

## Enchanted 169

Her friend looked at it and laughed, "Well, today is July 14. Tomorrow is the ghost festival in China. Starting tonight, there will be fireworks and lights on the river. What you see is the Buddhist woman of the ancient town. Every month and a half of the seventh and a half months of the lunar calendar, she can be found chanting on the river. The other ship is loaded with tinfoil ingots that will be burned tonight. This is the tradition of our ancestors. In July and a half, we fold the ingots and burn them. It's called 'forming ties with ghosts.'

Irish knew that it had already arrived at that point of the lunar calendar. People in modern cities had become used to living life at high speed and had long forgotten their ancestors' traditions. She sighed at the increasingly distant ships.

Chinese Taoists call it The Ghost Festival, and Buddhists call it the Obon holiday. On this day, almost half of China burns paper.

It suddenly reminded Irish of Halloween in her country. When she was a child, she carried bags from house to house and asked for candy. "Trick or treat," they had always said.

In all countries, people have beliefs or respect for traditions, only in different ways. Irish liked these traditional festivals. In other countries, she could happily blend into any festive atmosphere; however, in China, she enjoyed it.

Irish laughed when she thought about it as if she had all of a sudden figured everything out.

"Irish, come out to see the river lights tonight, this is the custom in our town, but we should go back to the house earlier, my old man said that people shouldn't return late in the evening in July," Her friend said with a smile.

Irish smiled too and said, "Okay."

Sure enough, the ancient town began burning tin foil ingots from house to house at night. When Irish had eaten something and prepared to go back to the inn, it was almost impossible for her to walk down the road on the bluestone slabs. She had been told not to step on paper money when it was burnt for the Ghost Festival because if she stepped on it, it would block the way for the ghosts to collect their money.

So along the way, she walked very carefully, but the two other foreigners she saw were not so lucky. They trampled on paper money one after another and hurriedly clasped their hands to apologize to the air. When she saw the situation, she couldn't help laughing. The two foreigners saw her and returned smiling sheepishly but full of kindness.

The air was filled with a light burning smell, and children went to bed early that night. The inn she stayed in had been booked on the Internet, and it was very popular. The innkeepers were incredibly kind, and they had a five-year-old boy named Pea, who looked like pistachio. He was always very sweet to Irish.

Seeing her back, the innkeeper poked her head out and asked with a smile, "Have you eaten yet? I cooked fish today, and it's still hot."

Irish laughed and said that she had eaten, and after thanking her, she went back to bed early and fell asleep.

After nightfall, the ancient town became very quiet. The lights went out, and the stars in the night sky became much brighter. There were no neon lights or cars, and there were very few streetlights.

But on this quiet night, Irish slept restlessly.

The moonlight crept in through the window, as cool as silver, shining faintly on her sleeping cheeks. Her eyelids fluttered quickly as she dreamed, and the sweat on her forehead became heavier.

It seemed that someone was singing something beside her ear with a background of strange music, and each note became harsher.

Far away, she seemed to see a pair of little figures running in the moonlight, a boy and a girl, and the boy kept pulling the girl. The smell of burning paper money filled in the air, and the whole alley was full of money but devoid of people.

Far away, the voice was haunting her.

"Run!"

"Ah---" Irish woke up again to this familiar and urgent voice. Her eyes opened in horror, and after a while, she got up from bed and picked up her mobile phone that she had placed by the bedside. It was 1:30 in the morning.

Her long hair was soaked in sweat, and the room seemed to still contain the smell of burning tin foil.

Irish lifted her hand, wiped the sweat from her forehead, and forcibly closed her eyes. Although she had relaxed her body and mind for nearly a month, her dreams did not relent, harassing her every night.

She remembered the sound she had just heard in her dream, like the chanting voice of a woman, but the background music was weird, and the voice had continuously appeared since arriving at the Light Town.

Taking a deep breath, she looked around, unable to tell the dream from reality. Nevertheless, she suspected that the woman's voice only existed in her dream.

She tried to analyze her dreams and began to consider that she had heard too much Kunqu Opera after coming to Kunshan, and it happened to be the Ghost Festival, which explained the paper money and woman's voice.

However...

Irish thought carefully about the woman's words, like the lyrics of a traditional ballad, and she was trying to recall what she had sung when she realized that the dream was fading away.

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When Irish woke up again, it was almost one o'clock in the afternoon the next day. After washing up, she was about to go out, and Pea ran to her, "Irish, my mother asked me to ask you if you're eating with us or not."

"Thank you. But I've decided to go out," She patted Pea on the head.

Pea followed her down the stairs like a grown-up and told her, "make sure you come home early tonight, it's Ghost Day."

"Oh, I certainly will," Irish smiled lightly.