

Chapter 7032

After a long deliberation, she called Ethan again.

On the phone, she told him, "I'm leaving for Japan before dawn, using a new identity."

"Please help me arrange it."

"Also, please check the current whereabouts of Master Jingqing, a renowned Buddhist scholar."

Ten minutes later, Ethan called back and said respectfully,

"Miss, the identity has been prepared."

"The plane is leaving for Aurous Hill now."

"Please be at the airport in three hours."

"I'll arrange for someone to pick you up."

"Also, Master Jingqing, the one you asked me to check on, went to Osaka, Japan, a week ago with some Buddhist scholars from China."

"The information I've found indicates that he was invited to participate in a private Buddhist exchange event."

Maria's smile deepened.

She had lived in Japan for many years and knew the country well.

Kyoto, where the Kinkakuji Temple is located, is not easily accessible.

From China, flying to Osaka is the first choice, followed by Nagoya.

Since Jingqing had also gone to Osaka, he was likely at the Kinkakuji Temple.

Could it be that Master Jingqing was the real mastermind behind this?

Maria felt that the last time she met the fake nun, she was obviously just a messenger and was unwilling to reveal more.

Now, only if she went there in person would she have the opportunity to figure out what was behind this matter!

Ethan's plane arrived very quickly.

Not only did he arrange a flight for her, but he also took the plane to Aurous Hill himself.

Accompanying him were dozens of top bodyguards with impressive capabilities.

Aurous Hill Airport received news from its superiors and gave the green light to Larry's Rolls-Royce, allowing the car to bypass security checks and customs and directly enter the airport hangar.

Maria had her long hair tied into a high ponytail, dressed in black, and wore a pair of black sunglasses and a mask.

The rise of AI and the ubiquity of surveillance systems have made her more cautious.

With appropriate disguise, she can avoid the risk of being caught by the combination of AI and surveillance.

The Rolls-Royce came to the bottom of an Airbus A350,

And the elderly Ethan was already waiting in front of the passenger boarding stairs.

After the car stopped, he stepped forward, opened the door for Maria, and said respectfully, "Miss."

Maria asked him, "Why are you here?"

Ethan bowed and said, "Miss, you are going to Japan."

"I am worried about you going alone."

"There are some battle-hardened bodyguards on the plane."

"They all have multiple identities. I will bring them to protect you."

Maria smiled and said, "Don't be so nervous."

"I will go to Japan and come back quickly this time."

"So as not to waste time."

"Besides, I will only go to one place, so there should be no danger."

Ethan said with some pleading, "Miss, you were in danger in Northern Europe last time. If Mr. Wade were to accompany you this time, I would be relieved."

"But if you go alone, I will be worried anyway."

"Don't worry. As soon as we get off the plane, the others and I will go."

"It will not affect you when we disappear before your eyes."

Old Zhang also approached and said respectfully,

"Miss, please let Old Sun accompany you."

"Otherwise, Old Qiu and I will be worried if we stay in Aurous Hill."

Maria pursed her lips and nodded, "In that case, then follow Old Sun's arrangements."

She turned to Old Zhang and instructed,

"If Young Master Wade comes to visit, tell him I'm away from home because of school matters."

"He's unlikely to come, though, so just remember this just in case."

Old Zhang immediately said, "I obey."

Maria nodded and took the lead on the ladder.

Without turning back, she waved behind her, saying,

"Old Sun, you're not very nimble, so I'll go first, so I won't have to worry behind you."

With that, she trotted onto the plane.

Ethan, Old Zhang, and Larry exchanged glances, all three smiling but saying nothing.

The Young Lady had been like this for decades.

When she was serious, she was more rigorous than anyone else in the world.

But when she relaxed, she was as childish as any other girl of seventeen or eighteen.

Half an hour later, the plane was wheeled out of the hangar and taxied to the end of the runway,

Its twin engines were roaring as it soared into the clouds.

The entire crew was in the rear cabin, leaving Maria alone in the several dozen square meters of the front cabin.

Even Ethan, timid as he was, went to the rear cabin alone.

The flight from Nanjing to Osaka didn't take long.

Two and a half hours later, the plane had already landed at Kansai International Airport.

The sinking airport had no idea it had welcomed its oldest passenger in history.

It was 6:30 a.m. Tokyo time, and the sun had just risen over the eastern horizon.

Maria, using the extremely common Chinese name Wang Jing, passed through customs without any issue.

After entering, she didn't rush to catch the train to Kyoto.

Instead, she bought herself a backpack featuring the famous cartoon character Coolome, a bunch of cute jewelry, and rubber bands at the airport store.

She then tied her high ponytail into two pigtails before departing.

Afterward, she arrived at the station and, speaking in a Kansai accent devoid of any accent, purchased a train ticket from Osaka to Kyoto, while Ethan and the others secretly protected her.

Living a long life has many advantages: not only does one travel to many places and experience diverse local customs, but one also masters numerous languages.

Furthermore, because Maria had lived in Japan for a significant period during the Meiji Restoration, her Japanese was not only extremely proficient, but far more so than most Japanese people.

In other words, she was like a foreigner, fluent in Mandarin Chinese and various regional dialects, well-versed in Chinese poetry and literature, and possessed a deep understanding of both classical and classical Chinese.

Furthermore, East Asians appear to be virtually identical, so her presence in Japan was like a drop of water merging into the ocean, leaving no trace.

It was already 8:40 a.m. when she arrived in Kyoto.

Kyoto has a relatively slow pace of life.

Although modernized early on, its traditional architecture has been remarkably well preserved, resulting in numerous ancient temples and historic residences, such as the former residence of the Ito family.

Unlike Tokyo, teeming with newly wealthy individuals, Kyoto is home to many well-connected and deeply entrenched veterans, a veritable hive of hidden talents.

Maria didn't rush to Kinkakuji Temple immediately,

But instead, I wandered the alleyways of Kyoto's old city in the direction of the temple.

After walking around and feeling hungry, she wanted to find a restaurant to have breakfast.

She accidentally saw a shop called "Miss Saito's Yudofu Shop" with a sign that said it was a century-old shop.

The corners of her mouth curled up slightly, and then she walked into the shop alone and sat down.

Yudofu is a traditional food in Kyoto.

The ingredients are relatively simple, just soft tofu, kelp, and bonito, and then cooked with Japanese soy sauce or miso and other seasonings.

However, this shop is different from the others.

The sign of this shop is not the traditional Kyoto yudofu, but Pu'er matsutake yudofu.

The shop is not big, and the owner is an elderly couple.

The introduction on the wall says that the shop was first founded in 1897.

When Maria entered the shop, the male owner greeted her warmly, "Please take a seat. The menu is on the table. Call me anytime if you need to order."

Maria nodded and found a corner to sit down.

She glanced at the menu and pointed to the prominent.

"Pu'er Matsutake Soup Tofu" at the top. "I'll have a bowl of the signature dish, thank you."

"Okay, please wait a moment!"

The male owner bowed and went to the kitchen to prepare it.

Soon, a simple bowl of tofu soup was served to her.

The broth was refreshing yet rich, a wonderful blend of the aroma of tea and matsutake.

Maria took off her mask, took a sip of the hot soup, and a satisfied smile immediately appeared on her face.

She whispered, "It tastes great."

The male owner wiped his hands with a towel and introduced attentively and proudly,

"There are countless yudofu shops in Kyoto, but only ours has Pu'er matsutake yudofu."

"It was improved based on Kyoto's traditional yudofu in 1899."

Maria looked like a cute Japanese girl and exclaimed,

"Oh, it has such a long history."

The male owner smiled and said, "No, no, a shop with a history of more than a hundred years in Kyoto is not very old."

"There are still shops here that are four hundred years old."

Maria nodded and deliberately asked him, "If I remember correctly, Pu'er tea should be a specialty of China, right?"

"Why did your great-grandfather use this raw material?"

The male owner's expression immediately became one of admiration, and he said, "In 1899, my great-grandfather's yudofu shop had just been open for two years, but because the competition was too fierce at the time, his business was not good and was on the verge of bankruptcy."

"At that time, he and his wife had three children, he was selling his wares in front of a soup tofu shop on a snowy day, and his life was very poor."

"At that time, a Miss Saito who had traveled to China lived in the center of Kyoto. At that time, Miss Saito had a big and good house in the center of the city, and adopted many orphans into the house."

"Miss Saito was kind and beautiful. Seeing that his soup tofu shop was always deserted, she asked him to deliver 50 servings of soup tofu to the house every day, so that the ancestor could have the ability to support his family."

"Later, Miss Saito also gave him the Pu'er tea and dried matsutake mushrooms she brought back from her travels in China,"

"So that the ancestor could have the ability to support his family."

"He refined the recipe, resulting in this unique Pu'er Matsutake Yudoufu."

Speaking of this, the male shop owner's eyes welled up as he sighed,

"My great-grandfather always said that Miss Saito was our Sugimu family's benefactor. If it weren't for her, he, his wife, and their three children probably wouldn't have survived that winter."

"Later, Miss Saito left Kyoto and never returned, so he changed the name of the shop from Sugimu Yudoufu Shop to Miss Saito's Yudoufu Shop."

Maria's face was filled with wonder,

Her thoughts drifted back to the streets of Kyoto over a hundred years ago.

Back then, Kyoto's snow was far heavier and colder than today's winters.

Passing through Kyoto's old city in a sedan chair, she saw a ragged family of five hawking yudoufu on the street in the snow.

Seeing the three children shivering in the cold, their hands, faces, and ears covered in chilblains,

She felt sorry for them and told the male owner of the family to deliver fifty servings of yudofu to their home early the next morning.

The man, grateful for this kindness, sent her yudofu, not only with generous portions of rich ingredients, but also generously proportioned.

While not particularly delicious, it showed he had put in a lot of thought.

So Maria asked him to deliver another fifty servings the next day.

This continued for ten days, and Maria noticed that the quality of his yudofu didn't decline at all.

In fact, thanks to the income and profit, he gradually added more expensive ingredients.

During those ten days, Maria, not accustomed to his yudofu, experimented with adding a little Pu'er tea leaves and dried matsutake mushrooms to it.

After a few attempts, she found the perfect recipe, which significantly improved the flavor.

Also impressed by the owner's good character, she passed on the recipe she had devised while on a whim.

Unexpectedly, the shop has remained open ever since, with the recipe remaining virtually unchanged.

Even more surprising, the shop's name was changed to "Miss Saito."

Saito Asako was Maria's pseudonym from her time in Kyoto.

Tasting the soup tofu in her bowl, which was almost identical to the one she had back then, Maria couldn't help but sigh inwardly,

"Time flies, years pass by."

"Looking back, it's been over a hundred years since I left Kyoto..."