allowed the alcohol to circulate freely within her.

Soon, the alcohol reached her nervous system through her bloodstream, and with no resistance in place, a mild dizziness set in.

At that moment, she realized alcohol wasn’t as dangerous or evil as she had once believed. The light buzz actually brought a new sensation—something unexpectedly pleasant and a little magical.

Seeing that she seemed to have discovered something new, charlie Wade poured another glass for both of them and said, “Sometimes, insights arise from chance experiences. Pay attention to how alcohol flows through the body—maybe it will lead you to a deeper understanding.”

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Following charlie Wade’s guidance, Ruyu focused on sensing how the energy from the alcohol moved through her body.

Immersed in the experience, she suddenly felt a deep introspection, as if her consciousness had turned inward. Like a detached observer, she watched the energy drift and penetrate freely within her.

Previously, her attempts at internal observation had barely scratched the surface. But now, with the alcohol paving the way and her spiritual energy following behind, she unexpectedly reached a profound state of endoscopy. It felt nothing short of magical.

Sensing the effects of the alcohol fading, she glanced at charlie Wade. Before she could speak, he refilled her glass.

Ruyu felt like her body had become an engine, with the strong liquor acting as fuel to keep it running. Realizing the fuel was nearly spent, she grabbed the bottle and downed the drink in one gulp.

This left Tawana, who had been watching from the side, stunned. She instinctively picked up the bottle and exclaimed, “53% alcohol? She’s drinking it like water—Miss Song can really hold her liquor?”

charlie Wade chuckled. “Miss Song is chasing the feeling of being drunk.”

Hearing this, Tawana felt a twinge of jealousy. They’re sharing a suite, and here she is drinking herself into a daze. Once I leave, won’t these two—both single—be left in a compromising situation?

With that thought, she grabbed an empty wine glass and said, “Mr. Wade, pour me one too. I want to feel drunk as well.”

charlie Wade replied, “You’ve got a performance tomorrow. You shouldn’t drink too much.”

Tawana waved it off. “The show’s not until 7 p.m.—a few drinks won’t hurt. If anything, it’ll help me sleep. I haven’t been resting well these past few days.”

In truth, her thoughts were: Worst case, I’ll get drunk and crash here. And if anything really happens between you two—include me.

charlie Wade didn’t read too much into it. Since Tawana offered, he simply poured her a drink and handed it over.

Tawana hesitated at first, overwhelmed by the strong smell of alcohol. But after a moment’s pause, she steeled herself, gritted her teeth, and downed the wine.

Having never tried white liquor before, she had clearly underestimated its potency. After just one glass, her stomach and esophagus felt like they were on fire, burning painfully.

She forced herself to endure the searing sensation, but before it subsided, a heavy fog settled over her mind. Her head felt like it was filled with lead, her vision blurred, and dizziness set in.

Clutching her forehead, she swallowed hard and murmured, “This wine is terrifying—like gasoline. God, I feel like I’m losing control... I’m about to pass out...”

As she spoke, she looked up at charlie Wade with dazed eyes and pleaded softly, “Mr. Wade, if you and Miss Song want to do anything, take me with you. I don’t mind the three of us... It’s completely my choice!”

With that, she tilted her head and fell asleep on the sofa.

Seeing that she wasn't faking, Charlie Wade let her lie there and ignored her. Ruyu opened her eyes and asked curiously, "Mr. Wade, Miss Tawana just said we should take her with us. Does she want to cultivate too?"

Charlie Wade waved dismissively. "Cultivate, my ass."

Still puzzled, Ruyu asked, "What did she mean just now? I didn't understand..."

"You don't need to understand," Charlie Wade said, shaking his head with an awkward expression. Then he asked, "Anyway, how do you feel now?"

Ruyu, oblivious to the suggestive undertones in Tawana's words, simply nodded. Since Charlie Wade seemed unwilling to explain further, she didn't press the matter. Instead, she focused on her progress and replied seriously, "Mr. Wade, I followed your instructions without trying to control the alcohol's effect. It really felt like I reached a deeper level of internal observation. Now, my perception feels sharper than ever."

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Charlie Wade asked, "Have you found your own sea of consciousness?"

"Not yet," Ruyu shook her head and said. "The Lord of England once told the Grand Commander to instruct me to find a way to unlock my sea of consciousness, but I still haven't figured out how to enter it."

Everyone possesses a sea of consciousness—a vast, spiritual ocean within the mind. Only by unlocking it can one tap into their boundless potential.

Some people attain enlightenment first and then unlock their sea of consciousness. Others—true prodigies—open their sea of consciousness first and then gain enlightenment through it, like Nanako.

However, enlightenment doesn't guarantee access to the sea of consciousness.

Every step after enlightenment becomes a threshold, filtering out most cultivators and allowing only a few to progress.

Most enlightened individuals remain stuck at the gateway for their entire lives, unable to access their sea of consciousness.

On the other hand, those who manage to open their sea of consciousness often don't know how to unlock the Niwan Palace.

charlie Wade himself had yet to open the Niwan Palace, but he was certain that doing so would be like stepping into an entirely new world—and his cultivation would advance by leaps and bounds.

With a sigh, he said to Ruyu, “The sea of consciousness lies within the brain. To find it, you need to make a breakthrough through endoscopic practice. The deeper your endoscopy, the more it will benefit your cultivation. You should keep trying.”

He then poured her another glass of wine and added, “If something works, repeat it. Let the power of the alcohol carry your consciousness deeper. Cultivation isn’t without shortcuts—sometimes they’re just hidden, like in a game of hide-and-seek. You have to discover them yourself, and sometimes it comes down to luck. I believe the strange poison in your body may also require a stroke of fate to overcome in the future.”

charlie Wade then reassured her, “But don’t worry. Whether it’s you or Yun Ruge, I’ll do everything I can to help.”

Ruyu sighed. “In the past, I relied on my own efforts to cultivate. Although the Lord occasionally rewarded me with some elixirs and fragments of cultivation techniques, he never taught me personally, let alone guided me patiently like you, Mr. Wade. I’ve stopped hoping the strange poison in my body can be removed. Now, I only wish for you to one day destroy the Poqing Society and save innocent lives from their suffering.”

charlie Wade asked her, “If the Poqing Society is eliminated in the future, what will become of the Song family?”

“Well...” Ruyu hesitated for a while, then shook her head. “I’m not sure. Although the Song family has long been enslaved and controlled by the Poqing Society, to be honest, we’ve committed many wrongs ourselves. If the Poqing Society is gone, I hope the Song family can find a better path—just to live a peaceful, honest life.”

charlie Wade nodded, then said solemnly, “That’s why you must survive. Live to see the day the Poqing Society is uprooted, and return to guide the Song family toward the right path. You must also hold the moral line—never let the Song family fall like Sara did with the Wu clan.”

Deeply moved, Ruyu nodded and said, “If I truly live to see that day, I’ll honor your guidance, Mr. Wade, and make the Song family a force for good. If I betray that promise, I’ll willingly fall by your sword!”

charlie Wade nodded with satisfaction and said, “Good. Now, let me lend you a hand—I’ll guide you to your sea of consciousness!”

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The sea of consciousness is like a place you've heard about for years but never had the chance to visit.

It resembles a paradise where flowers and willows bloom suddenly after a long, dark winter—utterly captivating.

Ruyu had been practicing Taoism for two years. Though she possessed great talent, her understanding of spiritual energy and cultivation remained limited, with no true mentor to guide her. She had always longed to explore the sea of consciousness but had never found the right method.

Now, hearing that charlie Wade would lead her there, she felt a surge of excitement and said respectfully, "Thank you, Mr. Wade, for giving me this opportunity!"

charlie Wade nodded and explained, "I will use liquor to guide you inward. I want its energy to lead your consciousness deeper and deeper, showing you where true inner observation should begin. But your spiritual strength isn't yet sufficient. You won't be able to reach the depths on your own quickly. So, let your awareness follow the flow of the alcohol's energy. If you can't move forward, I'll assist you."

A person's spiritual awareness alone might not reach the sea of consciousness—but alcohol can do so naturally.

Alcohol dulls the nerves and throws the sea of consciousness into disarray. Whether or not the drinker can sense it, alcohol can directly penetrate the sea of consciousness.

Understanding charlie Wade's words, Ruyu nodded without hesitation and said, "Then I'll begin exploring! I'll rely entirely on you, Mr. Wade!"

charlie Wade gave a slight nod and instructed Ruyu to sit cross-legged on the floor in the living room. As she began her internal observation, he gently placed a hand on the pulse point of her right wrist.

In that moment, Ruyu felt as if she were floating in an ocean with immense buoyancy. Though the energy from the alcohol wasn't powerful, it was denser than seawater. These energies were like pebbles—naturally and effortlessly sinking to the bottom.

But her consciousness was like an inflated rubber raft. The more she tried to sink alongside the alcohol's energy, the stronger the ocean's buoyancy became. At times, even when she finally managed to descend, she still remained far from the ocean floor.

However, this kind of descent couldn't be achieved gradually. The moment she relaxed even slightly or felt the faintest weakness, the immense buoyancy would immediately force her consciousness back to the ocean's surface.

This attempt was no different.

She had already exhausted all her strength, yet in this ocean of overwhelming buoyancy, each meter of descent demanded a tremendous effort.

Just as she felt she could no longer endure and was about to be pulled back to the surface by that powerful force, a surge of immense energy suddenly pushed her downward, pressing her firmly into the depths!

She immediately realized—charlie Wade had intervened!

Surprisingly, this sensation of being forcefully held underwater didn't frighten Ruyu at all. Instead, it astonished and thrilled her.

charlie Wade's spiritual energy was vastly superior to hers.

When his energy flowed into her, it pressed her downward swiftly and powerfully, like an immense hand—akin to the legendary Tathagata Palm.

In an instant, her consciousness reached a depth she had never approached before.

Taoist cultivation is filled with countless trials, and this deep sea represents a major barrier to taking the first step.

Over the ages, countless cultivators have been stopped by this very sea.

Without diving deep into it, no one can progress further or enter the next realm.

But this time, charlie Wade's spiritual energy carried Ruyu's consciousness all the way to the ocean floor.

Though "deep sea" is just a metaphor, it is an apt one.

As Ruyu's consciousness sank deeper and deeper, the pressure—like that of the ocean's crushing depths—grew increasingly intense, nearly overwhelming her.

At one point, the pressure became so intense that it felt as if her entire consciousness might tear apart at any moment.

Fortunately, charlie Wade was there to protect her. Just as she reached her limit, his voice echoed in her mind: "Don't worry, I'll handle everything."

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Moments later, Ruyu felt a surge of powerful spiritual energy enveloping her consciousness, wrapping around it like a swaddle around a baby—completely enclosing and protecting it. A deep sense of security instantly filled her entire being.

Then, she felt charlie Wade guiding her spiritual awareness all the way to the bottom of the deep sea.

She had originally believed that understanding the sea of consciousness required slowly searching through its depths. But to her surprise, the moment her consciousness touched the bottom, the entire world transformed.

What had seemed like the seabed suddenly became the sky of another world.

It was as if a hidden portal at the ocean floor had opened, transporting her from the deep sea to a completely different realm, where she now hovered above a new blue ocean.

The space around her seemed like a world made of only sky and sea.

The sky was utterly still, not a single cloud in sight. The tranquil blue sea below remained calm, disturbed only by faint ripples—as if something had just touched its surface.

Then charlie Wade’s voice came again: “Miss Ruyu, this is your sea of consciousness!”

Startled, Ruyu couldn’t help but ask, “Mr. Wade, how is this sea of consciousness different from the deep sea just now?”

charlie Wade smiled and replied, “They are both seas—but the first was a barrier. This one is the destination.”

He continued, “Look closely at the slight ripples on the surface of the sea of consciousness. These are the effects of the alcohol. Your physical constitution is far stronger than most, so the alcohol has only a mild influence here. For an ordinary person, getting drunk would cause the entire sea of consciousness to erupt like a tsunami.”

“So that’s how it works!” Ruyu exclaimed, then added with heartfelt emotion, “Does one have to enter the sea of consciousness for cultivation to become twice as effective with half the effort?”

“Exactly!” charlie Wade replied with a smile. “Cultivating your spiritual consciousness here not only strengthens your spiritual energy but also greatly enhances your perceptive abilities.”

Suppressing her excitement, Ruyu asked, “Mr. Wade, will I still need your help the next time I try to enter the sea of consciousness?”

charlie Wade smiled and said, “The deep sea that blocks you doesn’t remain forever. Once you’ve crossed this barrier, it’s essentially broken by you—and it won’t stand in your way again.”

“Really?” Ruyu was overjoyed. “That means from now on, I can reach this place just by turning my spiritual sense inward?”

“Yes,” Charlie Wade nodded. “It’s like knowing the path—once you know the way, it becomes much easier to return.”

He then instructed her, “Explore the sea of consciousness and experience it fully. Jump in from here—immerse yourself in it. You’re bound to gain something unexpected.”

Ruyu was filled with excitement. Her spiritual consciousness stirred, and she felt herself diving from the sky straight into the sea of consciousness.

It was like leaping freely from a height of ten thousand meters—yet she felt no fear. Instead, she completely enjoyed the exhilarating sense of freedom in the fall.

When her spiritual consciousness finally touched the sea, there was none of the massive impact or splashes she had imagined. The instant she made contact, her awareness seemed to transform into part of the sea itself—merging with it in a blink.

At that moment, she felt her entire being, her whole consciousness, embraced as if by a spring breeze. Her state of mind had never felt so clear and vibrant.

She couldn’t help but sigh inwardly: “So this is the marvel of gazing into the sea of consciousness. Without Mr. Wade, I might never have had the chance to experience such wonder in my lifetime!”