

## Chapter 7001

From the moment he landed in Melbourne,

Charlie's pace was unwittingly accelerated by the events unfolding.

On the way in, he'd been mulling over various scenarios for meeting Leon,

Formulating several lines of dialogue,

And mentally preparing for several possible responses.

As soon as he stepped off the plane,

He rushed to the hospital.

But upon arrival, he discovered that Leon had disappeared again!

His only thought was to quickly locate him,

Never considering that this was actually a trap set by Leon himself.

The three of them rushed to the nearest police station and met with a senior sergeant.

According to Issac's previous investigation, the initial attack by the teenagers occurred within this police station's jurisdiction,

And the case was handled by this same police station.

Now that Leon had disappeared again within the same precinct,

It was natural to seek their assistance.

The senior police sergeant the three men met was named Treve Davidson.

After learning the purpose of Charlie and the others' visit, he said to them,

"I don't have any clear information on Mr. Tang."

"He was taken to the hospital for treatment after the incident."

"Due to his serious injuries, our officers didn't immediately question him, so we don't know his true identity."

"As for your claim that he's already left the hospital,"

"We can't spare officers to help you locate him at the moment."

Charlie frowned and asked,

"So, you still haven't figured out his true legal status in Australia?"

"Yes,"

Treve nodded, casually saying,

"This man's identity is still very suspicious."

"Based on my personal experience, he's most likely not a legal immigrant."

"He's likely a stowaway who entered the country illegally."

"Or an illegal alien."

Charlie felt a little strange.

In the chat logs Claire had shown him,

The informant had said that Leon was a recent immigrant,

But now it seemed that this information was inaccurate.

He couldn't help but wonder if Leon's hasty escape from the hospital with injuries was because he lacked legal status in Australia.

In Charlie's opinion, the way he got the news was very accidental,

A coincidence among coincidences.

Leon left the hospital with injuries, certainly not to avoid him,

But most likely to avoid the police.

This is precisely the brilliance of this series of schemes.

It started by chance, which would give the parties involved the illusion that they were outsiders and in the dark.

When Charlie fell into the inertia of thinking and the trap of logic,

He was getting further and further away from the essence of the matter.

After knowing that he could not find any useful information about Leon from the police,

Charlie asked the sheriff:

"What is the current situation of the teenagers who were involved?"

Trev spread his hands, shrugged casually, and smiled:

"They have all been released."

"Released?!"

Charlie frowned and questioned:

"The person was beaten so badly,"

"And it's only been a day, why did you let them go?"

Treve smiled and said, "You said those are teenagers; they are not very old."

"All we can do is criticize and educate them."

"If the victims need compensation,"

"They can sue their guardians through the court."

Charlie asked again: "If I remember correctly,"

"In Australia, the minimum age of criminal responsibility should be ten years old, right?"

Treve waved his hand and said perfunctorily:

"Ten years old is only in theory."

"The real criminal responsibility must be over fourteen years old."

"Moreover, there is a provision in our law that if the prosecutor cannot prove that a child under fourteen clearly knows that he or she is responsible,"

"If someone's actions are wrong, then they can be presumed not to have criminal responsibility."

"This is called 'default of criminal responsibility.' You can look it up in a law book."

Seeing that Treve seemed to be favoring one side, Charlie said,

"I saw the video of the incident."

"Among the suspects who assaulted people, several are at least 1.7 meters tall."

"I can't say they're all over 14, but at least one should be, right?"

## Chapter 7002

Treve shrugged. "Your guess is wrong. These people are indeed under 14."

Charlie said coldly, "I need to check the files to confirm their ages."

Treve Davidson asked him warily,

"What is your relationship with the victim?"

Charlie said calmly, "He's my family."

Trev smiled, "No, no, no, there's no such thing as family in law."

"Only specific relationships."

"Who is he to you? Father, uncle, or grandfather?"

Without waiting for Charlie to answer, he continued with a smile,

"Oh, right, I forgot that person likely doesn't have legal status."

"This means that no matter what your relationship is, it's difficult for me to verify its authenticity."

"Let alone disclose the information of a minor."

"So you must first find your so-called family member and let him find a lawyer to sue."

"If he initiates the lawsuit himself,"

"We will provide his lawyer with the contact information of the abuser's guardian, as required by law."

After saying this, he smiled at Charlie, raised an eyebrow, and asked,

"Is there anything else I can help with?"

"If not, excuse me. I need to get to work."

Charlie felt a little annoyed.

He knew Trev's story might be true,

But his attitude clearly showed that he wasn't on the victim's side.

He felt that since the police didn't have any specific information about Leon,

There was no need to waste time with them.

He should first get information on the perpetrators.

As for the legal requirements, Trev was talking about,

They had nothing to do with him.

He wasn't here to follow their laws and regulations.

So, he smiled faintly, channeled some of his spiritual energy into Trever's, and ordered,

"Print out the perpetrator's information for me."

Trever's mind was now obedient to Charlie's orders.

Without hesitation, he immediately operated on the computer,

And then the printer beside him began to hum.

Soon, a form was printed out.

Trev handed the form to Charlie and said respectfully,

"Here is the information on the six people."

Charlie took a look, frowned, and asked, "All six of them are over twelve years old, three of them are over fourteen years old."

"And one of them is already eighteen years old."

"Why haven't they been arrested?"

Trev Davidson said, "The people who were beaten are most likely illegal immigrants."

"We usually don't delve into such matters, because the people who were beaten won't delve into them either."

"Most likely, it will be left unresolved."

"If we release these children, we can even get a favor from their parents."

Charlie asked coldly, "What if the people who were beaten are not illegal immigrants?"

"How will you deal with it?"

Trev said, "If the person being assaulted is a minority, even if they're not an illegal immigrant, we still need to consider their citizenship."

"If they do, we'll try to persuade them to settle privately."

"If they don't have citizenship and only have a student or work visa, we usually use subtle threats, telling them that this could be classified as a mutual assault."

"If that's the case, they risk having their visa revoked."

"And most people just consider themselves out of luck."

Charlie was furious.

As the law enforcement agency here, they were deliberately biased when faced with violent crimes.

No wonder these young people were so arrogant, and related violent crimes were endless.

And those teenagers, barely even grown hair, dared to intentionally injure others in broad daylight.

If they didn't teach them a lesson, he wouldn't be able to swallow his anger.

So, he gave Treve a psychological hint and said,

"Remember, starting from the day after tomorrow, you will be the Crime Nemesis that all evildoers fear."

"Facing any illegal crimes, you must be fearless, go all out, and enforce the law impartially."

"Otherwise, you will fight to the death. Do you understand?"

Treve immediately nodded heavily: "I understand!"

Charlie took the list of information and turned to Issac and Orvel and said,

"Okay, there is no valuable information here, let's go."

On the way out, Orvel asked puzzledly:

"Master Wade, why did you let Treve become the Crime Nemesis from the day after tomorrow?"

Charlie said lightly:

"Because I will be the Crime Nemesis for these two days!"

After that, he took out the list and said coldly:

"The next two days will be a nightmare that these little bastards will never forget in their lives."

## Chapter 7003

After leaving the police station, Issac asked with concern,

"Master, what are you going to do with these minors?"

Orvel interrupted, "If you ask me, first find them, beat them half to death."

"Then cripple their arms and legs,"

"And let them lie in bed until they turn 18!"

Charlie waved his hand,

"We're all so old now."

"It would be too embarrassing if word got out that we are fighting minors."

"What should we do then?"\

Orvel gritted his teeth and said,

"We absolutely have to teach them a lesson!"

"Otherwise, I'll be humiliated!"

Charlie sneered and said,

"There's no need to teach them a lesson myself."

"The best way is to let them teach themselves a lesson."

Charlie handed the paper to Issac and said,

"It's Sunday, so I guess these kids aren't in school."

"But I see their homes are all on the same street,"

"So maybe they're all hanging out together."

"Let's go find them."

The minors' residences were not far from the police station,

Within its jurisdiction.

It took Issac just over ten minutes to drive to a residential area called Reynolds Street.

Although it was within the city limits,

The area felt typically filthy and dirty,

Littered with garbage and filth, and even a number of homeless people.

Charlie had Issac drive past several of the minors' homes,

But he didn't see any signs of them.

Figuring it wasn't time for them to go out,

Charlie had Issac park the car at an intersection in the neighborhood and wait.

Issac parked the car and looked at the scene outside the window in surprise.

He said, "We are still in the city."

"But does it feel like we are in the slums?"

Charlie pointed to a small house on the corner of the street, not far away, and said,

"See, it says Safe Injection House."

"Places with this must not be good."

Issac suddenly realized and sighed,

"Sometimes I have to sigh at the brain circuits of certain people."

"They come up with such things to harm the country and the people."

Orvel didn't understand English very well and asked in confusion,

"What safe injection house?"

"What do you two mean?"

Issac said, "It's a place set up for drug addicts to inject contraband."

"Fcuk! There is such a thing?!"

Orvel was stunned.

As he was exclaiming in amazement, he saw several young people like zombies stumbling out of the safe injection house.

He could tell at a glance that these people were drug addicts,

And some even had a syringe stuck in their arms.

Not only did these people lose their demeanor,

They also appeared unkempt and disheveled,

As if they hadn't changed clothes, showered, or had their hair cut in years.

Two of them didn't even have shoes, walking barefoot,

Their feet were covered in boils and sores.

Looking down at the roadside, near the green belt and trash cans, several people lay sprawled,

Flies swarmed over them, yet they barely moved, seemingly unconcerned.

Fortunately, Melbourne, located in the southern hemisphere, was in early autumn,

And the weather wasn't cold.

Otherwise, these venomous insects might have frozen to death if not poisoned.

Orvel was horrified and blurted out,

"Damn it!"

"Shouldn't all those drug addicts be arrested?"

"Why are they given a place to do this in broad daylight?"

Charlie smiled and said, "That's their way of working."

"We really don't understand it, so we can only show respect."

At this time, a skinny young girl in a short skirt approached their car and knocked on the driver's window with an anxious and painful expression.

Even through the car window, the three people in the car could see the dense needle marks on the woman's arms.

Much of the skin was ulcerated from the excessive needle punctures.

Issac lowered the car window a crack and asked her,

"What's the matter?"

The young woman said in a pleading tone,

"Sir, please give me a hundred."

"I can meet any of your requirements."

After that, she glanced into the car and said,

"If it's two hundred,"

"I can meet all three of you."

Orvel was frightened, and his face turned pale.

He quickly said to Issac,

"Mr. Chen, please close the window quickly."

"I'm fcuking afraid that she will infect us with AIDS!"

Issac teased her,

"Orvel, AIDS is not transmitted through the air."

Orvel said, panicked, "Forget it, close it quickly."

"I'm scared."

"I'm afraid she has other diseases."

"Look at her mouth full of rotten teeth."

"She looks like a zombie."

"It's so fcuking scary!"

## Chapter 7004

Issac smiled, turned to the girl, and said,

"Sorry, we don't have any needs."

"Ask someone else."

After saying that, he quickly rolled the car window shut.

Seeing the car window securely shut,

Orvel finally breathed a sigh of relief,

But still with a lingering fear, he said,

"If I see people like them every day, how can I live comfortably?"

Issac laughed, "Orvel, Rich areas have everything good: good public security,"

"A good environment, good schools."

"Some are even nestled in the mountains and by the water,"

"With every home having a dock or a yacht."

"The police are eager to set up community police stations in the rich areas."

"Patrolling hundreds of times a day to ensure the safety of the rich."

"But poor areas are terrible in every way,"

"And even their local governments like to bully the poor."

"They always build these politically correct safe injection sites in communities where poor or ordinary people live,"

"Making their living conditions even worse,"

"And they dare not make any changes to the rich areas without the owners' permission."

"So, it's understandable that the top wealthy people in the country immigrate here to enjoy the luxury and corruption of capitalist society."

"But it's really hard to understand why the middle class spends all their money to come here to work as blue-collar workers and mingle in the lower and middle classes of society."

Orvel nodded: "Rich people are the best wherever they go."

"What I don't understand is what Mr. Chen said,"

"Those who sold their property and ran abroad to work as blue-collar workers."

"I have an old friend who used to do the aluminum alloy door and window business in China."

"He was not as good as the rich but better than the poor."

"As a result, I don't know who fooled him, and he had to immigrate with his whole family."

"As a result, he worked as a decorator for a Chinese foreman in the United States for more than ten years."

Charlie smiled and said, "Those were fooled by the immigration company."

"You have to know that the immigration company is like a legal snakehead."

"They are just like real snakeheads, in the business of sending people abroad."

"They first describe to people how good the outside world is,"

"So that people will want to go abroad, and then they pay them a lot of money in order to go out."

"They will never make money from the top rich people."

"Because top rich people know what the outside world is like much better than the bosses of immigration companies,"

"And it is impossible for them to fool them."

"Their target group is those who lack understanding of the outside world."

"But always feel that the moon outside is rounder than the moon at home."

"These people may have a total net worth of only a few hundred thousand,"

"And the immigration company will take half of it."

"For immigration companies, they don't care whether these people can survive abroad."

"As long as they can make money."

Orvel nodded thoughtfully and said,

"Some people know that you know that Taoism can hurt people,"

"But you don't care about making money."

"You really have no conscience!"

Issac couldn't help laughing and said,

"Orvel, this is not your style."

"I remember that you did this kind of thing a lot in Aurous Hill."

"Wasn't there a guy named Zhou Huaxin who specialized in P2P financial management and promised high interest rates to fool old men and women?"

"And then laundered the money and made it an investment loss."

"You were the one backing him, right?"

"How many old men and women have lost their life savings?"

When Orvel heard him mention this, his old face suddenly turned red to the root of his neck, and he quickly said,

"Mr. Chen, you don't understand the situation."

"It was not like this at the time."

"It was that son of a bitch Zhou Huaxin who opened a P2P company himself and took the initiative to ask me to invest,"

"And he didn't tell me what business it was."

"He only said he could give me some shares and dividends."

"And that he needed my help to settle the matter."

"I had no idea what kind of business he was involved in."

"Besides, after Master Wade contacted me,"

"I stayed out of it..."

Charlie smiled and said, "Everyone makes mistakes sometimes."

"Admitting mistakes and correcting them is the best thing."

"Old Chen, don't bring up his past."

Issac said cheerfully, "Young Master, you're right."

"I was just teasing him to see how he would react."

Orvel wiped a cold sweat from his forehead and said,

"Thanks to Master Wade for stopping me in time that time,"

"Otherwise, it would have been a big mistake..."

Charlie smiled but said nothing.

He looked at a house on the roadside not far away.

The door suddenly opened,

And a young boy of eighteen or nineteen walked out, carrying a baseball bat.

Charlie glanced at the black and white ID photo on the printed information and said,

"That kid is the main culprit, Bruce Brown."

As he spoke, Bruce whistled a few times on the roadside,

And several younger boys immediately emerged from the surrounding houses.

Charlie smiled and said,

“Hey, the boss just whistled, and all the minions below showed up.”

“Old Chen drives after them to see what they are going to do!”

## Chapter 7005

A group of teenagers, almost devoid of any anti-detection awareness, gathered together, chatting and laughing as they headed toward the city,

Frolicking and playing along the way,

Seemingly no different from ordinary children.

After leaving the neighborhood, they found an intersection and shared a pack of cigarettes on a bench.

From those aged twelve or thirteen to eighteen or nineteen,

Everyone was puffing away from the cigarette.

The leader, Bruce Brown, hid his baseball bat behind his hip,

His hands resting on the bench backs on either side,

Squinting his eyes at everyone passing by, as if searching for prey.

Charlie said to Issac,

"Old Chen, park the car across from them."

"I'll go meet them."

Issac asked, "Young Master, are you going by yourself?"

Charlie nodded and asked,

"Are you afraid I can't handle them?"

Issac smiled and said,

"No, I'm just worried these little bastards will get your hands dirty."

"It's something that either Orvel or I can handle."

Although Issac and Orvel weren't martial artists,

They had Charlie's guidance and the help of elixirs,

Making them far stronger than the average person.

Taking on a group of teenagers was no problem.

However, Charlie smiled slightly and said,

"Don't worry, I won't fight them."

"It's boring."

Issac was puzzled, but knew it was not a good idea to ask further questions,

So he followed Charlie's order and parked the car across from the young people.

Charlie pushed open the door and said to the two men,

"Arrange some more people to track down Butler Tang's whereabouts."

"Contact Inspector Li and activate my ground network system to see if there are any results."

Issac nodded and said,

"Don't worry, Master. I'll take care of it!"

Charlie hummed, stepped out of the car,

Straightened his collar, crossed the street,

And walked towards the teenagers.

At this moment, a young Asian couple happened to pass by them.

Bruce, the leader, saw the two approaching and immediately winked at the people around him.

Then he jumped up from the bench,

Grabbed the baseball bat behind him,

And blocked the couple's way.

His brothers immediately surrounded the couple from both sides.

The couple was horrified, and the man immediately asked them nervously:

"You...what are you going to do?"

Bruce sneered and asked, "What country are you from?"

The man said vigilantly:

"We are Australian citizens!"

Bruce frowned, obviously not expecting the other party to answer like this,

So he asked again: "Then where were you from before you became Australian citizens?"

The man replied, "Korea, what's the matter?"

"What's the matter?"

Bruce snorted coldly and cursed:

"Koreans, get out of here and go back to Korea."

"Australia does not welcome you!"

The man also tried to reason with them:

"We took the oath of naturalization last year and are legal Australian citizens!"

"Fck you, Koreans, you are still Korean even if you become a naturalized citizen!"

"You are a parasite of Australia!"

Bruce spat at the man, and then immediately said to the people around him:

"Hit him!"

After that, he swung the baseball bat and was about to hit the other party.

The buddies around him were staring at the man's backpack and the woman's small satchel.

They were looking for these targets in their free time,

Firstly, to beat them up for fun,

And secondly, to steal something to buy food, drink, and entertainment.

They had done the same thing many times without any problems.

## Chapter 7006

Sometimes, if they were unlucky and were caught by the police,

They would be released quickly.

The couple, momentarily terrified by the sudden attack, was thrown into panic.

The man, fearing the baseball bat, held his head in his hands, while the woman crouched and screamed.

Just as the bat was about to strike the man's arms,

Charlie, from outside the encirclement, shouted, "Stop it!"

Bruce instinctively stopped and turned to look at Charlie.

Seeing that Charlie was also Asian, he immediately asked coldly,

"Are you with them?"

Charlie smiled and said with interest,

"What kind of bastard are you?"

"You were born without anyone teaching you anything."

"You don't know any rules."

"You have to get down on your knees when you talk to me, okay?"

"Fck!"

Bruce, though young, had always bullied people.

When had he ever been humiliated like this by anyone?

Seeing Charlie's arrogance, all attention was instantly drawn to him.

Seeing that someone had distracted them,

The Korean couple exchanged a glance and quickly ran away, disappearing from sight.

Bruce paid them no more attention.

He swung his baseball bat over his shoulder,

And strode towards Charlie with great strides.

Seeing him throw the bat at him with all his might,

Charlie didn't even try to dodge.

Instead, just as the bat was about to strike his face,

He calmly reached out and effortlessly grasped the upper half of the bat.

Bruce's powerful attack seemed to lose all its energy in an instant, becoming motionless.

However, the power accumulated in his body and the bat during his swing didn't dissipate.

With nowhere to release it, it bounced back violently,

Like a powerful swing against an iron wall.

The pain in his arms was so intense that he instinctively let go, howling in pain.

The other boys were stunned by this scene,

And for a moment, they didn't dare to move forward.

They all gathered around Bruce, concerned about his condition.

Bruce looked at Charlie in horror and blurted out,

"How...how is this possible?!"

"How can your hands be harder than steel?!"

Charlie smiled and said,

"Look at you,"

"You've grown so big for nothing."

"But you can't even hold a baseball bat steady."

"What's the difference between you and a loser?"

"Come on."

After that, he raised his hand and threw the baseball bat at Bruce.

Bruce's arms were numb and painful,

And he subconsciously raised his hands to catch it.

However, the pain was so severe that as soon as he raised his arms.

He didn't keep up the movement,

And the baseball bat fell to the ground with a sound of metallic collision.

Charlie couldn't help but shake his head and sigh:

"I've never seen someone as useless as you."

"You're so weak and useless."

"If something is made out of a pile of dog shit, it would probably be stronger than you."

"What are you looking at?"

"Hurry up and pick up the bat!!"

The children around were frightened by Charlie's strange aura.

Bruce was also shocked and terrified at this time.

However, Charlie's words were really too mean,

Which made him feel humiliated.

If he didn't beat Charlie half to death today,

How could these brothers believe in him in the future?

So, he gritted his teeth and endured the pain,

And raised the baseball bat again.

Charlie nodded and smiled with satisfaction:

"Not bad, now you barely look like a qualified pile of dog shit!"

"Come on, continue!"

"Let me see how big the gap is between you and dog shit!"

## Chapter 7007

As the only adult among the teenagers, Bruce was furious.

In the past eighteen years, he had never experienced such intense humiliation,

Not only in broad daylight but also in front of his fellow thugs.

It felt as if his painstakingly cultivated image of ruthlessness and his standing in the underworld had been instantly shattered.

Rage had completely robbed him of his sanity.

He refused to believe that the man before him was truly so strong,

So strong that he couldn't even begin to challenge him.

It must be that his force wasn't strong enough, that his heart wasn't cruel enough!

With this thought, he gritted his teeth.

With all his might, he swung the baseball bat again, striking Charlie over the head.

This time, Bruce had murderous intent.

He didn't want to go, considering the consequences of this blow.

He simply wanted to vent his immense anger and restore his damaged image.

The children nearby were stunned.\

They had all played baseball and knew the devastating impact of a baseball bat.

They could all see that if Bruce had struck a normal human head with that bat,

It would have undoubtedly shattered their skull,

Perhaps even shattered their brains.

Even if they had blocked it with their hands,

It wouldn't just be a broken bone.

Their entire palm and arm would likely have been shattered.

The bat's powerful momentum and whistling sound as it hurtled towards Charlie's head.

The two younger students dared not open their eyes to watch,

Even fearing a fatality.

Although they hadn't received any substantial punishment in their previous visits to the police station,

If a murder case were involved, their parents wouldn't let them off easily.

To everyone's surprise, Charlie simply raised his hand and firmly grasped the bat again.

Even with the tip of the bat barely half a centimeter from Charlie's forehead,

The bat still failed to injure him.

Bruce couldn't understand.

Even though his arms felt like they were about to break,

He didn't bother to cry out.

He simply stared at Charlie, as if he were an alien, his entire body in a dazed state of confusion.

Charlie then handed the baseball bat to Bruce,

Staring him down, he spoke in a cold voice,

"Never again bully those unarmed, honest people."

"You must always remember that angry state you just had,"

"Remember that reckless, reckless mentality."

"From today on, you must use that state and mentality against the worst."

"Most ruthless, and most damnable people in this city."

"Only then can you replace them."

"Do you understand?"

As he spoke, Charlie intertwined his spiritual energy with his voice,

Delivering a powerful psychological suggestion to Bruce.

Charlie's suggestion was like a brand burned deep into his soul with spiritual energy,

A mark he would never be able to detect or shake.

The reason Charlie gave him this psychological suggestion was to punish him for his actions.

Using the old Chinese proverb:

“Evil will be punished by evil.”

Teenagers like Bruce have no kindness in their souls.

He is born bad, just like those teenagers who instigate other children to jump off buildings,

And trick children under the age of 10 into returning home to kill them.

Even without any psychological hints,

He'd already harbored murderous intent.

This proved he was rotten to the core, beyond redemption.

The reason he hadn't killed anyone yet wasn't because he wasn't bad enough,

But simply because he hadn't encountered something that would trigger his murderous intent.

If he did, he would kill without hesitation.

Releasing such a person back into society would be a grave threat,

But Charlie, a self-proclaimed gentleman,

Didn't want to or disdain to take action against such a young man.

Giving him a psychological hint would both deter him from brazenly bullying the honest and allow him to choose his own villains.

If he punished other villains, it would be considered a redemption.

If he were punished by them, it would be his undeserved fate.

Either way, it was a good thing.

Charlie's repeated use of words and actions to provoke him was to force him to experience that hysterical state for himself.

If he hadn't experienced it before,

Psychological hints alone would be useless.

But the repeated, progressive stimulation he'd just experienced had already given him a precise sense of the desire to kill.

At this point, coupled with the psychological cues that urged him to go against the worst,

Most ruthless, and most deserving of death,

He was able to instantly find that state.

## Chapter 7008

As expected, Bruce's eyes were bloodshot,

And his fists were clenched so tightly that veins bulged from his arms, neck, and forehead.

He clenched his teeth and said murderously,

"I understand!"

Charlie turned and pointed at Bruce, asking the children,

"Is he your boss?"

They nodded in panic.

Charlie said with satisfaction,

"Very good. You must remember this:"

"On the one hand, you must listen to your boss and do what he says."

"And on the other hand, you must learn from your boss and follow his example."

"Do you understand?"

Several people immediately became excited and shouted,

"I understand!"

Charlie smiled and nodded, "Very good."

"Finally, remember this: we have never met before."

"In five minutes, Bruce will begin to think about who is the most ruthless."

"And a bad person on the block,"

"And then put it into action."

"Do you understand?"

Bruce led the group of young brothers and said loudly,

"Got it!"

Charlie smiled, turned, and left without saying anything else.

When Charlie returned to the car,

The young people were still standing there in a daze.

Orvel and Issac were both puzzled upon seeing him return.

Orvel, impatient, couldn't help but ask,

"Master Wade, that ba5tard hit you so many times with a baseball bat,"

"Why didn't you do anything to him?"

"He should be over eighteen, right?"

Charlie smiled and said,

"Even if he's eighteen, he's still a young boy."

"Fighting him, not to mention that a little force would kill him, would lower my rank."

"Just wait and see, someone will take care of him for those victims."

The psychological implication Charlie gave Bruce was a never-ending journey of leveling up and fighting monsters.

Even if he could establish and improve his status in the area through a few victories,

There would still be more powerful targets to be found later.

So, it was like putting Bruce in a gambling game where he could only go all-in.

He might win a few rounds,

But he couldn't win all the time. Furthermore, he could only lose once.

After five minutes of blanking his mind,

The first question that popped into the young and energetic Bruce's mind was Who in this neighborhood was more ruthless and evil than him!

He was now completely consumed by the same fury he'd just felt,

But without Charlie as a target for his wrath,

He had to find his next opponent.

A face quickly surfaced in his mind:

Liam, the man he dreaded encountering most in this neighborhood.

Liam was only three years older than Bruce,

But had entered society much earlier.

In his early years, he was a vagrant street thug,

Occasionally robbing passersby or small convenience stores.

But in the past two or three years,

Liam had joined a well-known gang in several nearby neighborhoods,

And became a member.

The gang structure in Australia is very similar to that in Europe and the United States.

While their organizational structure is less rigid,

Their hierarchy is clearly defined.

In a city, the most powerful gangs control the most profitable businesses,

Such as the contraband and gambling industries.

However, even the most powerful gangs can't completely dominate the underworld.

Often, several players of the same caliber divide up their territory and compete with each other.

In areas that the top gangs disdain to focus on, numerous other gangs exist.

Some thrive in the sex industry,

While others rely on extortion and protection rackets.

Further down the hierarchy, there are gangs like Liam's.

Without a truly organized industry, they hide in various corners, scavenging scraps.

For example, the top gang distributes contraband to mid-level distributors,

Who then take the contraband, mix it with impurities,

And repackage it into retail packages for a few dozen yuan each,

Selling them to lower-tier customers.

These retail packages are then peddled on the streets by smaller gangs.

Take methamphetamine, the most prevalent drug in Australia.

## Chapter 7009

Its high-end audience includes the wealthy, white-collar workers, internet celebrities, and nightclub prostitutes.

This customer base offers high profit margins and drives other spending, making each one a cash cow for gangs.

Smaller gangs like Liam simply cannot reach these customers.

If they dare to sell low-quality products in high-end hotels or nightclubs, higher-ranking gangs will quickly eliminate them.

This is the concept of territory.

Owning the territory of high-end users is like a fertile ground, even a gold mine.

Territory owners will defend their interests with all their might,

And will retaliate fiercely if anyone dares to touch their core interests.

It's for this reason that Liam's gang is forced to operate on the streets,

Selling to impoverished addicts who rely on theft and deception to scrape together a few dozen dollars.

Even so, the profit margins are enormous.

A small bag of contraband worth a hundred dollars could bring them at least forty dollars in profit.

As long as their small gang could control a slum area and reach a few hundred addicts,

They could earn at least tens of thousands of dollars in net profit every day from this drug-related operation.

Even though Liam was just a lowly member of the gang,

It was not difficult for him to earn a few hundred dollars a day.

In Melbourne's slums, a few hundred dollars a day was considered a good income.

The median income in Melbourne was around a hundred dollars a day.

Liam could earn at least a hundred thousand dollars a year working 360 days a year,

Surpassing most white-collar workers in Melbourne.

Bruce, on the other hand, was far behind.

He wanted to join such a gang, but he never had the chance.

His small group had no territory of its own,

So they dared not engage in illegal drug dealing.

Therefore, he had no stable source of income.

Occasional street robberies were almost his only source of income.

A few months ago, Bruce saved up several hundred dollars and spoke a lot of sweet words to get Liam to come along and have dinner with him.

At the table, Bruce gave all the expensive food he ordered to Liam,

Then, starving, humbly pleaded with Liam to introduce him to the gang.

But Liam finished his meal, wiped his mouth, and told Bruce that a small-time scoundrel like him had no business joining his gang,

And that eating his food was demeaning.

With that, Liam stood up and walked away.

At that moment, Bruce felt humiliated.

Even so, he didn't dare confront Liam, only silently swallowing his loss.

He vowed to climb higher than Liam one day and then crush him.

Charlie had given him the courage he hadn't had before.

So, holding his baseball bat, he declared to his throng with a fascinated urge.

"Let's go find Liam and kill him."

"From now on, I'll be the most powerful rising star in all of South Melbourne."

"Maybe his boss will appreciate me and let me replace him."

"Then we'll truly soar!"

Psychological suggestion is like a mental imprint,

Forcing one to believe it so firmly that they forget or even ignore reality.

Bruce was originally a hoodlum with little education and even lower quality.

His understanding of the world was already extremely superficial.

Coupled with his frequent viewing of gangster movies,

He always believed that some special opportunity would bring him the attention of a big boss and lead him to a meteoric rise.

The psychological suggestion Charlie gave him sparked his first thought.

To replace Liam with ruthlessness.

As the group marched off to the next block,

Charlie instructed Issac to follow them in his car.

The next block was even grimmer than the previous one.

There were two safe injection sites here, too.

Around them and under a nearby overpass,

A large number of drug users gathered, numbering at least a hundred.

Because an overpass ran through this block, many addicts had pitched their tents directly beneath it,

Densely packed with at least forty or fifty.

They gathered here because, while it offered little protection from the wind,

It provided shelter from the sun and rain,

Making it the perfect place for the homeless.

Nearby, young men milled about the crowd.

Unlike the tattered addicts, these young men were dressed in sophisticated attire, even sporting extravagant gold jewelry.

They were members of gangs that specialized in selling contraband to addicts.

Among them, a curly-haired, half-black youth, smoking a homemade cigarette, moved among the addicts.

He stared intently at the hands of a female drug addict, counting money.

After counting a pile of small bills, she pleaded,

"Liam, I'm still short of thirty dollars."

"Can I give it to you tomorrow?"

The female drug addict was the streetwalker who had approached Issac earlier.

Liam said with disdain, "If you don't have money, go sell it."

"It's not even noon yet, so there's plenty of time."

"Come back to me when you've sold enough."

## Chapter 7010

The woman pleaded humbly, "I haven't smoked all day, Liam."

"If this goes on, I won't have the energy even to take on customers."

"Please, give me first."

"I'll do anything for you!"

"Didn't you enjoy my service before?"

Liam said with disdain, "I'm now an official member of the Saint Blue Gang."

"If I continue to accept your service,"

"How will I maintain my reputation in the gang?"

"You'd better cut the crap and get back to making money."

The woman looked desperate, wanting to plead again,

But afraid of angering the man, leaving her in a dilemma.

Liam glanced at her, then raised an eyebrow.

"Well, don't say I didn't take care of you."

"I can give you the stuff first, but after you're done smoking,"

"You have to work hard and try to get more work."

"I'll come to see you tonight at eight o'clock,"

"And then you have to pay me fifty dollars, including interest."

"Fifty?"

The woman looked stunned.

She owed thirty dollars, and she had to pay fifty in just one day, with interest almost doubled.

In all her years on the streets,

She had never encountered such a ruthless gang member.

But she had no choice now.

Her body and mind were suffering immensely,

So she could only bite the bullet and agree.

"Okay, fifty is fifty!"

Liam skillfully handed her a small bag of contraband and warned,

"It's a deal."

"If you don't give me fifty dollars by eight o'clock tonight,"

"It will be eighty tomorrow!"

The woman nodded rapidly,

"No problem!"

Then, she quickly took the contraband and slipped into a tattered tent.

Liam chuckled coldly and was about to find his next client when someone shouted,

"Liam!"

He turned and saw a dark figure flashing towards him.

Bruce's baseball bat was aimed straight at Liam's head,

Just as he had attacked Charlie earlier, ready to kill him.

Liam was lucky and experienced.

Seeing the shadow approaching,

He didn't even bother to figure out what it was,

And instinctively turned his head away.

Then, he felt a sharp pain in his shoulder, and his legs went limp.

The baseball bat had grazed his face and hit his shoulder directly, smashing his right shoulder into pieces.

The pain was excruciating.

When Liam saw who was coming, he was furious and yelled,

"Bruce, you little bastard, how dare you hit me?"

Liam's eyes were bloodshot.

"Hit you? You underestimate me, Liam!"

"I'm going to kill you today!"

He immediately swung the baseball bat and hit Liam again.

Liam, unarmed, could only stumble away as the enemy threatened to kill him.

Bruce, baseball bat in hand, sprang after him.

A group of other young men, like mad, swarmed after him, creating a chaotic scene.

Then, several other gang members, observing the situation, rushed forward.

Liam, severely injured in the shoulder, stumbled as he ran, losing his balance after only a few steps and falling to the ground.

Bruce seized the opportunity and rushed forward,

About to smash Liam's leg with a club.

Someone pointed a gun at him and shouted,

"Put down the baseball bat!"

Bruce, furious, gritted his teeth and declared,

"No one will stop me today!"

Just then, two loud bangs ripped through his right leg, leaving two bloody holes.

He instantly lost control of his leg and fell to the ground.

Immediately, the gang members rushed over,

Beating him half to death and pinning the other young men to the ground with a beating.

After all, this was Liam's gang's territory,

And it was also where they made their money.

Many of their younger brothers gathered here and around,

And immediately surrounded them when they saw something was wrong.

Seeing Bruce beaten beyond recognition and howling uncontrollably,

Charlie couldn't help but sigh and shake his head, saying,

"I thought this guy could be a tough guy and play a loser's counterattack for a few episodes,"

"But I didn't expect him to be beaten into this state right from the start."

"What a loser!"

## Chapter 7011

The moment he saw Bruce being knocked down, Charlie suddenly felt bored.

It was like he had a digital pet and hoped that it would grow up quickly,

But it died just after being fed for the first time.

He was bored as he watched Bruce and a group of underage brothers being taken away by ambulance.

He sighed, waved his hand, and said,

"I even told that sheriff to enforce the law impartially in two days."

"I just wanted to give him two days to have some fun."

"I didn't expect him to die so soon."

Orvel asked quickly, "Master Wade, is that little ba5tard dead?"

"Not really."

Charlie shook his head, "He didn't hit the artery."

"As long as he's not sent to the veterinary station, he shouldn't die."

"But his right leg is definitely broken,"

"And he'll have to use crutches after he recovers."

Orvel smiled and said, "It's okay."

"Didn't Hong Kong have a big brother named Crippled Ho back then?"

"Maybe this kid can make some noise after he recovers."

Charlie complained, "Crippled Ho became a big brother first before he became a cripple."

"If he had been lame from the beginning,"

"He wouldn't even be able to make it to Hong Kong."

"Let alone become a big brother."

Orvel scratched his head and said with a smile,

"That's right."

"This kid is lame without even a feather in his body."

"He will definitely be in trouble in the future."

"Forget it,"

Charlie said dryly. "Let's go to the hotel first."

"We have some important business to attend to."

"Old Chen asked the hotel to prepare a three-bedroom suite."

"We need to sort out the clues and find Butler Tang."

"Okay!"

Issac immediately agreed.

He made a few phone calls to give instructions and then drove straight to the Shangri-La Hotel in Melbourne.

On the way, Charlie didn't receive a reply from Claire.

He picked up his phone and sent her another WeChat message:

"Honey, are you busy?"

After sending it, he held the phone in his arms, waiting for a reply.

But Issac drove to the hotel and still hadn't received a reply from Claire.

Charlie felt a little uneasy.

Claire had never gone so long without replying before.

Could she have encountered some problem?

So he immediately called her,

But to his surprise, her phone was out of service.

His heart skipped a beat, and he quickly called his father-in-law,

Jacob tried to find out what was going on, but his phone was out of service as well.

He then called his mother-in-law, with the same result.

Charlie became increasingly nervous.

He couldn't understand why Claire and her parents suddenly lost contact.

So, he called Claire's company and, after explaining his identity,

The administrative staff member who answered the phone told him,

"Hello, Mr. Wade, President Willson didn't come to work today."

"Didn't come to work?!"

Charlie asked, "Has she contacted you yet?"

The administrative staff said, "President Willson instructed us yesterday to organize all the work materials."

"And send them to each Party A."

"Everyone must stick to it until the last day of the month."

"And the company will officially disband."

"Disband?!"

Charlie's expression froze, and he immediately felt something was wrong.

He quickly asked her, "Has the company encountered any problems in its operations?"

"Why is it suddenly disbanding?"

The administrative staff said,

"The company hasn't encountered any problems."

"President Willson said that she can't work anymore and wants to retire."

Charlie said nervously,

“Why have I never heard her mention retirement?!”

## Chapter 7012

The administrative staff asked in surprise,

"You don't know?!"

"President Willson told us that you don't want her to work so hard to run a business anymore."

Charlie asked, "What else did she say to you?"

"Nothing else."

The administrative staff said, "She instructed the finance department to give everyone N+6 compensation."

"And everyone is waiting to receive their compensation now."

Normally, a company offering N+1 compensation for firing an employee would be considered conscientious.

Few companies would offer N+2.

Claire offered N+6, which meant giving each employee an extra five months' salary—no small sum.

It was clear she felt guilty towards her employees,

Hence, the generous compensation.

The company was doing well, and she'd been working incredibly hard,

So why had she suddenly quit?

And she hadn't told him a word,

And now she couldn't even be contacted...

Charlie suddenly had a terrible feeling.

He felt that Claire hadn't encountered an accident or danger,

But had been planning all this for a long time!

This thought sent a wave of panic through him.

He desperately wanted to check on her home to see if she was there.

If not, he wondered if she had taken her belongings.

However, he was in Australia,

And even if he chartered a flight back immediately,

It would still take at least ten hours to get back to Aurous Hill.

So, the first solution that came to his mind was to ask Nanako for help.

Although Nanako spent most of her time cultivating her Dao at the Champs Elysees Spa Hotel,

Her father, Takehiko, lived in a flat in Tomson One.

She might be there right now, so a visit would provide the quickest answers.

Jemima also lived in Tomson One, but they weren't as close,

And since she wasn't very skilled, she probably wouldn't be able to sneak into his home.

Nanako, on the other hand, is different.

She is a martial arts expert and has successfully attained enlightenment,

Greatly increasing her strength. This is a piece of cake for her.

He immediately wanted to call Nanako, but after careful consideration,

He opted to send a WeChat message.

His wife had suddenly and deliberately disappeared,

And he hadn't even known about it from the beginning.

He didn't want Orvel and Issac to find out.

Then he immediately sent a text message to Nanako on WeChat, which read:

"Nanako, are you at Tomson?"

Nanako quickly replied:

"I'm here. Ou Duosan asked me to come back and have dinner with him."

"What's the matter? Are you also at Tomson?"

Charlie replied: "I'm in Australia, Nanako."

"I need your help with something. Please keep it a secret from me."

Nanako immediately responded:

"Just give me your instructions."

"I will never tell anyone, not even Ou Duosan."

Charlie felt a little relieved and said:

"I want you to sneak into my house and take a look at the current situation at home."

Nanako sent a nervous expression and asked:

"Charliejun, is something wrong at home?!"

Charlie said, "My wife, my father-in-law, and mother-in-law are missing."

"I would like to ask you to go to my house to help me see if they are there."

"If they are, please help me protect them secretly so that they don't find out."

"If they are not, please help me see if there is anything unusual at home!"

"Okay! I'll be there right away!"

Nanako didn't know what had happened at Charlie's house.

She thought that Charlie's enemies had targeted his family,

So she quickly put down her chopsticks and said to her father,

"Odo-san, enjoy your meal. I'm going out to do something."

Takehiko pointed to the sashimi on the table and said,

"Nanako, this is the best bluefin trout this year."

"If you don't eat it as soon as possible after thawing, it will soon go stale!"

"It's okay, father."

Nanako stood up and said hurriedly,

"Charlie has something to talk to me about."

"I must go there immediately."

Takehiko suddenly realized and said quickly,

"Since Mr. Wade has something to talk to you about,"

"Then you should go there quickly."

## Chapter 7013

As soon as she left, Nanako rushed to the core villa area of Tomson,

Arriving at Charlie's doorstep with familiarity.

Since moving there, she'd often strolled there alone,

Usually just glancing inside and then quickly leaving,

Pretending she was just passing through.

When she arrived at the villa, she saw three cars parked in the yard:

A Rolls-Royce Cullinan and two BMWs, one of which was the BMW 760 with a 5 Series badge.

She knew that the Rolls-Royce was usually driven by Charlie's father-in-law,

The BMW 7 Series by Claire, and the other by Charlie, occasionally.

With all three cars at home, it seemed likely that everyone else in the family was home,

Except for Charlie.

Nanako had already attained enlightenment.

While her spiritual energy wasn't yet very strong,

She could already sense the surroundings within a few hundred meters.

With a simple thought, she used her spiritual energy to sweep through the villa,

But finding no trace of anyone.

She immediately picked up her phone and texted Charlie on WeChat:

"Mr. Charlie, I just checked on your house."

"All three cars are there."

"But no one's home."

"Do you want me to go in now?"

Charlie replied immediately:

"Yes! Help me check if there are any suspicious clues!"

When no one answered his phone,

Charlie guessed that Claire and her family of three were definitely not there.

Based on the feedback from the company's administration,

Charlie had already guessed that Claire's disappearance was not an accident but a premeditated plan,

A plan to suddenly disappear from his world.

But he couldn't understand it.

He couldn't understand why Claire would leave him so suddenly,

After being with him for so many years,

Their relationship was clearly growing stronger.

Moreover, Claire had just given herself to him on his birthday.

Why would she leave so suddenly?

If she had always wanted to leave,

Why would she give him her most precious thing?

No matter how he analyzed it, it seemed illogical.

So, he needed Nanako to go to the house and investigate.

After getting Charlie's permission, Nanako easily leaped from the side wall of the villa,

Lightly tapping the wall with her toes,

And nimbly vaulted into the house.

Seeing that the door and windows were tightly shut,

She chose to break the lock of the main door with her palm,

Opened the door a crack and quickly slipped in.

Entering the room, Nanako did not find anything unusual.

The room was very clean and tidy,

And there was no sign of any accident or hasty departure.

Then she quickly took a few photos and sent them to Charlie.

Charlie had just arrived at Shangri-La in Melbourne.

When he received the photos of the first floor sent by Nanako,

He was even more surprised.

There was indeed nothing unusual in the house in the photos.

Even Claire's slippers were neatly arranged.

He was uneasy and said to Issac and Orvel,

"You two go back to the room first and tell me the room number later."

"I need to make a phone call in the car."

Issac immediately said respectfully,

"Okay, young master, I'll send you the room number."

After that, he winked at Orvel, and the two of them quickly pushed the door and got out of the car.

Charlie was the only one left in the car,

So he immediately sent a video call to Nanako.

Nanako answered the call quickly and said to Charlie,

"Mr. Charlie, I've checked the first floor of your house and I can't see any problems."

"Do you want me to check the surveillance of the property outside?"

Charlie said, "Please, go upstairs to my bedroom first."

"I want to see what my wife's personal belongings are like."

Nanako asked him,

"Is it appropriate for me to go in?"

"After all, it is your and Ms. Willson's bedroom.

Will it destroy your privacy?"

Charlie said, "I can't worry about that now."

"Just go in and turn the camera over so that I can see the details of the room."

"Okay."

## Chapter 7014

Seeing that Charlie was not shy, Nanako immediately agreed,

And then, under Charlie's command, she came to his and Claire's bedroom.

As soon as she entered the bedroom, Charlie immediately found something wrong.

Compared with the clean and tidy public area on the first floor,

The room looked much messier.

There were a lot of clothes piled on the bed,

And they were all very messy.

The doors of the cloakroom wardrobe were all open.

Most of the clothes were only hung on one side of the hanger,

And many of them fell on the shelves or the floor.

It was obvious that they were brought down when other clothes were hurriedly packed.

Nanako also noticed something unusual and asked him carefully:

"Charlie, didn't Ms. Willson tell you that she left home?"

Charlie shook his head and said truthfully:

"No, I just called her and her parents, but the call was unanswered."

"I called her company, but the people in her company said that she had already dissolved the company."

"This..."

Nanako said in disbelief:

"Isn't your relationship very good?"

"Why would Ms. Willson leave without saying goodbye?"

Charlie said blankly: "I don't know."

"But there must be something else going on."

Nanako looked around the room and suddenly saw a red certificate and a folded white paper on the bedside table.

She looked closely and found that the red certificate was actually a marriage certificate,

So she hurried over, aimed the camera at the marriage certificate and the folded white paper,

And said to Charlie: "Look, is this something Ms. Willson left for you?"

"Marriage certificate?!"

Charlie's pupils contracted instantly,

And his heartbeat speed suddenly increased.

All the previous things had already made him feel that something was wrong,

And the fact that this marriage certificate was placed on the bedside table made him even more alert.

He had guessed that the folded white paper should be the letter that Claire left for him.

He put his hand on his heart, forced himself to calm down,

And then said to Nanako: "Nanako, please open that paper."

"I want to see what is written in it."

Nanako didn't say anything,

But stretched out her slender jade hand and slowly turned over the A4 paper that was folded twice.

When Charlie saw the contents of the letter through the video screen,

He was suddenly motionless as if struck by lightning.

Then, tears filled his eyes uncontrollably, and he burst out.

The letter was written by Claire.

The content was not long, and each word was written very carefully and clearly.

The content was:

Dear husband, how are you?

When you see this letter, I will have already left China forever with my parents.

Please forgive me for leaving without saying goodbye.

Charlie, the moment I knew your whole life story,

I did not blame you for hiding your identity from me for so many years.

On the contrary, deep in my heart, I felt particularly distressed for your forbearance and grievances over the years,

I was particularly moved by the help and care you have given me and my family through various means and channels over the years.

Over the years, I have not played the role of a wife well,

Nor have I fulfilled the obligations of a wife.

I owe you too much.

And my parents have too many character flaws and are not thoughtful in doing things.

I am really sorry that they have caused you too much trouble over the years,

Especially mom.

She treated you so badly, but you forgave her again and again, and even saved her from danger.

Over the years, you have always been asked to accommodate us and clean up all kinds of messes for us.

I feel extremely ashamed.

I know you haven't been able to avenge your parents,

And I know that remaining with you as a family would only hinder you.

So, after careful consideration, I've decided to take them both away,

No longer a burden to you.

I hope that without our interference and concerns,

You can focus on your vengeance and get your life back on track.

You and I have a marriage certificate, but because of your status, it's not legally binding.

Therefore, our absurd relationship has been a dream from the beginning to the end.

Now that the dream is over and the bubble has burst,

We are no longer husband and wife.

Let's each keep a copy of the marriage certificate as a memento.

My parents and I have been so grateful for your care over the years.

It's neither moral nor logical for us to just walk away like this.

However, I know in my heart that otherwise, a clean and simple resolution between us will be difficult.

So, I once again beg you to forgive me,

And I also beg you not to try to find me.

From now on, we will each live in peace and contentment, apart from each other.

— Claire.



## Chapter 7015

After reading the letter, Charlie's heart ached.

In that instant, he regretted deeply that he had concealed his identity from Claire from the very beginning,

Leading to a lie that required countless lies to cover it up.

Instead of confessing the truth, he repeatedly covered it up with more lies.

It was like a program with a huge bug.

Instead of fixing the bug itself, the programmer resorted to adding a ton of code to work around it and barely keep the program running.

The result was that a program that could have been simple and efficient suddenly became overloaded with code,

Becoming increasingly bloated and unstable.

When a program is overloaded with unnecessary code,

It can collapse from the inside out, completely.

Charlie's mistake was exactly the same.

If he had confessed everything before marrying Claire,

She might have thought his stories were all just tall tales,

But at least he would have a clear conscience and wouldn't have to lie endlessly.

At the very least, he should have told her everything the moment Leon found him.

Even if Claire didn't believe him, he had the bank balance and Leon to back him up.

While Claire might find it difficult to accept, he had been honest with her, so she probably wouldn't leave him.

Thinking of this, he couldn't help but burst into tears.

Then, he muttered to himself,

"Leon Tang... Butler Tang..."

At this point, he straightened up as if struck by lightning,

His heart pounding.

A cascade of questions raced through his mind!

First, how could Claire know his identity?

Second, even if Claire knew his identity as the Young Master of the Wade family,

How could she have known the blood feud he still bore?

Third, someone who knew him well must have told her everything.

Who was that person? Was it Leon?

And finally, who was secretly pushing Claire to make the decision and move on?

Why had Leon, missing for so long, suddenly reappeared in Australia?

Why had the news of Leon's attack in Australia been so coincidentally relayed to him through Claire?!

Why had Claire left the moment he arrived in Australia?!

These questions surged into his mind like a flood,

Roiling his thoughts but also washing away his doubts.

The scum covering his core, washed away by this mental deluge, immediately revealed its true nature.

Charlie knew that all this must have been orchestrated by Leon.

He must have revealed his identity to Claire;

He must have told Claire about his deep blood feud;

He must have persuaded her to leave him so he could focus on dealing with Warriors Den.

He must have been the one who deliberately let himself get robbed in Australia by the Teenagers,

Tricking Claire into cooperating and making it seem accidental for him to witness.

And he must have been the one who, after he left for Australia, immediately arranged for Claire and her parents to leave home, and even leave China.

Charlie didn't understand.

He couldn't help but growl,

"Butler Tang, why?!"

"Over the past few years, I've respected you like a father,"

"And you've loved me like a son."

"Why did you leave so quietly?!"

"It would have been fine if you left quietly,"

"But why did you let Claire leave me?! Why!!!"

Nanako watched Charlie's tears streaming down his face,

His eyes bloodshot, and his face in agony through the video, and her heart ached.

She was smart and had guessed the whole story.

Seeing Charlie's emotions losing control, she quickly spoke to comfort him,

"Please don't be angry, Butler Tang did this for your own good!"

"For my own good?!"

Charlie subconsciously questioned,

"For my own good, you have to separate me and my wife."

"How can this be considered for my own good?!"

Nanako said softly, "But Charlie-jun, you are facing a behemoth with hundreds of years of history after all!"

"Analyze calmly, not only can Ms. Willson's family not help you at all, but they will become your weakness and give your enemies an opportunity to exploit."

"Even your grandparents' family have been repeatedly at the hands of the enemy."

"If the enemy knows about the existence of Ms. Willson's family in the future,"

"How can you protect them?"

At this point, Nanako said with some heartache,

"And... and Charlie-jun, don't you think that the existence of your family has seriously affected your cultivation?"

"You rarely have the opportunity to practice in seclusion."

"When there is something important, you can only find an excuse to consult Feng Shui every now and then."

"To be honest, at this rate, it will be difficult for you to have the ability to compete with the Warriors Den in a short time..."

Charlie was instantly speechless by what Nanako said.

He was not a fool, nor was he an idiot who acted on impulse.

He knew that everything Nanako said was right.

## Chapter 7016

If the Warriors Den got hold of his identity and information in the future,

Claire's family of three would surely become their second-largest target after him.

He also knew that the special family situation had seriously affected his own cultivation.

Whether it was the ring Maria gave him or the handprint that appeared in the Nordic Aurora, it was still a mystery to him because he had never found the time to truly concentrate on retreat.

He understood the truth, but the pain of separation was real.

That was his wife of six years!

Although they had not been husband and wife for the first six years, she had just...

Thinking of this, Charlie was even more heartbroken.

He choked up and sighed, "Claire had obviously been ready to leave me a long time ago, but she insisted on spending my birthday with me, and even gave herself to me on my birthday..."

"Moreover, since she knew my identity, she must have known about my engagement with Sara."

"But even so, she still accompanied me to watch Sara's last concert..."

"And I didn't even have the chance to tell her my true identity in person..."

He suddenly felt that he owed Claire too much.

At this moment, he had only one thought in his mind, and that was to find her, confess everything to her, and tell her all the secrets.

If she was willing to accept his true self, they would be together.

If she couldn't forgive him and didn't want to look back, he wanted to hear her answer in person.

But how to find her?

He immediately wiped away his tears and said to Nanako,

"Nanako, please contact Ruoli for me. The He family has served the Su family for many years and is very experienced."

"Let her and the He family help me investigate Claire's whereabouts."

"Let's start now and we must seize every minute!"

Nanako said without hesitation, "Okay, I'll tell Ruoli right away. Is there anything else you need me to do?"

After that, without waiting for Charlie to answer, she hurriedly said,

"Why don't I transfer a group of ninjas from Japan? Although their combat effectiveness is not that strong,"

"Their ability to track down and find shadows is definitely beyond doubt."

"Letting them come over should be of some help."

Since the Tokyo Brawl, the Ito family has conquered most of the ninja families in Japan.

These ninjas have sworn allegiance to the Ito family and are on call 24 hours a day.

Charlie had dealt with ninjas before.

As Ito Nanako had said, while these ninjas weren't very strong, they had superb tracking and anti-tracking abilities,

As well as exceptional concealment.

While ordinary warriors might be stronger than ninjas,

If a ninja was determined to hide, even a warrior far superior in strength wouldn't necessarily be able to find them.

This was unless a cultivator like Charlie could use spiritual perception to conceal the ninja.

Since Leon had planned this all along,

Claire's path must have been complex and confusing,

And ninjas might actually prove useful.

So, he thanked her, "Thank you, Nanako. Please take the trouble to arrange for the ninjas."

"But you must instruct them not to cause any trouble or any other problems after arriving there."

"Focus all their attention on finding this person."

"No problem,"

Nanako said quickly. "You don't have to be so polite to me, Charlie-jun."

"It's not just the ninjas. With just one word from Charlie,"

"The entire Ito family, from top to bottom, will obey your orders!"

Charlie was touched, but he didn't just keep thanking her.

Instead, he said seriously, "Nanako, since Claire left me a letter at home,"

"Proving that her escape route started from home,"

"Have the He family begin an investigation immediately."

"When the ninjas arrive, have them meet Ruoli and temporarily follow her orders."

Charlie had long been aware of Ruoli's abilities.

At such a young age, she had led a large number of Su family experts across Japan to exterminate the Matsumoto family.

If it weren't for him, the evacuation would have been smooth and the mission would have been completed perfectly.

Letting her lead the operation would be absolutely no problem.

Nanako naturally had no objection and immediately said,

"No problem, Charliejun,"

"I'll ask them to prepare now and rush to China before dark!"

Charlie said, "Thank you for your hard work."

Nanako asked, "When does Charliejun plan to come back?"

Charlie said, "I want to come back as soon as possible,"

"But Butler Tang was last seen in Australia."

"He should still be here."

"I want to try to find him."

"After all, he is the most critical link."

"If I don't find him, I will never know what other secrets he has!"

## Chapter 7017

When Nanako heard Charlie say he wanted to stay in Australia,

She subconsciously asked him,

"Charlie, if you want to find Ms. Willson as soon as possible,"

"Shouldn't you hurry back to China?"

Charlie sighed, "I've already fallen into a trap since I came to Australia."

"They must have a strict organizational structure and action plan."

"Maybe Claire is no longer in China."

"If I go back now, it may not make any difference."

"But I can be sure that Leon is the mastermind behind all this."

"No matter where Claire is, as long as I find him,"

"I can find Claire!"

Nanako suddenly realized and said,

"I understand."

"I will cooperate with Ruoli as much as possible in China."

"Don't worry."

"Okay!"

Charlie was confused and hung up the video without saying anything more to Nanako.

Feeling a slight chill on his face,

He reached out to touch it and realized that he had been crying.

So he quickly wiped the tears with his palm,

And immediately pushed the door to get out of the car.

The Wade family didn't have many connections in Australia,

Limited to three hotels in Melbourne, Sydney, and Brisbane.

Most of the staff were ordinary people,

So tracking down someone like Leon would be futile.

Charlie's first choice was Detective Duncan.

Duncan's investigative skills were nearly unmatched.

The previous operation to relocate the assassins in Morocco had revealed that his anti-detection skills were even stronger than his own investigative abilities.

This inference stemmed from Duncan's meticulous handling of all leads in that incident,

Leaving only a small clue:

The owner of the food factory.

As long as the owner didn't reveal everything,

No one would ever discover that the factory was a key transit point for the assassins.

However, Duncan had effectively ensnared the owner in a trap,

Making him a self-defeating benefactor, willing to keep the secret to himself.

While leads in this case might theoretically exist,

They were practically dead, and further investigation would lead to a dead end.

This also meant that if Duncan were to investigate the case,

He would find nothing.

Therefore, Charlie felt that whether he approached Leon or Claire,

He would need Duncan's help.

So, he immediately created a WeChat group and added Duncan,

His eldest uncle, Marshal, and his second uncle, Marcus.

Using simple language, Charlie explained the entire incident to the group,

And then sent a message to the group requesting Duncan's help.

The first one to reply was Charlie's uncle, Marshal.

He said in confusion, "Charlie, from what you said, it seems that Leon has not been loyal to your father all these years."

"He should be loyal to someone else!"

Then, he sent another voice message:

"If he is taking care of you and protecting you on the orders of your father, then his duty is equivalent to that of an ancient minister entrusted with the care of an orphan."

"He should do his utmost to protect you and assist you wholeheartedly after you successfully succeed to the throne."

"How could he suddenly disappear when you need him the most?"

"Not only did he disappear,"

"But he also secretly planned to make the Willson family leave you?"

Charlie sighed: "Uncle, I think the same as you."

"There must be other people to whom he is loyal."

Marshal smacked his lips and said,

"Tsk ts... That's strange!"

"I knew him. He was absolutely loyal to your father."

"Your father and mother are both dead."

"Who else can he be loyal to except you?"

"Being loyal to others is illogical!"

Second uncle Marcus sent a voice message:

"It is indeed illogical."

"From what I know about Leon, he only obeyed the brother-in-law."

"And at most the eldest sister."

"Now that the eldest sister and brother-in-law are gone,"

"He must be obeying Charlie."

"How could he do these little tricks behind Charlie's back?"

Even Marshal and Marcus, who knew Margaret best, did not dare to imagine that she was still alive at this time.

Even Duncan, who had solved unsolved mysteries for a lifetime,

Did not guess that Margaret might still be alive when he saw the news.

After briefly analyzing the situation, he expressed his thoughts, saying,

"I'm wondering, maybe Changying knew that the Warriors Den wanted him dead,

So when he was arranging his affairs with Leon,

He had already made all these arrangements?"

Marshal said, "Old Li, what you said doesn't make sense."

"It was indeed Changying who arranged for Charlie to go to the orphanage."

"But it was definitely not him who arranged for Charlie to marry the girl from the Willson family."

"So how could he have arranged it in advance?"

"For Leon to take Charlie's wife away without Charlie's knowledge?"

Duncan explained, "I think it's very likely that he didn't simply leave Leon as a minister to be entrusted to Young Master Wade."

"But instead gave Leon certain powers and allowed him to privately form a team."

"After all, this matter was so well-planned and closely connected that it was definitely not something that could be accomplished by just a few people."

"While the core philosophy of this team still revolves around helping Young Master Wade,"

"Its specific actions are all based on Leon's subjective will."

"When Leon feels that the Willson family girl and her parents remaining with Young Master Wade will indeed affect Young Master Wade's revenge plan,"

"It makes sense for him to try every possible means to get the Willson family away from Young Master Wade."

Marshal and Marcus both sent a thumbs-up emoji.

## Chapter 7018

Marshal said, "I think Old Li's analysis is closest to reality."

Marcus said, "I also support Inspector Li's analysis."

Charlie also felt that Duncan's analysis was correct.

His father had foresight, leaving Leon with a mission to protect him for twenty years,

And it was impossible not to give him autonomy.

So, Leon might have secretly established a team that obeyed his orders over the years.

He had not told anyone about the existence of this team except him and his team members,

Even though he himself was unaware of it.

So, he said, "Inspector Li, Butler Tang has disappeared in Australia."

"But I suspect he hasn't left yet."

"I need you to immediately instruct the AI model to search for him in the ground network system."

"I want to see if I can locate his movement path during this period."

Because of the huge investment, Charlie's ground network system has long been spread across major airports, docks, and stations around the world.

Vending machines in various countries have been acquired by Wade family shell companies around the world.

Vending machine surveillance data is uploaded to the vending machine operating company's servers in real time,

Backed up there and synchronized with the AI model.

Every day, the AI model receives surveillance data from hundreds of millions of passengers worldwide.

It automatically records the faces captured by the vending machines and then categorizes hundreds of millions of people based on their facial features.

While it doesn't know a person's first name or last name,

It remembers the appearance of every person it encounters and converts their facial features into data.

Each facial feature is stored in its own database.

Whenever another camera captures that facial feature and the data matches,

The subsequent capture is also added to the database for that facial feature.

This allows the system to track a person's movements.

For example, if the system first captures Zhang San at an Airport, it will then automatically capture Zhang San's appearances at airports in Beijing, Tokyo, New York, London, Paris, and even Afghanistan, and automatically aggregate the subsequent data.

This way, Zhang San's movements are recorded.

With billions of people worldwide, the collection, storage, and processing of such a massive amount of information requires staggering computing power and storage space.

Fortunately, Charlie's AI model possesses the world's most powerful computing power,

Allowing it to collect, store, and analyze data with impunity.

Billions of travelers' information was recorded by the AI model.

While many people's information might simply be stored and never accessed,

If it were needed, it would surely reveal clues.

Unless, of course, he never used public transportation.

What Charlie didn't expect was that the AI model didn't find any information matching Leon's.

And what Charlie was certain of was that all Australian airports have vending machines.

This meant that Leon had never used public transportation!

Charlie felt a surge of panic, for he hadn't expected Leon to possess such unfathomable abilities.

Not only did he leave no record of his true identity upon entering Australia,

He even lost his video footage!

He had traveled to other countries before using fake identities,

But in most cases, he had to fly through customs.

Once he boarded a plane and left the terminal,

It was impossible not to leave behind any visual information.

Furthermore, some vending machines were strategically placed near customs and airport security checkpoints.

Everyone who entered these areas had to remove their hats and masks,

And their facial information was inevitably collected.

The AI model had no information about Leon,

Proving he definitely hadn't left the airport terminal.

Duncan immediately felt the pinch.

He asked Charlie:

"Master Wade, has Mrs. Wade been abroad recently?"

"Recently?"\

Charlie said: "The last time we went abroad was when we went to the Maldives together around the Spring Festival."

Duncan asked again: "Did you separate when you went to the Maldives?"

"Or to put it more bluntly, is it possible that Leon secretly met Mrs. Wade in the Maldives?"

"Impossible."

Charlie said, "Claire and I were inseparable during that time."

"And there was also a mercenary attack on the island at that time."

"It is impossible for Butler Tang to be on the island."

After that, Charlie asked again: "Why are you asking this?"

Duncan said, "First of all, I personally think that since he was able to persuade Mrs. Wade to make the important decision to leave Master Wade, he must have met with Mrs. Wade."

"And it must have been in a very safe and private place."

"He had a detailed discussion with her using both reason and emotion."

"Otherwise, he would not have been able to persuade her."

"Secondly, if Mrs. Wade has only been abroad once recently, and this time she was with Master Wade the whole time,"

"Then it proves that Leon's face-to-face persuasion of Mrs. Wade did not happen abroad, but in China!"

"Given that Leon just disappeared again in Australia, this suggests two possibilities:

First, Leon hasn't left China since his previous disappearance.

Second, he had already left China when he disappeared,

But quietly returned to China to persuade Mrs. Wade."

"Whichever the actual situation is, it shows that Leon seems to be much more powerful than we imagined."

"Because, since the establishment of our underground network system,"

"We have never captured any information about him. "

"If it is the first case, then he left China for Australia this time and completely concealed his whereabouts."

"If it is the second case, then he left China for an unknown country the first time."

"Returned to China from that unknown country the second time,"

"And then went from China to Australia the third time,"

"All of which were completely concealed."

"Besides, let's talk about Mrs. Wade's family."

"If he can also take people like Mrs. Wade and her family, who have clearly left obvious traces of their lives,"

"Out of China without leaving a trace, then his whereabouts are even more unfathomable!"

"To have such capabilities, there must be an extremely large and powerful backing force that provides convenience in all aspects."

"This backing force may be stronger than we imagine, even stronger than us."

Marshal interrupted him: "Is it so exaggerated, Old Li?"

"Nowadays, Charlie's industry, combined with the industries of the Wade family and the An family, dare not say it is the best in the world."

"But it should be second only to the Warriors Den and the Rothschild family."

"Leon is just the steward of the Wade family. How could he be stronger than us?"

Duncan said, "Marshal, this is like seeing a fresh, just-chewed piece of gum on the moon."

"When we see it, we can't think about which idiot is so uncultured that he actually ran to the moon to spit out gum."

"What we have to think about is what kind of organization has the ability to send people to the moon, and also has the ability to let people chew and spit out gum in the ultra-high vacuum environment of the moon."

"This is too terrifying."

"From what I have seen,"

"I personally feel that the power behind Leon is no longer something that can be described as a team."

"It's simply an empire!"

## Chapter 7019

Duncan's words made everyone, including Charlie, feel a chill in their hearts.

Leon was Changying's confidant.

He had the ability, but it was impossible for him to have such an ability.

Charlie couldn't help but recall the experience he had at Qingzhao Temple outside the Shiwan Mountains.

It seemed that there really was a behemoth,

Just like himself, who was fighting against the Warriors Den in the dark.

However, he really couldn't imagine where this behemoth came from.

But the only thing to be thankful for was that this organization was not an enemy.

But even if the other party was not an enemy,

This act of forcibly interfering in his private life made him very angry.

Duncan said at this time:

"By the way, Master Wade, I suggest that we look for information about your wife and family in our underground network system,"

"To see if they have used public transportation."

Charlie sighed: "I don't think so."

"Leon's plan is so thorough, he shouldn't take such things lightly."

Duncan said, "When we do criminal investigations,"

"We sometimes encounter clues that we know are impossible,"

"But according to professional regulations, we must actually investigate and confirm that it is 100% impossible before we give up."

Charlie knew that the work of the police is very rigorous and has strict implementation standards.

It is impossible to just make assumptions based on common sense,

And deny a certain line, so he said:

"Then you try it first."

Soon, the AI model returned the results.

Duncan said: "The underground network system has indeed not captured Mrs. Wade and her family in the past two days."

"From this point of view, we can be sure that people left Aurous Hill through special channels."

Charlie said in the group in a hoarse voice:

"Inspector Li, I beg you to help me track down Leon's whereabouts and find out the organization and the mastermind behind him!"

"During this period, all resources and personnel are at your disposal."

"I hope you won't refuse!"

Duncan hurriedly said, "Master Wade, you are too polite."

"You saved my life, so I naturally have no choice but to do this!"

Then, he sent another message:

"How about this, Master Wade? I will set off tonight and go to Australia first to see if I can find any clues."

"However, I suggest that we arrange another team."

"Starting from Aurous Hill, to track down the movements of your wife and her family."

"This clue should be easier to track down than Leon."

Charlie hurriedly said, "Inspector Li, I have arranged for the He family and the ninjas of the Japanese Ito family to assist in the investigation."

"They have certain strengths and anti-reconnaissance awareness,"

"And the investigation should be faster than that of ordinary police."

"However, you will be in charge of all these people at that time."

"I will let the person in charge report the progress to you in real time and obey your command."

"That's great,"

Duncan said. "Since Mrs. Wade didn't take public transportation,"

"Let's start by checking the surveillance cameras in your complex."

"If she left on foot, have her check what mode of transportation she took and where she ultimately went."

"If she took another mode of transportation, check where she ended up."

"Keep checking until the clues are broken!"

"Okay!"

Charlie said. "I'll tell them right away."

Duncan said, "Please create a group chat."

"I'll communicate directly with them,"

"Eliminating the need for you to relay messages."

"No problem!"

Charlie said. "I'll have Grandpa arrange a private plane to fly you to Australia when you're ready."

## Chapter 7020

At this moment.

In the affluent area of Houston, USA, the Duncan family had just finished dinner in their new home,

Which they had purchased for over a million dollars.

Their daughter, Paula, was already pregnant, and with her due date approaching,

She felt overwhelmed after dinner and retired to her room with her husband, Stephen, to rest.

At that moment, Duncan's wife, Julie, was wearing an apron and clearing the dishes.

Duncan had just finished a group chat with Charlie and his two uncles in the yard and immediately returned home.

He said to his wife, "Julie, I need to go to Australia, right now."

"Going to Australia? So urgent?"

Julie was surprised. "Paula's due soon."

"What's the big deal? You have to leave now?"

"Don't let it affect your chances of seeing your grandchild."

Paula had already been diagnosed with a boy and was due soon.

Her son-in-law, Stephen, had already happily accepted the An family's proposal,

Deciding that the child would take the mother's surname, Li.

The Li family had been a single-line family until Duncan's generation.

When it came to Paula, Duncan had prepared himself for a gruesome rebuke from his father upon his death.

Unexpectedly, the An family helped him turn the tables.

Whether son or grandson, they both inherit half of their family's bloodline.

In this respect, there's no difference.

The real difference lies in the surname.

In China, a surname isn't just a single character; it's the legacy of the family.

Even if a daughter marries someone with the same surname,

The Li surname of one family is completely different from the Li surname of another.

The generation names of one family might read.

Yu Yan Tan Feng Lian, Cheng Zhen Tian Yin Han; Dai Yu Zhi Jun Shu, Mao Can Pei Ming Yuan.

The generation names of another family might read.

"Wei Zheng Bo Xian Zhe, Jian Shu Yao Hua Guang;"

"Xiang Yun Zhao Jin Xiu, Ming Yue Qing Guo Liang."

While a child may share the same surname as their parents,

It's the family name whose name they're included in that family's genealogy that counts as continuing the family line.

If no one from the other family continues the family name,

The ancestral generation name will cease.

The boy in Duncan's daughter's unborn child is confirmed to take the surname Li,

So he or she will inherit Duncan's family's generation name,

And be included in the family tree, ensuring the continuity and growth of the family line.

Therefore, Duncan had long considered this child as his own grandson.

Seeing that his daughter's due date was approaching,

He naturally wanted to stay and wait for the good news,

But now that Charlie was in trouble and needed his help,

He could not delay in any way.

So, he said to his wife, "This time it's a matter with Uncle An's family."

"It's quite urgent, and they need me to go over and help."

"Think about it, our family can be where we are today because of Uncle An's family.

"Paula's due date is still in three days."

"If the labor is late, we may have to wait for a week."

"The situation is urgent now."

"How can I wait until Paula gives birth before going?"

Julie nodded in understanding and said,

"But it's already past nine o'clock."

"How can you still get a plane to Australia?"

Duncan smiled and said,

"When I say it is an emergency, the plane is ready."

Julie said nervously, "It's so urgent."

"There won't be any danger, right?"

"No." Duncan comforted her,

"I'm just going to help Uncle An and the others investigate the whereabouts of someone."

"It's nothing serious and there's no danger. Don't worry."

Julie breathed a sigh of relief and said,

"Then you must pay attention to safety too."

"It will take you at least ten days or half a month to go back and forth."

"I estimate that when you come back, your grandson will be taken home."

"We will wait for you to come back safely at home."

"Okay!"

Duncan smiled and said, "If anything happens to my daughter,"

"Go to the hospital immediately."

"Remember to update me if you have any news!"

## Chapter 7021

While Duncan was flying to Australia, numerous Japanese ninjas also immediately set out for China.

Thanks to China's recent visa-free policy, hundreds of ninjas, free of any prior paperwork, simply arrived from various airports on chartered flights provided by the Ito family, with their passports in hand.

Ruoli, before the ninjas arrived, had already begun her investigation with the He family.

She borrowed several of the Su family's security personnel from her sister, Zhiyu.

And had them hack into Tomson's surveillance system and roadside surveillance,

Immediately retrieving all the footage from the past two days.

Analyzing the footage, they quickly found footage of Claire and her family departing in a commercial vehicle.

However, Ruoli was surprised to find that the car's windows completely blocked out any view of the interior as it passed the surveillance camera.

The rear windows were covered in black privacy film, obscuring any view of the interior,

But the front windshield, inexplicably, became a mirrored surface beneath the camera.

Ruoli initially dismissed the issue,

But as she tracked the incident through the surveillance cameras and reached the highway, something strange happened.

The highway surveillance doesn't cover the entire route.

The footage is segmented, each separated by at least a kilometer.

So, in one surveillance frame, Claire's car was clearly visible,

But in the next seven identical cars appeared.

Ruoli was stunned.

"What's going on? Where did all these cars come from?"

The Su family's technician explained:

"Second Miss, these cars suddenly appeared. It seems they were already waiting on the road."

"They weren't in the same frame before, but now they've all converged."

Ruoli zoomed in, scrutinizing each car, frowning.

"These cars look identical."

"No license plates, nothing special."

"Now it's impossible to tell which car Mrs. Wade is in..."

Then, in the next surveillance frame,

The number of identical cars continued to increase.

Continuing to track along the surveillance, the technician said in confusion:

"Second Miss, the number of vehicles of the same type here is still increasing,"

"And we found that they are constantly overtaking each other in the surveillance footage."

"It is probably the same when we can't take pictures."

"In this case, it is basically impossible for us to locate which one is the target vehicle."

Ruoli said solemnly:

"The other party is not only well prepared, but also a little too well prepared..."

Another technician blurted out:

"Second Miss, there are already cars leaving the highway from here."

"Should we continue to track along the vehicles leaving the highway?"

Ruoli said, "We can't tell which one is the target vehicle at all."

"If we have to track every single one of them, we alone wouldn't be enough."

After that, she thought of a detail and quickly asked,

"Quickly check which lane they used to exit the highway."

"Was it a manual lane or the ETC?"

The technician brought up the toll booth video and said,

"Second Miss, it's the ETC."

Ruoli felt like she had grasped a clue and said,

"Even if the car didn't have a license plate, it must have left its vehicle information when applying for the ETC."

"Let's check the records in the ETC system!"

The technician busied himself at the computer for a moment, then said,

"We found the Second Miss. The license plate is an Aurous Hill license plate, number ck196."

Ruoli said excitedly: "Then quickly check the registration information of this CK196!"

The other party replied: "The owner's name is Jacob Willson, and the registered vehicle information is a Rolls-Royce Cullinan."

"Jacob Willson?"

Ruoli frowned and said, "This...how is this possible?"

Ruoli naturally knew Jacob's situation.

She knew that Jacob had the most expensive Rolls-Royce Cullinan.

Why would this commercial vehicle use his ETC?

So, Ruoli asked: "Can the current ETC be removed without damage?"

"I remember that it couldn't be used after it was removed before."

"And it had to be reactivated."

A staff member said, "ETC is much more relaxed now. There is no need to go to a designated location for installation."

"If you buy it online, it can be mailed directly to your home."

"And it can also be activated on your behalf."

"The previous ETC had an elastic switch."

"It would be activated after being stuck on the glass."

"After being removed from the glass, the elastic switch would be invalid when it was opened."

"But now if you buy it online, the seller can directly stick the elastic switch with a hard object,"

"So it doesn't need to be stuck on the glass and can be placed anywhere."

Ruoli said with some surprise:

"So, Jacob took the ETC from Cullinan and put it into this car."

After that, she immediately ordered:

"Keep an eye on this car for me,"

"I want to know where it has been and where it finally went!"

"Okay, Second Miss."

Ruoli thought that she had found a clue as soon as she came up,

But unexpectedly, another staff member soon said:

"Second Miss, I also see a car getting off the highway here."

"It also took the ETC channel."

"I checked in the system, and its ETC information is also CK196."

"What's going on?"

Ruoli suddenly felt something was wrong, and asked quickly:

"Did they copy Jacob Willson's ETC?"

The technician said, "The logic of ETC is the encryption key."

"It is difficult for ordinary people to crack it, but for professionals, it is very simple to crack it."

"It's just that cracking it is of little value."

"In theory, as long as all the electronic tags of a certain car can be deciphered, it can be copied."

The joy that Ruoli had just felt disappeared in an instant.

She sighed and said, "It seems that these identical cars are using identical ETC labels."

"In this way, every car cannot be cleared of suspicion."

The technician said solemnly, "Second Miss, the number of identical cars is still increasing."

"There are at least 30 of them now."

Ruoli, unable to come up with a plan, quickly sent the information about the situation to Charlie.

When Charlie saw the surveillance footage, he was equally stunned.

He hadn't expected Leon to go to such lengths to relocate Claire and her parents.

It seemed he truly didn't want him to find Claire!

## Chapter 7022

Anxiously, Charlie quickly added Ruoli to the group chat and forwarded all the videos Ruoli had sent to the group.

Duncan was on a plane, and since it was the An family's private jet, it had high-speed internet.

After viewing the videos, he immediately replied,

"Young Master Wade, in all my years in the industry, I've never seen such a large-scale operation."

"This is a brilliant move."

"All the cars are identical, which means our workload has been multiplied dozens of times."

"This isn't good!"

Charlie asked, "Inspector Li, do you have any ideas for speeding up the identification process?"

Duncan pondered for a long time before suddenly having an idea.

"I'll send these videos to the AI model and see if it can identify anything!"

Duncan rarely encountered such a daunting case.

Previous cases had been difficult due to a lack of clues, such as fragmented fingerprints and shoe prints, blurry surveillance footage, and so on.

But this time, there were too many clues, a dizzying amount.

The surveillance footage showed dozens of identical cars entering the highway,

Then, take different detours or exit the highway.

Most astonishingly, they were all using the same vehicle's ETC system.

This meant they had also hacked into the highway's toll collection system.

He now had numerous avenues to investigate,

Such as the daily routes of each vehicle and their origins.

He could investigate who had purchased so many identical commercial vehicles, which vehicle management office had recently accepted registrations for vehicles of the same model,

And whether the hackers had left any traces in the ETC system.

However, when there were too many clues, it became almost the same as having no clues at all.

Every clue could be investigated, but no one knew whether further investigation would lead to a dead end or to another hidden trap.

What if the vehicle owner is found, and then the information is traced, only to find it's fabricated?

What if traces of the hacker are found,

But the information left behind is also a deliberate trap?

Therefore, Duncan didn't want to waste his time on this.

His greatest hope was that AI could pinpoint Claire's vehicle by detecting subtle anomalies, too subtle for a human to detect.

If he could single out a single vehicle from dozens of them, everything would be much simpler.

So, he fed all the video footage into the AI model, letting it analyze the differences between the vehicles.

The AI immediately analyzed the vehicles from multiple dimensions and concluded that there were no external differences.

Not even distinct stains, proving that they had been thoroughly cleaned before departure.

If necessary, the AI could also assess the suspension's behavior while the vehicle was in motion.

For example, the AI could use video footage to determine the road's undulations and estimate the slope.

Then, based on the vehicle's speed, it could determine the suspension's behavior as the vehicle passed over a certain level of undulation.

Whether using conventional springs, air suspension, or electromagnetic suspension, a vehicle's body compresses or releases as it travels over an undulating road.

The major factors that determine the amplitude of fluctuations are the slope of the road surface, the speed of the vehicle, the tuning of the vehicle suspension, and the curb weight of the vehicle.

If there is a difference in any of these four points, the performance of the vehicle suspension will be different.

The point of entry of AI is that since they are all the same models, their suspensions must be the same.

The slope of the road surface and the driving speed can be calculated by AI to determine whether the same car shows the same reaction coefficient when it passes different slopes at different speeds.

The only variable that cannot be calculated is the curb weight of the vehicle.

The heavier the car, the lower the degree of fluctuation when dealing with ups and downs, and vice versa.

Just like a fully loaded ship will be more stable when dealing with waves.

AI listed a lot of its own entry points, which made Duncan feel very reasonable,

So he immediately authorized AI to analyze along this line of thought.

However, after the AI ran at full speed for dozens of seconds, it reported:

"I calculated the road slope, vehicle speed, and vehicle undulation in the video to obtain a reaction coefficient."

"After comparison, I found that the reaction coefficients for all vehicles were the same, which is counterintuitive."

Duncan immediately asked, "What do you mean by counterintuitive?"

The AI replied, "If the reaction coefficients calculated using these three points are the same for all vehicles, it only proves that their curb weights are similar."

"If their weights vary significantly, the reaction coefficients for each vehicle should be different."

“Lighter vehicles have higher reaction coefficients, and heavier vehicles have lower ones.”

Duncan exclaimed in astonishment, “How could dozens of cars have the exact same weight?”

“Even if other vehicles were to arrive, their fuel consumption would vary due to the distances they’d covered.”

“A difference in fuel consumption would also mean a difference in weight!”

The AI replied, “Due to insufficient video accuracy, my analysis of the suspension height itself has an error of at least one centimeter.”

“And the weight difference should be within that error.”

“In other words, if my accuracy is accurate to two decimal places, their error is three, which is beyond my ability to judge.”

“If the overall weight difference doesn’t exceed five kilograms, I can’t detect it.”

Duncan practically cursed.

While it’s unclear which car Claire was riding in, it’s certain there were at least four people in it, including the driver.

The weight of the dozens of other cars was identical to that of this one,

Proving, first of all, that Claire’s car had a built-in weighing system, capable of calculating the vehicle’s curb weight the moment the family boarded.

Secondly, the other vehicles’ reaction speed was extremely fast.

Just half an hour later, they joined Claire’s car on the highway.

This proved that they had adjusted their weight in a very short time and could even calculate a rough estimate of fuel consumption.

The vehicle weighed only about two tons unladen.

To carry four adults, at least another 300 kilograms would be added.

For a 2,300-kilogram vehicle, the weight difference was controlled within 5 kilograms, which was considered very accurate.

Duncan asked the AI: "From the current data, is there any way you can find the difference between these vehicles?"

The AI replied: "The current video data are all surveillance videos with limited accuracy."

"You need to provide more and more accurate data for analysis."

Then, the AI said, "If it is from May to October, it would be relatively easy for me to analyze this matter."

"But it's a pity that the time is wrong."

Duncan was surprised and asked it:

"Why is the time wrong? What is special about May to October?"

The AI replied: "There are more mosquitoes from May to October."

"When every car is driving at high speed, the front of the car will collide with a large number of mosquitoes. Although there are many mosquitoes, just like fingerprints and QR codes, as long as they are compared with each other, it is absolutely impossible for any car to hit the same insect corpses in front."

"In that case, it is easy to locate the other party, but mosquitoes have not started a new round of reproduction this season."

"And there are no details that can be used to distinguish."

Duncan sighed. He couldn't understand who would be so cautious,

So cautious that even the weight of the car would be controlled so accurately.

Normally, no one would consider this aspect, and even if they did, they wouldn't be so precise,

Unless this person knew what they were facing and had already prepared.

At this thought, Duncan suddenly felt a chill run down his spine, wondering,

"Could this person have known Charlie had an AI model?"

Then, his suspicions were instantly confirmed.

"That must be it!"

He immediately called Charlie, gravely analyzing the situation before delivering his conclusion:

"Young Master, whoever that person is, they were fully aware of your capabilities."

"They knew you had an AI model, and they even knew you would ask me for help with the investigation."

"That's why they planned everything flawlessly from the outset, preventing the AI from picking up any flaws."

"Such a strong control ability, able to precisely command so many people without a single mistake,"

"It is truly someone who is a master of planning and winning from afar!"

Charlie was startled by this and muttered,

"Even when we were evacuating our death squad, our thinking wasn't as meticulous, and our attention to detail wasn't nearly as precise..."

"Who on earth could be so obsessed with such details?"

Duncan sighed, "Master Wade, I've lived for over fifty years."

"And I've only met two people with this ability."

Charlie hurriedly asked, "Who are they?"

Duncan said, "One was your father, and the other was your mother."

## Chapter 7023

Duncan's sigh didn't prompt Charlie to dwell on this matter,

But instead, he felt a surge of pressure.

In Duncan's eyes, the other party possessed abilities comparable to his parents.

His first thought was, given his formidable abilities,

Could he still find Claire?

Duncan himself didn't dwell on it much.

He simply sighed, thinking that for someone like him,

He only knew Charlie's father and mother,

And it had never occurred to him that either of them was still alive.

Charlie couldn't help but sigh,

"Detective Li, they've created so many smokescreens."

"Leaving behind so many true and false clues."

"How should we proceed?"

Duncan paused for a moment, then asked,

"Master Wade, are you determined to find Mrs. Wade?"

Charlie blurted out,

“Of course. I will find her no matter what!”

Duncan smiled, “Then don’t worry too much.”

“I’ll do my best to help you sort through the clues until we find Mrs. Wade!”

Charlie felt a sense of relief at this.

Knowing Duncan’s character and abilities,

His words reassured him at least halfway.

...

Houston and Melbourne are nearly 15,000 kilometers apart.

The An family’s plane would need to stop and refuel,

So the entire journey would take at least 17 or 18 hours.

Charlie had no experience investigating cases,

And with Duncan absent, he could only clumsily begin by examining the surveillance footage,

Attempting to trace Leon’s movements.

But Leon proved far more cautious than Charlie had imagined.

First, all the hospital’s surveillance footage was inoperable.

According to the hospital, the cause was a virus in the computer room,

Corrupting the hard drives holding the footage and making data recovery nearly impossible.

Second, the surveillance footage surrounding the hospital had been vandalized before the incident.

Someone had fired lead pellets from an air gun,

Shattering the camera lenses or disrupting the transmission lines.

These lead pellets are activated by compressed gas, lacking gunpowder, and produce a virtually silent discharge.

While not as powerful as a real gun,

Its near-zero recoil makes it incredibly accurate when used with a high-precision air rifle and scope.

This type of firearm is legal in many countries and far outnumbers real guns.

Many farmers use it to hunt rats and wolves.

A single shot from a hundred or two hundred meters away can easily penetrate a rat's skull,

While shattering lenses or cables is no problem.

Furthermore, the coverage and angles of the cameras themselves are often limited,

So if the attacker carefully positions and distances,

A side shot can go undetected.

Melbourne's surveillance coverage is already much lower than that of major Chinese cities,

With many areas lacking cross-surveillance systems.

Therefore, if a camera is knocked out, the area becomes a blind spot.

This is precisely why the police have been unable to find any witnesses or any useful leads.

While Charlie was at his wits' end,

Leon had already taken off from Port Hedland Airport, bound for Osaka, Japan.

Just as he had entered Australia,

He again, through Margaret's arrangement, entered the airport through unauthorized means and departed directly on a special cargo plane.

This method of departure allowed him to remain almost completely hidden,

Making it impossible to simply trace him.

Unless they could find a key person and extract information from them,

They would remain completely in the dark.

Meanwhile, Kinkakuji Temple in Kyoto,

A renowned temple in Japan was completely closed.

Kinkakuji Temple normally undergoes renovations every one or two years,

But most of the work involved is relatively minor, consisting of repainting, gilding, and minor repairs.

Which could be completed in a few nights.

However, this time, the Temple announced that several buildings, due to their age, posed significant safety risks and would undergo extensive renovations.

Requiring closure for at least a month and a half.

Margaret had taken up residence there.

Jing Qing had secretly arrived a few days earlier,

Having already communicated with his disciple, the abbot of Kinkakuji Temple.

The abbot of Kinkakuji Temple, Kongyin, is a 125-year-old, highly accomplished monk.

## Chapter 7024

Though his energy levels have faded, his passion for Buddhism remains undiminished.

His disciples once showed him a video of Master Jingqing giving a lecture,

And Kongyin was deeply impressed by his profound understanding of the Dharma.

Convinced that after 110 years of monastic life,

His understanding of the Dharma was still only 60% or 70% of Jingqing's.

He resolutely decided to accept Jingqing as his teacher, his final guide.

Last year, Kongyin personally traveled to Putuo Mountain,

Ostensibly to facilitate a Buddhist exchange between Chinese and Japanese monks,

But in reality, to meet with Jingqing and personally propose his discipleship.

Jingqing initially declined, but Kongyin, deeply captivated by his exposition of the Dharma,

Not only knelt before Jingqing and pleaded,

But also solemnly accepted the position in front of both Chinese and Japanese media.

Kongyin's actions weren't meant to be morally coercive.

He was a leading figure in Japanese Buddhist scholarship, and publicly accepting the young Jingqing's apprenticeship would have lowered his stature.

However, he remained unconcerned, believing firmly in the proverb, "If one hears the truth in the morning, one can die in the evening."

He hoped that in his final years, he would have the opportunity to comprehend the most profound Buddhist teachings currently available.

After all, the Buddhist scriptures, dating back thousands of years, were no longer accessible to everyone.

The more profound one's study, the deeper one's understanding.

And like the practice of Buddhism,

Even a mere level of advancement can make a world of difference.

Jingqing feared Kongyin's actions would cause too much noise and draw unnecessary attention,

So he reluctantly agreed to accept Kongyin as an unofficial disciple,

Teaching him the Dharma while keeping their master-disciple relationship secret.

Kongyin had been practicing Buddhism for 110 years and was extremely devout.

Since Jingqing had agreed to teach him the Dharma,

He fully complied with all his requests.

Thus, no one outside the temple knew that the two, despite a significant age difference of several decades,

Actually had a master-disciple relationship.

A few days ago, upon learning that Jingqing wished to retreat to Kinkaku-ji Temple for a period of time,

He immediately arranged for its reconstruction and reserved one of its most secluded courtyards for Jingqing.

Not only did he refrain from visiting,

But he also strictly prohibited anyone else in the temple from approaching.

Margaret and Sister Sun's group temporarily took up residence there.

At that moment, Jingqing was discussing Buddhism with Kongyin in his meditation room.

Margaret was alone in the courtyard,

Lost in thought as he gazed at the newly sprouted old pine trees.

Sister Sun crossed the corridor in the courtyard and walked quickly to the front.

She whispered respectfully, "Madam, Leon has taken off and is expected to arrive in Osaka in eight hours."

"I have arranged for someone to pick him up and bring him to Kyoto as soon as possible."

Margaret nodded and asked, "What's going on with Charlie?"

Sister Sun said, "He has arranged for many people to investigate in China."

"And the Ito family has also sent a number of ninjas to help."

Margaret said lightly, "It doesn't matter."

"Let them investigate."

"No matter how they investigate, the clues will be broken at several key points."

"With so many circuit breakers, it's impossible for all of them to fail."

Sister Sun added, "But I just heard that Inspector Li left Houston for Melbourne."

Margaret frowned slightly and blurted out,

"Inspector Li? Duncan Li?"

"Yes!"

Sister Sun nodded. "The young master saved his life."

"I think now is the time for him to repay his kindness."

Margaret pursed her lips for a moment and said solemnly,

"Duncan is in trouble."

"For him, as long as he has enough time, any case can be solved."

"Investigating us should not be a difficult task."

"With his ability, one or two years is enough."

Sister Sun said worriedly,

"One or two years is too short a time window."

"The possibility of the young master surpassing the Warriors Den in one or two years is very small..."

Margaret smiled and said, "It doesn't matter."

"Duncan is a smart man."

"If he really finds our actual clues,"

"I will go to see him. He will always give me a face."

At this point, her expression froze, and she said solemnly,

"No matter what, it is most important not to delay Charlie's development."

"Victoria doesn't have much time left."

"She will only become crazier and more crazy and hysterical in the future."

"Charlie must be fully prepared."

"Otherwise, once she is determined to do whatever she wants,"

"The An family and the Wade family will become her targets!"

## Chapter 7025

As Duncan's plane was about to land in Melbourne, Claire's cargo ship had already sailed out of the Yellow Sea and into the East China Sea.

Having been aboard for nearly twenty-four hours, Claire had barely rested, constantly replaying the memories of her years with Charlie.

Elaine and Jacob had been comatose and were just beginning to show signs of waking.

Meglina approached Claire's door, knocked gently, and said respectfully,

"Ms. Willson, your parents are almost awake."

Claire came to her senses, wiped away the tears that were drying from her eyes, and hurriedly opened the door, asking, "Can I go see them?"

"Of course," Meglina said.

"They'll probably have a lot of questions when they wake up, and I'll have to trouble you to answer them later."

Claire nodded, "Of course, I'll explain everything to them."

Meglina then said respectfully, "Ms. Willson, please follow me."

In the medical room, Claire met his parents, who were still in a coma.

Claire had visited several times over the past twenty-four hours.

Each time, she felt a sense of relief when she saw through the window that her parents were soundly asleep, their vital signs normal.

This time, Meglina took her directly into the medical room, allowing her to sit directly between Jacob and Elaine's beds.

It was then that Claire realized that, while her parents hadn't yet woken up,

They had begun to stir and scratch, apparently emerging from a deep sleep.

As Elaine's consciousness gradually returned, she felt the most restful sleep she had ever experienced in her life.

It felt as if every cell in her body had been completely relaxed.

She couldn't help but stretch, and when she opened her eyes,

She was drowsy and saw a figure sitting beside her bed.

Startled, she opened her eyes and took a closer look, only to discover it was her daughter.

At this time, Claire's big eyes were red and slightly swollen.

It was obvious that she had been crying, so she quickly asked:

"Claire, what's wrong with you? Why are you crying?"

After she finished speaking, she suddenly found that her finger was still connected to the blood oxygen monitor, and there was a blood pressure monitor on her arm.

She was shocked. In a panic, she saw Jacob still lying quietly next to her.

This was not a bedroom. It seemed that both of them were lying on the hospital bed.

The nervous Elaine quickly asked:

"Claire, I...what's wrong with me?"

"Why are we in the hospital?! Did we have a car accident?!"

Claire quickly wiped away her tears, forced a smile, and said:

"Mom, we didn't have a car accident; it's just that you and Dad slept for too long."

"So the cruise staff arranged special supervision for you."

Elaine breathed a sigh of relief.

Jacob, who was standing beside her, also woke up at this time and was also shocked by the scene.

Elaine, on the other hand, was much calmer and said to him,

"Look, this luxury cruise ship is different."

"This ward is no different from the high-end wards in those high-end private hospitals, right?"

After saying that, she suddenly thought of something and quickly asked,

"Claire, this... this place must charge a lot, right?"

"I saw them say that those private hospitals charge five-digit fees for a night's hospitalization!"

Claire could only smile and said, "This... is free."

Elaine's nervousness disappeared in an instant, and she said with a smile,

"No money, that's great."

Claire was a little dazed at this time.

She thought about explaining the whole story to her parents when they woke up,

And she also conceived a variety of words in her mind,

But she always felt that no matter what she said, she didn't know where to start.

At this time, Jacob suddenly asked:

"Claire, why don't I have any recollection of boarding the ship?"

"Did we fall asleep as soon as we left home? Weren't we awake when we boarded the ship?"

Claire stammered: "Yes... I saw you were sleeping so soundly,"

"So I didn't disturb you."

Jacob said in surprise, "This is too strange. We didn't wake up when there was such a big commotion boarding the ship?"

After saying that, he asked again: "By the way, Claire, how long have we been on the ship?"

Claire replied unnaturally: "About twenty-four hours."

"Dmn." Jacob rubbed his temples and said in disbelief:

"I fell asleep as soon as I got in the car, and slept until I got on the boat."

"It's okay to sleep until I get on the boat, but I slept for 24 hours on the boat."

"I have never slept for such a long time in my life."

"Could there be something wrong with my body..."

As he said, he subconsciously wanted to find his mobile phone, and muttered:

"I have to ask my friends in the hospital if this situation is not right."

"If not, I will go to the hospital for a deep check when I go back."

Jacob felt that now was the best time of his life.

People have become particularly cherishing their lives and attaching more importance to their health than ever before.

While talking, he couldn't find his mobile phone anywhere,

So he asked Claire: "Claire, have you seen my mobile phone? Is it lost?"

When Elaine heard this, she also began to look around, but she also didn't see her mobile phone.

She blurted out, "My mobile phone is gone too."

"Could it be that the staff stole it from me?"

Seeing that both of them were a little anxious,

Claire could only bite the bullet and say,

"Dad, Mom, your cell phones have been temporarily confiscated."

"Confiscated?"

Elaine got anxious when she heard it and said angrily,

"How fresh! They didn't confiscate my cell phone even though I was on a cruise."

"What do they think this is? Don't they know that the customer is God?"

Claire explained bit by bit,

"Dad, Mom, we...we are not on a cruise this time..."

"Not a cruise?"

Jacob said puzzledly, "Claire, you have confused me."

"Didn't you say we were taking a cruise to Tahiti?"

"What else could it be if not a cruise?"

Claire said, "We are on a cargo ship this time."

"The cargo ship is indeed taking us to Tahiti."

"But we are not going to Tahiti, but to one of the archipelagos there."

Elaine said impatiently, "No matter which island we are going to, it is always inappropriate to take our cell phones."

"How can there be such a service provider?"

Claire pursed her lips and looked at the two of them, one hand picking at the nails of the other hand nervously, and whispered,

"Dad, Mom, we are not going back after we go out this time."

"Not going back?"

The couple was even more confused.

Elaine got up from the bed and asked anxiously:

"Claire, what's wrong with you? Why are you talking so vaguely and incoherently today?"

"If you weren't my daughter, I would have thought you had kidnapped us."

Claire made up her mind and said frankly:

"Dad, Mom, we are going to the South Pacific this time. We will not return to Aurous Hill in the future, or even return to China."

"You can no longer have any contact with relatives and friends in China."

"In other words, we will disappear from the Chinese world so that no one can find us."

"Why?" Elaine was anxious and blurted out:

"We haven't committed any crime or violated any law."

"Why should we disappear from the world?"

After that, she suddenly widened her eyes:

"Oh, Claire! Did Charlie have trouble reading feng shui for someone outside?"

"Could it be... Could it be that he offended a big shot?"

Claire was a little stunned.

She didn't expect her mother to think about this.

Jacob, on the side, also seemed to be influenced by Elaine, and immediately said:

"Oh! I said a long time ago that Charlie is not that kind of material."

"When he first married into our family, he couldn't even cook a delicious meal."

"Suddenly, one day, he became a Feng Shui master."

"I asked him where he learned it from, and he was vague, saying that he learned it from TV or from a book he bought from a roadside stall."

"This... this is not good at all! Isn't it just relying on eloquence to cheat money?"

"If he cheats less, he may get away with it, but if he cheats too much, he will be exposed sooner or later!"

Elaine also sighed worriedly: "Yes! The key is that he can cheat people out of money if he wants to. His appetite is surprisingly big."

"He said that the Wang family gave him a villa worth more than 100 million, and he really dared to take it?"

"Every time he reads Feng Shui for someone, he charges millions or even tens of millions. It's a small matter if he can't see any effect."

"What if he makes things worse and causes the person's Feng Shui to suffer losses?"

"And then the person's business is damaged, and the family is destroyed, won't the person fight him to the death? "

Speaking of this, Elaine became more excited, clapped her hands, and said with regret:

"And that Orvel, he is a figure in society, fighting and killing all his life,"

"What kind of good thing can he be doing? Even though he usually praises Charlie every day, isn't Charlie still of some use value?"

"He asks Charlie to do feng shui for his friends every day."

"In my opinion, he is just making a profit from the difference and treating Charlie like a beast of burden!"

"Take the last time he went to the west to do feng shui for the mine owner."

"Maybe when Charlie went there, Orvel would ask him for 10 or 20 million, and then give Charlie a few million to get rid of him."

"Although Charlie only took a small share, he would be 100% responsible if something happened. If something happened at the mine, Charlie would definitely be held accountable!"

The two were getting more and more agitated as they spoke.

She said to Jacob, "Look, my daughter's eyes are red and swollen."

"She cried countless times when we were asleep. It must be what I said!"

After that, she looked at Claire and asked nervously,

"Claire, tell Mom the truth. Did Charlie really explode?"

Claire originally wanted to confess Charlie's identity and the current situation to her parents.

But she also worried.

Her mother was obsessed with money, and her father was power-hungry.

If they knew Charlie's true identity—the son of the Wade family and the grandson of the An family—how could they bear to leave this wealthy son-in-law?

Even if she told them that Charlie was facing his father's murderer, their personalities wouldn't care.

After all, danger is only potential, while money and power are real.

What if her parents weren't happy with her decision to leave Charlie?

They might try every possible means to contact him and try to get back together.

But what if they thought Charlie had truly turned mad?

Then, given their personalities, they would probably avoid him.

Forget about them secretly seeking him out; even if he found them, they would probably retreat.

At this thought, she instantly changed her mind and said,

"Mom, you're right..."

## Chapter 7026

Claire's words gave Elaine a new understanding of her own IQ and judgment.

She immediately looked like she knew it and sighed,

"In fact, I've long felt that Charlie is not honest."

"He reads Feng Shui for people every day and accepts large sums of money from them. How can he not get into trouble?"

Jacob also echoed with emotion, "Hey! I should have thought of it earlier! I should have thought of it earlier!"

"So many so-called masters who were famous throughout the country and could call the wind and rain, didn't they all end up being exposed?"

"Some were sent to jail, some even lost their lives, and some were retaliated against!"

After that, he asked Claire, "Claire, tell me, what's going on with Charlie?"

Claire looked at her parents, who seemed to see through everything, sighed helplessly, and said,

"Dad, Mom, Charlie did offend someone."

"It was the trouble caused by reading Feng Shui, and it's quite a big trouble."

"It seems that someone was killed."

"People are now looking for him everywhere to settle accounts."

"He didn't want to implicate us, so he arranged for us to hide in the South Pacific, and he went to other countries to hide."

"The reason I put your cell phones away is because I'm afraid you won't be able to resist contacting others."

"If Charlie's enemies find out, we'll be in trouble."

"They can't find Charlie, but they can find us."

"If they really come looking for us, it might be fatal."

Jacob asked nervously, "Then Charlie arranged for us to go to the South Pacific. Will he come here in the future?"

Claire said, "Charlie said that he won't come to us until the matter is resolved."

"He also asked us not to look for him, let alone go back."

"And not to contact our previous relatives and friends."

"Just live an anonymous life in the South Pacific."

Elaine asked nervously, "We didn't take anything with us when we left!"

"How are we going to live in the South Pacific?"

"It doesn't matter if we have no money, won't we have to go begging on the streets?"

Claire said, "Don't worry, Mom, Charlie has arranged everything."

"He sold the villa in Tomson quietly a long time ago, and negotiated with the buyer to let them wait until the second day of the second lunar month when the dragon rises before taking over the house."

"He just didn't tell you."

"And the car that Dad drove has also been sold."

"It just so happens that the value of our villa has increased a lot now."

"It is worth more than 30 million US dollars."

"Add the car and the money Charlie has saved from reading feng shui for people during this period, which is almost 70 to 80 million US dollars."

"So much money!"

Elaine immediately asked nervously:

"Where did all the money go? Could he have taken it all away?"

Claire said: "Charlie used the money to buy us an island in the South Pacific and hired some bodyguards and servants so that we can live there in peace."

"The prices there are low."

"Even if this matter doesn't work out, we can still have no worries about food and clothing in this life."

Elaine's expression changed immediately, and she asked in surprise:

"Charlie bought us an island?!"

"In other words, the whole island is ours?"

"Yes." Claire nodded and said,

"Charlie has made all the arrangements."

"We just need to live a good life there and ensure that we have enough food and clothing."

"But you must remember, you must not let anyone know where our family of three is; otherwise, these will be taken away."

Elaine breathed a sigh of relief and said,

"Okay, okay, don't worry, I will never contact even my own parents!"

After that, she reminded Jacob, "Remember this, too!"

"Don't tell anyone! You can't reveal our family's whereabouts to anyone, no matter what!"

Jacob nodded repeatedly, "Such a big thing, I can't tell it even if you kill me!"

After that, he suddenly felt a little emotional and said, "Charlie is still affectionate and righteous!"

"He cheated us out of all the money and left it to us."

Elaine nodded and sighed, "It can be said that our family has not supported him in vain all these years."

Jacob thought he might not see Charlie again in the future, and he felt a little melancholy in his heart.

He sighed and said, "To be honest, Charlie is a good guy, but he has become a little arrogant after being praised as Master Wade in the past two years."

"If he had been down-to-earth like before, his life would have been more prosperous."

Elaine thought back to the past and suddenly had some new insights.

She said depressedly, "Hey, you mentioned this."

"There is something I have never told you two..."

Jacob asked, "What is it?"

Elaine said a little embarrassedly,

"Hey, a few years ago, I found a bank card in Charlie's pocket."

"At that time, I had a quarrel with your mother, that damn old lady. I was very short of money, so I thought about seeing if there was any money in Charlie's card to get some money to go to the beauty salon for a face or something."

"I was so unlucky that I actually tried to find out the password of that bank card..."

Jacob was puzzled: "You are an interesting person."

"You can even guess the password of Charlie's bank card."

"So why do you say you have bad luck?"

Elaine felt a throbbing pain in the old injury on her leg and gritted her teeth and said,

"You can never imagine in your dreams that there were tens of billions in that card!"

"How much...how much?!"

Jacob was completely stunned.

He complained: "Elaine, you are not talking in your sleep, are you?"

"Do you know what tens of billions means?"

"You can buy a whole bunch of airplanes with that amount!"

"Even if Charlie is doing feng shui for the Jade Emperor, he can't give him so much money!"

Elaine thought Jacob didn't believe her, and immediately said angrily:

"This is the pain of my life, how can I lie to you?"

Jacob smiled: "Come on, tell me in detail."

"How did Charlie's bank card become the pain of your life?"

Elaine lowered her head and hesitated and struggled for a moment,

Then told the whole story of how she secretly transferred the money and was later taken away by the police.

Jacob was stunned when he heard this and said,

"I always thought that you were deceived by a pyramid scheme organization."

"And the police arrested you because they were cracking down on pyramid schemes."

"I didn't expect... I didn't expect that there was such a hidden secret!"

At this point, Jacob slapped his thigh and sighed sincerely:

"Elaine, Elaine, you woman are so fcuking brave!"

"If I saw 10 billion, my legs would be scared to death."

"You actually dared to transfer it all to your own card!"

"Don't say that the 10 billion belongs to a fraudulent organization."

"Even if it is really Charlie's, do you really think that the money is yours just by transferring it to your card?"

"If Charlie calls the police, you will be shot seven or eight hundred times for the amount involved in the case?"

Elaine's face was also a little embarrassed, and she said:

"I was mainly confused at the time. You also know that in those years, our family was always targeted by that dead old lady because Claire didn't want to divorce Charlie."

"They opposed us everywhere. We were so poor that we could hardly make ends meet."

"Seeing so much money, I couldn't help it all of a sudden."

"I always felt that this time I couldn't have to suffer from poverty anymore,"

"So I transferred all the money to my own card."

"I didn't expect that it was a new method of the fraud group... "

As she said that, she asked carefully: "Do you think Charlie is involved in that fraud group?"

"The police said that he was also a victim, but now it seems that Charlie is not so honest."

"It seems that he is doing fraudulent business when he reads Feng Shui for people recently..."

Claire's face was burning.

Her mother stole 10 billion from Charlie, and she didn't expect that she didn't know how to reflect on it until now.

She even suspected that Charlie was related to the fraud group.

It really made her feel ashamed.

So she interrupted Elaine's speculation and said,

"Mom, don't think about it here. Our good life in the past few years is almost all due to Charlie."

"The road ahead is also paved by him."

"Even if you don't feel grateful, don't think badly of him."

Elaine nodded and said, "Okay, okay, I won't say much."

After that, she asked with concern:

"Claire, did Charlie give you any information about the island?"

"Let Mom take a look first?"

Claire shook her head and said, "There is no information. The time was too short."

"How can I prepare so much? But don't worry, there is everything there."

"And the conditions are definitely not worse than Aurous Hill."

Jacob said with a smile, "Oh, the last time I went there, I didn't spend enough time in the Maldives."

"To have an island of my own, what kind of fairy-like life would that be?"

"I'm kind of yearning for it now!"

Claire said, "The voyage will take quite a long time."

"In order to prevent our enemies from finding out any clues, Charlie has arranged for someone to escort us away."

"He will also take us to change boats in the middle."

"You guys should have a good rest and recuperate first."

"I'll go and say hello to them."

Changing the strategy temporarily, Claire hoped that the staff arranged by Leon would cooperate with her and let her parents completely believe that Charlie arranged for their family to avoid being hunted down after the thunder.

In this way, she could ensure that her parents would never take the initiative to return to China or find a way to contact Charlie.

## Chapter 7027

Claire sent her parents to their room and settled them in.

Seeing the good conditions of the room, the couple immediately felt relieved.

They were most afraid of being at a disadvantage on the way to escape,

And they were also afraid that after arriving on the island in the South Pacific,

They would find the conditions on the island too harsh.

However, seeing that the ship they escaped on had such good conditions,

They naturally felt more at ease.

Jacob looked left and right, touched the carpets and furniture in the room, and said to Elaine:

"Wow, everything on this ship is good."

"The furniture is made of high-quality mahogany."

"And the carpets are all pure handmade wool carpets, and they are very thick."

"I remember that such carpets from the Middle East seem to cost tens of thousands of dollars per square meter."

"Even the conditions of the ship we escaped on were so good,"

"So the conditions on the island in the South Pacific must be no worse."

"Really?"

Elaine squatted down in surprise,

Touched a corner of the carpet, and asked in confusion:

"Can this thing be so expensive?"

Jacob reminded her: "Have you forgotten the carpet we saw in the Abu Dhabi Mosque?"

"That one costs tens of thousands of dollars per square meter."

"What do you think is the difference between this carpet and that carpet?"

"Right!"

Elaine said with emotion:

"It's a good thing to touch it."

As she said, she couldn't help but sigh:

"It seems that Charlie is a good boy."

"He is in trouble, but he still takes care of us so considerately."

Jacob sighed and said with some heartache:

"Didn't you hear what my daughter said?"

"He sold the house and car, and collected cash and other things together to settle our family of three."

"He is really kind and righteous."

Elaine also looked a little sad.

She sighed softly a few times and then said solemnly:

“Husband, Claire, since Charlie is so good to us, we must not let him down!”

Claire looked at her mother in surprise,

Thinking that her humanity had finally been sublimated.

Unexpectedly, Elaine said seriously,

“Charlie has put in so much hard work and effort to build this situation for us.”

“We must not let his efforts go to waste.”

“In other words, we must not let anyone know where our family of three is going.”

“Once we get there, we must not let anyone know that we are there.”

“Because once it gets out, all of Charlie’s efforts may be wiped out.”

Claire’s newly ignited fantasy was instantly shattered.

She laughed at herself, feeling that she was almost 30 years old and still hadn’t seen reality clearly.

She knew what kind of person her mother was,

But she still hoped that she would change.

It was simply wishful thinking.

Jacob, however, gave Elaine two thumbs up in agreement and praised her:

"Wife, you are absolutely right."

"At this time, we must have the courage to cut off our own arms and must not let Charlie's efforts go to waste."

As he spoke, he muttered in a low voice:

"Haven't those ba5tards who engaged in telecom fraud been sentenced one after another recently?"

"Once they are caught, no one can escape."

"And all the family property will be lost."

"If Charlie really becomes a fraudster in the future, then all he leaves us will be illegal gains."

"Logically, they should be confiscated,"

"But as long as no one can find us,"

"We can rest assured in the South Pacific!"

Elaine couldn't help asking:

"What if Charlie is caught?"

"Will he give us up?"

"After all, serving a sentence can reduce a person's sentence."

"And just like when Horiyah got into trouble, wasn't it said that if we could return the stolen goods and make compensation,"

"So she could get a lighter sentence?"

Jacob nodded and said, "I still believe in Charlie's character."

"Since he has made this decision, going on the run and leaving us to enjoy life,"

"It proves that he definitely wants to protect us."

"As long as we don't expose ourselves,"

"There's no need to worry about our safety."

Elaine breathed a sigh of relief and quickly said,

"Again, don't let anyone know anything."

Claire listened to her parents' mumbling, feeling sad at the same time, as a sudden realization.

She found that some things and problems were too difficult to explain if she honestly told the people around her, and they were hesitant and timid.

Just like this time, when she had taken her parents away from China indefinitely without saying goodbye,

If she had told them the truth, they would have been incredibly shocked.

Thinking of Charlie's trillion-dollar fortune would have made them even more eager.

Your mother, with her penchant for money over her own life, wouldn't care if Charlie was in any danger.

She would definitely find a way to tell the world that she was Charlie's mother-in-law.

## Chapter 7028

This would have made everything even more difficult to handle.

But if she lied, everything would have been much simpler.

With this lie, she wouldn't have to worry about her parents holding her back.

The biggest and most difficult problem would have been solved with the greatest ease.

She suddenly thought of Charlie's lie,

And a sudden realization dawned on her.

She now understood his decision to keep it a secret.

By keeping it secret, everything would have been less shocking, less incomprehensible.

In that moment, she finally understood Charlie's situation and feelings,

And the resentment she had harbored instantly vanished.

After coming out of her parents' room,

Claire found Maglina and shared her thoughts.

Maglina also felt that Claire's way of handling the matter was actually more appropriate than being honest.

Being honest would also test human nature.

If the old couple were determined to find Charlie as a rich son-in-law,

It wouldn't be impossible for them to keep an eye on them.

However, this state of high alert and the other party's determination to break through the defense would be like a prisoner and a guard.

Constantly being on guard against each other would make both sides very tired and more likely to make mistakes.

But if Claire's method was used, the old couple would not have the mentality of being imprisoned prisoners.

They would regard the staff as an umbrella to protect them,

And would be eager to hide under the protection of the umbrella at all times.

At that time, all work would be able to proceed more smoothly.

So, he immediately reported the matter to Sister Sun,

And Sister Sun also consulted Margaret.

Margaret was initially taken aback when he heard this,

But soon smiled and said to Sister Sun,

"No one knows a father or a mother better than a daughter."

"Let's follow Claire's idea!"

...

In Melbourne, Charlie had no idea that in the eyes of Jacob and Elaine,

He had gone from being a good son-in-law to a troublemaker.

The old couple who used to call him a good son-in-law now wished they had never seen him again in their lifetime.

After the two met, Charlie synchronized the situation with Duncan.

After listening, Duncan said with emotion:

"Master Wade, let me be honest."

"Since Madam Wade is willing to leave you, it means that, first, her safety is definitely not a concern."

"Second, she certainly does not want you to find her."

"If Madam Wade were held hostage, it might be easier to find her."

"But she and the other party are in a cooperative relationship,"

"Which is too difficult."

After that, Duncan said seriously, "I think you should not focus your energy on this matter."

"This matter requires careful analysis."

"It is a slow and meticulous process, not a miracle."

"It may take one or two years at the fastest,"

"Or three to five years at the longest."

"If you devote yourself to it, it will delay too much of your work."

"If you trust me, just leave this matter to me and focus on your revenge plan."

"After all, Madam Wade left you in the hope that you could better focus your energy on this matter."

"What do you think?"

Charlie sighed in his heart.

He also knew that finding Claire was by no means a simple matter.

Even if the other party stopped trying to relocate Claire,

It would take at least a year or two for Duncan to piece together these clues.

If they noticed something was wrong and tried the same tactics again, the timeline would likely be extended even further.

A full-time search would undoubtedly waste too much time and energy.

Furthermore, Claire might not want to see him.

If she were also intent on avoiding him,

The search would only become more difficult.

Claire left him not because she was angry with him or because she didn't love him.

She didn't want to hinder his revenge.

If he could achieve his revenge, Claire might return,

And the mastermind might even reveal herself.

But if he failed to achieve his revenge,

And his identity remained unrevealed,

Claire, knowing his vengeance was unresolved, would undoubtedly continue to hide,

Potentially delaying both his revenge and his search for Claire.

Charlie's success, despite his parents' secret support, was also due to his decisive approach.

Now that Claire's departure was inevitable, no matter how heartbroken he was, he couldn't afford to give up.

He had to make a rational decision to achieve the best outcome.

So, he said to Duncan, "Inspector Li, I'll put all the ninjas from the He and Ito families under your command."

"I'll also assign you a hundred elite soldiers from the Front, and you can also deploy the entire AI model."

"Please make sure to find the whereabouts as quickly as possible."

Duncan immediately said, "No problem, Young Master."

"I'll start with the clues from Australia and Leon."

"China will arrange for people to track the information about these cars."

"After I'm done in Australia, I'll go to China to continue the investigation."

"You don't have to waste time in Australia."

"Okay." Charlie sighed and said,

"Then I'll return to Aurous Hill first."

"I'll leave the search for her in the hands of Inspector Li."

Although Charlie said this, he had another thought in mind:

Returning to Aurous Hill to see Maria.

Unlike Duncan, a meticulous detective, Maria's intelligence lies in her unexpected and unconventional approaches.

When she first arrived in China, she discovered his hidden true identity simply by using his name.

If Victoria had been half as clever, she would have found him and killed him long ago.

Therefore, he wanted to meet Maria to see if her experience and wisdom could offer any useful tips.

## Chapter 7029

After a ten-hour flight, Charlie hurried back to Aurous Hill.

Meanwhile, the Aurous Hill He family, along with ninjas sent by the Ito clan, had joined forces to investigate all the clues leading up to Claire's departure.

Even for seasoned experts, this kind of unraveling of a mystery proved difficult to master.

Furthermore, as Ruoli had said, each clue was like an endless maze,

The further one followed, the more tangled and chaotic the path.

Charlie knew this was no easy task,

But the feedback he received was unsettling.

So, upon landing, he immediately called Maria to inquire about her current location.

It was seven o'clock on a Friday evening.

Maria told him, "I'm at Zijin Villa."

"Young Master, do you have something to ask me?"

Charlie said, "I'd like to seek your opinion on something."

"Is it convenient for you?"

"Yes," Maria said in a clear voice,

"Young Master, please come directly."

"I've prepared tea and will be waiting for you."

Charlie breathed a sigh of relief and told Orvel and Issac to leave together.

He drove another car sent by Issac's men and headed straight for Zijin Villa.

When they arrived at the Villa, it was already eight o'clock in the evening.

Zijin Villa was very quiet.

After receiving the notification from Old Zhang, Larry and his wife, along with him, waited quietly at the entrance.

Despite their advanced age, they treated Maria with the deference and respect of a child to their mother.

Furthermore, Charlie's kindness to them was immense,

So they dared not neglect him.

Seeing Charlie, Larry stepped forward and said respectfully,

"Mr. Wade, you are here."

Charlie smiled and nodded and asked them, "Where is Miss Lin?"

Larry said, "Miss Lin is waiting for Mr. Wade in the villa at the top."

Old Zhang on the side also bowed and said, "Mr. Wade, Miss has ordered us to guard downstairs and not disturb you. I won't take you upstairs."

Charlie knew that they had a deep-rooted respect for Maria, so he nodded and said,

"Thank you all for your hard work. I'll go up first."

Then, Charlie stepped onto the stone steps and came to the door of the villa.

At this time, the door of the villa was ajar, leaving a gap of nearly 20 centimeters.

Through the gap, he could see Maria sitting under the Mother of Pu'er tea, boiling water, and making tea.

He was about to knock on the door to show politeness,

But Maria in the courtyard said, "Young master, please come in."

Charlie did not delay any longer and pushed open the heavy wooden door and walked in.

Maria was wearing a long white dress and a white fur shawl.

When she saw Charlie come in, she immediately stood up and saluted:

"I was busy making tea and couldn't get away to greet you."

"I hope you can forgive me."

Charlie smiled and said, "Miss Lin, we are friends in need and friends who have risked our lives for each other."

"Why are you so polite to me?"

Maria smiled sweetly and said, "No matter what, etiquette is always indispensable."

"My grandmother taught me since I was a child that even if I get married,"

"I must still be polite to my husband."

"What's more, you are my savior."

Charlie shook his head helplessly and smiled bitterly, sighing:

"Aren't you my savior too?"

After that, he didn't bother to be polite to Maria anymore and sat down directly opposite her.

After sitting down, Charlie remembered to look up at the lush tea tree above his head, and exclaimed:

"I didn't expect that the Mother of Pu'er Tea has such tenacious vitality."

"In such cold weather, it is still lush and green."

Maria nodded and smiled:

"Although the Mother of Pu'er Tea failed to pass the tribulation that year, it is now a fairy product reborn from the ashes."

"Ordinary weather can't affect her growth."

"She just needs to work hard and wait for the next tribulation."

After that, she filled the teacup with tea to 80%, handed it to Charlie, and said:

"Young Master, try it and see if it is different from before."

Charlie picked up the teacup, took a sip, and felt the tea wrapped in a trace of spiritual energy entering his stomach.

He couldn't help but sigh: "It seems that the spiritual energy is better than before."

"It was richer before, but it's still a long way from reaching a level that would be of great help to cultivation."

Maria smiled and said, "Don't worry, Master. In three to five years, the Mother of Pu'er Tea will be lush and leafy enough to shade this courtyard."

"By then, the spiritual energy contained in her leaves will be even richer, and then she will be able to truly help you."

After saying this, she comforted Charlie,

"For you, three to five years is just a blink of an eye, and it will pass quickly."

Maria's original intention was to say that Charlie's lifespan would definitely be hundreds of years.

If he could unlock the secret of the ring, it might even last thousands of years.

In the long river of life spanning thousands of years, three to five years is really nothing.

However, these words struck Charlie as strange.

How could three or five years be a fleeting moment?

If he couldn't find Claire, he'd probably feel like his days were years.

He didn't covet the spiritual energy of the Mother of Pu'er Tea,

But if Claire also had to wait three or five years to find her,

He didn't know how he'd survive.

Maria saw the worry on Charlie's face, and her perceptive and intelligent mind immediately noticed something was amiss.

So, she asked with concern, "Sir, have you run into any trouble?"

Charlie nodded, sighed softly, and told her the whole story of Claire and his family of three leaving Aurous Hill.

After hearing this, Maria was slightly surprised, then something clicked in her mind. She said,

"Butler Tang has been secretly protecting the young master for so many years."

"And he's arguably one of the people who knows him best."

"If he starts to be wary of him, he'll definitely do it better than anyone else."

"So, I don't think the situation is optimistic."

Charlie sighed, "I know it's not optimistic, but I still want to find Claire as soon as possible."

"I wonder if Miss Lin could help analyze and give me some advice?"

"If not, you could even tell me a fortune."

Seeing Charlie's dejected look, Maria felt a little distressed.

She pulled nine copper coins from her bosom, cleared half of the tea table, and then carefully scattered the nine copper coins on the tea table.

Then, she frowned and stared at the nine copper coins, her face full of confusion.

Charlie couldn't help but ask, "Miss Lin, what does the hexagram show?"

Maria frowned and said, "It's very strange."

"It shows two completely different hexagrams,"

"The Gate of Life and the Gate of Death."

"Since you are looking for someone, the Gate of Life and the Gate of Death represent one being within reach and the other being like looking for a needle in a haystack."

"This..."

Charlie was confused and asked subconsciously,

"Miss Lin, how could such a hexagram appear? Isn't this a complete contradiction?"

Maria counted silently on her fingers, becoming more and more surprised the more she calculated. She said doubtfully,

"The hexagram indicates that this is indeed the case."

"As for whether Madam Wade can be found, the hexagram represents life and death."

"In other words, there are two 50-50 possibilities: extremely difficult to find or extremely easy to find."

"The factors that influence these two possibilities lie in just one person."

Charlie pressed on, "What does this mean?"

Maria said, "Both the gates of life and death are controlled by one person."

"If this person opens the gate of life, it will be easy for you to find Madam Wade."

"If this person opens the gate of death,"

"It will be extremely difficult for you to find Madam Wade."

## Chapter 7030

Charlie couldn't help but wonder,

"Then doesn't this refer to Leon and the mastermind behind this matter?"

"They are in control of the entire thing."

"No," Maria explained.

"Whether it's Steward Tang or his mastermind, both of them are considered dead in this hexagram."

"Even if they had the ability to help the young master find Madam Wade, they would never do so."

"They went to so much trouble to take Madam Wade away from the young master; they can't let their efforts go to waste."

"It's like someone being kidnapped."

"The kidnapper is their death gate."

"While they could spare their life, it's almost impossible."

"Their life gate lies either with the police or some other third party."

"But not with the kidnapper."

Charlie nodded, suddenly realizing, "This means that the only person who can truly influence the life gate and death gate is someone other than me, Leon, and the others."

Maria nodded, "That's right."

Charlie quickly asked, "Is that Inspector Li?"

"I've asked him to help me investigate this."

"Does the success or failure of this matter depend on him?"

"If he's on the right track, or if he finds that crucial opportunity,"

"Can the problem be solved?"

Maria hesitated, "That... I'm not sure..."

There was something she hadn't told Charlie: whether to open the life gate or the death gate depends on that person's whim.

In other words, they have complete control over both.

If Duncan were simply assigned to investigate the case, with the life gate opening if he found it right and the death gate opening if he found it wrong,

That seemed to contradict the hexagram's indications.

If one had to blame Duncan, the logical explanation would be that after discovering the life gate, Duncan hesitated to tell Charlie.

In that case, with the life gate in his left hand and the death gate in his right hand, life and death would be decided by a single thought.

But was that really the case?

Maria was unsure.

She stared at the hexagram formed by the nine coins, her astonishment growing.

She had never encountered such an ambiguous or even half-and-half situation before.

Of the nine coins, four were oriented precisely in the gates of life, while the other four were positioned precisely in the gates of death.

And yet, the crucial coin landed in a position that presented both life and death.

This potential for life and death didn't refer to the coin itself,

But rather to the fact that when viewed alongside the four gates of life,

The five coins could simultaneously form a hexagram representing the gates of life.

However, when viewed alongside the other four gates of death,

It could also form a hexagram representing the gates of death.

It was as if a child of mixed descent from two countries, equally powerful, were born during a war.

Only this child could tip the scales:

If they took on the father's nationality, they would become enemies of the mother's, and vice versa.

Maria had practiced hexagram reading for centuries,

But this was the first time she had encountered such a strange hexagram.

She silently picked up nine coins and tossed them out again.

Although the positions of all the coins had shifted this time,

She, interpreting the hexagram, reached the same conclusion.

Seeing her frown, Charlie couldn't help but ask again,

"Miss Lin, what does the hexagram show this time?"

Maria shook her head. "Same as before, no change."

Surprised, Charlie asked, "I just noted down the front and back of all the coins."

"Compared to the previous hexagram, every coin's position has shifted."

"And the front and back have changed as well. Why is the hexagram the same?"

Maria smiled and said, "Young Master, you learned Feng Shui from the Nine Profound Heavenly Scriptures."

"But it doesn't seem to contain divination."

"Hexagrams aren't interpreted based on appearances, but rather by their own unique logic."

"The two hexagrams appear unrelated, yet the results are identical."

Charlie sighed, "There really aren't any profound divination techniques in the Nine Profound Heavenly Scriptures."

Maria explained, "The reason divination is so profound is because its underlying logic is equivalent to a software program capable of simulation."

"Young Master, now that you're involved in car manufacturing, you should know that modern simulated car collisions,"

"In addition to actual crash tests, they can also be simulated in software."

"The software itself has already set the physical properties of the Earth as constants."

"During the simulation, you only need to input parameters such as the vehicle's weight, speed, collision avoidance design, material strength, collision location, and collision object."

"And you can simulate the collision results of the car in detail."

"My fortune-telling relies on the I Ching and the Eight Trigrams."

"Although the ancients did not have computers, they used years of observation to master the underlying logic of the world and even the universe."

"And then created the I Ching and the Eight Trigrams."

"The core of the I Ching is 'yin and yang', which is actually the earliest binary system, similar to the 0 and 1 in the computer world."

"I use copper coins for fortune-telling."

"The positive and negative of the coins, like yin and yang, are also a form of binary."

"These nine copper coins of mine are like the nine important parameters of computer simulation and deduction."

“By submitting these nine parameters to the Yijing Bagua software for simulation, we can predict the direction and outcome of events, as well as the variables involved.”

“As long as the development of things does not deviate from the operating mode of this world, the deduction result will not deviate too much.”

“Although the positions and front and back of the nine copper coins thrown out are different, the reason why nine copper coins are needed for divination is that all divination does not depend on the state of a single copper coin, but on the relationship between the nine copper coins.”

“In other words, throwing nine copper coins on a table, or in a room, or scattering them throughout the courtyard will not affect the result.”

The Yijing Bagua is not feudal superstition, but the simplicity of the great way.

Just as 0s and 1s can form a computer’s virtual world, yin and yang naturally form all things in the universe.

However, Maria might be the only person in the world who truly masters the I Ching’s eight trigrams and can perform calculations using nine variables.

The same results had occurred twice, leaving Maria baffled.

Both Leon and the people behind him belonged to the Death Gate.

Duncan, being Charlie’s associate, belonged to the Life Gate.

Charlie himself must also be a Life Gate.

So, who was this person caught in the middle, wavering?

Confused, she said to Charlie, “Sir, please be patient.”

"Give me some time to think through the connections."

"I'll let you know as soon as I have a result."

Charlie nodded gently. Duncan might even need a year or two, or even three to five years, to track down the cause.

Even Maria, no matter how amazing she was, couldn't find the clue overnight.

This matter naturally couldn't be rushed.

Recalling the letter Claire had left for him at home before leaving, Charlie suddenly felt a surge of longing to return home.

He said to Maria, "Miss Lin, it's getting late."

"I won't bother you any longer."

"If you have any findings or conclusions, please contact me immediately."

Maria nodded and smiled, "Don't worry, young master."

After saying this, although she felt reluctant, she didn't try to persuade him to leave.

She smiled and said, "I'll see you off, young master."

Charlie left Purple Gold Villa and hurried back to Tomson First Floor without stopping.

The house looked exactly as it had been shown in Nanako's video.

Most of the furniture and belongings were untouched, just as they had been when he left.

Returning to the bedroom, Claire's letter still lay quietly by the bed.

Charlie opened it and reread it, tears welling up in his eyes again.

After six years of marriage, they had thought their marriage was finally on track,

Only to have it suddenly end at the most beautiful moment.

Now back home, everything was the same as before, except for Claire.

The sight of her in this place, filled with memories of her, made Charlie even more devastated.

After much hesitation, he finally took the letter from Claire and left Tomson One.

Living alone in such a large house was lonely enough, and the constant presence of Claire made it even more oppressive.

So, Charlie left Tomson One and headed for his hillside villa in Champs Elysees, feeling he needed some time to himself, perhaps three to five days, or a month or two.

He then left messages on WeChat for Duncan and Maria, telling them to call him immediately if they had any news.

He planned to temporarily disconnect from WeChat and whitelist only Duncan and Maria on his phone, blocking all other calls and texts.

When Maria saw Charlie's message saying he'd call her if he had any news, she knew he'd want some quiet time to process Claire's departure.

She worried, fearing he'd become devastated or suffer from constant longing for her.

So, she told Lao Zhang and the others not to interrupt him, deciding to sort out Charlie's recent experiences and who the variables in the hexagram depended on.

She opened a Go board and placed a black piece on the far left, muttering,

"Every cause and effect has a source."

"So, the source of all this should be Qingzhao Temple on the edge of the Shiwan Mountains, right?"

## Chapter 7031

Maria and Charlie had known each other for a short time.

From that time, she felt the mysterious power behind Charlie first surfaced at Qingzhao Temple.

At the time, she and Charlie were traveling together to the Shiwan Mountains,

But unexpectedly, they encountered the fake nun waiting there.

Not only did she know the secret of their trip to the Shiwan Mountains,

But she also knew that the Shiwan Mountains held numerous dangers for Charlie.

Maria placed a white stone beneath the first black stone.

The upper black stone represented Qingzhao Temple,

The lower white stone is the fake nun.

Then, they flew directly from the Shiwan Mountains to Eastcliff.

She then took out another black stone and placed it behind the previous one.

Initially, in her mind, this black stone represented Eastcliff.

She then recalled the time when she and Charlie had just arrived in Eastcliff,

When Leon had delivered Charlie's parents' old photo album to the Wade family mansion, and then left without saying goodbye.

It was then that Maria realized that Leon and the fake nun from Qingzhao Temple were in cahoots.

So, she placed a white stone beneath the second black stone.

This white stone represented Leon.

Now, Maria's task was to locate the third black stone and the third white stone.

However, a detail suddenly occurred to her.

She had met Leon once when she and Charlie had returned to the Wade family mansion.

He had smelled a faint scent of incense, which both Charlie and she had noticed.

Leon had said he had just visited the Lama Temple to worship Buddha.

Charlie hadn't thought much of it, but Maria pondered it further.

She initially thought that Leon's face didn't resemble a religious believer,

But rather a seasoned veteran with a firm belief in atheism.

Then, she considered the Lama Temple's status as a Lama temple,

Which seemed even more out of place for someone of Leon's stature.

But at the time, she was preoccupied with the dangers lurking in the Shiwan,

And hadn't considered Leon's unusual behavior.

But now, thinking about it, it did seem puzzling.

Qingzhao Temple, Lama Temple.

Why were they both temples?

Did this mean that the mysterious mastermind behind Leon had some connection to temples?

Her intuition told her that her theory was correct.

So, she immediately took out a black pawn and placed it next to the first two, muttering,

"The first black pawn is Qingzhao Temple, the second black pawn isn't Eastcliff, it's Yonghe Palace."

"So this third black pawn is most likely a temple."

At this thought, her eyes suddenly lit up:

"Madam Wade left Nanjing. Before she left, she must have met these people."

"They must have told her something about the young master, which made her willingly leave him."

"So, where did she meet them? Most likely Nanjing, and most likely a temple!"

"If the third black pawn is a temple in Nanjing,"

"Then it's most likely the most famous... Qixia Temple!"

Moreover, Maria had intended to visit Qixia Temple before,

And that time, as she had hoped, she met the fake nun from Qingzhao Temple there.

Therefore, the suspicion of Qixia Temple became even greater!

Maria felt that she was getting closer and closer to the truth.

So, she immediately called her grandson, Ethan Sun.

As soon as the call connected, the caller politely asked,

"Miss, why are you calling so late? What can I do for you?"

Maria asked, "Do you have access to the carrier's confidential data?"

Ethan immediately replied, "Of course. What data do you want?"

Maria sternly instructed him, "Please help me check the access records that Mrs. Wade has left with the carrier over the past few months."

"Be specific, down to every base station."

"Then, plot the locations on a map, timeline, for me."

"Mrs. Wade?"

Ethan was a little surprised.

He didn't know why Maria wanted to investigate Charlie's wife.

It wasn't something Charlie had asked her about.

However, between Charlie and Maria, he naturally preferred her.

So, he gave up the question and immediately said,

"Miss, wait a moment. I'll make arrangements."

Maria, reflecting on something, reminded him,

“Remember, maintain absolute confidentiality.”

“Don’t worry!”

The carriers held user data with high confidentiality.

This was especially true of user movements, which generally couldn’t be accessed even by the police.

For users, no matter which carrier’s mobile number service they use, as long as their phone needs to access the network,

A connection record will be left with the carrier.

When a user is at home, the carrier will automatically match them with the nearest base station and record the time they connected to that base station.

When a user leaves home and enters the coverage area of the next base station,

The carrier will also record the time they disconnected from the previous base station and the time they connected to the next one.

This is critical data stored in the server.

Over the years, this data has helped police solve many major crimes.

Especially in the era when the Sky Eye system was not yet fully developed,

Many criminals cleverly fabricated alibis,

But ultimately failed, and the police discovered that their phone had been near the crime scene.

Maria knew she didn't have an AI model like Charlie's,

And it was impossible to quickly locate Claire's movements through municipal surveillance.

That's why she came up with this method.

While this method wasn't as precise or clear as video surveillance,

The answer Maria wanted was simple:

She simply wanted to know if Claire had visited Qixia Temple in the past few months!

Ethan was incredibly efficient.

In less than twenty minutes, a video file was sent to Maria's phone.

The video started with a map of Aurous Hill City and a red dot.

After clicking play, the coordinates jumped around the map.

The corresponding time in the upper left corner indicated which base station Claire's phone connected to at that time, and the next,

As well as the location of that base station on the map.

Because of the distance between base stations, the red dot's movement was hopping.

Most of Maria's movements bounced back and forth between Tomson and Claire's company, with occasional stops elsewhere.

She paid no attention to any of this.

Instead, she kept her eye on the Qixia Temple section of the map, wondering when the red dot would light up.

Hard work pays off.

As time advanced to the eve of the Lunar New Year,

The red dot representing Claire's base station suddenly lit up at Qixia Temple!

At that moment, a smile crossed Maria's lips.

The third black piece officially became Qixia Temple in her mind.

So, the next step was to find clues to the white piece.

Who had Claire gone to see at Qixia Temple?

Was it the fake nun, Leon, or perhaps someone else who was the "white piece"?

At this thought, a name suddenly flashed through her mind.

Charlie had said that Ito Nanako, by chance, had been enlightened by a monk named Jingqing at Qixia Temple.

Recalling that the enemy's position had always remained close to the temple,

She realized that this monk, Jingqing, must be a member of their faction.

So, she placed the third white stone below the third black stone and said with a smile,

"It seems this white stone is most likely Master Jingqing."

She then searched for news about Master Jingqing and discovered that, despite his young age, he possessed profound Buddhist attainments.

He had even represented the Chinese Buddhist community in a discussion with Master Kongyin, the abbot of Kinkaku-ji Temple in Japan, at Mount Putuo.

On a whim, she searched for Master Kongyin again.

Although he had not appeared in public for the past two years and had left no news, Maria still found an announcement through the search engine's automatic search function regarding the closure of Kinkaku-ji Temple for renovations.

The closure began just before Charlie's birthday, less than a week away.

She couldn't help but mutter to herself,

"Although there's no direct evidence yet, the indirect evidence has formed a mutually corroborating chain of evidence."

"This should mean that the other party is currently in Kinkakuji!"

Charlie could never have imagined that Maria had pieced together the entire story in just the time it takes to play a movie, using only six chess pieces.

"Kinkakuji..."

Maria muttered, and then she wanted to call Charlie to share her analysis.

But just as she was about to dial, she exited the dialer screen.

She believed that since Claire was involved, Charlie's rationality would be affected.

If she told him her theory now, he might immediately depart for Japan.

However, the other party was clearly more powerful than he was.

Not only was she fully aware of his movements,

But she was also monitoring him to some extent.

Otherwise, when he deliberately went to Qixia Temple, the fake nun would never have appeared on her own initiative.

## 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..."

## Chapter 7033

The owner of the yudofu shop never knew he would actually meet Miss Saito from his great-grandfather's story.

It's said that even his great-grandfather didn't know Miss Saito's full name,

Only that her surname was Saito.

Saito is a highly ranked surname in Japan,

Making it impossible to trace her back.

Maria finished her bowl of yudofu,

Paid for it,

And happily left the shop, backpack on her shoulder.

She continued her journey toward Kinkaku-ji Temple,

But her attention remained fixed on the surrounding shops.

Maria had lived in Japan for a long time,

Remaining there until the turn of the 20th century.

During her time in Kyoto, she was known as Miss Saito, a philanthropist.

Japan had just undergone the Meiji Restoration,

Transforming from an agricultural nation into an industrial one.

Militarism, while still in its infancy, had yet to spread throughout the country.

Back then, most people in Kyoto lived in poverty,

And many shops and small store owners benefited from Maria's kindness to varying degrees.

Maria marveled that many of these shops are still open today.

There were 200-year-old sushi restaurants, 300-year-old tempura establishments,

And several dress and kimono shops dating back to the 19th century.

The abundance of centuries-old brands here is largely due to the country's near-untouched history of invasion and colonization.

Even during World War II, when they wreaked havoc across East and South Asia,

They ultimately managed to escape the ravages of war,

Allowing these time-honored brands to survive.

As Maria wandered the streets of Kyoto like a high school girl skipping school from Osaka for a day trip,

Margaret, who was inside Kinkaku-ji Temple, was completely unaware of her whereabouts.

Ever since faking her own death, she had been scheming in the shadows,

Never expecting her to be exposed.

Twenty minutes before Maria arrived in Kyoto,

Leon had already made his way to Kinkaku-ji Temple and met Margaret.

Margaret was very satisfied with his plan and praised him,

“Leon, you’ve made an invaluable contribution this time.”

“You’ve worked hard these past few days.”

“Stay here and rest for a while.”

Claire’s family of three had already left China,

And Claire’s sudden inspiration had completely eliminated the risk to Jacob and Elaine.

For Margaret, this was the best situation.

Leon said with some emotion, “The young master must be very distressed with the young lady’s departure.”

“I don’t know how long it will take him to recover...”

Margaret nodded and sighed, “Although the three have left,”

“I know Charlie must be very anxious and distressed now.”

“Otherwise, he wouldn’t have asked Duncan for help so quickly.”

“He naturally wants to do his best to find Claire.”

At this point, she felt very uncomfortable.

After all, her intention wasn’t to secretly manipulate Charlie’s life,

It was to exert any control over him as a mother.

She was desperately trying to get Claire to leave because Charlie's cultivation progress had been so slow,

His inability to open the Niwan Palace meant an insurmountable barrier between him and Victoria.

Neither Victoria nor Meng Changsheng in the Shiwan Mountains would give Charlie much time.

If he wasn't allowed to fully develop his cultivation,

All his plans for revenge would be thwarted.

She had even prepared herself for Charlie's resentment.

She had endured humiliation for the past twenty years just to give him a chance—a chance to clear all obstacles and finally escape hiding.

She sighed, "When Charlie meets me someday,"

"He'll know I was behind everything."

"I wonder if he'll resent me then..."

Leon said respectfully, "Madam, this is for the greater good."

"I'm sure the young master will understand your good intentions."

Margaret nodded, quietly wiped away the tears from the corners of his eyes, and smiled:

"Victoria always thought that I was not dead."

"Maybe I won't live to see the day when Charlie wins."

"If that happens, whoever survives between you and Sister Sun will go to see Charlie and tell him the truth about all this."

"As long as he can have the last laugh,"

"It doesn't matter if he blames me, hates me, or doesn't understand me."

"I just have to let him know that he has not been alone all these years."

## Chapter 7034

At this time, in the closed main hall of Kinkakuji Temple,

The elderly Master Kongyin was sitting cross-legged on a cushion with several of his most admired disciples, listening to Master Jingqing's teachings.

Jingqing knew that Kongyin's closure of Kinkakuji had greatly aided Margaret,

So he diligently imparted his own profound insights into Buddhism.

The two of them, like a pair of close friends regardless of age, enjoyed daily conversations.

Not only did Kongyin receive deeper enlightenment from Jingqing,

But Jingqing, through Kongyin's sincerity, also further purified his own spiritual altar.

It could be said that both sides benefited greatly,

And Kongyin's disciples also benefited greatly from their discussions.

However, Master Kongyin was old and in poor health.

Long periods of cross-legged meditation were very physically demanding,

So his exchanges and learning with Master Jingqing had to be frequently interrupted due to his health,

And resumed only after he had recovered somewhat.

Seeing that everyone had been communicating for a whole morning,

Master Kongyin's physical condition was obviously not very good,

And even his breathing became much more rapid, Master Jingqing put his hands together and said:

"Namo Amitabha, Master Kongyin looks a little tired,"

"Why don't we stop here this morning, Master Kongyin, go back and have a good rest?"

"And we will decide in the afternoon."

Kongyin, who was trying hard to hold on, waved his hands reluctantly and said to him with a smile in fluent Chinese:

"Master Jingqing... I recently... feel that my time is coming to an end."

"I am afraid that I don't have much time left."

"The ancient Chinese said that if you hear the truth in the morning, you can die in the evening."

"Master Jingqing, "Your understanding of Buddhism is the most profound I've encountered in a hundred years."

"So before you pass away, I'd like to hear more."

"Master Jingqing, please be generous with your guidance."

Jingqing couldn't help but sigh, "Master Kongyin's indifference to life and death is truly admirable."

"So, let's continue."

When Maria arrived at the entrance to Kinkakuji Temple, a sign prohibiting entry had been erected.

The specific reason for the ban was stated below:

Renovations, with the exact completion date still to be determined.

Several monks guarded the entrance, patiently turning away any visitors who approached.

When the young Maria approached, a monk stepped forward habitually and said,

"Amitabha, donor, please don't come any closer."

"The Kinkakuji Temple is currently closed for renovation and is temporarily not open to the public."

Maria smiled sweetly and said,

"Hello, I would like to meet Master Kongyin."

The monk shook his head and said,

"Master Kongyin hasn't seen pilgrims for many years."

"Please go back."

Master Kongyin is the most famous monk in Japan and a leading figure in the field of Japanese Buddhism.

Many devout Buddhists hope to have the opportunity to meet Kongyin himself.

They even meet several of them every day at the gate of the Kinkakuji Temple,

And he has long been accustomed to it.

Maria knew that the mysterious person hiding here must be extremely cautious.

There might be hidden agents planted by the other party around to observe them quietly.

So she didn't show any aura at all,

But smiled and said, "To be honest, my ancestors are related to Master Kongyin."

"This time, I am here at the request of the elders in my family to meet Master Kongyin."

"Master, please help me pass a message to Master Kongyin."

"Just say, 'Zhengping, the young lady is here.' He will understand."

## Chapter 7035

Compared with Ethan, Kongyin's identity is not as sensitive.

Therefore, in Maria's view, going to Kinkakuji to see Kongyin is much simpler than going to Eastcliff to see Ethan.

When Maria suggested that the monk at the door pass on the message,

The other party was indeed not as vigilant and cautious as Ethan's guards in Eastcliff.

When the other party heard that Maria claimed to be a relative of Master Kongyin and that she was following the orders of the elders,

They instinctively chose to believe Maria's words.

Japanese Buddhism was introduced from China.

Jianzhen brought Chinese Buddhist theories to Japan when he traveled east,

And Japan learned them in their entirety.

However, after the Meiji Restoration, Japanese Buddhism and the precepts of monks changed greatly.

Before the Meiji Restoration, Japan strictly adhered to the Buddhist monastic disciplines of India and China.

Monks were forbidden from eating meat or marrying.

However, after the Meiji Restoration, Japanese Buddhism gradually became secularized,

And most monks were allowed to marry and have children.

Given this environment, visiting temples to see one's father or grandfather,

Let alone relatives, it was commonplace.

Although Master Kongyin never married, he lived to be over 120 years old.

Who knows if he had any relatives or friends in the secular world?

This seventeen or eighteen-year-old girl, despite wearing a mask, was beautiful and lovely in her big eyes.

Her two ponytails made her look a little quirky, but at first glance,

She gave off a very sincere and innocent vibe.

I don't think she would lie in a Buddhist holy place.

The monk then said, "Young lady, please wait a moment."

"Our abbot is currently meeting with a guest and has instructed that no one should be disturbed."

"I'll inform him immediately after he's finished."

Venerable Kongyin had recently been spending three hours every morning discussing Buddhism with Venerable Jingqing.

He had also instructed that no one should disturb him,

And the monks at the temple adhered strictly to this rule,

Not daring to interrupt at this time.

Maria said, "This is urgent."

"Please inform Venerable Kongyin as soon as possible."

"He will absolutely not blame you if he learns of it."

"But if you delay, he might actually blame you."

"This..."

The monk hesitated for a moment, then, seeing that Maria wasn't joking, nodded and said,

"Young lady, please wait a moment. I'll go and inform you."

Maria nodded and instructed him,

"Master, please make sure to convey what I just said in full."

The monk then said, "Miss Zhengping is here, right? I understand."

As he spoke, he pondered.

Zhengping was clearly a man's name.

Could this little girl be Miss Zhengping?

It didn't match her lovely temperament at all.

Maria reminded him again:\

"Also, please tell Master Kongyin that he is old and must not come to pick me up in person."

"I will go in to see him myself."

The monk was even more confused and thought:

"Little girl, even if your family has relatives with Master Kongyin,"

"Master Kongyin is over 120 years old."

"And it is impossible for him to come in person to greet a little girl like you!"

"It's really a dream..."

However, despite his surprise, he turned around and left very actively, running towards the main hall of the temple.

At this moment, above the main hall.

Master Jingqing had just finished reading the scriptures.

Master Kongyin dragged his tired body and kept clapping, sighing:

"The subtlety of Buddhism is that everyone will have different experiences after reading it."

"The bigger the pattern, the bigger the world of discovery."

"I have read this scripture for decades,"

"And I have read the Japanese version, the Chinese version, and even the Sanskrit version,"

"But I have never had such a profound understanding as Master Jingqing."

"There are many details that I have never figured out in my life."

"Now that Master Jingqing has pointed it out,"

"I suddenly feel enlightened, and my mind is opened."

"I am truly grateful!"

Master Jingqing said humbly, "Master Kongyin, studying Buddhism is sometimes related to one's state of mind."

"Sometimes to one's environment, and sometimes to opportunity."

"The fact that I have such insights is not due to my profound understanding,"

"But largely thanks to opportunity."

"If Master Kongyin were to encounter his own opportunity,"

"He would surely have even deeper insights than mine."

For ordinary people, Buddhism is the textual sutras.

For monks, it is teachings, and for those who embrace Buddhism, it becomes a guide to practice.

Some things cannot be interpreted without reaching the appropriate level.

It's like intelligence hidden in newspaper articles during wartime.

To those who don't understand, it's just an article,

But only those who master the specific communication codes can discern the core.

The same is true of Buddhism.

After Jingqing attained enlightenment, he revisited the scriptures and naturally gained a deeper understanding.

Had Kongyin never attained enlightenment,

Even if he had spent his entire life reading,

He would never have grasped Jingqing's level of understanding.

Master Kongyin couldn't help but sigh at this moment:

"Although the word 'chance' is simple to say, many people find it difficult to encounter it in their entire lives."

"Especially a great opportunity like Master Jingqing."

"It is hard to find one among millions of people."

"How can I dare to ask for it?"

Master Jingqing was stunned.

His description of his own chance was a very vague concept.

It was almost like luck.

However, Master Kongyin's words seemed to reveal a message,

That is, he knew very well what his chance was.

While he was shocked, he suddenly thought that although Master Kongyin himself had not attained enlightenment,

Perhaps he had met someone who had attained enlightenment.

So, he thought again and again, and asked:

"Master Kongyin seems to know what the opportunity I am talking about is."

"What exactly does it mean?"

"Of course." Kong Yin smiled faintly, waving his hand at the senior disciples around him."

"With a weary expression, he said,

"You may leave."

"I need to speak with Master Jing Qing privately."

## Chapter 7036

The disciples immediately clasped their hands together and said in unison,

"Disciples obey!"

With that, they all rose and quickly exited the main hall.

Only Master Kong Yin and Jing Qing remained.

Kong Yin then spoke with a look of longing,

"For the first few decades of my life, I was obsessed, madly pursuing enlightenment."

"However, I could never find that opportunity, could never open the door to a new world."

"Over time, I realized that I was destined to never reach that lofty ultimate opportunity."

He smiled, "However, I'm already very content with my current life and dare not ask for any more."

"If the Buddha comes to take me to the Western Paradise and asks me if I have any regrets,"

"I will tell them that I should have died in my infancy."

"To have lived to this day,"

"I'm already grateful to the world and dare not even think of regrets..."

"But I think the Buddha must know that I have never spoken falsely or had any false thoughts in the past hundred years,"

"That I have integrated knowledge and action,"

"And that I have devoted myself to Buddhism."

"So, I hope that he will remember my sincere heart and allow me to see her again."

"Then my life will be complete."

Jing Qing asked in surprise,

"Who is this person that Master Kongyin is talking about? Is she the same as me?"

Jing Qing's words were still vague, but he believed that Kongyin understood.

Kongyin naturally understood.

The girl who emerged in his mind was the girl who was as kind as a mother,

As strict as a teacher, but as innocent as a young girl.

The girl who had remained unchanged from the time he could remember until he left her.

He knew Maria would never age, and he also knew she wasn't a person of enlightenment.

So, with a smile that shone with tears, he said,

"She's different from Master Jingqing."

She's the best mother, the best teacher, the best playmate,

The best friend, and... a true living Bodhisattva."

Jingqing was confused, but remembering that Master Kongyin was over 120 years old,

He instinctively guessed he was missing a long-dead elder or a benefactor in his life.

He envied Kongyin for this.

Kongyin practiced Buddhism in the more secular world of Japan.

Here, he could speak openly about his thoughts and feelings,

And no one would accuse him of lingering on the worldly side.

However, in Chinese Buddhism, there seemed to be a greater emphasis on severing worldly desires and entering the realm of solitude.

Even if they couldn't sever their inner desires, they didn't dare let others know.

He smiled and consoled her,

"If even Master Kongyin praises her so highly,"

"Then she must have been reborn in the Western Paradise."

"If the day of your passing truly comes,"

"Master, I will surely reunite with her in the Buddha's presence."

Kongyin simply shook his head and smiled, saying nothing more.

His mind flashed back to Maria's appearance in the past.

He murmured, "How could this young lady be in the Buddha's presence?"

"The Buddha would surely protect her until she reaches five hundred years old,"

"Perhaps even immortality."

Just then, someone outside the door suddenly shouted,

"You idiot! The abbot is debating and lecturing with Master Jingqing."

"What are you, a mere novice, doing here without guarding the gate?!"

Then, someone else said, "Brother Yuancheng,"

"I've come to tell the abbot that a relative's child is outside the door,"

"Asking to see him!"

The same person chided him, "You idiot!"

"You believe everything you hear."

"It's obvious lies, and you actually believe them!"

"Go and chase that mischievous child away!"

With that, the person began to chase the novice monk out.

The novice monk did not dare to force his way in,

So he could only shout loudly towards the main hall:

“Abbot! The little girl outside the door said that Miss Zhengping is here!”

“It’s Miss Zhengping!”

The quarrel between the two men,

As well as the novice monk’s shouting, which was all in Japanese.

Master Jingqing knew very little Japanese, \

So he could not understand what was being argued outside.

Master Kongyin did not take the quarrel outside to heart at first.

He had been communicating with Jingqing for the whole morning and was already exhausted,

So he thought it was time to take a break and continue in the afternoon.

However, when he suddenly heard the words

“Miss Zhengping is here.”,

His body suddenly shuddered as if he had been electrocuted,

His pupils suddenly shrank, and his whole body trembled with excitement.

At this moment, he had forgotten how tired he was,

And in an instant, he stood up from the cushion and staggered out.

However, due to sitting cross-legged for a long time and being too old,

His legs were too weak when he stood up, and he almost fell down.

Seeing this, Master Jingqing, opposite him, immediately stood up and supported him,

Then asked with concern: "Master Kongyin, has something happened?"

"Why are you so panicked?"

Kongyin felt that his legs were completely out of control,

As if they were broken at the hips,

But he was extremely excited at this moment,

And just wanted to crawl to the door as fast as possible, even if he had to crawl.

Because he knew that in this world, except for Maria,

All the people who could say the name Zhengping to him had already been buried!

Maria, who had been so kind to him,

Must be at the gate of Kinkakuji Temple at this time!

So, he said to Jingqing with tears in his eyes:

"Master Jingqing, please take me to the temple gate, please!"

## Chapter 7037

Master Jingqing didn't understand the situation, but he nodded decisively and said,

"Okay, Master Kongyin, I'll help you out."

Master Kongyin's legs weren't quite right, but he kept murmuring excitedly,

"Quick, quick..."

Jingqing felt his body tremble, and was even more horrified.

Kongyin, over 120 years old, seemed to him, a junior, a truly accomplished monk.

Even when discussing death, Kongyin had remained calm and composed, without a trace of pretense.

Jingqing was puzzled by what had happened outside to stir Kongyin's excitement.

The two men pushed open the door and left,

Where the novice monk was still struggling with his senior brother.

When the elder brother saw Master Kongyin coming out with the support of Master Jingqing,

He became even more furious and said to the novice monk,

"You bastard! Instead of guarding the door properly,"

"You come here and disturb the Master's meditation."

"Get out of here right now!"

Master Kongyin saw this and scolded him in a low voice,

"Yuancheng, shut up!"

Master Yuancheng said with a look of grievance,

"Master, I... I'm afraid he will affect your debate with Master Jingqing..."

Master Kongyin waved him away and ignored him.

Instead, he immediately asked the novice monk,

"Huaiyi, is there a girl outside the door?"

"Yes, Master Abbot!"

The novice monk said quickly,

"She said she's Miss Zhengping and wants to see you."

Master Kongyin's face lit up with childlike joy at receiving confirmation,

And he quickly said, "Huaiyi, help me go to the main gate to greet her."

"Yuancheng, take Master Jingqing back."

Kongyin knew most of Maria's affairs and knew she had been hiding from her enemies,

So he didn't dare leave Jingqing here.

If he saw Maria and discovered her true identity,

It would be detrimental to her.

Master Yuancheng hadn't expected his master to actually go and greet a young girl.

He was astonished, but immediately realized he had wronged his junior brother, Huaiyi.

He first said, "Yes, Master," then immediately bowed to Huaiyi and said,

"Amitabha, Junior Brother Huaiyi, please forgive me for my rudeness just now."

Kongyin had devoted himself to Buddhism for so many years, free from any ulterior motives.

This had also been a long and extremely effective screening process for the people around him.

Disciples who were eager for quick success or wanted to gain fame and fortune from him could not stand it and gave up halfway.

These people who settled down may not have much talent in Buddhism,

But basically, like Kongyin, they can achieve the true unity of knowledge and action.

So when they realize that they are wrong,

They can admit it for the first time and do not make any excuses for themselves.

The novice monk Huaiyi also returned the greeting:

"Amitabha, it's just a little misunderstanding; it's over."

"Brother Yuancheng is also doing this for the abbot."

After that, he said to Master Kongyin:

"Abbot, Miss Zhengping said that you are old and must not go to meet her in person."

"She can come in to see you."

Kongyin hesitated for a moment, and finally nodded and said:

"Then, Huaiyi, you go and invite that lady in."

"You must be respectful and not neglect it."

"Yuancheng, you go and see Master Jingqing off!"

Yuancheng nodded, turned to speak Chinese to Master Jingqing:

"Master Jingqing, the old master has something urgent to do."

"I will take you back."

Jingqing did not understand Japanese and had no idea what was going on.

But since the other party wanted to send him away, he certainly couldn't say much.

So he handed Master Kongyin to the novice monk Huaiyi and said respectfully,

"Master Kongyin, I will take my leave first."

After Jingqing left, the young novice monk Huaiyi also turned to leave.

Master Kongyin stopped him and warned,

“Huaiyi, when you see that young lady, don’t be too respectful.”

“Just treat her as an ordinary pilgrim and welcome her in.”

“Do you understand?”

Kongyin knew Maria’s secret and knew that Maria’s identity was sensitive.

Although the temple was temporarily closed to the public,

Tourists visiting Kyoto would still run up to it and take pictures.

If Huaiyi was too polite to Maria,

He was worried that it would reveal unusual information.

All those years with Maria had long trained him to be cautious and careful in every detail.

Although Huaiyi didn’t understand, he still nodded respectfully and said,

“Master Abbot, I will go and invite Miss Zhengping in!”

Kongyin nodded and waved his hand: “Go ahead.”

A moment later, the young monk Huaiyi came running to the temple gate.

Maria, with twin ponytails, was tiptoeing and playfully pacing back and forth at the temple gate,

As if she were having fun with herself.

Huaiyi came closer and whispered,

“Miss Zhengping, the abbot invites you. Please follow me.”

Maria nodded and smiled, “Master, please lead the way.”

When Maria followed Huaiyi into the Kinkakuji Temple,

Kongyin had already asked Yuancheng to help him to the door of the main hall.

He said to Yuancheng, “Yuancheng, you step back.”

“Tell everyone to leave the main hall and go one hundred meters away.”

“No one is allowed to enter.”

Master Yuancheng asked with concern,

“Master, can you do it yourself?”

“Yes.” Master Kongyin nodded and said, “You step back.”

Master Yuan Cheng said respectfully,

“Okay, Master, I will withdraw first.”

## Chapter 7038

After that, he turned and left, leaving Kong Yin standing alone at the door, looking anxiously.

On the other side, Jing Qing left the main hall and came to the courtyard provided by Kinkakuji Temple for Margaret and his party.

When Jing Qing entered the courtyard, Margaret was chatting with Leon, Sister Sun, and others.

Margaret brewed a pot of good tea and was serving tea to the two of them with a Kung Fu cup.

Seeing Jing Qing coming, she smiled and said,

"Jing Qing, Master Kong Yin let you back so early today?"

"Sit down and have a cup of tea."

These days, Jing Qing would debate with Master Kong Yin until noon every day before returning.

Today, he was an hour earlier than usual, which was indeed a bit abnormal.

Jing Qing smiled slightly and said,

"Madam, just now two monks from the temple came over and shouted outside the main hall,"

"But they spoke Japanese the whole time, and I didn't understand what they were saying."

"It's just that Master Kongyin was very excited and asked me to help him go outside the temple gate."

"I don't know what happened exactly."

Margaret asked in surprise, "Master Kongyin is over a hundred years old."

"What could make him so excited?"

Jing Qing shook his head slightly, "I don't know about this."

Margaret asked in confusion, "Didn't you help him go over?"

"No." Jing Qing said truthfully,

"Later, Master Kongyin instructed his two disciples,"

"And then asked me to go back first."

Margaret felt that something was wrong, so he said to Sister Sun,

"Sister Sun, ask our secret sentry if he found anything unusual."

Sister Sun nodded, turned, and walked away a few steps,

Gently pulled out the microphone of the walkie-talkie from her collar, pressed the call button,

And asked a few questions softly.

After hearing the answer, her expression suddenly froze, and she immediately walked over to Margaret in a panic and said,

"Madam, the sentry said that a Japanese girl came to the temple gate just now,"

"She looked young and waited at the door for a while."

"Now she has been taken in by the novice monks in the temple..."

Margaret had just picked up a purple clay teacup for Jing Qing.

When she heard this, her hand suddenly shook,

And the teacup fell from her fingertips, hit the tea tray with a snap, and shattered into pieces.

A look of horror flashed across her face, and she asked Sister Sun,

"Who do you think it could be?"

Sister Sun's face was covered in cold sweat.

She said anxiously, panicked, and filled with shame,

"Madam... I'm worried it's Maria..."

Margaret smiled bitterly,

"I think the same as you..."

Sister Sun was instantly thrown into disarray.

In all these years, they had never been approached by anyone.

This felt like the crew of the Titanic, so confident that their ship would never sink,

Only to turn around and hear a voice shouting,

"It's over! We hit an iceberg!"

Jing Qing also panicked and said quickly,

"Madam, this Maria... couldn't she have come for you?"

"Otherwise... how about we help you evacuate first!"

"Yes, Madam!"

Sister Sun also said, "We still have time to leave while she's looking for the abbot."

"I just found out, it's Maria herself!"

Margaret shook his head and said with a self-deprecating laugh,

"If Maria had come to see me, there would have been no point in hiding."

"You have to understand that she came on her own this time, which means she hasn't told Charlie about her discovery yet."

"Otherwise, if Charlie had come with her, with his level of cultivation,"

"We would have been exposed long ago."

Jing Qing, Sister Sun, and Leon all looked dejected.

They also knew that if Maria really came to see them, hiding would have been pointless.

Maria's coming alone was just sending a signal.

Don't worry, let's talk face-to-face first.

If they ignored this signal, then next time,

Maria might bring Charlie with her.

Leon was still struggling: "Madam, even if Maria discovered us,"

"She would definitely not know of your existence."

"Why don't you hide first and let your subordinates go to see her!"

"It's useless."

Margaret smiled and said, "Maria is so smart that she is almost a demon."

"Victoria has not been able to catch her for hundreds of years."

"Charlie was found after fighting with her for a few rounds."

"If you go to see her, she will definitely not believe that you are the mastermind behind the scenes."

"The few of us combined have not lived as long as she."

"Besides, it's unrealistic to try to fool her when she has come to your door."

After that, Margaret sighed and said seriously:

"Things have come to this point."

"If you are not as skilled as her, there is no need to resist in vain."

"Just wait. If Maria really comes to see me,"

"She will send someone to invite us over soon."

"Then I will go and have a frank talk with her!"

Jing Qing subconsciously released his spiritual energy and sensed that Maria was approaching the entrance to the main hall courtyard,

So he immediately said, "Madam, I will use my spiritual energy to investigate and fully monitor Maria's every move!"

"No need for that."

Margaret waved his hand and said seriously,

"It's really not fair to try these little tricks at this time."

"I, Margaret, have lived an honest life and have never done anything wrong."

"Yet, like a homeless rat, I've been hiding in the shadows around the world for twenty years."

"It's not a bad thing to be honest with Maria today!"

## Chapter 7039

Seeing Margaret's decision, the other three fell silent.

While everyone was shocked and annoyed to be found here by Maria,

They were still a friend, not an enemy, and at least posed no threat.

Margaret cleared the broken pieces from the tea tray and took out a new cup.

"Alright, everyone, don't be discouraged."

"It's normal to be less skilled and less intelligent than others."

"Especially with a senior like Maria."

"Just sit down and wait patiently."

The three nodded and sat down again.

Maria had already walked to the entrance of the main hall courtyard.

Master Kongyin, exhausted and excited, was holding onto the doorframe in anticipation.

The moment he saw Maria step in,

A childlike smile crossed his wrinkled face.

Maria noticed him, and her usual girlish smile faded,

Replacing it with a kind yet commanding one.

At the same time, as she walked, she took off her mask and undid her twin ponytails with both hands.

As she walked quickly, her hands were very skillful and neat,

And she tied her long hair back into a neat high ponytail.

At this moment, Maria's eyes took on a bit of sharpness.

In an instant, her temperament changed drastically,

As if she had become a different person.

Kong Yin was trembling and wanted to walk out of the main hall to greet him.

Maria tied her hair and just slightly extended her right hand towards him with her palm facing him.

Kong Yin knew that Maria wanted him to wait there.

So he stopped and held the door frame with both hands for support.

Tears had already burst out,

So that Maria's figure gradually blurred in his eyes.

Maria quickened her pace and strode towards Kong Yin.

When she got closer, Kong Yin loosened his hands that were holding onto the door frame,

And was about to kneel down tremblingly, muttering and choking:

"Miss... Zhengping pays homage to you..."

Maria reached out to support him and asked with a smile:

"Zhengping, it's been a hundred years since we last met."

"Are you okay?"

Kong Yin's emotions instantly lost control,

And he broke down and sobbed like a child:

"Good...good...Miss...Zhengping is fine."

"Thanks to you, I am alive today and have the opportunity to see you again."

"Miss...how have you been all these years?"

Maria saw him. It was inevitable that she would feel sad when she saw her crying,"

"But she still maintained that kind smile and said softly,

"I'm fine, as you can see,"

"I still look the same."

After that, she supported him and said,

"You are old, don't stand here all the time."

"And don't get too excited."

"I'll help you go in and sit down to talk."

Kong Yin choked and said,

"Zhengping doesn't dare to trouble the young lady."

"I can still walk by myself."

Maria smiled softly and said,

"You are still as strong as when you were a child."

Although she said so,

Maria still gently supported him to sit on the cushion in the center of the main hall.

Kong Yin was nearing death, his movements slow and fatigued,

But his face was filled with excitement.

He wiped away his tears with his cassock and finally took in Maria.

He sighed, "Miss, you haven't changed at all in all these years."

Maria laughed heartily,

"I haven't even reached four hundred years of my five-hundred-year lifespan."

"In a few decades, I'll still look the same."

Kong Yin sighed, "Miss,"

"You've worked hard these past few years."

Maria smiled and said, "I've had so many more years of travel and experience than the average person."

"So it's only natural that I should endure some hardships."

Kong Yin nodded, "Miss, you're as open-minded as you were back then."

Then he remembered to ask,

"Miss...you...why did you come to Japan?"

"I remember you saying that the aggressive military policy since the First Sino-Japanese War had disappointed you so much."

"You said you wouldn't return here."

"And now you're back. Have you run into any trouble?"

## Chapter 7040

Maria shook her head and said,

"I came here to meet the distinguished guest of your temple."

"My distinguished guest?!"

Kong Yin was stunned for a moment, then asked her,

"Miss, are you acquainted with Master Jingqing and the others?"

"I don't know them."

Maria smiled and said, "I just saw that your temple is closed for reconstruction."

"And Master Jingqing has come to Japan again."

"I felt that the person I was looking for might be here."

"So I came to take a look."

"If it is convenient for you, please send someone to tell them for me."

"And tell them that Maria begs to meet them."

Kong Yin nodded and said,

"To be honest, miss, among them, I only know Master Jingqing."

"The others all live in a separate courtyard in the temple."

"They seldom go out and never communicate with us."

"However, it seems that Master Jingqing is not the leader of these people."

"The real leader should be living in seclusion in the separate courtyard."

"Miss, wait a moment, I will tell Master Jingqing and ask him to convey the message."

Maria said, "You are old and weak, so don't bother."

"I will go find the novice monk and ask him to convey the message on my behalf. "Go ahead and talk."

Kong Yin smiled and took out his cell phone from under the futon, saying,

"Don't worry, miss. I'll call Master Jingqing."

Maria was stunned for a moment, covered her mouth and giggled, reached out and touched his bald head, and said with a smile,

"Zhengping, when I see you again, it feels like more than a hundred years ago."

"I forgot that we are now in modern society."

Kong Yin smiled like a child and said,

"But in my heart, the days when he lived with his other brothers and sisters were the best time of his life."

Maria sighed, "Time flies."

"You are the only one left among your brothers and sisters, right?"

Kong Yin sighed with tears in his eyes,

"Yes, miss, I am the only one left."

"I didn't expect that I would have the chance to see you before I die."

As he spoke, he couldn't help sobbing again.

Maria smiled and said, "Okay, stop crying."

"You were the most tearful of all the children before."

"I didn't expect you to be over a hundred years old and still be so tearful."

"I can't count how many times you've cried since I met you."

Kong Yin quickly wiped away his tears and murmured,

"I'm sorry to have made a fool of myself..."

Then, to avoid embarrassment, he quickly picked up his phone and asked Maria,

"By the way, Miss, how should I tell Master Jingqing?"

Maria smiled and said, "Just tell him that your daughter wants to meet the head of his family."

"If you would be so kind,"

"Please come to the main hall for a chat."

"Okay, Miss."

Kong Yin called Master Jingqing without hesitation.

Jingqing was not surprised by his call.

After the call was connected, he said respectfully,

"Hello, Master Kongyin."

Master Kongyin continued, "Master Jingqing,"

"My daughter wants to meet the head of your family."

"Could you please come to the main hall for a chat?"

Jingqing looked at Margaret in front of him, and Margaret nodded slightly.

He then said to Kongyin, "Please ask Master Kongyin to tell your young lady that we're coming right over."

After hanging up, he asked Margaret,

"Madam, I'll accompany you."

Margaret stood up and said with a smile,

"Let's all come together."

"She's brave enough to take such a risk to come to Kyoto alone."

"What's there for us to hold back?"

Leon and Sister Sun exchanged a glance, then stood up silently.

Then, the four of them walked toward the main hall.

Inside, Maria sat at attention.

For a girl who looked only sixteen or seventeen,

Sitting so upright and looking so solemn was a bit of a strange sight.

Kongyin had a thousand words to say to Maria,

But he knew his young lady had important matters to attend to,

So he sat down beside her in silence.

Soon, footsteps were heard, and Maria raised her eyes toward the main hall entrance.

Although she remained calm, she was also deeply curious about who was behind all this, even orchestrating it.

Moreover, she knew very well that the fact that they had arranged for her to meet at Qingzhao Temple proved that she was in the open with them,

And they must have known her identity and origins.

Now, it was finally time for everyone to be frank!

## Chapter 7041

A moment later, Maria saw a tall, slender, middle-aged woman with a strikingly handsome face and a heroic air walk in.

Maria knew the people following behind her.

One was Leon, the Wade family's longtime steward.

One was the fake nun she'd met that day at Qingzhao Temple;

And one was the renowned young Buddhist master, Master Jingqing.

So, who was this beautiful woman?

Maria felt vaguely familiar, but at first glance, she couldn't place her name.

Living too long has its advantages and disadvantages.

Besides the increased burden of worry, the sheer number of people one has met and heard of puts a strain on one's memory.

Even the most sociable of individuals live for decades,

And even those who shy away from socializing know only a few thousand.

Since her teenage years, Maria has constantly changed locations and identities, meeting one group of people after another.

Her timeline spans over three hundred years,

And her memory bank is filled with countless faces.

As for Margaret, she had never actually met Maria.

She had only seen bits of her indirectly or passively,

So the connection was initially unclear.

When Margaret first learned about Maria, Charlie was still living in the Aurous Hill Welfare Home.

From some of the group's opponents, she had learned many of its secrets,

Including Maria, who had long been Victoria's primary target.

However, she had no idea what she looked like until she appeared beside Charlie.

She hadn't noticed this peculiar girl.

Initially, she was unsure.

It wasn't until Maria accompanied Charlie to the Shiwan Mountains that she was finally certain this young girl was the Maria that Victoria had been searching for for over three hundred years.

Although she had seen photos and videos of her some time ago,

This time, face to face, Margaret felt a sudden, overwhelming sense of power and aura from this seemingly young woman.

She knew she couldn't be misled by her appearance.

Maria, a frail woman of only sixteen or seventeen, had managed to survive the unpredictable and treacherous modern world for nearly four hundred years,

All despite Victoria's relentless pursuit.

She was undoubtedly a remarkable woman.

When Margaret approached Maria, she smiled.

Though she had questions in mind, she didn't speak first.

Instead, she gestured to the futon across from her and offered him an invitation.

Margaret returned the invitation with a smile,

But didn't immediately take a seat.

Instead, she spoke respectfully,

"Senior Lin, it's a nice meeting."

"Let me introduce myself."

"My name is Margaret An, and I'm Charlie's mother."

At the mention of Margaret, a slight ripple crossed Maria's usually calm face.

She was genuinely shocked, but it didn't last.

As the saying goes, the longer one lives, the more one sees.

And the more one sees, the fewer things can disturb one's calm heart.

For Maria, even if two living dinosaurs appeared tomorrow,

Let alone Margaret's continued existence,

She wouldn't find anything incomprehensible.

She believed that the most incomprehensible person in the world was herself.

So, with a faint smile and a slight nod, she said,

“So it’s Madam Wade?”

“Then everything makes sense. Please take a seat.”

Margaret nodded and sat down cross-legged in front of her with a respectful expression.

For the first time, these two incredibly intelligent women sat face to face.

Maria looked at Margaret, and Margaret looked back at Maria.

Their gaze spans centuries, and their nearly identical destinies,

Instilled a sense of mutual appreciation in both.

Maria was the first to break the silence.

She looked at Margaret and smiled, saying,

“I have long heard of Madam Wade.”

“It is truly a great honor to meet you today!”

Margaret said humbly but respectfully,

“Senior Lin, you are too polite.”

“In fact, I have heard of you a long time ago and have always admired you.”

“However, even Victoria couldn’t find you.”

"So I didn't dare to hope to meet you one day."

Maria smiled and said, "Even in the Warriors Den, very few people know about my identity and background."

"It seems that Madam Wade has done a good job of infiltrating the Warriors Den over the years."

Margaret smiled slightly and said,

"In fact, infiltration work is very difficult to advance."

"In the core layer, the three elders and the four earls are doubly bound by their cultivation and antidotes."

"I can't penetrate their level,"

"And I have never dared to try, for fear that one careless move will lead to a complete failure."

"However, over the years,"

"I have found several righteous people from the Wu family who are determined to break away from Victoria's control."

"And they have been of some help."

Maria raised her eyebrows in surprise and asked with interest,

"Mrs. Wade is truly courageous!"

"She actually chose to find a breakthrough directly from the Wu family!"

"This unconventional idea is truly admirable!"

Margaret said modestly, "Actually, I am starting from the perspective of human nature and have discerned a truth from many years of history,"

"Which is: when people are individuals, there are purely good and evil."

"But as people form groups and the number of groups increases,"

"It is difficult to guarantee that this group is purely good or purely evil."

"In other words, I believe that as long as the base of the group is large enough,"

"Even the best group will have bad apples."

"Even the worst group will have righteous people."

"Just like the fascist camp in World War II had many demons and killed countless people,"

"But among them, there were also those who turned from darkness to light;"

"During apartheid in the United States, there were so many white people who discriminated against people of color,"

"Yet there were also white people who became true friends with people of color."

"This proves that no matter how powerful the influence and control of the environment is,"

"It is impossible to completely control everyone's thinking and worldview."

"Probabilistic theory says that probability is the norm and underlying color of this world."

"Therefore, I feel that the Wu family has flourished for four hundred years under Victoria's protection."

"They have so many descendants that they could have established five military governorships like the ancient feudal system."

"With such a large scale, even if the vast majority of people are Victoria's loyal lackeys,"

"There must be a few who are dissatisfied with Victoria and the Wu family's actions."

"If I can find these people, I will be infiltrating the enemy."

Maria's eyes widened as she exclaimed,

"Mrs. Wade's thinking is truly extraordinary."

"It's truly enlightening!"

## Chapter 7042

Margaret said self-deprecatingly, "I hid for twenty years without being noticed by anyone other than my subordinates,"

"But after a few actions, I was exposed in front of you."

"Compared to your wisdom, I'm just a nobody."

Maria shook her head and sighed with some annoyance,

"My so-called wisdom has always been used to escape, but Mrs. Wade is different."

"She uses her wisdom to counterattack."

"This alone makes her far superior to me!"

Facing Maria's praise, Margaret said modestly:

"Senior, you are too kind."

"I am far from launching a counterattack now."

"I have only made some preparations in secret."

"Moreover, my husband planned many things for me before he died and formed a professional team."

"Otherwise, if I were alone, I might not even be able to escape."

Maria smiled slightly and asked her:

"Has Madam Wade made any major breakthroughs from the Wu family?"

Margaret said, "To be honest, senior, there are indeed a few people in the Wu family who feel that the Wu family has been aiding and abetting Victoria over the years."

"Although they have gained a lot of material benefits, they are also deeply sinful."

"However, none of those interested in overthrowing Victoria are in high positions."

"While they can provide some intelligence, it's unlikely to be of much help."

Maria nodded, suddenly thinking of a breakthrough, and she said,

"Mrs. Wade's thinking has given me an idea."

"Although the vast majority of the Wu family members have aided and abetted the evil, they certainly worry about the future."

"For the past three or four hundred years, they have had Victoria's protection."

"Allowing them to rest easy and even enjoy immense wealth."

"But Victoria only has less than a hundred years left to live,"

"And they will undoubtedly worry about the drastic changes that will follow her death."

Margaret's pupils trembled, and she looked at Maria, waiting for her next words.

Maria continued, "Although the Wu family and Victoria are on the same boat,"

"Victoria has no descendants of her own."

"She doesn't have to worry about the continuation of her bloodline after her death."

"But the Wu family is different."

"They don't have elixirs of immortality."

"They have relied on generations to reproduce to reach their current situation."

"Once Victoria's 500-year lifespan expires, will the Wu family's descendants still be able to control the three elders? Can they still control the death squads and the cavalry guards?"

"Can they still resist the external enemies of the Warriors Den?"

"These are probably the difficult problems that the Wu family will face."

"So, I think we should think of a way to make the Wu family aware of this huge risk,"

"So that they will gradually become alienated from Victoria."

"At the same time, we should also make Victoria aware of the risk of betrayal from the Wu family."

"She is suspicious and violent by nature."

"Once she starts to guard against the Wu family, they will definitely have grudges against each other."

"For Victoria, how to solve the Wu family's alienation will definitely be a very headache-inducing systemic problem."

Margaret said with surprise, "Senior's idea has opened my eyes!"

"Victoria is getting fewer and fewer, and the Wu family must be getting more and more worried."

"If we can find a way to amplify the Wu family's worries and at the same time arouse Victoria's suspicion,"

"The internal friction between them may be equivalent to that of thousands of troops!"

After speaking, she asked Maria,

"Does the senior have any good ideas?"

Maria thought for a moment and asked with a smile,

"How about making the story of me and Victoria into a short play?"

"Ah?!" Margaret exclaimed,

"Senior... why do you think so?"

Maria said calmly, "For the past three hundred years,"

"I have been hiding everywhere, and so has Victoria."

"To put it bluntly, we are both old monsters who have lived for hundreds of years, and no one can see the light of day."

"Make our story into a short play, and write the ending of the story as Victoria's five hundred years of life are over."

"And then she dies like Empress Dowager Cixi, and everything disappears, and the Wu family collapses completely."

At this point, Maria suddenly laughed mischievously and said,

“After Cixi’s death, the all-powerful...”

“The benefits vanished in an instant like a passing cloud, and the Qing Dynasty soon perished.”

“This period of history happened not long ago, and most Chinese people know it, and naturally, the Wu family also knows it.”

“Others may not extend it to reality, but Victoria and the Wu family will definitely put themselves in this situation.”

“Victoria is Empress Dowager Cixi, and the Wu family is the late Qing Dynasty.”

“After Victoria’s death, the collapse of the Wu family is only a matter of time.”

“By then, Victoria will be furious, and the Wu family will probably be in constant fear.”

“Then both sides will be suspicious of each other and keep backhanded.”

“In the next few decades, Victoria will probably be in a state of panic!”

Margaret was incredibly surprised, and Sister Sun and Leon beside him were also extremely excited.

No one had considered such a tactic.

If the story of Maria and Victoria were really made into a short film,

The Wu family would probably be devastated,

And Victoria would probably be furious!

This simple tactic could trap the alliance between the Wu family and Victoria in a trap of internal friction.

It was definitely a prime example of using a small amount of force to achieve a great result!

So, Margaret asked her: "Senior, if you are really willing to make these into short dramas,"

"Then I can take care of it on your behalf and find a reliable team to make it come true!"

Maria smiled and said, "Madam Wade, you and I don't have to intervene directly in this matter, so as not to leave clues."

"Besides, it's still too small to find only one team to shoot it."

Margaret couldn't help asking:

"What do you think, senior?"

Maria said, "My idea is that I will write our story into a script by myself."

"And then publish the script on the Internet,"

"And then take out 500 bitcoins and give it to Huiwang."

"Huiwang will host a special competition. The content of the competition is that all people who shoot short dramas in the world can remake this script for free."

"Whoever shoots the version with the largest number of views and the widest influence will win. "You'll receive 300 of the 500 bitcoins."

"The second-place winner will receive 100, the third-place winner will receive 50."

"And the fourth to thirteenth-place winners will receive five."

She raised an eyebrow and said, "Five hundred bitcoins, at current prices, is worth about \$60 million, or 400 million RMB."

"The cost of a short play is only a few hundred thousand RMB, a few million at most."

"Even if you can only get five bitcoins, that's \$600,000."

"I imagine this is a huge temptation."

"Furthermore, Gray Network's intermediary service is always trustworthy."

"As long as you transfer the bitcoins to them and pay their agreed 10% handling fee,"

"They will strictly adhere to the agreement and maintain fairness in the competition."

"As long as Gray Network spreads the word, no one will worry about unfair competition or not receiving prize money."

"By then, there might be hundreds of short dramas all over the world,"

"All about Victoria and me."

"Victoria and the Wu family will be bombarded with information like this."

"I'm afraid they can't avoid it."

## Chapter 7043

Margaret nodded excitedly, sighing, "Senior's plan is brilliant!"

"And using Bitcoin to post a reward on the gray network won't leave any clues for Victoria."

"Even if she is furious, she'll be completely helpless."

"As for the audience around the world, they will just treat this short drama as a fabricated story."

"No one will associate it with reality."

"It's truly beneficial and has no harm!"

"Senior's strategy is truly impressive!"

Maria smiled and said, "I was also inspired by Madam Wade."

"After meeting, I suddenly realized that hiding for more than three hundred years was too tiring and foolish."

"It's better to switch tactics and go from defense to offense."

"Victoria has made me suffer so much; it's time she had a taste of it too!"

Maria's plan astounded Margaret.

She planned to script and film her experiences with Victoria into a short play, even going so far as to invent an ending where Victoria vanished into thin air five hundred years later.

This was intended to drive a wedge between the Wu family and Victoria, potentially disrupting their morale. This was genius in itself.

Even more remarkable was her decision to base the short play on an incentive system, rather than an investment.

This was the ultimate risk mitigation strategy.

If a production were funded, no matter how many shell companies were used, the funding process would be impossible to conceal.

Who produced the play and who paid them was difficult to completely conceal.

Even if the money could be concealed, the details of who found the person and how they contacted them would remain hidden.

However, Maria bypassed the investment process entirely.

She simply offered a high-value Bitcoin incentive and used the gray network as a backup.

The high reward offered by the gray network would naturally encourage the short play creators to spread the word,

And even attract outsiders to participate for the financial incentive.

The high prizes will incentivize those involved in short drama productions to finance and film their own productions, without any contact with Maria.

This is a bit like a marathon organizer.

They only need to offer a high enough prize for winning, without paying any commission to marathon runners.

Marathon runners and enthusiasts from around the world will flock to the event,

Covering their own travel, food, and lodging expenses.

Not only do they have to pay entry fees,

But some popular events even require a lottery to qualify, making it impossible to pay.

This way, Maria won't have to pay these production teams herself, making the funding chain completely untraceable.

Bitcoin, a cryptocurrency, is also anonymous, making it impossible to trace Maria through Bitcoin.

Even if Victoria knew that Bitcoin came from Maria,

She wouldn't be able to trace it.

The gray network itself is an untraceable gray area.

Even if Maria posts tasks there, Victoria can't track her down.

This way, Maria has the dual security of the gray network and cryptocurrency.

Maria didn't need to reveal any clues; simply by posting the task,

She could attract skit creators worldwide to self-finance their own productions for the bounty of a few hundred Bitcoins.

The story of the two would then likely be broadcast online in hundreds of languages and across the globe,

Bombarding Victoria and her family with a seamless, 360-degree information barrage.

Even more remarkably, Maria posted her own script online. Victoria knew she wrote it,

But couldn't find her whereabouts, leaving her feeling helpless.

Besides providing the money and the story, Maria took no risks.

Furthermore, hundreds of teams worldwide would be filming this story, with tens of thousands of actors involved.

Even if Victoria wanted to vent her anger, she wouldn't have the chance.

Targeting these actors would only draw unnecessary attention.

The audience, already convinced it was a fictional story, would begin to wonder if the actors were mysteriously murdered,

Prompting speculation about a possible connection.

Margaret couldn't help but sigh to Maria at this moment,

"I've been working in the dark for twenty years,"

"And even the total destructive power I've brought to the Warriors Den might not even be comparable to what you've planned for this short play."

"If you need any help, I'll definitely do my best!"

Maria smiled and said, "It's easy. I can write the script myself."

"Even if Victoria can tell it's me, it doesn't matter."

"As long as she can't find me, she'll just be worried."

"As for Bitcoin, I have over a hundred thousand Bitcoins spread across hundreds of electronic wallets."

"That's more than enough to keep her busy with this little thing, even for decades."

As she spoke, Maria smiled playfully and continued,

"I planned that in the script I wrote, Victoria would still be called Victoria Wu."

"I wouldn't even change her name,"

"So that she could experience the feeling of social death!"

Margaret sighed, "This trick is enough to cause chaos in the Warriors Den's army."

"It's really an excellent strategy to win over people's hearts!"

After she finished speaking, she remembered that Maria had seen her talk for so long,

But the topic of their conversation had not yet mentioned Charlie,

So she took the initiative to stand up, bowed deeply to Maria, and said,

"By the way, senior, you once saved Charlie's life."

"As a mother, I am grateful."

"Today I finally have the opportunity to thank you in person!"

Maria was a little surprised and asked her,

"How did Madam know about the Changsheng Earl's self-destruction of the Niwan Palace?"

"Apart from me and the young master, the only other person who knew about this was the Dingyuan Earl, who was present at the scene that day."

Margaret said, ashamedly, "In fact, I also realized it later."

"I originally thought that with Charlie's strength, it should not be a problem to deal with a mere Changsheng Earl."

"What's the problem? Unexpectedly, that day, a loud bang erupted from the mountainous area outside Aurous Hill City."

"When my men arrived, the place where the two men had fought had already been razed to the ground."

"It was then that I realized that Jermo must have a trick up his sleeve that I didn't know about."

Without waiting for Maria to ask, she spoke bluntly,

"At first, I didn't know whether Charlie was dead or alive."

"Later, when Charlie was safe and sound, I speculated that it must have been you who saved him,"

"Or perhaps the ring your father left you. I wonder if I'm right?"

Maria smiled sweetly and nodded gently, then sighed,

"Communicating with Madam Wade was truly refreshing."

"Straightforward, no beating around the bush."

She put away her smile and said solemnly,

"Victoria has been hunting me for so many years simply to get her hands on that ring."

"I've long since grown tired of this life of hiding,"

"And the only thing that's holding me back from suicide is that ring."

"Although I am a weak woman and unable to kill Victoria,"

"The murderer of my father, I absolutely cannot and will never allow Victoria to obtain that ring."

"So, I originally planned to guard the ring until Victoria's five hundred years of life ended."

"This has been my belief and mission for the past three hundred years."

Maria's eyes were firm, but also a bit of contempt.

"In a war, the stronger one may not necessarily win."

"As long as they can't kill me, whoever survives will be the biggest winner."

"After all, I am younger than her."

"When her five hundred years of life are up,"

"I still have twenty years to live."

At this point, Maria sighed and continued,

"However, I didn't expect that when I was in Northern Europe,"

"Victoria would almost capture me, and the ring almost fell into her hands."

"Fortunately, you appeared in time and saved me from danger."

"At that moment, I realized that I might not have the ability to safely protect the ring for Victoria's five hundred years."

"So I simply gave it to you."

"If you take a step forward, the ring can help you."

"If you take a step back, the ring can protect your life."

"If you take another step back,"

"It can also ensure that even if Victoria catches me one day, she will not be able to get the ring."

"Without the ring, Victoria will have less than a hundred years to live."

## Chapter 7044

After hearing this, Margaret's admiration for Maria deepened,

And she couldn't help but sigh,

"Senior, your meticulousness and courage are truly admirable."

She then asked her, "Is Victoria so desperate to obtain the ring because it contains the recipe for the Evergreen Pill?"

Maria knew Margaret had already found a breakthrough within the Wu family and must have gleaned a wealth of crucial information,

So her mention of the Evergreen Pill wasn't surprising.

She calmly replied, "Based on what my father said,"

"The master did mention that the key to the Evergreen Pill lay in the ring."

"However, my father didn't know how to find this crucial clue."

"And the master never explained the ring's benefits."

"If Victoria hadn't suddenly confronted my father,"

"He wouldn't have even known the ring could have saved his life at a crucial moment."

Maria concealed nothing,

Recounting the entire story of her father's injury at the hands of Victoria and the ring's arrival.

Margaret was grateful and surprised when he heard it, and said excitedly:

"So this ring has such magical effects!"

"Your father used it once, and Charlie also used it once."

"Which proves that this ring can be reused."

"With it, Charlie will be immortal?"

Maria shook her head and said, "Everything is still unknown."

"The young master had a lot of spiritual energy sucked away by the ring."

"And he relied on round after round of elixirs to survive."

"I think it must be that the ring consumes a lot of spiritual energy every time it is activated."

"Moreover, how many times the ring can be used is also unknown."

"The best result is that the young master no longer needs its help."

Margaret nodded lightly with a serious face and sighed:

"What the senior said is right."

"There is no chance of trial and error in this kind of thing."

"One wrong step will lead to eternal damnation."

Maria smiled slightly, looked at Margaret, and said:

"When I came here today, I thought of many possibilities,"

"But I didn't expect to face Madam Wade."

"However, since we have met and talked about the young master,"

"Many things still need to be discussed openly and frankly."

"Let's talk about the problem clearly and thoroughly."

"I can achieve twice the result with half the effort for the young master,"

"What do you think, Madam Wade?"

Margaret nodded respectfully: "Senior is right,"

"I have decided to meet with you."

"And I am also ready to tell you everything I know."

"In addition, I also have some questions that I need to ask you."

Maria said with a smile:

"Then I will ask first."

Margaret raised his right hand and made a gesture of invitation:

"Senior, please speak."

Maria said: "Since Madam Wade was not killed as the outside world thinks,"

"Then I think the young master has been doing well in these years."

"Madam Wade must have been behind the scenes, orchestrating everything."

"Including the acquisition of the Nine Profound Heavenly Scriptures."

"So, since she arranged for the young master to marry Claire,"

"Why bother breaking them up now?"

"To be honest, senior, although I've been behind the scenes,"

"I'm far from being a mastermind, nor do I dare to be."

"When my husband anticipated the danger, he prepared a plan for me to escape."

"But I was kept in the dark at the time."

"Otherwise, I wouldn't have agreed to his offer to keep me alive."

"By the time I learned the truth, my husband had already been murdered."

"I could only follow his wishes and remain anonymous."

"I didn't dare contact any relatives or friends."

## Chapter 7045

Margaret continued:

"Several important milestones in Charlie's life,"

"Such as entering the orphanage, receiving the 10 billion from the Wade family, and obtaining the Nine Profound Heavenly Scripture, were all planned by him in advance."

"I didn't dare to interfere too much."

"The marriage you mentioned was completely unexpected."

"Neither my husband nor I could have predicted that Charlie would meet Claire's grandfather,"

"Let alone that he would be discovered by someone else."

"Claire's grandfather was a servant of the Wade family many years ago."

"He recognized Charlie from the Wade family based on his appearance and surname at the construction site,"

"And he took it upon himself to make Charlie a live-in son-in-law."

Maria suddenly understood and nodded gently, then said,

"But if Madam Wade is not satisfied with this marriage, there would have been many ways to avoid it in the first place, right?"

Margaret nodded and said,

"To be honest, in my opinion, Charlie is a descendant of the Wade family and the grandson of the An family."

"His background is definitely distinguished."

"Moreover, he has the Dragon Character given to him by his father."

"Making him a rising dragon."

"If being trapped in shallow water is the inevitable path to growth, then I can sit back and watch Charlie live in an orphanage,"

"Or I can watch him carry bricks on a construction site and be bullied."

"But what I least want to see is him becoming someone else's live-in son-in-law."

"So, I tried many ways to indirectly obstruct it,"

"Including secretly arranging for several wealthy individuals to pursue Claire before the marriage,"

"And even lobbying the Xiao family, but nothing worked."

"Given the circumstances at the time, if I had taken any further action,"

"It might have been seen as deliberate,"

"And forceful interference would only have let Charlie notice..."

"So, I had no choice but to call it a halt."

Maria nodded and asked,

"So, Madam Wade is not happy with their marriage, right?"

Margaret shook his head and said,

"I can't say I'm unhappy with Claire,"

"But I can't say I'm satisfied either."

"Objectively speaking, the fundamental reason why many mother-in-law and daughter-in-law relationships in China are tense is that the mother-in-law has not adjusted her mindset."

"A son is not a puppet of his mother-in-law."

"It is not the mother-in-law's place to interfere in who he wants to marry and how he wants to live with."

"A mother-in-law cannot choose a wife for her son, let alone dislike his wife."

"Claire was not chosen by me, but I have no right to dislike her."

Having said that, Margaret looked at Maria and said frankly,

"The reason why I went to great lengths to separate the two of them is that I don't want Claire's family to drag Charlie down again."

"I have also secretly observed Charlie's movements."

"Basically, he is centered in Aurous Hill and radiates around the world."

"But every time he leaves home, he seems very hasty."

"He returns immediately after finishing his business and commutes back and forth every day."

"Let me ask you, senior, if a cultivator has no time to retreat all day,"

"How can he have the opportunity to improve his cultivation?"

Maria nodded lightly and pondered,

"My father once said that cultivating the Tao is to slow down one's life like the redwood with a lifespan of ten thousand years, practicing meditation all day long."

"He often retreated into a state of deep concentration, often unnoticed for months or even over a year."

"To a cultivator, this was but the blink of an eye."

"His master once told him that by the time he reached his level of cultivation,"

"A hundred years had already passed."

"If he truly reached the highest realm,"

"Ten thousand wouldn't be surprising."

She then sighed, "Young Master's previous situation certainly had a significant impact on his cultivation."

"He never had enough time to retreat."

"His progress and breakthroughs may have stagnated because of this..."

Margaret felt a little relieved, but she couldn't help but sigh.

"I don't want to interfere with Charlie like this,"

"But if he doesn't seize the moment,"

"I'm afraid he won't be a match for Victoria by the time she dies."

With a solemn expression, she added, "Based on my understanding of Victoria,"

"If her lifespan truly reaches its limit, she will unleash vengeance on everyone."

"I'm afraid no one in the Wade or An families will be spared."

"Time is running out for Charlie!"

## Chapter 7046

No one in this world understands Victoria better than Maria.

This woman is what people now call a "super-malicious."

She is filled with malice towards everyone and the world,

Driven solely by her own interests.

When Maria's father rejected her advances,

She immediately murdered him without hesitation,

Proving she had prepared even before confessing her love to him.

If he agreed, they would become a perfect couple.

If he refused, she would kill him immediately, taking the elixir and ring for herself.

Her love and hate shift so swiftly, all in a single thought.

Such people have been around for generations.

Even in modern civilization, there are those as selfish as Victoria,

Those who, when their courtship is rejected, immediately turn to murder.

Therefore, if Victoria feels her chances of survival are over for the next five hundred years,

Given her character, she will surely fight tooth and nail,

Dragging countless others down with her.

Currently, the only person who stands a chance of eliminating her is Charlie.

If Charlie's cultivation remains stagnant or progresses slowly,

No one will be able to stop her.

Thinking of this, Maria sighed softly and said with emotion:

"Objectively speaking, Mrs. Wade's family will indeed bring great constraints to the young master."

"Now is indeed the time to put aside the love between children."

Seeing that Maria supported the point of view,

Margaret's expression instantly relaxed a little, and he smiled and said:

"When I saw you coming, I thought you were here to help Maria find Claire."

"Fortunately, you and I can reach a consensus on this matter."

Maria nodded slightly and said:

"The main reason I came here is to find out who is behind the young master's death."

"I planned everything behind the scenes."

"Now that the truth is out, I'm relieved."

She paused briefly, then continued,

"I dare not delay for too long,"

"Fearing that the young master might learn of my whereabouts and take notice."

"I'll be leaving shortly."

"Before I go, I have one more question for Madam Wade."

Margaret looked at her and asked,

"Senior, I suppose you're wondering about the whole story of Meng Changsheng in the Shiwan Mountains?"

Maria's eyes flickered, and she smiled,

"Communicating with Madam Wade is truly a relief."

Many questions immediately dawned on Maria the moment she met Margaret.

But she still didn't know why Margaret had arranged for that fake nun to intercept her and Charlie outside the Shiwan Mountains,

Warning them of the immense danger within.

Deep down, Maria had always admired and respected Meng Changsheng.

After all, he was her father's mentor and the person he respected most.

She had never heard her father mention anything bad about him.

Therefore, she couldn't understand Margaret's wariness of him.

Furthermore, she didn't know whether her master was dead or alive.

Margaret wanted to speak, but a glimpse of Master Kongyin,  
Sitting respectfully and silently beside, she hesitated for a moment.

Maria noticed her observing Kongyin and said,

"Zhengping is my adopted son."

"He is a man of integrity and excellent character."

"You can rest assured."

Margaret nodded, pondered for a moment, and then said something shocking:

"I suspect that everything that has happened to Maria is the result of a scheme laid out by Meng Changsheng over hundreds of years."

"He deliberately released the original 'Nine Profound Sutra Preface' and 'Nine Profound Heavenly Sutra' into the secular world."

"The mission of the 'Nine Profound Sutra Preface' is to find those with the Dragon Fate, inducing them to cultivate enlightenment."

"And then to induce them to voluntarily give their Dragon Fate to their offspring,"

"Thereby creating a person with the Ascending Dragon Fate."

"The 'Nine Profound Heavenly Sutra' was prepared for the Ascending Dragon Fate,"

"To refine the Ascending Dragon Fate into Meng Changsheng's desired form and then lure them to the Shiwan Mountains..."



## Chapter 7047

At this point, Margaret said solemnly,

"I believe Meng Changsheng went to great lengths to plan all of this in order to seize another body and cultivate anew!"

"To extend his life!"

"Seizing another body and cultivating anew..."

Maria frowned and said, "I've only heard of this kind of thing."

"But it's all just hearsay and no real evidence."

Margaret continued, "I only learned about this by chance."

"After Maria began cultivating the Nine Profound Heavenly Scripture,"

"I went to the Shiwan Mountains to help him find opportunities."

"I originally wanted to find the immortal residence where Meng Changsheng had practiced in seclusion."

"However, I never expected to meet a Taoist priest of Master Kongyin's age in the Shiwan Mountains."

"The Taoist priest suddenly appeared, blocking my way."

"And told me that if I went any further, I would end up in the Blood Lake Hell."

"Blood Lake Hell?"

Maria blurted out, "The Blood Lake Hell mentioned by the Taoists should just be a legend like the Eighteen Layers of Hell!"

"How could it be in the Shinwan Mountains?"

Margaret explained, "The Blood Lake Hell mentioned by the Taoists is a hell where the resentful souls of those who died unjustly or committed sins gather."

"The Taoist priest said it was the Blood Lake Hell because it was like the Blood Lake Hell mentioned by the Taoists, where many people died unjustly."

"The Taoist priest said that deep in the Shinwan Mountains is a formation that was created with the sacrifice of countless lives."

"And that formation is still operating to this day."

"There must be an evil cultivator who has died in the formation."

"Death in the form of a sword..."

Maria murmured, "I've heard that death in the form of a sword means that those who fail in the tribulation abandon their physical body but retain their soul."

"Then this... must be the legendary way of the immortal!"

"Yes." Margaret nodded heavily and continued to explain,

"The Taoist priest also said it was the way to become a scattered immortal."

Maria asked doubtfully, "But, that shouldn't be the case..."

"It's said that in this world, only cultivators in the Tribulation Crossing Stage can achieve the state of disintegration and become scattered immortals the moment they fail the tribulation."

"Others simply don't have the possibility of disintegration."

"Once their lifespan is over, their souls will be scattered and their spirits will be destroyed!"

"The master's cultivation level hasn't even exceeded a thousand years of lifespan."

"Let alone the Tribulation Crossing Stage."

"How could he have the ability to disintegrate and become a scattered immortal?"

Margaret sighed, "This is the most terrifying part."

"The Taoist priest himself is a cultivator."

"He told me that any cultivator's spirit will vanish into thin air after death."

"The reason why the evil cultivator in the formation was able to disintegrate despite his lack of strength was because, before his death,"

"He used the lives of countless people to replicate a blood lake hell in the Shinwan Mountains, according to Taoist legend."

"That blood lake hell has transcended the Five Elements,"

"And Three Realms concealed the cycle of reincarnation!"

"If there really is purgatory in this world, then he has created a purgatory of his own in the human world."

"Heaven thinks it is part of Hell, and Hell thinks it is part of the human world."

"And that evil cultivator who kills countless people can die here without being punished by Heaven."

At this point, Margaret looked at Maria and asked seriously,

"To be able to kill countless people in the Shiwan Mountains,"

"This must have happened in ancient times."

"Meng Changsheng has been in seclusion in the Shiwan Mountains for many years."

"So he is naturally the most suspicious."

"Moreover, Meng Changsheng happened to live for a thousand years."

"With his obsession with immortality,"

"He is the most likely to do such a thing."

Maria shook her head and said,

"But... my father once said that the master died at the age of a thousand years."

"Before his death, he gave two Eternal Green Pills to him and Victoria."

"After my father and Victoria took care of his funeral, he was about to leave the mountain when Victoria attacked my father."

"By then, the master had already passed away."

"If he were the evil cultivator, it would contradict what my father said."

"My father told me all this before he died,"

"So I think he would never lie.

Margaret sighed, "Senior, your father didn't lie."

"It was Meng Changsheng who lied."

## Chapter 7048

"It was Master who lied?! Why did Madam Wade say that?!"

Maria's face was filled with surprise and confusion.

Margaret asked Maria, "Senior, do you know anything about Meng Changsheng's life?"

"For example, when was he born and when did he die?"

Maria blurted out, "Master was born in Chang'an in the first year of the Linde reign of the Tang Dynasty."

"Which was 664 AD, and died in 1663,"

"Which was the second year of the Kangxi reign of the Qing Dynasty?"

"Exactly one thousand years ago."

Margaret shook her head and said,

"I had people look up a lot of ancient books and materials in Chang'an."

"Because Meng Changsheng was a Jinshi and had served in the court,"

"Some official historical books have records of him."

"According to the official historical records,"

"Meng Changsheng was indeed born in the first year of the Linde reign."

"However, this contradicts what the Taoist priest said,"

"So I asked some tomb raiders to search for clues in the ancient tombs of the Wu family from the Tang Dynasty."

"After over a year of searching, until Senior and Charlie went to the Shiwan Mountains, we finally found a document from over a thousand years ago from the Wu family."

"It states that the 16th-generation grandson of the Wu family at the time was named Meng Sheng."

"With the courtesy name Changming."

"He was born in the second year of the Qianfeng reign of the Tang Dynasty."

"Which was 667 AD."

"The surname, name, and courtesy name all match."

"I believe this Meng Sheng is Meng Changsheng!"

Maria's eyes widened, her expression no longer calm.

She blurted out, "Madam Wade, do you mean that Master changed his birth date?"

"He deliberately changed his age by three years?"

"Yes!" Margaret nodded and said,

"Based on what I have found, it should be so."

Maria frowned, "But this doesn't make sense!"

"I once talked to you. You once met an old man by chance."

"The old man's ancestor was a servant named Jiang who was accepted by the master at the beginning of his cultivation."

"Even the old man said that the master was born in the first year of Linde."

"I think the master was less than a hundred years old at that time."

"It is impossible for him to start planning things a thousand years later so early."

"Besides, some scholars in the Tang Dynasty would spend a lot of manpower and material resources to bribe examiners and change their age in order to take the boy exam."

"Some officials would do this to delay retirement."

"I will first analyze human nature."

"Meng Changsheng's original name was Meng Sheng, with the courtesy name Chang Ming."

"Later, after practicing Taoism, he changed his name to Meng Changsheng and called himself Changsheng Jushi."

This is like a businessman who was originally named Meng Sheng and later changed his name to Meng Facai."

"But the word Changsheng sounds more reasonable."

"It has a sense of ethereal beauty, so it seems less vulgar."

"But in fact, its underlying logic is the same as names like Meng Fa Cai and Meng Dang Guan."

"The younger generation feels that people who can change their innermost thoughts into their own names must have very strong inner desires and are definitely not the kind of people who have no desires or demands."

Maria agreed and said, "Mrs. Wade's analysis is indeed very reasonable."

Margaret continued, "When Meng Changsheng passed the imperial examination and entered the court as an official, the emperor was still Emperor Gaozong Li Zhi."

"Emperor Gaozong of Tang changed his reign title fourteen times in his lifetime."

"His wife Wu Zetian later ascended the throne and changed her reign title seventeen times in her lifetime."

"As for Emperor Gaozu of Tang and Empress Dowager Tang, they changed their reign titles seventeen times."

"Emperor Gaozong used only one reign title, and other emperors generally used one or two."

"Emperor Gaozong and Empress Wu Zetian frequently changed their reign titles."

"It's said this was because they were both devoted believers in Taoism and the I Ching."

"And each reign title held special significance for them."

"This was likely due to their frequent use of the I Ching and the Eight Trigrams for divination."

She then added, "I had someone calculate Meng Changsheng's birth date and time in the first year of Qianfeng."

"It doesn't bode well for his career, nor will it significantly impact the country."

"Given his birth date and time, and Emperor Gaozong's deep faith in Taoism and the I Ching, he wouldn't have many prospects for advancement."

## Chapter 7049

After a pause, Margaret continued,

"As for his birth date recorded in official history,"

"I've had someone calculate it for the first year of the Linde era."

"If we go by that horoscope, he was definitely destined for a top-tier official career."

"For the nation, he was a peerless genius capable of rescuing the country from collapse."

"When Meng Changsheng was practicing Taoism, he did everything he could to achieve immortality."

"As an official, he would certainly do everything he could to climb the career ladder."

"Changing his birthdate to prepare for a successful official career."

"He would definitely be capable of such a thing!"

Maria felt a chill run down her spine as she murmured, her face pale.

"If that's true, then in 1663, my master was actually only 997 years old, three years away from his natural death."

"My father and Victoria handled his funeral affairs according to his wishes."

"I guess he must have faked his death..."

"That's right." Margaret said, "Meng Changsheng would not let your father and Victoria know his true thoughts and all his plans."

"He faked his death in advance, deceived his two disciples,"

"And gave himself three years to prepare the Blood Lake Hell that would allow him to dissolve into the blood before his death."

"This was his real purpose."

After that, Margaret said, "I also checked the county annals around the Shiwandashan Mountains."

"Between 1664 and 1666, the local area suffered a rare natural disaster."

"A large number of people left their homes and became refugees."

"The number was at least tens of thousands."

Maria looked at her and murmured,

"Could these people have all been harmed by the Master?"

Margaret shook her head and said,

"I have no direct evidence for this."

"But according to that senior, setting up the Blood Lake Hell formation requires the sacrifice of vast quantities of blood and wronged souls."

"Furthermore, I've consulted nearly every county annals within the hundreds and thousands of miles surrounding the Shinwan Mountains."

"During that same period, or in the year or two following,"

"No place recorded receiving large numbers of refugees, nor did it record a sudden surge in local banditry."

"Tens of thousands of refugees didn't flee to other towns or become bandits."

"So where did they go?"

Upon hearing this, Maria trembled violently, her eyes quickly filling with tears.

She was a clever woman, knowing that what Margaret said,

When put together, it was enough to prove everything.

Meng Changsheng, whom her father revered so deeply, had long ago lost his humanity in his pursuit of immortality.

Using tens of thousands of lives to create a hellish formation,

Solely to allow him to dissolve within it and avoid complete annihilation of his soul was a cruel tactic.

She wiped away her tears with her sleeve and choked up,

"Master... Oh, no, it's Meng Changsheng!"

"He killed so many people and planned all this, hoping that someone with the Ascending Dragon Fate would appear in this world."

"He would then lure them to the Blood Lake Hell in the Shinwan Mountains to possess another body,"

"And then be reborn in the body of someone with the Ascending Dragon Fate..."

"This step-by-step plan, a layout spanning hundreds and thousands of years, just for his own immortality..."

"What's the difference between a person and a demon?"

Margaret sighed, "Even the demons in myths and folk tales rarely contain such great evil."

Maria asked, "By the way, Madam Wade, since Meng Changsheng must die in the Blood Lake Hell,"

"Does that mean he will never be able to leave that hell?"

"That's right,"

Margaret nodded. "He shouldn't have existed in the first place."

"Only by staying in his Blood Lake Hell can he hide from the Heavenly Dao."

"If he leaves the Blood Lake Hell, he will be shattered into dust by the heavenly thunder."

"However, if he remains in the Blood Lake Hell, he will be the only god there."

"The Taoist priest said earlier that he has already refined tens of thousands of wronged souls in the Blood Lake Hell into magical instruments."

"With such a powerful magical instrument, no one can be his opponent, no matter where they go."

Maria breathed a sigh of relief and said,

"This also means that as long as you never go to the Shiwan Mountains,"

"Never visit his home turf; he will never be able to do anything to you."

"Because he can't leave his Blood Lake Hell, right?"

Margaret pondered, "In theory, it is true."

"But I feel that everything seems to be more complicated than it seems!"

## Chapter 7050

Seeing that Margaret still had concerns,

Maria couldn't help asking, "Madam Wade, is there any way for Meng Changsheng to leave the Blood Lake Hell?"

Margaret shook her head,

"According to that Taoist priest, Meng Changsheng's soul after his death could not leave the Blood Lake Hell,"

"But I still can't help but worry."

"He has been planning this for hundreds of years."

"I think he shouldn't let himself be so passive."

"I'm afraid he has another killer move."

Maria suddenly thought of something and asked her,

"Madam Wade, there is nothing strange about the ring I gave to you, right?"

"What if it can teleport you to the Shinwan Mountains?"

Margaret said, "It shouldn't be."

"If it had something strange,"

"It would not have been possible to save Charlie's life the first time."

As she spoke, Margaret explained, "Senior,"

"I have always felt that the power of that ring is too against the will of heaven."

"It can teleport a living person directly to another person."

"Since it has this ability, the person who refined this ring can completely refine an actively triggered ring."

"And then teleport himself to another person at will."

"Sending to any place—how could a cultivator with a thousand-year lifespan craft this?"

If Meng Changsheng possessed such skill, he would have long ago found a way to extend his lifespan by fifteen hundred years."

"Even if he didn't go to such lengths to lure Charlie to the Shiwan Mountains,"

"He could simply refine a magical instrument and circulate it along with the Nine Profound Heavenly Scripture."

"Once it encountered someone with the Ascending Dragon Rank,"

"It would directly teleport them to the Shiwan Mountains for him to possess."

"Wouldn't that make everything much simpler?"

Maria suddenly realized and agreed,

"Madam Wade's words make perfect sense."

"A ring capable of teleporting a living person thousands of miles away—such a capability is truly unimaginable."

"This couldn't possibly be a magical instrument Meng Changsheng crafted himself."

"It's likely he stumbled upon it by chance."

"And he probably didn't even know it had the teleporting power."

"Otherwise, since he'd already decided to possess another body and be reborn,"

"He'd naturally have saved this magical tool for his own use after his rebirth."

Margaret asked her, "Did your father ever mention Meng Changsheng's legacy?"

"Legacy?"

Maria frowned and said, "My father mentioned that Meng Changsheng had many magical instruments."

"Most of which were left by him in his own secret room."

"My father never thought of looking for them,"

"So after taking care of his funeral,"

"He didn't think of looking for them."

Margaret nodded and said, "Meng Changsheng practiced for thousands of years, and he must have countless elixirs and instruments."

"But your father and Victoria only got two Eternal Green Pills and a ring."

"I think these things are of no importance to Meng Changsheng."

"If he knew that this ring was so magical,"

"He would never give it to your father."

Maria sighed, "From this deduction, it seems that the ring should be a symbol of strength."

"It was refined by a stronger cultivator."

"The Master obtained it by chance,"

"But he did not comprehend its efficacy."

At this point, she frowned and muttered:

"He told my father that this ring contains the secret to living for a thousand years."

"Perhaps it was from this ring that he obtained the recipe for the Eternal Pill."

"Achieving a breakthrough from a lifespan of five hundred years to one thousand years."

"After that, he has been in seclusion in the Shinwan Mountains and has never encountered any real danger."

"So he has no chance to explore more secrets of this ring."

Margaret agreed and said, "Based on this analysis by the senior,"

"I think it is very likely that Meng Changsheng accidentally obtained the ring and got the recipe from it."

"He thought the ring had lost its effect, and he had already refined the Eternal Green Pill."

"To him, even if there were more of it left, it was meaningless."

"He gave it to your father and Victoria, just like an adult giving two children a candy bean."

"The pill became useless garbage, and the ring became useless chicken ribs."

"He simply left it to your father and Victoria."

## Chapter 7051

Maria smiled bitterly:

"Now it seems that he is not only vicious and cruel,"

"But also very likely a miser."

After saying that, she waved her hand and said with a smile:

"It doesn't matter."

"As long as the ring does no harm to the young master, that's enough."

Margaret nodded and smiled. She then said,

"It can only be said that everything is a matter of fate."

"He left the ring to your father as a gesture of kindness to this disciple."

"He passed on the Nine Profound Sutra Preface and the Nine Profound Heavenly Sutra as a grand move for his own rebirth."

"It's like a killer who, before going out to assassinate his target, sees a child fall at the doorway,"

"Helps him up, and then takes out his gun to kill several people in a row."

"From a personal perspective, the child and the target he killed are two independent individuals with no subjective connection."

After a pause, Margaret said,

"Please remind Charlie to find a way to study how many more secrets the ring holds!"

"Madam, don't worry."

"I will remind him from time to time."

Maria agreed without hesitation and then asked,

"Madam Wade, what is the identity of the Taoist priest you mentioned?"

Margaret shook her head and said,

"I don't know either."

"He just suddenly appeared to remind me and didn't reveal any useful information."

"However, he did tell me that the reason he stayed in the Shivan Mountains was,"

"To find a way to break the sinful Blood Lake Hell Formation."

Maria said with some relief,

"This can be considered a potential ally of yours."

"Maybe he can provide some help to you in the future."

"Yes,"

Margaret said, "Perhaps one day,"

"Charlie will also receive his guidance."

Maria nodded, looked at the time, and said,

"Madam Wade, it's getting late."

"I should prepare to return."

"A little girl has been in there for so long."

"If someone pays attention, they might notice something."

As she spoke, Maria laughed at herself and said,

"I am always so timid and cautious."

"I make Madam Wade laugh at me."

Margaret didn't think Maria was timid at all.

Instead, he said very seriously, "What you said is very true."

"We should not be careless in everything."

"Countless people's life careers have been ruined by one or two careless mistakes."

"You are alone, but you have made Victoria search for her for more than three hundred years without success."

"This alone makes me bow down to you."

"It is my great honor to be able to talk to you face to face and honestly today!"

Maria smiled slightly, slowly stood up, saluted lightly, and said,

"Madam Wade, you are too kind."

When Margaret and the people around saw Maria stand up,

They also quickly stood up with a look of respect on their faces.

Margaret plucked up her courage and said to Maria,

"Senior, I have a favor to ask."

"I hope you can help me."

Maria nodded and said,

"Madam Wade, please go ahead."

Margaret said respectfully:

"I can't meet Charlie and the family yet."

"I hope you won't mention our meeting to him before things settle."

Maria agreed without hesitation and said,

"Madam Wade, don't worry."

"As someone who has been in hiding for a long time,"

"I feel the same way as you and will never reveal a word about you."

## Chapter 7052

Maria knew that family affection would often affect a person's reason and judgment.

This was true for Margaret, and even more so for Charlie.

Over the years, she has raised so many children and has a mother-son relationship with most of them.

But she never says it and never shows it.

She always keeps a distance from these children in her heart.

Moreover, for hundreds of years, she has maintained the hierarchy between the ancient masters and the slaves with them.

Even the old men who are around her as her children still have to call her "Miss" respectfully in front of her.

This is the rule that she set for them,

And it is also the safe distance that she keeps between them and herself.

Hearing Maria's straightforward agreement,

She heaved a sigh of relief and was also filled with gratitude.

She bowed to Maria and said earnestly and respectfully,

"Thank you, senior, for your help!"

Maria smiled and sighed, "I had previously divined for you,"

"And the hexagram indicated a life-or-death situation,"

"With both the gates of life and death controlled by one person."

"I had never been able to figure out who that person was,"

"But today I learned that it was actually me."

"Before I came here, I was still hesitant about whether to tell you the results of my analysis,"

"But after much hesitation, I decided to come and find out."

"Now it seems that..., I chose the death gate at that step."

Margaret couldn't help but sigh:

"Senior, you are a master strategist and extremely wise."

"If I can form an alliance with you and secretly help Charlie together,"

"It will definitely be of great benefit to Charlie."

"What do you think?"

Maria didn't give a clear answer, but smiled and said:

"After talking so much with Madam Wade, I can't turn back."

"If the young master knows everything and blames me in the future,"

"I only ask Madam to say a few good words for me,"

"And don't let the young master bear a grudge against me."

Margaret immediately understood Maria's thoughts in an instant.

In Maria's heart, Victoria's life or death was no longer that important.

She only cared about Charlie now.

Everything else was actually irrelevant.

At that moment, her heart was filled with mixed emotions,

But she quickly recovered and said gratefully,

"Thank you for your help, Senior."

"I'll exchange contact information with you so that we can keep in touch in the future."

As she spoke, Margaret took out a cell phone and said to her,

"Senior, to avoid risks, I have removed the front and rear cameras and the microphone of this phone."

"As well as the GPS module."

"So I can't make voice or video calls,"

"But I can communicate through text."

"Okay."

Maria smiled and said, "Madam, you should agree on a code with me."

"For example, what will represent the young master and what will represent Victoria and the Warriors Den."

Margaret smiled and said,

"This, I will let you think about it, senior."

Maria was playful and said with a smile,

"After I go back, I will send someone to buy a cat and raise it in the yard."

"The cat will be called Xiaoxiao."

"When Madam talks to me about Xiaoxiao, it will be about the young master."

"The Warriors Den refers to the large group of stray cats entrenched near Zijin Villa."

"Victoria will be called the Black Forest Emperor."

"The Black Forest Emperor?"

Margaret widened her eyes and asked in surprise,

"Could it be a character in an animated cartoon that Charlie watched when he was a child?"

"It seems like a very bad cat?"

"That's right."

Maria nodded and smiled,

"It's the bad cat who always wears an octagonal hat!"

Margaret couldn't help laughing,

And the look in her eyes when she looked at Maria was a little more loving.

At this moment, the clever and almost demonic Maria truly became a quirky little girl in her eyes...

## Chapter 7053

Margaret's perceptions and feelings toward Maria gradually began to multiply.

On the one hand, she knew Maria was nearly four hundred years old, a true ancestor.

But on the other hand, she also felt vaguely that Maria was just a little girl,

A lovely girl younger than her son.

At times, she felt like a close friend whose age she had forgotten, a kind of confidant.

Respect, admiration, appreciation, liking,

And affection—when these feelings converged in one person,

Margaret was somewhat uneasy.

Maria sighed lightly and smiled, "Madam Wade and I hit it off the moment we met and had a great conversation."

"If there is a chance in the future,"

"I hope I can have another chat with Madam Wade like we did today."

Margaret knew that Maria was really leaving, so he nodded and said,

"Junior also hopes to see you again."

"Due to the special circumstances, I will not see you off."

Maria smiled and said, "Madam Wade, there is no need to see you off."

"I will go out by myself."

After that, she turned her head to look at Kong Yin,

Only to find that he was already in tears, so she smiled and said,

"Zhengping, I'm leaving."

Kong Yin knew that Maria was leaving, and couldn't help choking up and said,

"Miss... Zhengping hasn't seen you for a hundred years."

"Today we finally meet again."

"I dare to ask you to stay in the temple for a few days, even..."

"Even if it's just one night..."

Kongyin really wanted to say, Miss, Zhengping misses you very much,

But it was like a lump in his throat, and he couldn't say it.

The more he couldn't express his feelings, the more they turned into tears, which continued to fall.

Two lines of tears formed a stream of water,

Flowing down his wrinkled face like a river flowing through dry, cracked, yellow earth.

Everyone on either side was moved by sympathy.

They couldn't help but look at Maria, hoping that she could fulfill Kong Yin's small wish.

Maria said softly, "Zhengping, it is fate that we can meet again."

"You know I've been accustomed to separation for so many years."

"Staying a few more days will not only increase the risk,"

"But it will only make the next separation sadder."

"In this case, why not keep this reunion as a surprise in your heart?"

Kong Yin could no longer hold back his emotions.

He did not continue to sit cross-legged, but knelt on the ground with his hands flat on his knees, crying like a child,

"Miss, I know the hardships you have experienced in your life."

"I should never make such a request..."

"It's just... It's just..."

Kong Yin's words became intermittent because of crying:

"It's just... It's just that I have a feeling..."

"He feels that he has lived for more than 120 years..."

"The end... The end is already at hand..."

"Miss... In the past 100 years of my life, the most... earliest memory is... Being held in your arms..."

"Now... Now that the end is approaching,"

"I dare to hope that the last memory of this life will still be that you accompany me..."

"In that case... in that case... I can... die... without regrets..."

Before Maria could finish her words, he felt a sharp pain in his heart.

His vision went black, and he fell sideways.

Maria instinctively tried to help him up, but she wasn't quite there yet.

Master Jingqing, however, was quick to help Kongyin up.

Seeing his pale face and lips as white as paper,

He felt a pang of worry in his heart and asked,

"Master Kongyin, are you alright?"

The others glanced at Kongyin nervously, fearing something might happen to him.

Maria bit her lip, her heart aching like everyone else's.

Just then, Kongyin suddenly opened his eyes, looked at Maria,

And said with a forced smile,

"Miss, you... You must take care of yourself!"

Maria's heart skipped a beat.

She realized his time had come, and tears immediately streamed from her eyes.

In a flash, she quickly leaned forward, took out a pill without hesitation, and handed it to Kong Yin's mouth, smiling like coaxing a child,

"Zhengping, be good, take this medicine, and everything will be fine."

Kong Yin forced a smile with difficulty and said in a trembling voice:

"When I was... when I was sick as a child... Miss... persuaded me to take medicine like this."

"The medicine Miss brewed... was... was very bitter, bitter... so bitter... after drinking it, my whole..."

"Body can't help... can't help shaking,"

"But... but, every time it really..."

"Really works to cure the disease..."

As she spoke, Kong Yin took a few deep breaths and continued:

"But... but this time is different,"

"Miss... my time... is... really here..."

Maria wiped away her tears and said seriously:

"This time is the same. You take this pill and everything will be fine."

"This is the rejuvenation pill that the young master gave me."

"It can increase my life span by 20 years."

"If you take it, you will get better immediately, just like when you were a child!"

Everyone around was horrified.

The Rejuvenation Pill—who didn't know its efficacy and value?

Margaret knew even more clearly that his elder brother had spent hundreds of billions of dollars and still failed to buy a single Rejuvenation Pill.

Charlie had given the Rejuvenation Pill to Maria,

Presumably, as a life-saving elixir for her,

Yet she hadn't hesitated to take it out and give it to Kong Yin.

Just when everyone was impressed by Maria and happy for Kong Yin,

Kong Yin smiled and shook his head, saying:

"No, Miss, I feel... I feel that the Buddha seems... seems to have come to take me away..."

Maria shouted: "I won't let you die! Zhengping!"

"Take this pill right now! Otherwise, don't blame me for having someone pry open your mouth and force it into your mouth!"

Kong Yin shook his head with all his strength, looking at Maria and choking:

"Miss, let me... just go like this. One hundred... one hundred and twenty-five years of life... life journey,"

"At the end... still have you by his side... to accompany you, is... is the real great... great perfection..."

"And it is the blessing that I have cultivated for my whole life... my whole life..."

Maria was rarely angry and scolded sternly:

"Zhengping, you don't even listen to what I say, right?"

"If you don't take the medicine, I will do it!"

Kong Yin shook his head and said seriously:

"Miss... I don't... dare not... just ...It's just that I don't want to... doesn't want to live another twenty years..."

"One hundred... One hundred and twenty-five years, in... in the secular world... is already... already extremely rare."

"All... all of Japan knows... knows Zhengping's age."

"If... if Zhengping lives another... another twenty years,"

"The young lady's enemies will surely... surely become suspicious... I don't want to... don't want to harm the young lady..."

As he spoke, he was already on the verge of death,

And in his dying breath, he choked out,

"Young lady... I will become... the brightest star in the west,"

"Just like you told me when you were a child... when you were a child."

Maria cried, "Zhengping, take the medicine. For the next twenty years, you can find a place where no one knows you and live in anonymity."

"Being alive is always a good thing."

“Didn’t you ask me to stay for a few days?”

“Take the medicine, and I’ll stay here for a few days, okay?”

Kong Yin’s eyes were already filled with turbid tears.

He shook his head desperately, trying to shake the tears out,

But they were soon filled with tears that he couldn’t control.

He looked at Maria, who was already blurry, and said with a smile:

“Miss... please forgive me for not... being able to obey your order this time...”

Maria held the pill in her hand, struggling internally.

She wanted to force the pill on Kong Yin, but she knew that he was determined, and was worried that forcing him to live for twenty years would become a burden to him.

## Chapter 7054

Kong Yin knew Maria's struggle and said with a smile:

"Miss... let go... You said before... you always... always have to let go and let... let us fly out and spread..."

"Now... please let go and let... let me go... go and see those... see those brothers and sisters..."

Maria burst into tears, but nodded heavily, then held Kong Yin's hand, which was as old as old tree bark, and cried:

"Then remember to say hello to them for me."

Kong Yin smiled knowingly and instantly relaxed.

He grabbed Maria's hand and said:

"Don't worry, Miss, don't worry..."

After that, he looked at Jing Qing with satisfaction and said:

"Master Jing Qing... please... please convey for me... for me "Yuan Cheng, after I die... on the tombstone... don't... don't engrave my Buddhist name, engrave... my lay name... Sai... Saito Masa... Saito Shohei..."

"This... this is what the young lady gave me..."

Jing Qing, seeing this, could hardly hide his heartache and said solemnly,

"Master Kongyin, don't worry, I will definitely convey this!"

Kongyin nodded, then looked at Maria and, with his last remaining strength, said,

"You must take care of yourself, young lady!"

"You must... You must live to your last... day..."

"You must... remember to enjoy... enjoy life, and not..."

"Not just... just give to others..."

With these words, his pupils gradually dimmed,

And he gradually collapsed until he completely lost all vital signs.

However, Kongyin's face showed no trace of pain or resentment,

But instead of a satisfied and open-minded smile.

Everyone around him could see that seeing Maria and having her accompany him through the final journey of his life was, for Kongyin, a true fulfillment of life.

At the beginning of his life, he was fortunately saved by a noble person.

At the end, he was accompanied by a noble person again.

In between, he lived a full 125 years of ups and downs.

The process was wonderful, with a beginning and an end, and his life was complete.

Throughout her life, Maria adopted many orphans, like Saito Shohei.

Besides nurturing and educating them with all her heart,

She also provided guidance and support for many on their journeys.

Her wealth of experience and profound knowledge made her the world's finest teacher.

She generously shared her knowledge and experience with these children,

This resulted in many of them rising to prominence in various fields, despite humble and often difficult backgrounds.

Over the years, Maria earned immense wealth,

But she shared most of it with these children, seeking nothing in return,

Solely to ensure their lives flourished.

If one were to summarize Maria's primary focus over the past three hundred years,

Aside from her unwavering pursuit of survival,

The rest was almost entirely about sowing the seeds of love in the world.

The children she raised knew that her life, beyond simply escaping, was a life of continuous devotion to others.

She raised generations of people under various identities and in various places,

And she also helped generations of people under various identities and in various places.

Just like Miss Saito in Kyoto, she was like the Madonna to the poor,

Lending a helping hand to any kindhearted person in need.

In those days, the children of poor families in Kyoto envied not the sons and daughters of officials and wealthy merchants,

But the orphans Miss Saito had adopted.

Later, Miss Saito left Japan, and no one knew where she went.

But her story lived on through the older generations of Kyoto.

Maria lavished countless efforts on these children, never expecting anything in return.

With the exception of those like Lao Zhang, who had no ambition and only wanted to serve Maria, they rarely disturbed their lives.

This truce wasn't simply a desire to burden them, but more importantly,

A desperate attempt to avoid the thought of separation.

Those adopted children would eventually grow old before her.

She didn't want to face the pain of such an eternal separation,

So she decided to give all her wealth to them, letting them live their own lives.

She would disappear from their lives during their prime years,

Refusing to contact them again.

This way, she wouldn't have to watch the children she'd raised die before her eyes.

She'd come to see Kong Yin today, eager to investigate,

But she hadn't expected to inadvertently accompany him through his final journey.

Looking at Kong Yin's utterly aged, lifeless face, Maria broke down.

She clutched the rejuvenation pill in her palm, weeping uncontrollably, muttering,

"Zhengping, why are you so foolish?"

"There's no such thing as paradise in this world."

"I've taught you since childhood that death is like the extinguishing of a lamp.'

"How can a lamp, already exhausted in this world, be rekindled in another?"

So many people would crave the chance to extend their lifespan by twenty years,

But Kong Yin had passed up the opportunity, partly for her own sake.

Maria felt a deep sense of sadness.

Seeing her grief, Margaret stepped forward and gently embraced her, comforting her,

"Everyone will die. It's just that you've lived too long, making it seem as if they haven't lived long enough."

"In fact, even without these extra twenty years of life, Master Kongyin would already be one of the rare longevity in the world."

"Moreover, he's a monk, so he's probably already indifferent to worldly life and death."

Maria's grief deepened, and she choked up as she spoke,

"Actually, Zhengping became a monk to attain enlightenment."

"I once told him that Buddhism is also a path to enlightenment."

"So, since childhood, he'd harbored the desire to achieve enlightenment through Buddhism, believing that enlightenment would allow him to better and longer protect me."

"Unexpectedly, he persisted in this decision for over a hundred years, only to realize it was completely hopeless."

With a long sigh, Maria said, "The fact that he used his secular name instead of his Dharma name during his funeral arrangements proves that."

"At the last moment, he had given up on his delusion about Buddhism."

"So, what was the point of his unwavering perseverance over the past century?"

Margaret hadn't considered this before,

But after her reminder, a sudden realization dawned on her.

It turned out that Master Kongyin had dedicated his entire life to the pursuit of enlightenment through Buddhism.

To have persisted for over a hundred years, he must have possessed a strong sense of conviction.

Only in his final moments did he realize that his efforts had been utterly in vain.

So, in his final moments, he resolved to abandon Buddhism and end his life under the secular name given to him by his adoptive mother.

Margaret was overwhelmed with mixed feelings,

Yet his admiration for Maria grew even stronger.

At this moment, Jing Qing, still supporting Kong Yin's body, said respectfully,

"Madam, Miss Lin, the abbot's passing is such a serious matter that we must immediately inform Master Kong Yin's disciples."

"If you two find it interesting, why not move to the other courtyard to discuss further while I notify the temple staff?"

Margaret naturally had no objection.

She and Maria had a very good conversation,

And spending more time together was bound to be a good thing.

Maria said somewhat dejectedly: "Madam Wade, I have finished what I needed to do."

"And Zhengping is gone now."

"There is no point for me to stay here, so I'd better not stay any longer."

Margaret asked her: "Senior, don't you plan to participate in the funeral?"

Maria shook her head dejectedly:

"No, the deceased is gone, and the funeral is just a formality."

"Besides, Zhengping's funeral must be organized by the Kinkakuji Temple,"

"And I can't get involved."

"I'd better wait until I come to Kyoto again to pay my respects at his grave."

After that, she handed the rejuvenation pill in her hand to Margaret,

And said seriously: "Madam Wade, this rejuvenation pill was given by the young master."

"But it is of no use to me."

"Why don't you keep it, and it can be used in case of emergency?"

Margaret was surprised and shook her head after a moment.

Sh then said, "Since Charlie gave this rejuvenation pill to you,"

"Senior, he must have his reasons."

"You should keep it for yourself."

Maria said, "The fight between Madam Wade and Victoria will probably continue for a long time."

"Besides, this pill can save your life at a critical moment."

"It will be more useful for you to keep it than for me."

Margaret shook her head again and smiled,

"Senior, don't insist."

"I can't accept it and I don't want to."

Maria smiled bitterly, "This rejuvenation pill is priceless."

"No matter where it is, it will attract a group of people to fight for it desperately."

"But I didn't expect to be met with such coldness here today."

"I've offered it twice in a row,"

"But I still haven't been able to give it away."

Margaret patted her on the back, smiled, and comforted her,

"Senior, you should keep the pill and take it back."

"Since Charlie gave it to you, he must have his reasons."

## Chapter 7055

Margaret felt deeply reluctant to part with Maria.

She felt she had grown incredibly fond of this age-old girl,

Almost to the point of adoration.

If possible, she would have spent three days and three nights in a long, heartfelt conversation with Maria,

Pouring out all the secrets she had previously hidden,

Feeling it was so hard to find a soulmate.

Maria also admired Margaret.

In centuries, she had never had a friend with whom she could truly confide,

So openly and without reservation.

Her adopted sons were still her adopted sons,

And as their mother, she would share some of her secrets,

But the generational gap and status still existed.

As a traditional Chinese woman, she had to maintain the dignity of a mother.

And in the face of Charlie, she felt compelled to humble herself in his presence,

Both because he had saved her life and because she had been intimate with him.

Margaret was the first person in all those years who truly shared her own perspective.

As the saying goes, money is easy to come by, but a true friend is hard to find.

If she had more time, chatting with Margaret for days would be truly enjoyable,

But time didn't permit it, and it certainly wasn't the right time.

After all, Kong Yin's passing had left her deeply saddened,

And she wanted nothing more than to quickly return to the rooftop villa of Zijin Villa,

Where she could cry alone and let out her emotions.

So, she gently embraced Margaret and waved goodbye.

Margaret advised her with reluctance on his face:

"Senior, take care of yourself."

Maria also nodded gently and advised:

"Madam Wade, the same, be careful, we will meet later."

Margaret said respectfully:

"See you later!"

Sister Sun, Leon and Master Jingqing all looked at Maria respectfully and said in unison:

“Senior, please take care of yourself.”

Maria looked at Master Jingqing and said:

“Master Jingqing, please take care of Zhengping’s funeral.”

Master Jingqing immediately said respectfully:

“Amitabha, please rest assured, Miss Lin, I will do my best.”

Maria nodded, looked at Kongyin who was sleeping peacefully,

Then looked at everyone, smiled and said:

“In that case, I will say goodbye to you.”

“You don’t have to see me off, I can walk out by myself.”

After that, she turned and left without waiting for their response.

Stepping out of the main hall, the dazzling, warm sunlight bathed Maria’s face.

A gentle spring breeze, tinged with warmth and carrying the delicate scent of flowers, made her pause slightly.

She closed her eyes, taking in the warmth of spring and the blossoming of flowers for a moment.

Then, she untied her high ponytail and expertly tied it back into the twins she’d arrived from.

Her face regained its youthful, youthful expression.

Though her heart remained heavy, the new green buds sprouting from the treetops,

And the buds emerging from the flower beds on either side reassured Maria of the power and meaning of life.

Life is like the arrival of spring: new trees sprout, and flowers bloom.

However, those flowers and plants that withered in the cold winter of the previous autumn are gone forever.

As Gong Zizhen wrote in his poem,

“Fallen petals are not heartless; they transform into spring mud to protect the flowers.”

Plants pass down their heritage in this way, and humans,

As the highest form of known life, are even more so, carrying on the legacy, generation after generation.

Although Saito Shohei, her adopted son, has passed away, Kūin, the master of Japanese Buddhism, lives on.

## Chapter 7056

Although Kūin failed to attain enlightenment in his lifetime,

He will surely inspire others in the future, lead them into Buddhist monastic life,

And find enlightenment within the vastness of the Buddhist teachings.

The moment she stepped out of Kinkakuji Temple,

The melodious sound of bells echoed behind her.

The bell rang repeatedly, with no sign of stopping.

The monks, each attending to their duties within the temple, paused when the bell exceeded thirteen.

The bells of Kinkaku-ji Temple were rarely rung,

Only to announce the time on important occasions.

And the bells never exceeded twelve.

Once the bells exceeded twelve, all monks were required to drop their work and immediately proceed to the main hall.

The bells would continue to ring for ninety-nine and eighty-one times, signaling the abbot's passing. While

Japanese monks tend to be more secular, the monks of Kinkaku-ji, influenced by Kōin, possessed a far greater degree of piety than the average Japanese monk.

They were like a small boat drifting in the Dharma,

Needing a prominent flagship to guide them, and Kōin was that flagship.

Kōin's passing was like losing their guide on the vast ocean for these deeply devout monks.

Many monks, tears streaming down their faces, hurried toward the main hall.

Hundreds of monks, their eyes red, silently walked and sprinted toward the main hall.

They didn't dare to run, fearing to disturb the abbot's ascent to the Western Paradise.

Hearing the bells, Maria paused again.

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

Back then, her residence wasn't far from Kinkaku-ji Temple.

One day, she took her children to enjoy the cherry blossoms in her courtyard,

Recounting their history.

She explained that the cherry blossoms were actually introduced from China over a thousand years ago during the Nara period,

During the heyday of the Tang Dynasty.

As the children peppered her with questions about this history,

The bells of Kinkaku-ji Temple echoed relentlessly throughout Kyoto, echoing as they do today.

When the children asked her why the bells tolled incessantly,

She explained that the 9981 tolls symbolized the return to the true nature.

Japanese Buddhism, after nearly two thousand years of development and localization, incorporated much of the wisdom of ancient Chinese people.

The ancient Chinese I Ching considers nine to be the largest yang number.

In other words, it's also the largest single digit in the decimal system.

Therefore, nine represents maximum and perfection.

Eighty-one, nine squared, signifies even greater perfection.

She did not convey the message of death to these children,

But smiled and said, "The reason why Kinkakuji Temple rings the bells eighty-one times is because their abbot has completed his merits,"

"And everyone in the temple is celebrating for him."

At that time, an ignorant little boy looked at her and said crisply,

"Miss, I also want to be the abbot in the future,"

"And I want Kinkakuji Temple to ring the bells eighty-one times for me!"

Maria shook her head helplessly and smiled,

"Of all people, Zhengping is the most competitive."

"You want to compete for everything."

The little boy pointed at the largest snowman in the yard with his frozen red hands,

And said proudly, "Miss, I want to do everything to the best of my ability,"

"Even build the biggest snowman!"

"So it will be no problem for me to be the abbot of Kinkakuji Temple in the future!"

The light and shadow of a hundred years ago whizzed through her mind,

And Maria couldn't help but sigh in her heart,

Some things seem to be unintentional jokes and teasing,

But in fact, they have been predestined.

She looked up at the sky and murmured in her heart,

"If there really is a Western Paradise in this world,"

"I might even be the one with the most connections in that paradise."

"You are all good children."

"You must have gone there long ago and you must all be waiting for me there, right?"

## Chapter 7057

News of Master Kongyin's passing quickly spread throughout Japan.

The local people had always respected and admired this long-lived Buddhist master,

So when they heard the news, countless people flocked to Kyoto's Kinkakuji Temple to pay their respects,

And television stations were broadcasting live coverage of his life.

As Maria boarded the plane, preparing to take off back to China,

Her phone was still receiving notifications about Kongyin.

Maria, heartbroken, flew back to Aurous Hill.

On the plane, Ethan came to the front cabin and saw Maria leaning against the window,

All lost in thought.

He walked forward carefully and asked respectfully,

"Miss, are you okay?"

Maria came back to her senses and forced a smile:

"I'm fine. It's hard for you to follow me to Japan."

Ethan quickly bowed and said,

"It's my honor to be able to serve you, young lady."

"During the years when you were away from China,"

"I often talked about you with several brothers and sisters who grew up with you."

"Although everyone has made achievements in different countries and different fields,"

"When they talked about it, the person everyone envied the most was actually Old Zhang."

"He was the only one who could stay by your side for so many years."

Maria sighed: "It's hard for him."

"He has been with me for so many years, and he doesn't even have a child."

Ethan sighed lightly:

"In fact, for those of us who can't find our ancestral heritage,"

"There is no need to continue our bloodline."

After speaking, he suddenly thought of this short trip to Japan, so he asked her:

"Miss, is that Master Kongyin also an orphan you raised?"

"Yes." Maria nodded and sighed,

"Back in Japan, I adopted many orphans from Kyoto."

"Over time, I became a little famous in Kyoto,"

"And many people left their unwanted or unable-to-raise newborn children at the door of my house."

"Zhengping was one of them."

At this point, Maria couldn't help but sigh,

"That period of time was so long ago."

"Those children have long since passed away."

"Zhengping is the last to pass away."

"With his passing, all the children I raised in Japan are gone."

Ethan asked him, "Miss, was Master Kongyin the one you loved the most among all those children?"

Maria shook her head: "Not that I loved him the most,"

"But he had the hardest life."

After that, she recalled the past and said:

"Zhengping's mother gave birth to him when she was seventeen years old."

"When Kyoto was at its coldest."

"After giving birth to him, she left him outside the door of my mansion and jumped into the Yodogawa River to drown."

"In the weather at that time,"

"The newborn Zhengping probably wouldn't have survived half an hour."

"Fortunately, he cried loudly in his cradle,"

"And the other children heard it and told me,"

"So I took him in."

Ethan asked in surprise:

"Then why did his mother commit suicide?"

Maria said, "She left a long letter."

"According to the letter, his father was a son-in-law of the Ito family in Kyoto at that time."

"And Zhengping's mother was a maid in the Ito family."

"His father was suppressed by his wife all day long."

"So he got together with his mother in private."

"Later, Zhengping's mother became pregnant."

"His father was afraid of being exposed."

"So he sent her out of the house and found another house for her to live in and give birth."

"However, the matter was eventually discovered by other servants."

"The Ito family wanted to wipe out the roots and killed him and his mother."

Ethan was puzzled:

"The son-in-law. Why didn't the Ito family punish him for cheating?"

"But instead wanted to kill a maid?"

## Chapter 7058

Maria said, "The Ito family had their concerns."

"The reason they wanted to recruit a live-in son-in-law was because the head of the Ito family at the time had only one daughter."

"And he needed a live-in son-in-law to continue the Ito family's bloodline."

"Zhengping's father and the Ito family's daughter already had a son named Ito Keiichi."

"The head of the Ito family knew about this and was afraid that after his death,"

"Zhengping's father would use his son, Ito Keiichi, to bring his son from outside to the Ito family."

"So he wanted to cut the grass and wipe out the roots."

"Ito Keiichi..."

Ethan murmured, "This name is somewhat familiar."

Maria explained, "Ito Keiichi is the founder of the Ito family."

"The largest family in Japan today."

"He single-handedly transformed the Ito family from a small, wealthy family in Kyoto into a wealthy tycoon in Japan."

"Zhengping is his half-brother."

Ethan suddenly remembered something and exclaimed,

“Mr. Yes seems to have a close relationship with the Ito family.”

“Yes,”

Maria nodded, sighing, “If Zhengping had accepted the rejuvenation pill,”

“He might have met Ito Takehiko in the future.”

“Ito Keiichi is his great-grandfather.”

The plane returned to Aurous Hill at nightfall.

Maria immediately locked herself in the mountaintop villa,

Brooding in solitude.

This meeting with Kongyin and their farewell made her realize something:

She had always adopted children, raised them,

And prepared them for the world, then disappeared from their worlds.

She had thought they had forgotten her.

But she had never imagined that these children would retain their feelings for her for over a hundred years.

Kongyin was like this, and presumably some of the other surviving children were the same.

Back then, for safety's sake and to detach from them,

Maria rarely contacted them.

But in her heart, these were her children,

And how could she not miss them?

So, in the courtyard, beneath the Mother of Pucha tree,

She secretly resolved that if Wu Feiyan was no longer a threat,

She would visit her surviving children if it were still possible.

The youngest among them was probably seventy years old.

...

Three days later, Master Kongyin's funeral was held in Kyoto, Japan.

Touchingly, the funeral was presided over by Master Jingqing,

A young Buddhist master from China and a close friend of Kongyin's.

Kongyin's body was cremated at a Kyoto funeral home.

All of Japan hoped that Kongyin's remains would be found after his cremation,

But sadly, Kongyin vanished in a wisp of smoke,

Leaving behind only a handful of ashes.

In accordance with his wishes, his ashes were not left at Kinkakuji Temple.

Kinkakuji only enshrined his spirit tablet,

His chief disciple quietly buried his remains in a cemetery on the outskirts of Kyoto.

This cemetery boasts a history of over a hundred years and is one of Kyoto's oldest established cemeteries.

Tens of thousands of people have been buried there.

While new plots have been sold for several years,

Some have already purchased empty plots that remain unused.

One such plot, however, was purchased years in advance by the monk Kōin.

After Kōin's burial, a tombstone was erected in front of it.

However, unlike most tombstones, its inscription contained only the six characters.

"Tomb of Saito Shōhei" and the year of his death at the bottom.

Without a date of birth, few know the lifespan of the occupant of this tomb.

Let alone Kōin's final resting place.

Near Saito Shōhei's tomb, a few scattered tombstones bear the surname Saito, including those of Saito Keiko, Saito Toyama, Saito Hide, Saito Suzu, Saito Ryo, and others.

The death years of these people span a wide range, with the earliest even dying in 1926.

Those who don't know might think that a certain Saito family buried all their deceased relatives here,

But some elderly people in Kyoto know that these Saitos are basically orphans adopted by the famous Miss Saito.

They were all very successful in their youth,

And most of them have spread their families all over Japan and even around the world,

But without exception, before they died, they all asked their families to bury them here.

The tomb of Saito Shohei is just one of these Saito tombs.

Apart from the newer tombstone, there is nothing special about it.

However, for these orphans who grew up together,

Who have no blood relationship but are as close as brothers and sisters,

Isn't it a different kind of romance to be buried together after death?

## Chapter 7059

Since returning to Aurous Hill and Purple Mountain Villa,

Maria hasn't left the house.

While her schedule at school is full, Maria is already tired of it.

She originally enrolled at Aurous Hill University primarily to find and be close to Charlie.

But once he found her and she shared all her secrets with him, school became irrelevant.

After returning from Japan, she fell into depression, feeling unable to maintain the status of a university student.

She asked Larry to put in the effort and applied for leave of absence from Aurous Hill University,

Citing illness and needing recuperation.

Thanks to Larry's connections, the university authorities readily approved her application,

And Maria remained confined to Purple Mountain Villa.

In the blink of an eye, several days passed.

During these days, Charlie, like Maria, remained in his villa halfway up the hill at Champs Elysees Hot Springs, never leaving the house.

He had also been trying to retreat during this time,

But his preoccupations kept him from leaving.

He hoped that Duncan and Maria would bring him good news,

But the progress reported by Duncan was not optimistic,

And there was no news from Maria.

During the days when Charlie was in seclusion,

Duncan had already flown from Australia to China.

He was unable to track down Leon in Australia.

Although he knew that as long as he dug hard,

He would definitely find clues; it was like looking for a needle in a haystack.

The needle is right there in the haystack.

It's not that you can't find it, but the cost is too high,

Or even beyond human power.

In order not to waste time, he decided to give up on Australia and use China as the starting point.

Solving a case is actually a process of screening.

The difficulty depends on the base number of screening.

Any case is done by people.

It is unreasonable to say that if you check all eight billion people on the earth,

You will definitely find the person you want to investigate.

But the problem is that no one has such screening ability.

A thorough investigation of even 800,000, let alone 8 billion people, would be difficult.

It would require repeated, rough, and detailed screening.

If the rough screening didn't miss anything, it would be fine.

But if it did, all the subsequent work would be virtually wasted.

Even with his years in the police force,

Duncan couldn't solve every case.

Some cases simply defied investigation.

After several days of searching without any leads related to Leon,

He realized that Leon's precautions and the professionalism of his team were extremely high.

He realized that continuing the investigation wouldn't yield any results for a year or two.

So, he returned to China and met with Ruoli.

With Ruoli's help, he led the He family and ninjas from the Ito clan to investigate the disappearance of Claire and her parents.

If searching for Leon in Australia was like searching for a small boat in the vast ocean,

Then searching for Claire and her parents in China was like searching for a single mung bean in a pile of mung beans.

Duncan felt immense pressure, but he could only investigate car by car.

However, this process would be extremely long,

So he reminded Charlie to be prepared for a protracted war.

However, there was still a chance. He also fed the video footage of Leon and Claire's family of three into the AI model,

Integrating it with the ground network system to monitor the entire world.

As long as these four people appeared within the ground network's monitoring range,

They would receive the news immediately.

## Chapter 7060

Although Charlie was extremely anxious,

He also knew that this matter could not be rushed,

So he could only accept the reality.

As for Maria, he didn't inquire further.

He hadn't expected her, who usually went only between school and home,

To help him find Claire, who had long since left Aurous Hill.

Meanwhile, Claire and her parents were still adrift in the South Pacific.

Sailing across the ocean was tedious, but thankfully, the ship was comfortable,

And the food and drink were almost all world-class ingredients,

Allowing Jacob and Elaine to fully indulge.

After a few more days of adriftness,

Claire and his family finally arrived at a small island, less than 20 square kilometers, in the Windward Islands of French Polynesia.

Seven or eight years earlier,

The island had been sold to a Silicon Valley tycoon, who had invested heavily in its reconstruction,

Transforming it into a private island with superb facilities.

Not only did it have its own dock, accommodating medium-sized yachts and seaplanes,

But it also boasted its own small airport with a runway nearly 2,000 meters long,

Accommodating light jets and fixed-wing aircraft.

Claire and his family left the cargo ship on the high seas and boarded a seaplane to reach the island.

Before landing, Elaine and Jacob were stunned as they gazed down at the island.

It was clear to the naked eye that this island was truly remarkable.

Not only did it have a dock, it even had its own runway.

A mid-sized yacht was moored at the dock, and at the end of the runway sat a Hawker Beechcraft King Air 350.

A twin-engine turboprop business jet.

This modified aircraft boasts a range of nearly 5,000 kilometers,

Allowing it to fly directly to Hawaii and even to Los Angeles on a single refueling trip.

On the north side of the island stood a luxurious residence costing tens of millions of dollars.

Built directly on the waterfront,

The residence opened onto a sandy beach and a turquoise sea,

A scenery comparable to that of the Maldives.

This luxurious residence was the one Margaret had prepared for Claire and his family.

To isolate the island as much as possible, it's equipped with photovoltaic, wind, and tidal power generation, along with a massive storage system.

This allows for complete self-sufficiency in electricity,

And sufficient electricity can even power the island's desalination plant,

Solving the island's domestic water needs.

Therefore, there's no need to rely on external supplies for water and electricity.

The island is hundreds of kilometers away from the shipping routes of freighters,

Making it easy to resupply supplies.

Simply docking with a freighter midway will provide a large supply.

As the seaplane glided across the water and came to a steady stop at the dock,

Jacob and Elaine eagerly jumped out of the cabin.

Several servants came forward respectfully,

And a middle-aged man in the lead said attentively:

"Mr. Willson, Ms. Ma, welcome to the island."

"I am your butler, Vithian Ning."

"In the future, all your food, clothing, and daily life on this island will be taken care of by me."

"You can just call me Vithian."

Jacob looked at the luxury yacht on the other side of the dock and couldn't help asking:

"Vithian, was that yacht also arranged by my good son-in-law?"

Vithian had received instructions long ago, so he smiled and said:

"Yes, Mr. Willson, not only this yacht, but also the plane on the runway was arranged by Mr. Wade."

"The yacht is for you and Ms. Ma to go out to sea for fun."

"And the plane is for emergency response."

Jacob rubbed his hands excitedly,

But soon his conscience was awakened, and he murmured:

"How much money did Charlie pilfer?"

"If he is caught, he will not be shot, right?"

## Chapter 7061

While Jacob was delighted by the incredible hardware infrastructure,

He couldn't help but feel a little worried about Charlie.

He wasn't someone who hadn't seen the world,

So in his opinion, this island and its related supporting facilities were no longer a problem that could be solved with tens of millions of dollars.

It would cost at least hundreds of millions of dollars,

Or at least 700 million RMB.

Elaine was also astonished.

Thinking of Charlie, she couldn't help but say with some concern,

"Jacob, how much is the death penalty for fraud?"

"I don't know. Let me check."

Jacob said, reaching for his phone,

But couldn't find it after searching his pockets.

Only then did he realize that his phone was gone.

Claire, who was standing by, had not expected that the hiding place Leon had prepared for them would be so extravagant,

So he could only say to his family:

"Dad, Mom, don't guess blindly."

"Charlie invested his money in Bitcoin some time ago and made a lot of profit."

"And I heard him say that the original owner of this island had financial problems,"

"So all the houses here were sold at low prices."

"As you know, the global real estate market is not very prosperous now."

"And the prices of these small islands in the South Pacific have fallen even more."

"It's just like our small-property vacation villas in the suburbs."

"They were very popular in the early years, but now no one is interested in them."

Jacob was shocked when he heard this.

Suddenly, he realized, "Daughter, if you say that, I understand."

"This kind of purely vacation-themed house is really worthless."

"When vacation villas were the hottest a few years ago, Lao Pei bought an American-style villa with small property rights in the mountains in the suburbs,"

"About 60 or 70 kilometers away from the city."

"At that time, he thought it would be very comfortable to drive to the mountains occasionally for a weekend,"

"But after a year, he couldn't do it anymore."

"There used to be some commercial facilities there."

"But later, because fewer people went there, the facilities gradually disappeared."

"When I got there, I couldn't even find a small store."

"No place to eat, let alone takeout."

"Now the house can't be sold even at a 70% discount."

After saying this, he looked around and saw, looking at the beautiful scenery,

He sighed:

"You said this place is thousands of kilometers away from the nearest continent."

"Who can have the time to run here?"

"It would be strange if he didn't lose his life."

Elaine didn't quite understand,"

"So she nodded and asked a soul-stirring question:

"What do you think if Charlie is arrested?"

"The country will not confiscate his assets, right?"

Jacob waved his hand: "Oh, don't worry, where the hell is this?"

"The South Pacific!"

"As long as Charlie is not arrested and doesn't sell us out,"

"We will live here peacefully!"

Elaine was relieved and quickly said to Claire:

"Claire, you have to find a way to contact Charlie and let him find a chance to escape!"

"The conditions here are so good,"

"At worst, our family of four can just stay here and not go back."

Claire could only explain, "Mom, Charlie has his own things to attend to."

"If he comes here now, there's no chance he'll ever be able to return home openly."

"So he's trying his best to resolve the problem."

"If he can, not only can he come to us openly,"

"But we can also return openly."

Elaine suddenly became excited and blurted out,

"That would be great!"

"Otherwise, living in such a nice place,"

"But not being able to show off to relatives and friends,"

“Or posting on WeChat Moments would be such a shame!”

Claire was already accustomed to Elaine’s train of thought.

Although she was completely determined to leave Charlie,

Deep down, she still clung to a glimmer of hope.

That was that after Charlie avenged his parents,

He would still have her in his heart as his wife.

If he didn’t despise her, she would naturally be willing to stay with him forever.

Of course, if he regained his status as the Young Master of the Wade Family and stepped back into the spotlight,

And no longer looked down on her,

Then she would absolutely not bother him or cause him any trouble.

Regardless, she’d wait for him here.

Whether she could wait or not was up to fate.

## Chapter 7062

Vithian, standing nearby, stepped forward at the perfect moment and said respectfully,

"Three of you, please follow me around for a tour."

"There are many details I need to explain to you,"

"And some staff are waiting over there."

Elaine, somewhat impatient, said,

"Come on, let's go!"

"Explain everything to us!"

Vithian led the three of them into a four-seater golf cart and took them on a tour of the island.

The island's facilities were far better than they'd expected.

The south side of the island had been designed as a golf course,

It has superbly maintained turf comparable to a professional competition venue.

Besides the golf course, the outdoor tennis courts were also top-notch.

Vithian also explained that the villa's basement level also housed more:

Professional swimming pool, a gym, billiards, and table tennis.

Jacob and Elaine's smiles widened as they listened.

Claire, on the other hand, felt more and more relieved.

She herself could tolerate this isolated life,

But she was worried her parents wouldn't be able to handle it and might cause trouble.

The better the facilities here,

The less likely they are to cause trouble.

The island was staffed by many young women,

Who appeared to be professional housekeepers and servants,

But we were actually bodyguards.

Vithian led the three to the villa area.

Because of its large area, the villa was built with grandeur,

Far superior to those in the city.

Jacob and Elaine were amazed to see a middle-aged woman and a dozen young women already waiting in line.

Everyone greeted the three people respectfully.

Vithian first introduced the middle-aged woman to them:

"Mr. Willson, Mrs. Willson, Ms. Willson,"

"This is Lili Xu. The person in charge of the villa is also my wife."

"She will be responsible for taking care of your daily life, diet, and living in the villa."

Lili looked to be around forty years old.

Although there were some fine lines at the corners of her eyes,

She looked very capable and had the impression of being a very efficient person.

She stepped forward and said with a smile,

"Mr. Willson, Mrs. Willson, Ms. Willson, my team and I will do our utmost to serve you three."

"We will operate a three-shift system to ensure we have someone on duty 24 hours a day."

"Your rooms will each be equipped with a dedicated pager."

"Please notify us at any time if you need anything."

"We will resupply supplies once a week."

"If you need anything, please list it on the list and we will arrange the procurement and dispatch."

She added, "Because our location is quite remote,"

"There may be a delay in meeting your needs."

"Generally speaking, the items you need will be delivered in two to three weeks."

Elaine quickly asked, "Can we use cell phones here?"

Lili shook her head and said apologetically,

"I'm sorry, Mrs. Willson, Mr. Wade has instructed that he and the three of you are currently under investigation."

"Therefore, your specific movements must not be disclosed to the outside world."

"Therefore, you three must not use cell phones, computers, or other devices that can communicate with the outside world to avoid being located by the professionals."

Elaine immediately gave up the idea of using a cell phone and blurted out,

"Forget it, we won't use cell phones or computers!"

Since ancient times, the means to make a person keep a secret have been nothing more than coercion and inducement.

But generally speaking, inducement is much more effective than coercion.

Just like the 108 heroes of Liangshan Marsh,

They were all forced to become bandits.

In this situation, the more they were forced, the more they resisted.

In the end, it was the inducement that worked.

Although Elaine is not a hero, she can't pass the test that even heroes can't pass.

This luxurious tropical island in the South Pacific is right in front of her,

And she dared not contact the outside world at gunpoint.

So, Claire breathed a sigh of relief.

Anyway, this is settled down.

She only hopes that being away from her family will allow Charlie to devote himself to his revenge without distraction.

But when she thought of Charlie, her heart immediately filled with deep longing.

People aren't afraid of passionate love.

The more sudden, earth-shattering, and overwhelming a love is, the faster it dissipates.

Yesterday, they felt like they could die for each other,

But today they feel like an idiot,

Unable to muster that same passion again.

People fear the kind of love that boils like a frog in warm water.

## Chapter 7063

After a long time together, they may not even realize how much they love each other,

But in reality, they've developed a strong sense of mutual dependence.

It's just that they've become so familiar with this feeling that neither of them truly appreciates the other.

Only once they're apart do they realize the pain of losing each other.

Claire felt that her feelings for Charlie were very similar to the relationship between water and a fish.

When living in water, everything seemed ordinary.

They could breathe by moving their gills and swim by wagging their tails, unaware that all this was due to the water's protection.

But one day, they left the water and, through the loss of water, truly understood the meaning of its existence.

Thinking of this, her eyes welled up, and she couldn't help but shed tears.

Jacob and Elaine didn't share Claire's melancholy.

Like two wolves, they busied themselves with familiarizing themselves with every inch of their territory.

The villa was so vast, so vast that it was impossible to even begin to fully visualize its outline.

However, Elaine, with her exceptional talent, managed to find the best bedroom suite and proudly declared it hers.

Of course, her relationship with Jacob had improved considerably,

And now that they were no longer separated,

This suite became their private residence.

While it might be called a suite, it was practically a full house.

Upon entering the living room, over a hundred square meters in size, fifteen meters long, and eight meters wide, it was incredibly luxurious.

It connected to a large, semicircular terrace, also fifteen meters long and with a radius of over six meters.

Facing the sea, the humid tropical breeze washed over them, relaxing every pore and creating an exquisite comfort.

Entering from the left side of the living room, there was a large bedroom, also facing the sea.

A two-meter-wide bed faced the ocean,

And a luxury brand bathtub sat by the floor-to-ceiling window.

For Elaine, soaking in it was enough to make her heart soar.

Behind the bedroom was a walk-in closet.

The wardrobes in the closet had no visible panels.

They were all covered in leather, giving them an incredibly fine touch.

The handles and hardware were so exquisite that,

When you removed them, you'd think they were custom accessories from some high-end brand.

The two of them explored the bedroom and bathroom, touching and examining each other.

Afterward, Elaine emerged, tears streaming down her face, saying to Jacob,

"I thought I was living the life of the upper class at Tomson,"

"But only after arriving here do I realize how refined life can be..."

Jacob also sighed, "Look at those cabinets."

"They fit almost perfectly with the surrounding walls."

"The gaps are so narrow they're almost invisible, and they're completely consistent from top to bottom."

"This kind of craftsmanship isn't something you'd expect from a typical luxury brand."

"Even the cabinets in those exquisitely decorated villas at Tomson couldn't achieve this level of sophistication."

He then quickly added, "There's another room to the right of the living room."

"Let me take a look."

Elaine immediately followed,

"Wait, I'll come with you."

Entering the room to the right, they revealed a room comparable to Marlon Brando's study in *The Godfather*.

The room was decorated entirely in solid wood:

The floors, walls, tables, and chairs were all top-grade walnut, giving it a vintage American feel.

The large, American-style desk was even more exquisite.

Jacob couldn't help but sit in the swivel chair, resting his legs on the tabletop, and sighing,

"The only thing Marlon Brando and I lack is a good Cuban cigar."

Then, looking down, he noticed a low cabinet with a transparent glass door next to the desk.

At first glance, it was packed with cigars.

Surprised, he stepped forward, opened it, and found it was filled with the famous Cohiba cigars.

He carefully pulled out a cigar, held it in his hand, and examined it carefully.

He exclaimed, "I think I saw someone smoking this series of cigars once."

"They said they cost over 20,000 yuan a pop..."

Elaine said in disbelief: "So expensive?!"

"Who is crazy enough to spend more than 20,000 yuan on a cigar?"

"What else can't you do with that money?"

Jacob put the cigar under his nose and sniffed it, then sighed:

"Oh, you don't understand, rich people make money very quickly; some people can't wait to make millions a day."

"How do you say he spends so much money?"

"What's the point of smoking two cigarettes worth more than 20,000 yuan a day?"

"No matter how extravagant you are, the more money you spend,"

"Otherwise, look at who the world's top ingredients, drinks, and cigars are sold to?"

"Aren't they all sold to the top rich people?"

Elaine murmured, "It's great to have money!"

After that, she was afraid that all this would disappear,

So she quickly reminded him:

"Jacob, you have to be careful,"

"No matter what you say, you can't let outsiders know that we are living so well here."

Jacob found the lighter, hesitated for a long time, lit the cigar, took a puff, and then sighed:

"Don't worry, even if my relatives, even if my father came to ask me in a dream, I wouldn't tell them."

## Chapter 7064

Elaine said approvingly, "That's more like it!"

As they were talking, they heard someone knocking on the door,

So they went to the living room and opened it.

Several girls came over with luggage carts.

One of them said respectfully,

"Mr. Willson, Mrs. Willson, we have prepared some daily necessities and a change of clothes for you two."

"The clothes are all made according to your body sizes."

"Do you want us to help you put your things in place first?"

"If you two have any other needs,"

"You can also tell us, and we will prepare them as soon as possible."

Elaine said with some surprise,

"You are so thoughtful."

"By the way, I came here in a hurry this time and I didn't bring all the cosmetics."

"Do you have any good skin care products?"

The girl immediately said,

"Yes, Mrs. Willson, we have prepared the best top-grade caviar skin care set for you."

As she said that, she took out a large gift box containing a complete set of skin care products from one of the boxes.

"Oh my god,"

Elaine exclaimed in surprise.

"You prepared such wonderful skincare products for me?"

"You're so generous!"

The girl smiled and said, "Mr. Wade ordered this."

Elaine was delighted and asked,

"How long does this set last?"

"If it lasts a long time, I'll use it sparingly."

The girl explained,

"There's no limit."

"Just let me know when you're done and I'll refill."

Elaine's eyes widened.

"Then... can I learn how to use cream and essence like others and prime my skin?"

Primers are used to treat creams and essences like a mask.

If you use a fingernail-sized amount for normal facial cleansing,

A prime would require at least the size of a quail egg.

A bottle of cream costing tens of thousands of yuan could last for half a year if you were frugal,

But with a prime, you could only use it five or six times at most.

Elaine's life was comfortable,

But not to such an extent.

She saw people posting scientific notes every day,

But she couldn't bear to waste so much.

Now that she heard there were no limits on these items and they would be refilled when they ran out,

She immediately thought of the very thing she had been reluctant to do.

Jacob couldn't help but ask,

"By the way, can we refill the Cohibas in the cigar cabinet when we run out?"

"Of course, sir," the girl said respectfully.

"The cigar cabinet in the room, as well as the wine cabinet, soft drink cabinet, and snack cabinet in the living room, are all equipped with weight sensors."

"If they detect they're out of stock, we'll refill them immediately."

"Feel free to use them."

Jacob was also pleasantly surprised.

He had never experienced such a relaxed life before.

Meanwhile, Claire didn't choose her room.

Instead, she walked out of the villa's ground floor and onto the beach not far from the sea.

She sat alone on the ground, hugging her knees, staring blankly at the emerald sea.

Maglina came over and said respectfully:

"Mr. Willson, uncle and aunt have settled in."

"Would you like to go and see the rooms?"

"We still have several bedrooms to choose from."

Claire shook her head:

"I don't care. Any room is fine."

Maglina said, "We have prepared a lot of daily necessities and clothes for you and your uncle, and your aunt."

"Once you choose a room, I will have someone send it to you."

Claire said lightly, "You can arrange it."

"I want to be alone for a while."

Maglina nodded in understanding and said:

"Okay, Mr. Willson, then you stay alone for a while."

"I will help you arrange it."

"It's almost time for dinner."

"I will come to call you in an hour. What do you think?"

Claire nodded slightly: "Okay, go and get busy."

Maglina said goodbye respectfully and left,

Leaving Claire sitting alone on the beach in a daze.

Her mind was almost all about Charlie.

Looking at the endless sea, she couldn't help but murmur softly:

"Charlie, I really hope that I can meet you again in this life..."

## Chapter 7065

After more than ten days of seclusion,

Charlie finally emerged from the hillside villa at Champs-Élysées Hot Springs.

Those ten days of seclusion felt like sleepless nights for him,

As he couldn't concentrate on his cultivation because of his thoughts of Claire.

It was now late March in the Gregorian calendar,

And late February in the lunar calendar,

And Aurous Hill was entering springtime.

With Qingming Festival approaching, the Wade family had begun preparations for this year's ancestral worship ceremony.

However, since everything was now in Charlie's hands,

The patriarch, Zhongquan, approached Charlie to inquire about the specific plans for this year's ceremony,

Such as whether to hold a grand event and whether to invite members of the collateral branches of the family to participate.

However, the patriarch sent Charlie many messages and WeChat messages without receiving a reply.

So, he left a message for Charlie, stating that if he didn't reply,

He would take over the organization of the ancestral worship ceremony.

For Charlie, his primary consideration was whether the ancestral worship ceremony was necessary.

Paying respects to ancestors and parents during the Qingming Festival is naturally his duty as a junior,

But it seems unnecessary to make a big fuss about it.

Therefore, ancestor worship is necessary, but a grand ceremony is not.

Secondly, he felt somewhat listless,

And in this state, he was even less suited to organizing a grand ceremony.

So, after consideration, Charlie decided that this year's ancestor worship would be simplified,

Without extravagance or waste, and that collateral branches of the family would no longer be allowed to go to Waderest Mountain,

Allowing only direct members of the Wade family to sincerely worship there.

Meanwhile, Zhongquan had been busy preparing for the ancestor worship ceremony for several days.

He was getting old, and the closer he got to his fifties,

The more he cared about the etiquette of worshipping ancestors,

Because he would unconsciously think of himself.

He was sincere in worshipping his ancestors now,

And naturally hoped that his descendants would be just as sincere when worshipping him in the future.

However, upon receiving a message from Charlie saying he wasn't planning to hold the grand ceremony,

He was unwilling but couldn't overstep his bounds,

So he had no choice but to halt all preparations.

Charlie stood on the mountain ridge,

Gazing at the vast scenery, I momentarily lost myself in thought.

He didn't know where to go next or what to do.

He didn't want to go home because home was no longer home.

He didn't want to go anywhere else either,

Because he lacked the energy to go anywhere.

Going back to continue his secluded cultivation?

That didn't seem like a good idea either,

Because he was like a severe insomniac;

Forcing himself to lie in bed wouldn't help him sleep, only increasing his anxiety.

So he called Duncan to inquire about the progress of his investigation.

Duncan replied truthfully, "Young Master, we've done a preliminary tracking of the vehicles these past few days."

"Each vehicle's movements have been deliberately concealed."

"So even using a preliminary process of elimination, it's difficult to narrow down the scope immediately."

"We're still struggling to find a breakthrough."

"It's estimated that we'll need at least two more months to conduct the first round of screening."

"At that time, we should be able to eliminate at least 60% of the vehicles."

"And then conduct a second round of screening on the remaining 40%."

Charlie's scalp tingled.

The first round of screening would take two months.

Several rounds of screening would mean a year had passed.

However, he wasn't an unreasonable person.

## Chapter 7066

In the field of criminal investigation,

Aside from cases committed by idiots that allow the police to quickly find clues and arrest them,

The remaining cases committed by individuals or small groups with a modicum of intelligence take a long time to solve, often more than a year.

Solving a case is never a simple matter.

He wanted to ask Maria again, but then he remembered that she was a remarkable woman who had lived through four hundred years of world turmoil.

Although he didn't have her extraordinary life experience,

He was still a man and shouldn't bother her with matters of the heart.

It would disturb her peace and make him lose face.

During his seclusion, his friends who received the news tacitly refrained from disturbing him,

But Nanako couldn't help but leave him a message:

"Charlie, after you finish the seclusion, please let me know."

So he replied, telling her that he had just finished his seclusion.

Nanako quickly replied: "If you're free, let's have dinner tonight."

"I brought some wine and ingredients from Japan."

"Odosan has been saying he wants to wait until you have time to enjoy them together."

Charlie thought that Nanako lived in Tomson,

And he didn't want to go back and be reminded of Claire,

So he subconsciously wanted to refuse.

Before he could even finish drafting his polite refusal,

Nanako sent another message: "I forgot to tell you,"

"My father and I moved. We're now living in Shanheyue."

"East of Zijin Mountain."

"Odosan said he'd like to invite you to visit our new place sometime."

For her age, Nanako was undoubtedly an exceptionally intelligent girl.

Ever since she helped Charlie visit his home and discovered Claire's farewell letter,

She immediately decided to find a place to move out of Tomson as soon as possible.

She knew that Tomson Riviera would become a source of resentment for Charlie.

Before, she lived there simply to be closer to him,

But now it had become a place Charlie couldn't let go of.

Continuing to live there with her father would only make things worse.

Therefore, she immediately asked her father to find another place to live in Aurous Hill,

And it had to be a move-in-ready apartment so they could move out as soon as possible.

Takehiko Ito, a seasoned businessman and a man of action, immediately contacted a top real estate agent to introduce him to some new and used luxury homes.

After viewing the properties,

He spent a nine-figure sum to buy a detached luxury villa in Shanheyue, near Zijin Mountain.

Charlie was surprised that Nanako had moved.

Not being particularly sensitive to matters of the heart,

He subconsciously asked, "Why did you and Uncle Ito suddenly move?"

Nanako replied, "Odosan kept complaining that high-rise apartments weren't convenient and lacked the privacy of a detached villa."

"So he bought this one himself."

"I couldn't refuse him, so I agreed to move."

Nanako's words were half true and half false.

The truth was that Takehiko Ito genuinely disliked apartment buildings,

And his willingness to live in a high-rise in Tomson was entirely out of consideration for his daughter.

The false part was that Takehiko Ito didn't actually want to move.

It was she herself who wanted to.

Charlie didn't think much of it at the moment.

Ito Takehiko is a top tycoon, and Charlie had been to his Kyoto mansion,

Which is so large that it can charge practically an entrance fee.

It was understandable that such a tycoon wouldn't be comfortable living in a high-rise apartment and would want a detached villa.

Knowing that Ito Takehiko also wanted him to visit their new home,

Charlie, who was worried about where to go, readily agreed, saying,

"Send me the address, I'll be there later."

"Great!"

Nanako exclaimed excitedly, "Remember to come early and have a chat with Odosan."

"He's been talking about you."

"Okay,"

Charlie agreed, saying,

"I'll be there in a while."



## Chapter 7067

Zijin Mountain, River and Moon.

Nanako, phone in hand, ran out of her room, excitedly calling out,

“Oto-san, Oto-san! Charlie will be home for dinner later!”

At that moment, Takehiko was tending to his five-needle pine tree in the central courtyard of the villa.

This five-needle pine was transplanted from his residence in Kyoto.

As one of the top tree species in Japanese horticulture,

This robust and full-bodied pine was worth at least several million dollars and was his favorite.

Previously, living in an apartment,

He hadn't had the opportunity to plant trees,

But now, in a Chinese-style detached villa, he immediately began to tinker with it.

Like their Chinese counterparts, wealthy Japanese people have some rather unique and retro hobbies.

While wealthy Chinese people like to collect wood and jade,

Wealthy Japanese people all have a heart that aspires to be gardening masters.

Owning a mansion in Kyoto doesn't make one a true tycoon.

To truly be a tycoon is to own a mansion filled with top-quality trees of the finest varieties and appearances.

When guests arrive, the mere sight of the trees in the yard is enough to convey the host's wealth and status,

Even without the host saying a word.

Takehiko Ito, one of Japan's top billionaires, is naturally a master of gardening.

Now residing in China, and given that Kyoto's climate is similar to Nanjing's,

He plans to gradually transplant the precious trees he's planted in Japan to Kyoto.

He was busy with his work when Nanako told him that Charlie was coming over for dinner that evening.

He was overjoyed and exclaimed,

"Mr. Wade has finally emerged from seclusion!"

"Yes," Nanako nodded, adding,

"It seems Mr. Charlie just came out of seclusion today."

Takehiko smiled and said,

"This period must have been very difficult for Mr. Wade."

"Since he's coming over today, let's have a few drinks with him."

Then, looking at his daughter, he gave her a meaningful instruction:

“Nanako, this is your best chance to win over Charlie.”

“You must seize it.”

When Nanako was arranging to buy a new house,

Takehiko had asked her why she wanted to move out of Tomson.

In Takehiko’s view, his daughter loved Charlie to the core,

And out of love for him, she was extremely fond of Tomson.

Her sudden decision to move out seemed rather odd.

Nanako didn’t hide anything and explained the situation to her father.

Upon hearing that Claire had left Charlie, Takehiko exclaimed, “Good!”

A dozen times, his hands rubbed so hard they felt like they were going to rub off a layer of skin.

In his view, Claire’s departure was the perfect opportunity for his daughter to take Charlie’s place.

No matter how many women Charlie had around him,

He believed his daughter was the most special one in Charlie’s heart,

Or to put it bluntly, the one he was most attracted to among all those women.

This judgment wasn’t based on blind confidence,

But on his analysis of Charlie’s actions towards his daughter.

Charlie had not only traveled to Kyoto specifically to treat his daughter's injuries but had even saved her life.

In the ensuing chaos in Tokyo,

It was Charlie who helped the Ito family emerge victorious.

What moved Takehiko even more was that Charlie had used the extremely precious Rejuvenation Pill to regrow his legs.

If Charlie hadn't cared for his daughter,

How could he have had such a stroke of luck?

It could be said that during this time,

Takehiko's most beautiful dream was for Charlie to become his son-in-law.

Now that an opportunity has presented itself,

He must get Nanako to give it her all.

Nanako knew this was a rare opportunity.

Her personality was always bold and impulsive, regardless of the consequences,

So she never hid her feelings for Charlie.

## Chapter 7068

Even knowing that Charlie might never leave Claire,

She was still willing to wait, even if it all came to nothing in the end,

She wouldn't regret it.

In the past, she would have simply stayed by Charlie's side silently,

But now, she hoped to win his heart.

So, she said very seriously to Takehiko,

"Odosan, I also hope to seize this opportunity."

"But it will probably be difficult in the short term."

"Charlie is deeply in love with Miss Willson,"

"And it will probably be difficult for him to get over it for a while."

Takehiko said solemnly, "For Mr. Wade, it's like falling into quicksand."

"If he relies on himself alone, it will be difficult for him to get out."

"Someone has to reach out to him,"

"And he has to be willing to grab that person."

"Only when the two of them work together can they break free from the quicksand."

After saying that, he said earnestly,

"Unseen by you, countless people are frantically reaching out to Mr. Wade, hoping to help him."

"So you must not be too passive,"

"Otherwise, once someone else gets there first,"

"You will definitely regret it."

Nanako smiled slightly and said,

"Have you considered that Charlie isn't someone anyone could pull out on their own?"

Takehiko asked, puzzled, "What do you mean?"

Nanako said somewhat shyly, "Honor, Charlie has so many confidantes."

"Before, with Miss Willson around, he constantly restrained his feelings for these confidantes,"

"So they had no chance."

"Now, if he chooses to continue restraining himself,"

"These confidantes still won't have a chance."

"If he chooses to stop restraining himself, then everyone might have a chance."

Takehiko asked, "Nanako, do you mean that once Mr. Wade accepts Miss Willson's departure?"

"He might be surrounded by three thousand beauties like an ancient emperor?"

Nanako nodded slightly and said, "If..."

"If he doesn't give to anyone, everyone can continue to silently persevere as before."

"But if he decides to give, it will inevitably hurt others."

"Charlie never does anything to hurt his female confidantes,"

"So it might really require everyone's concerted effort."

Takehiko said awkwardly,

"Men with many female confidantes are not uncommon in high society, even quite common."

"Look at Elon Musk, he has many women who have given birth to children for him?"

At this point, Takehiko countered, "But even so,"

"Only one person can maintain a legal marital relationship with him."

"Others, even if they gain his affection, will only be without status or recognition."

"You can't be the one without status or recognition, can you?"

Nanako said somewhat awkwardly, "Odosan."

"It's too early for you to talk about this now."

"Besides, this matter isn't entirely up to me..."

"It's not a matter of will."

Takehiko said earnestly, "Nanako, the Ito family is now the number one in Japan."

"If Charlie can give you a formal title in the future,"

"I am willing to give you all the assets of the Ito family as your dowry."

"I have the determination to go all out,"

"And you must also go all out in your actions!"

After saying that, he sighed, "In my opinion, no one is more suitable to be Charlie's next wife than you."

"The Ito family is powerful, so it can be considered a good match."

"Moreover, you and Charlie have long had feelings for each other,"

"Which I can see."

"What's more, you are both cultivators."

"If you two spend the rest of your lives together,"

"You can not only rely on each other emotionally,"

"But also support each other on the path of cultivation."

"This is truly a match made in heaven!"

## Chapter 7069

For Takehiko, accompanying Nanako to settle in China after leaving his homeland was partly because his legs had fully recovered,

And he didn't want to stay in Japan and cause a stir,

And partly because he hoped his daughter could soon marry Charlie.

Nanako's decision to leave Japan and come here to be with Charlie was also driven by a pursuit of true love.

Therefore, her father's words didn't make her blush.

Instead, they gave her immense support.

His words showed he had given his all.

As long as she could marry Charlie,

Her father didn't even care who the Ito family would be in the future.

If she truly married Charlie, the entire Ito family would be her dowry.

After marrying Charlie, she would not only take his surname, becoming Wade, but any children she bore would also bear the surname Wade.

The Ito family would then cease to exist with her generation.

However, if she hadn't met Charlie, according to her father's and the customs of those large Japanese families, the Ito family would definitely have taken in a son-in-law.

In Japan, a son-in-law who marries into the family has even less dignity than one in China,

Because not only do the children born to the son-in-law take the woman's surname,

But the son-in-law himself also has to change his surname to the woman's.

In that case, the Ito family could have continued to exist and multiply,

Instead of ending abruptly in his generation.

Thinking of this, Nanako was moved but also a little sad.

She softly asked her father, "Odosan, if we don't take in a son-in-law,"

"The Ito family might not have any more descendants."

"Can you...Can you really accept that?"

Takehiko smiled and said, "As long as you truly marry well in my eyes, what is there not to accept?"

"What needs to be passed down is not just the surname,"

"But also the bloodline."

"As long as the bloodline can continue, the surname is not that important."

After saying this, he sighed, "Many years ago, our family took in a son-in-law who sacrificed his own surname to marry into the Ito family."

"The head of the Ito family at the time, to prevent him from changing the Ito family name in the future, even hunted down the maid and illegitimate child who had an affair with him."

"You see, even if you take in a son-in-law, it's not really that worry-free."

"You still have to be on guard."

"Rather than that, it's better to simply not care."

"Moreover, Charlie is truly a rare and wonderful man."

"If you could marry him, even if I died right now,"

"I would die with a smile on my face."

"As for the name Ito, I don't need it."

As Takehiko said this, Nanako's eyes were already a little red,"

"And she murmured softly, "Thank you, Odosan..."

Then, Takehiko suddenly chuckled and said,

"Of course, we exchange sincerity for sincerity."

"If you really marry Charlie in the future and give him four, five, or six sons,"

"I will kneel on the ground and beg him to allow one of your sons to take the Ito surname..."

As he spoke, he looked at Nanako and asked seriously,

"Nanako, do you think Charlie would understand and be considerate of me?"

Nanako had just moved, but suddenly her father made her both laugh and cry.

Giving birth to four, five, or six sons? What did he take her for?

Other fathers dote on their daughters and don't want them to have many children,

But her father actually hoped that she would have four, five, or six sons.

So, she muttered shyly, "Charlie will be here soon."

"If you want to know if he will understand you, you can ask him yourself."

Takehiko laughed and said,

"The Ito family never asks for anything in return."

"They always give first."

...

As evening fell, Charlie drove to Shanheyue, following the location sent by Nanako.

Located on the eastern slope of Zijin Mountain, it wasn't far from Maria's Zijin Villa.

This was Charlie's first time visiting this villa area,

And he discovered that the building density was even lower than that of Tomson,

And it was a pure villa area, unlike Tomson, which included high-rise apartments to meet its floor area ratio requirements.

All the villas in Shanheyue were designed in a traditional Chinese courtyard style.

To maintain the classical Chinese aesthetic above ground,

The entire community implemented a pedestrian-vehicle separation system.

Vehicles were not allowed on the surface and had to access their respective villas' basements via the underground garage.

Nanako, always thoughtful, waited for Charlie at the community entrance before getting into his car and guiding him into the underground garage.

As Charlie drove into the underground parking garage,

Nanako hesitated for a long time before asking,

"How have you been these past few days?"

Charlie shook his head: "I've been in seclusion,"

"But because I can't calm my mind, it hasn't been very effective."

Nanako sighed: "It must be because you miss Ms. Willson too much, right?"

Charlie didn't shy away from the question, nodding slightly and saying,

"I've been thinking about where she is, how she's doing, and so on."

"I'm also hoping that Detective Li will find a clue soon,"

"So I haven't been able to concentrate on my cultivation."

After saying that, he asked Nanako,

"What have you been busy with lately?"

Nanako said, "I went back to Japan a few days ago."

"Oh?" Charlie asked curiously,

"Why did you suddenly go back to Japan?"

Nanako asked him, "Do you remember the amulet that I gave you before?"

"I remember."

Charlie nodded and said, "I think you got it in Japan?"

"Yes." Nanako nodded and said, "I got it at Kinkaku-ji Temple in Kyoto."

Charlie asked her, "You didn't go to get another amulet, did you?"

"No," Nanako said somewhat sadly.

"I went back this time because the abbot of Kinkaku-ji Temple, Master Kūin, passed away."

"I had received guidance from him before,"

"So I went back to pay my respects."

Charlie had always been an atheist and did not believe in any religion,

So he knew nothing about Master Kūin.

When he heard that Nanako had gone back to pay her respects to a high-ranking Buddhist monk, he didn't find it particularly special.

He simply said casually, "You traveled all that way to pay your respects."

"This monk must have been very remarkable."

Nanako nodded. "Master Kūin was the most respected monk in all of Japan."

"He lived to be 125 years old when he passed away."

Charlie asked her, "So old? Was he a monk?"

Nanako shook her head and said, "No, he was obsessed with Buddhism his whole life."

"Spending his entire life studying Buddhist scriptures and doctrines."

Charlie was somewhat surprised.

It was truly rare for an ordinary person to live to be over 120 years old.

However, rare doesn't mean nonexistent, so he didn't take it too seriously.

He then asked her, "Was the funeral of such a national treasure-level monk very grand?"

"Not really,"

## Chapter 7070

Nanako said. "The monk's funeral wasn't public."

"It was held inside Kinkaku-ji Temple, and only monks attended."

"I wasn't qualified to attend his funeral."

As she spoke, she suddenly remembered something and said,

"Oh, by the way, the one who presided over the funeral for Master Kongyin was Master Jingqing,"

"Who enlightened me and helped me attain enlightenment?"

"Master Jingqing?"

Charlie was somewhat surprised to hear this name.

This person had appeared in his ears quite frequently.

He was able to help Nanako attain enlightenment at Qixia Temple,

But he never expected that he would also have connections with a high-ranking Japanese monk.

He wasn't a suspicious person,

But his intuition told him that if someone unrelated to him appeared in his ears repeatedly, there must be something to it.

So he asked, "Did you see that Master Jingqing again this time?"

"No," Nanako shook her head.

"Master Jingqing left Japan after presiding over the funeral,"

"And I didn't attend the funeral, so I didn't see him."

"I went to Kinkaku-ji to pay my respects to Master Kongyin after the funeral."

"Kinkaku-ji is currently under renovation and is not accepting worshippers."

"But fortunately, the Ito family has always been Kinkaku-ji's largest donor,"

"So the temple made an exception."

Charlie nodded slightly and sighed,

"I don't really encounter many cultivators in life."

"The few I do encounter are all enemies, or were once enemies."

"This Master Jingqing was able to enter the Dao through Buddhism,"

"So he must have extraordinary abilities."

"I wish I had the opportunity to meet him and discuss the Dao."

As he spoke, he was reminded by his own sigh.

Cultivators are extremely rare, so since he began to understand the Dao,

Every cultivator who appeared around him had some connection with him.

Either they're from the Broken Qing Society,

Or they're someone close to him, like Nanako.

The former is targeting him; the latter is someone who suddenly attained enlightenment while beside him.

And was enlightened by that Master Jingqing.

Looking at it from this perspective,

It seems unlikely that Master Jingqing's appearance would be entirely unrelated to him.

At this moment, Nanako was unaware of Charlie's thoughts.

Hearing that Charlie wanted to meet Master Jingqing,

Out of affection for her beloved, she blurted out,

"Since Charlie wants to see Master Jingqing,"

"Nanako will try to contact him for you and see if he's willing to meet with you."

Charlie asked, "Do you have his contact information?"

Nanako shook her head: "No, but Master Jingqing is quite active in the Buddhist community."

"If you're determined to find him, it shouldn't be difficult."

Charlie asked again, "What is his status in the Buddhist community?"

"Does anyone else know he's a cultivator?"

Nanako said, "Master Jingqing himself is a young monk who entered monastic life and is active in several Buddhist schools..."

"Having studied at the academy, he then began traveling and staying at various temples, lecturing and debating Buddhist teachings."

"He possessed a profound understanding of many Buddhist doctrines and gained the recognition of numerous Buddhist masters."

"However, I think the outside world certainly doesn't know his identity as a cultivator."

"After all, being a cultivator is such an extraordinary thing,"

"Just like you, he certainly wouldn't let outsiders know it normally."

Charlie suddenly realized and murmured,

"You're right... Every cultivator has a sense of 'possessing a treasure is a crime.'"

"Unable and unwilling to let others know their secrets..."

At this point, Charlie asked, "But, Master Jingqing has no relation to you."

"And you've never even met him before."

"Why would he risk exposing himself to enlighten you and help you attain enlightenment?!"

"This... I... I don't know either..."

Nanako was also somewhat confused.

Charlie felt increasingly uneasy. He frowned and said,

"Cultivators in this world are like hunters in the dark forest described in 'The Three-Body Problem.'"

"No one dares to light a torch to attract the other,"

"And upon seeing other torches, they either immediately move away or kill them."

"Someone like Master Jing Qing, who actively comes out to help you comprehend the Dao,"

"Doesn't conform to the dog-eat-dog rules of this world."

Nanako felt a little flustered and quickly asked him,

"Does Master Charlie think Master Jing Qing has ill intentions?"

"Not exactly,"

Charlie shook his head. "He risked everything to guide you in your enlightenment."

"So he's definitely not a bad person, nor does he have any malicious intentions."

"It's not that he has ill intentions, just that his motives are unclear."

Charlie wasn't Maria, after all.

If he were Maria, when he thought of this, he should have considered whether Claire's departure was also related to Master Jing Qing.

If he could think of this and try to trace Claire's previous actions,

He might have reached the same conclusion as Maria.

Right now, he only felt that Master Jing Qing's appearance seemed to have another purpose,

And he desperately wanted to know who this person really was.

Nanako then said, "Since Charlie suspects Master Jingqing's motives,"

"Why not find an opportunity to ask him directly?"

"If he merely discovered my potential for enlightenment by chance and casually enlightened me,"

"Then there's no need to worry too much."

"However, if he intentionally approached me and intended to enlighten me, then this matter becomes very complicated."

"Because for a cultivator to pay attention to someone like me who hasn't yet attained enlightenment,"

"The only possibility is that he noticed you, Charlie, first."

Nanako's analysis further cleared up the fog.

Charlie also felt that the probability of a cultivator with an extremely low chance of existence accidentally encountering someone with an equally low chance of talent,

And then, generously helping her attain enlightenment was frighteningly slim.

If the probability of a cultivator existing in this world is one in ten million,

And the probability of someone with the talent to become a cultivator is one in a million,

Then the probability of them coincidentally meeting in one place is much smaller than the probability of an asteroid hitting Earth.

Therefore, the latter possibility seems much, much, much greater.

If that's the case...

Charlie suddenly had a bold deduction:

He felt that Master Jing Qing was most likely the same kind of person as Leon.

Thinking of this, he suddenly wanted to go to Zijin Mountain to see Maria and tell her his conclusion.

Because in Charlie's subconscious, the person he could be most honest with in this world,

The person with whom he had the fewest secrets was Maria.

Apart from Maria, he held back from everyone else.

Seeing Charlie's solemn expression and silence, Nanako realized the seriousness of the situation and quickly said,

"I suddenly feel that this Master Jingqing is quite unfathomable."

"How exactly did he notice Charlie?"

"And how did he notice me through Charlie?"

Charlie, inspired by her words, quickly asked,

"Do you remember the details of your meeting with him?"

"I remember," Nanako nodded, saying,

"I heard from others that Master Jingqing's blessed amulets were very effective,"

"So I had the idea to ask for one for Charlie, which is why I met him at Qixia Temple..."

She then murmured somewhat shyly, "Charlie knows that I..."

"I've always had some superstitious beliefs..."

Charlie seized on something and immediately asked,

"So, where did you hear about him?"

Nanako truthfully replied, "In the elevator."

"In the elevator at Tomson Riviera."

Charlie found this even more suspicious and frowned,

"The elevator at Tomson Riviera? What a coincidence!"

"Yes," Nanako said. "I was taking the elevator down to the basement when a neighbor came up."

"She was on the phone talking to someone about Master Jingqing's visit to Qixia Temple,"

"And that Master Jingqing would bless amulets for believers."

"So I went up to her and asked her about it..."

Charlie's eyes narrowed, a sharp glint flashing within them.

Then he said decisively, "This woman is suspicious!"



## Chapter 7071

From that moment on, Charlie became incredibly wary of these coincidences.

Now, when he looked at these coincidences, a thought immediately popped into his mind:

Where in this world are there so many coincidences?

Even the Nine Profound Heavenly Scripture that his father-in-law obtained by breaking the bottle wasn't a coincidence,

But the result of his parents' meticulous planning years ago.

His successful enlightenment was also thanks to his father transferring his Dragon Rank to him.

Making him a Dragon Ascendant.

Therefore, when Nanako overheard Master Jingqing coming to Qixia Temple in the elevator,

And then went there, and was enlightened by Master Jingqing,

These seemingly interconnected coincidences were more like a sophisticated trap, luring people deeper and deeper.

If this series of events were a series of schemes,

Then the woman Nanako encountered in the elevator was the first bait!

So he immediately asked Nanako, "Do you know that woman?"

"Does she live downstairs from you?"

Nanako nodded and said, "I've seen her a few times, and we've exchanged a few pleasantries in the elevator."

"We're fairly familiar."

"She lives on the ninth floor."

"Her husband is always away on business, so she lives alone."

Charlie immediately said, "Wait a moment, I'll make a call."

With that, he immediately took out his phone and called Orvel.

The call connected, and Orvel respectfully said,

"Master Wade, what can I do for you?"

Charlie instructed him, "Orvel, check the owner information for Tomson Riviera."

"Get the owner information for the ninth floor of the building where Miss Ito lives and send it to me."

The high-rise building that Nanako bought was the best one in Tomson Riviera, with only one unit on each floor.

Orvel's connections here were deep-rooted,

And he immediately began to inquire after receiving the call.

Soon, he sent the information to Charlie.

The apartment on the ninth floor is registered under the name Zhang Xixi.

However, this Zhang Xixi is not a Chinese citizen but an American of Chinese descent.

She owns an import/export company in Nanjing,

And her investment in China qualifies her to purchase the property.

Charlie found this suspicious.

The woman's identity differed significantly from Nanako's description.

Nanako said the woman's employer worked out of town year-round,

And she was a housewife,

But this didn't seem to be the case.

Therefore, he needed to confirm whether the woman's company was a shell company and whether her American citizenship could be verified.

He planned to have Orvel continue investigating the woman and the company,

And then send the woman's information to Stella in the United States,

Asking her to verify the authenticity of her American citizenship.

Nanako realized the seriousness of the situation and knew Charlie must be very frustrated, so she comforted him,

"Don't worry too much. We'll investigate slowly, and the truth will come out."

"In the future, we should pay more attention to unusual coincidences around us."

"Maybe we can seize the opportunity."

Then, she suddenly thought of a detail and quickly added,

"But Charlie, thinking back, I haven't seen this woman for a while."

"Maybe she's already completed her mission and left."

"If you investigate her openly now, you might alert her."

"Then they'll know you've noticed their presence,"

"And if they had other plans, they'll be even more cautious."

"Wouldn't that make it harder to find clues?"

Charlie murmured, "You mean to pretend you don't know and wait patiently?"

"Yes," Nanako said confidently,

"In Sun Tzu's Art of War, there's a strategy of using a counter-strategy."

"Now is a perfect opportunity. Pretend you don't know anything,"

"Let them lower their guard, and then they can use the same tactic again."

"That way, we can turn the tables."

Charlie thought Nanako's words made a lot of sense.

Investigating wouldn't necessarily frighten the other party.

In fact, whether or not to thoroughly investigate this woman might be a warning sign left behind by the other party.

Thinking of this, Charlie abandoned the idea of having Stella thoroughly investigate the other party's identity,

And instead had Orvel arrange for someone to check the water and electricity bills for the ninth floor of Tomson Riviera,

To see the recent water and electricity consumption of that apartment,

In order to infer whether the apartment was occupied.

If the recent water consumption was zero and the electricity consumption was extremely low,

It proved that the apartment was vacant and no longer occupied.

Orvel was very efficient; he quickly reported back to Charlie that the ninth-floor apartment had zero water bills for the past month.

And the electricity bill was only 68.03 yuan.

If an apartment is vacant and there are no leaks, water consumption will indeed be zero.

However, electricity is different.

The refrigerator, router, and smart home appliances that can connect to the internet will continuously consume electricity.

A monthly electricity bill of over 60 yuan is only a little over 100 kilowatt-hours,

Or four or five kilowatt-hours per day.

This electricity consumption is at least a third of what a side-by-side refrigerator would consume.

A single-level apartment in Tomson Riviera is two to three hundred square meters,

And the developer installed embedded AP panels in every room,

So the network would take up another third.

The rest would be for gas alarms, smoke detectors, and emergency call buttons.

It's possible the other party also installed networked surveillance cameras in the house,

So anyone breaking in would be notified in real time.

Therefore, judging from the water and electricity consumption,\

This house hasn't been lived in for the past month.

It seems this woman has completed her mission and left Aurous Hill.

Even if her identity is discovered, she probably won't be found.

Charlie felt somewhat agitated because he realized that an invisible net surrounded him,

Controlling most of his movements, even starting to arrange and influence his life like in The Truman Show.

He even began to suspect that his wife, Claire, might also be part of this network.

If so, her departure might simply be because her role in the other party's play was over.

Although he knew the other party might not actually have malicious intent,  
This feeling of being secretly manipulated still made him very uncomfortable.

Nanako quickly changed the subject, saying,

"Charlie, we've learned our lesson."

"Let's not let her influence us too much now."

"Father is waiting for us at the dinner table."

"Let's go upstairs quickly!"

Charlie sighed softly and nodded slightly.

He knew his mindset was a bit off, largely due to Claire's departure.

At that moment, he suddenly wanted to find Maria, sit with her under the Pu-  
erh tea tree, brew tea, and tell her about his troubles,

To see how she would comfort him or offer some inspiration.

So, he adjusted his mindset and said to Nanako,

"We can't keep Mr. Ito waiting."

"Let's go upstairs quickly, but I can't stay too long tonight."

"I have things to do later."

Nanako knew Charlie had just emerged from seclusion and must have many  
things to attend to, so she nodded and said,

"After dinner, Charlie, please go ahead and do what you need to do."

"Our grandfather won't mind."

As the two entered from the underground parking garage and arrived on the first floor,

## Chapter 7072

Takehiko saw Charlie and immediately greeted him happily.

He found Charlie pleasing to the eye, no matter how hard he tried to look at him,

And now that he knew Charlie's wife had run away,

He felt even more comfortable looking at him,

Seeing him more and more as if he were the Ito family's son-in-law.

So he patted Charlie on the shoulder and said with a smile,

"Long time no see, Mr. Wade."

Charlie smiled and said, "How have you been, Mr. Ito?"

"Very good, very good!"

Takehiko said cheerfully, "The new house is much more spacious and comfortable."

"I've been working on my yard lately, and I plan to transplant some of the precious tree species I have planted in Japan to Nanjing."

"If you have any favorite varieties, just let me know."

"And I'll definitely find the best one to bring over for you!"

Charlie thanked him, "Thank you."

"Mr. Ito, but I might not have the energy to take care of the plants."

Nanako chimed in, "Dad, Charlie is usually very busy."

"Unlike you, he doesn't have time to tend to trees and flowers."

Takehiko laughed and nodded, "That's true."

"I don't worry about any work matters anymore."

"I just enjoy my retirement every day."

"Lately, I've taken to going to the market."

"I walk around every day..."

"Going to the market to buy some fresh ingredients and then walking back feels wonderful."

Charlie asked him, "Mr. Ito, are you adapting well to life in Aurous Hill?"

Takehiko smiled and said, "I'm adapting very well."

"My appearance when I go out is quite different from before."

"I've shaved my beard and dyed my hair black."

"Every day, I walk through the busiest places in Aurous Hill, and everyone treats me like an ordinary middle-aged man."

"No one recognizes my true identity,"

"So I don't have to worry about being seen as having recovered from my leg injury."

"I feel very relaxed."

Takehiko truly enjoys life in Aurous Hill.

It's a level of ease and comfort he's never experienced in his life.

While the young people in this city are busy and work very hard every day,

The middle-aged and elderly people with a certain level of financial means live a truly leisurely life.

At this moment, Nanako's aunt,

Ito Emi came out of the kitchen and respectfully said,

"Onii-chan, Mr. Wade, Nanako, dinner is ready, please enjoy."

Takehiko smiled and said, "Mr. Wade, Nanako brought back a lot of top-quality ingredients from Japan, including Kyoto's most famous Uji matcha."

"She said she wanted to wait for you to come so we could enjoy it together."

"So I've been thinking about inviting you to my home for dinner."

Charlie knew Nanako's feelings for him, and upon hearing Takehiko's words,

He subconsciously looked at Nanako, his eyes filled with gratitude.

Nanako, both shy and excited, quickly said,

"Charlie, please move to the dining room!"

In the dining room, many dishes were already laid out on the table.

The Japanese value ritual, so the plating and decoration of each dish were very meticulous, making it a truly pleasing sight.

Charlie wasn't particularly interested in Japanese cuisine.

It was relatively bland, and the seasonings were rather limited.

The country's culinary scene felt like a large chain restaurant, mostly consisting of combinations of soy sauce, wasabi, miso, and citrus vinegar.

However, since he was a guest, Charlie didn't want to reveal this.

So, when Nanako enthusiastically introduced the various ingredients and cooking methods, Charlie readily complimented her.

At the dinner table, Takehiko kept wanting to gossip about Charlie's wife's sudden departure,

But he refrained from mentioning it for fear of saying the wrong thing.

Finally, when they were almost finished eating, he managed to ask,

"Mr. Wade, did those ninjas who came from Japan to help you recently provide any real assistance?"

"If you think they're not up to par,"

"I'll contact them and send another batch from Japan."

This question was quite sophisticated.

Instead of directly asking about the progress, he inquired whether the ninjas had provided any substantial assistance.

Although both questions concerned the same matter,

The motivations and perceptions were vastly different.

Asking directly would inevitably seem abrupt and gossipy,

This approach was much gentler and more natural.

If they had helped, it meant there was progress.

If they hadn't, it meant the matter was still unresolved.

Charlie, being honest, didn't suspect Takehiko's subtle intentions and truthfully replied,

"Thank you for your help, Mr. Ito."

"These ninjas are currently working under Inspector Duncan's command,

But I'm not entirely clear on the specific progress."

Takehiko nodded, inwardly relieved.

Having been a boss for so many years, he understood his subordinates' basic logic very well.

If they proactively reported progress,

It meant they were performing well; if they didn't, it was definitely a mess.

He thought this was fine.

Charlie couldn't find Claire, and sooner or later, he would lose faith in her.

The next step after losing faith would be giving up,

And the next step after giving up would naturally be replacing her.

In high spirits, he showed no sign of his true feelings and said very earnestly,

“Mr. Wade, if there is anything the Ito family can do for you, please don’t hesitate to ask.”

“The Ito family will do its utmost!”

Charlie casually thanked him, but his expression betrayed his melancholy.

Takehiko was a smart man; he had already gotten the answer he wanted from Charlie’s expression,

So he didn’t mention it again for the rest of the meal.

Because his thoughts were all on Maria,

Charlie bid farewell to the Ito father and daughter as soon as he finished eating.

Leaving Shanheyue, he drove to Zijin Villa while sending a message to Maria:

“Miss Lin, is it convenient?”

“I have some new discoveries I’d like to discuss with you in person.”

Maria quickly replied, “Young Master Wade, you can come anytime.”

“I’m always at the villa on the mountaintop.”

Charlie replied: “Okay, see you later.”

As Charlie drove to Zijin Villa, Maria sent a WeChat message to Margaret:

"Xiao Xiao is coming to see me, saying she has some new discoveries."

Margaret replied: "It probably has nothing to do with the stray cat army or Black Forest King, but most likely it's related to me."

Maria sent a tongue-out emoji: "I think so too."

Margaret asked her, "Did you buy Zhen Xiao Xiao?"

Maria replied: "Zhen Xiao Xiao is right beside me, but I didn't buy her, I adopted her."

After clicking send, she reached out and touched a few-month-old calico kitten lying next to her.

The kitten rolled over with a look of enjoyment,

Its four paws flailing around as if swimming in the air.

Margaret replied, "Then let's talk again after Xiaoxiao leaves."

"Okay."

The Xiaoxiao that Maria and Margaret mentioned was Charlie's nickname.

Charlie, however, was completely unaware of all this.

He arrived at Maria's mountaintop villa and immediately noticed something different from before:

The calico cat is beside Maria.

He asked in surprise, "Miss Lin, where did this kitten come from?"

Maria smiled sweetly at him and said,

"Young master, this kitten is one I just adopted."

"It used to live with other stray cats on the mountain,"

"But it was always bullied by them, so I brought it home to raise."

Charlie thought the calico cat was quite beautiful,

Its eyes scan everywhere, seemingly very intelligent.

So he went up to it, stroked its head, and asked Maria,

"What's this little guy's name?"

Maria replied sweetly, "Young master, I call it Xiaoxiao."

## Chapter 7073

"Xiaoxiao, what a nice name,"

Charlie muttered casually, pinching the kitten's chin.

The kitten was well-behaved,

Half-closing its eyes and tilting its head slightly as he handled it.

Charlie was somewhat surprised and said,

"This kitten is quite bold, not afraid of people at all."

Maria smiled and nodded, saying,

"Xiaoxiao is more affectionate than most stray cats."

"Maybe it's because it's always been bullied in the cat community,"

"So it feels that people are more reliable than their own kind."

After saying that, she looked at Charlie's handsome face and eyebrows as he looked down, thinking to herself,

"If you knew that your mother was still alive, you would be very excited, wouldn't you?"

"For twenty years, I thought my dearest loved ones were long gone,"

"But I never expected that my mother was still alive."

"There is probably nothing more comforting than this."

At this moment, Xiaoxiao, perhaps liking Charlie's gentle rubbing, slowly sat up, arched its back,

And patted its two front paws back and forth a few times before snuggling into Charlie's arms.

Maria smiled and said, "It seems Xiao Xiao really likes you, Young Master."

With that, she took out her phone, opened the camera, and said,

"Young Master, let me take a picture of you and Xiao Xiao."

Charlie didn't think much of it, nodded slightly,

And held Xiao Xiao, looking at the camera.

Maria pressed the shutter button,

And a close-up, high-definition photo was taken.

Because the lighting in the courtyard was dim, the phone automatically turned on the flash.

In the photo, Charlie's sharply defined features, highlighted by the flash, looked as if an automatic beauty filter had been applied,

Making him even more handsome than in real life.

Maria handed the phone to Charlie, smiling, and said,

"Young Master, take a look, is it alright?"

Charlie didn't care about such things, glanced at it casually, and smiled,

"It's quite good."

Maria smiled happily, took back her phone,

And then, I casually opened WeChat and sent the photo to Margaret.

She had never thought of taking photos of Charlie as a memento before.

She wanted to take pictures of him just now,

Partly because she thought the image of him and his cat was harmonious,

And partly because she wanted to send the photos to Margaret.

For many years, Margaret hadn't dared to get close to Charlie.

Back when Charlie was in the orphanage, it might have been a little easier.

Her staff could secretly take some photos for her.

But in recent years, Charlie's power had grown stronger,

And those who had stayed by his side had gradually left and kept their distance.

Seeing a recent photo of Charlie on a regular basis would probably be difficult.

At this moment, Margaret had left Kinkakuji Temple and gone to Aomori Prefecture,

Hundreds of kilometers away.

Aomori is the northernmost part of the Japanese mainland,

Famous for its apples and other cash crops.

Margaret had her own plantation there, as well as a deep-processing production line for apple-related products.

Aomori's apple production accounted for half of Japan's total,

And Margaret accounted for half of Aomori's apple production,

With her company handling most of the export business.

After Margaret and Changying married, in addition to helping their family make money,

They also invested in numerous industries around the world using various shell companies and nominee shareholders.

These included highly profitable technology, energy, and industrial enterprises,

As well as less profitable small businesses.

For example, their apple industry investment in Aomori was large-scale,

But the actual profit was not high.

However, this didn't matter to them.

Their investment in Aomori was mainly due to the geographical conditions and the unique nature of the industries there.

This brought them many advantages.

Aomori Prefecture has a low population density,

About one-third of the average population density in Japan.

The advantage of a sparsely populated area is that it's easier to hide, especially in the form of plantations,

Making it even harder for outsiders to discover their secrets.

Moreover, Aomori's geographical location is quite convenient for Margaret.

A few hundred kilometers to the south lies the developed regions of mainland Japan,

Such as Tokyo and Osaka, while a few dozen kilometers to the north is Hokkaido.

Aomori is separated from Hokkaido only by the Tsugaru Strait,

It is connected by an undersea tunnel.

To the east by ship are the Korean Peninsula and the Russian Far East,

While to the west lies the vast Pacific Ocean.

From Aomori Port, San Francisco is only seven or eight thousand kilometers away,

Making it extremely convenient.

Margaret controls Aomori's apple export business by acquiring large numbers of plantations and suppressing export prices and profits,

Making it impossible for competitors to keep up.

While others grow apples to make money,

She doesn't care about profitability, resulting in the lowest profit margin.

A lower profit margin naturally leads to higher cost-effectiveness for consumers.

Margaret's main purpose in controlling Aomori's apple exports is to use exports to create a transnational freight channel,

Allowing her to transport special goods through apple exports.

Fearing Charlie's investigation, she moved here after the passing of the Void Concealment Master, settling in her largest plantation.

The hillsides were covered with apple trees, all managed by her people,

And a hidden security system had been established, ensuring her safety.

At this moment, she was in her own building within the plantation,

Savoring apple juice she had just extracted using traditional pressing methods,

When she suddenly received a photo from Maria.

Overjoyed, she held her phone in both hands, carefully examining the photo of Charlie.

She hadn't seen such a clear photo of Charlie in a long time.

Looking at her son's handsome features and the rare, relaxed smile as he held the kitten, her mood instantly improved.

## Chapter 7074

Just then, Sister Sun entered, respectfully saying,

"Madam, Jing Qing wishes to see you."

Margaret, zooming in on Charlie's photo and carefully examining her son's face,

Smiled and said, "Let Jing Qing in."

"Yes, Madam."

Sister Sun turned and went out, returning shortly with Jing Qing.

Jing Qing approached Margaret respectfully and said,

"Madam, Jing Qing is preparing to return home."

"I came to say goodbye and see if you have any instructions for me."

Margaret put down her phone and smiled, saying,

"Nothing to instruct me on."

"You've worked hard these past few days."

"Amitabha."

Jing Qing clasped his hands together respectfully and said,

"Madam, you flatter me. It is my honor to serve you."

Jing Qing's respect for Margaret was not flattery, but genuine.

He had previously been devoted to Buddhism,

Believing that all beings were equal under the Buddha.

However, after successfully attaining enlightenment under Margaret's guidance,

He realized that both Buddhism and Taoism were under the Heavenly Dao,

And that all beings were not equal,

Because everyone's distance from the Heavenly Dao was different.

Take himself, for example; after enlightenment,

His lifespan was decades, even centuries,

Longer than that of ordinary people.

Was this equality among beings? Of course not.

Margaret herself hadn't attained enlightenment,

So she was probably much further from the Dao than Jing Qing, who had.

However, in Jing Qing's view, her opportunity to get closer to the Dao was entirely due to Margaret's support,

So she should be respectful and grateful to her.

Margaret looked at Charlie's photo for a while before reluctantly putting down her phone.

She first replied to Maria, "Thank you, senior."

Then she said to Jing Qing,

"You've been in Japan for a while now, which has delayed many things back home.

Now that everything here is settled,"

"You can go back and attend to your business."

Jing Qing nodded slightly and said,

"I plan to leave for Tokyo later and take the earliest flight back."

Margaret smiled and said, "Okay, you can decide according to your own schedule."

"If you decide to leave later,"

"I'll have someone take you there."

Meanwhile, at the top-floor villa of Zijin Villa.

Maria smiled at Charlie and Xiao Xiao, and asked softly,

"Young Master told me on the phone that you had made a new discovery."

"What exactly is it?"

Charlie, holding Xiao Xiao, said to Maria,

"I met Nanako today, and while chatting with her, I discovered a detail I had previously overlooked."

"Back then at Qixia Temple, she was enlightened by a monk named Jing Qing,"

"Which is why she was able to achieve enlightenment."

"I was wondering, what kind of person would be willing to risk exposing themselves to enlighten a stranger?"

Maria's heart skipped a beat.

Charlie had noticed Monk Jing Qing!

Wasn't this equivalent to uncovering a corner of Margaret's cover?

So, she asked Charlie,

"Young Master, do you think the identity of this Monk Jing Qing is questionable?"

"Yes," Charlie nodded emphatically.

Maria replied, "It's difficult for me to say about such matters."

"For cultivators, their secrets are certainly important."

"But sometimes they also feel that inheritance is necessary."

"Just like my master, when he was in seclusion in the Shinwan Mountains,"

"He still took my father and Victoria as his disciples."

As she said this, Maria felt nauseous, because she already knew Meng Changsheng's despicable character.

However, to avoid arousing Charlie's suspicion, she could only use him as an example.

Charlie, however, said, "It's understandable if it's for inheritance."

"But Nanako's going to Qixia Temple wasn't accidental."

"It was intentional."

He then recounted how Nanako had been deliberately lured by a woman in the elevator,

Including the fact that the woman had disappeared.

Maria frowned upon hearing this.

She knew that once Charlie grasped the source of Nanako's enlightenment,

The matter would inevitably be exposed.

Furthermore, the fact that the woman had left Jinling only intensified Charlie's suspicions.

However, she also knew that Margaret was powerless to do anything about it,

Because Charlie had his methods.

Let alone a young woman, even someone like Master Jingqing, with some cultivation but not high enough, would likely be unable to keep the secret in front of him.

Once Charlie found that woman, he would find out everything.

Now, she dared not try to guide Charlie's judgment any further.

She was a smart woman, and she felt that once Charlie began to notice and analyze the anomalies around him,

He would approach problems with a dialectical and truth-seeking mindset.

If she kept trying to mislead his judgment,

He would definitely realize something was wrong.

Therefore, Maria immediately said decisively,

"I think your analysis makes a lot of sense, young master."

"If she was deliberately led to Qixia Temple, and then Master Jingqing appeared to enlighten her by chance,"

"Then this proves that they are definitely in cahoots."

"And this might become an important breakthrough!"

"Is that so!"

Receiving Maria's affirmation boosted Charlie's confidence,

And he had no doubt about Maria's previous guidance.

He said seriously, "Finding that woman now will probably be very difficult."

"But finding Master Jingqing shouldn't be too troublesome."

"As a well-known figure in the Buddhist community, his whereabouts should be relatively easy to track."

"Nanako said that she recently presided over the funeral arrangements for Master Kōin of Kinkaku-ji Temple in Japan."

"So he should be returning to China soon!"



## Chapter 7075

Charlie's words secretly worried Maria.

Although few people knew of Master Jing Qing's identity as a cultivator,

He was still quite well-known in the Buddhist field as a highly accomplished monk.

Once he returned to the country, his whereabouts would certainly not escape Charlie's notice.

In that case, if Charlie confronted him,

He might be able to learn from him that his mother,

Margaret was still alive.

During a long talk with Margaret, she had mentioned that the reason she couldn't acknowledge Charlie was that.

It was because Victoria had always suspected she wasn't dead.

That's why, after Margaret faked her death,

She planted the scholar in the An family to spy.

Moreover, in Victoria's eyes, Margaret was the real threat;

Charlie, the boy who had been missing since he was eight, was nothing to fear.

Therefore, Margaret felt that if she acknowledged Charlie,

It wouldn't help his path of revenge.

On the contrary, it might be extremely detrimental to him.

Maria agreed with this.

Margaret has been able to maintain her safety all these years because she hasn't spread the news that she's still alive.

Her subordinates are almost all from Changying's old guard.

The few young people she has are all children of these veterans,

With impeccable backgrounds and impeccable credentials.

Maria, on the other hand, failed to do the same,

This led to problems within her team.

Given this situation, Margaret naturally can't let Charlie know she's still alive.

Otherwise, given Charlie's personality, he'll definitely want to reunite with his mother, putting both mother and son in danger.

Therefore, Maria believes she must tell Margaret that Jing Qing shouldn't return to the country,

And even less should Jing Qing continue to appear in public.

Otherwise, if Charlie finds Jing Qing, things will spiral out of control.

However, Maria also worries about something else.

Charlie just shared his analysis with her.

If Jing Qing disappears immediately afterward, Charlie will definitely suspect her.

Although she was immune to his psychological manipulation,

She couldn't bear to lie to him.

If he confronted her and she forced herself to lie,

Even if Charlie didn't completely break off relations,

An irreparable rift and estrangement would inevitably form between them.

Given her genuine feelings for Charlie,

She naturally didn't want them to end up in that situation.

So, how could she achieve the best for both of them?

Maria fell into deep thought.

Seeing that she remained silent, Charlie couldn't help but ask,

"What are you thinking about, Miss Lin?"

Maria pursed her lips and said,

"I'm thinking about your cultivation, Young Master."

"My cultivation?"

Charlie asked in confusion,

"Is there anything that worries you, Miss Lin?"

Maria said, "You've been in seclusion for over ten days."

"And even today, when you emerged, you didn't mention anything about your cultivation."

"I suppose your seclusion these past few days hasn't yielded much, has it?"

Charlie was slightly taken aback and awkwardly chuckled,

"That's right. I couldn't concentrate,"

"So my seclusion was futile."

"I didn't gain anything."

Maria asked him, "Didn't you try that ring?"

"Or perhaps the hand seals you learned under the Northern Lights in Northern Europe that day?"

"Uh...no..." Charlie, like a child caught doing homework by the teacher, said guiltily,

"To be honest, I couldn't calm my mind during my seclusion."

"So I didn't concentrate on tackling these two things."

Maria sighed and said, "Young Master,"

"No matter who is behind Master Jingqing and Steward Tang,"

"They are definitely your comrades."

"As you said, cultivators are extremely secretive about their identities."

"Master Jingqing was willing to risk enlightening Miss Ito,"

"Which must mean he felt that enlightening Miss Ito would be of some help to you."

"So even if it meant risking his life, he was willing to lend you a hand."

"Why do you need to pry into his background?"

"If you find him, given that you are both cultivators, the chance of one cultivator being exposed is not that great."

"But if two cultivators meet, the chance of exposure will increase exponentially. What good would that do?"

## Chapter 7076

"This..."

Charlie was speechless for a moment.

After pondering for a long time, he sighed and said,

"I... I actually wanted to find my wife through them..."

Maria nodded and said, "I understand your feelings, young master."

"However, have you considered that there are two problems with this matter?"

"One is that there is no evidence to prove that Master Jingqing and Steward Tang are in the same camp."

"Master Jingqing risked his life to enlighten Miss Ito."

"If you rashly go to Master Jingqing, you will not only be impolite,"

"But you will also bring unnecessary risks to Master Jingqing."

"The second problem is that Madam Wade left so that you could focus entirely on your revenge."

"You disregard all that and only want to find her."

"But have you considered what would happen even if you found her?"

"Not only would it render her efforts futile, but your high-profile search and contact might also expose Steward Tang and his entire faction."

"It's like you and they are carefully hiding in the shadows to avoid being discovered by Victoria."

"Yet you ignore all that and rush in to tear down their cover."

"I think this behavior is quite dangerous."

Maria's words opened up a new perspective for Charlie.

Leon and his group were definitely his allies.

Right now, everyone was lying in ambush under the enemy's nose.

If no one acted rashly, they would all be safe for the time being.

But if he rashly searched for them, or even found them,

He might give the enemy an opportunity to wipe them out.

At this moment, Maria pressed her advantage, saying,

"Young Master, I believe that Madam Wade is currently the safest."

"Otherwise, if she were still in Aurous Hill, she would be exposed immediately if you were exposed, and would be in extreme danger."

"If you adjust your mindset and prioritize improving your cultivation and dealing with Victoria,"

"Her safety would be more guaranteed."

"Why get caught up in endless infighting with Madam Wade and Steward Tang at this time?"

Charlie felt enlightened and sighed,

"Miss Lin is right."

"I didn't prioritize the overall situation."

Maria said softly, "Young Master, there's no need to be upset."

"Truly adjusting your mindset is the most important thing."

Charlie asked her,

"Miss Lin, in your opinion, what should I do now?"

Maria pursed her lips and pondered for a moment,

Then suddenly raised her head and said,

"Young Master, why don't I accompany you to Northern Europe again, while..."

"The aurora borealis can still be seen in Scandinavia."

Charlie asked in surprise, "Go to Scandinavia?"

"You mean, go again to see if there are any clues about the aurora borealis?"

Maria nodded emphatically, "The Arctic region of Scandinavia is extremely quiet."

"In addition, there are no other natives around the royal family's holiday home."

"And tourists are not allowed to approach."

"There, not only will you have the opportunity to see new clues about the aurora borealis,"

"But even if you go into seclusion there, you will surely be able to calm your mind."

"I will go with you. If you go into seclusion,"

"I can at least take care of you to some extent."

Charlie asked her, "Do you think the person or thing that manipulated the aurora borealis is still there?"

Maria murmured, "I have a feeling, but I haven't been able to confirm it yet."

Charlie asked, "What feeling?"

Maria looked at Charlie and said, "I believe that the thing that manipulated the aurora borealis that day is not there."

"But it is within you, young master."

"What?!"

Charlie's eyes widened as he blurted out,

"On me? How so?"

Maria said seriously, "The aurora is a natural phenomenon caused by the interaction of high-energy charged particles with the Earth's magnetic field and upper atmosphere."

"In other words, the aurora is like fine sand falling from the sky,"

"Easily affected by minute amounts of energy,"

"Changing its trajectory and shape. Have you seen a movie called 'Interstellar'?"

Charlie nodded, "Yes."

Maria explained, "Based on the knowledge I've gained over the years,"

"The underlying logic of that movie is quite scientific."

"When the protagonist was in a higher dimension, trying to send a message to his daughter, he used the fine dust in the room."

"I think that being in a higher dimension, his energy was difficult to transmit stably to three-dimensional space."

"So he could only try to influence that particularly elusive fine dust that was easily changed by minute forces."

"So, if we apply this logic, then the aurora, like fine sand, is also a good way to transmit information across latitudes."

Charlie suddenly realized and asked her,

"You mean, it's not that something under the aurora in Northern Europe is reminding me,"

"But rather that something inside me or around me doesn't usually have a suitable medium to transmit those messages to me,"

"And when we're under the aurora, it just happens to give it a good opportunity to transmit the message?"

"That's right!"

Maria nodded emphatically with a hint of joy and said,

"That's my deduction."

"Perhaps it's the ring left by my father, or perhaps some other opportunity, that's reminding you, young master."

"That's why I was thinking of going to the Arctic with you again to verify whether this deduction is right or wrong!"

## Chapter 7077

Maria was perhaps the most persuasive person in the world to Charlie.

She possessed unparalleled intelligence and an incredibly rich life experience.

Even though she appeared to be just the girl next door, diligently preparing for the college entrance exam,

Charlie, who knew almost all her secrets and experiences,

Not only trusted her implicitly, but I also deeply respected her.

Therefore, when Maria asked about his cultivation progress, he felt ashamed.

When Maria analyzed his current situation for him, he suddenly realized that seeking help from Claire, Leon, and Master Jing Qing might not bring any benefits,

But it would certainly bring a lot of harm.

It would not only waste his energy and time,

Delay the most important task at hand, but it might even bring them danger.

When Maria shared her views on the Northern Lights that night in Northern Europe,

Charlie also suddenly felt a sense of enlightenment.

The mystery might not truly lie in the polar regions, but within himself.

However, the power of that mystery is limited, or perhaps constrained by some kind of restriction.

It's like the protagonist in *Interstellar*, hiding in a higher dimension,

Wanting to convey countless messages,

But ultimately lacking the power to do so,

Only able to transmit information by altering the aurora.

If that's the case, then his return last time was somewhat hasty.

Because he didn't know if there was any follow-up to the handprint.

Thinking of this, he asked Maria,

"Miss Lin, does that mysterious entity also lose its own energy when transmitting messages through the aurora?"

"Perhaps the handprint it showed last time was only a part of the message it wanted to convey to me."

Maria nodded, saying, "I think it's very possible."

"In *Interstellar*, the protagonist used binary and Morse code,"

"Aided by sand and the hands of a watch, to transmit information from a higher dimension to his daughter."

"Binary and Morse code are very slow."

"It takes a long time to transmit a complete message."

"Based on this, the content presented by the aurora that night might indeed only be a part."

"If I..." "If we want to confirm this, the best way is to go to Northern Europe again while the aurora is still there."

Charlie agreed, "That's right!"

"Once the aurora season ends,"

"We lose the channel through which it transmits information,"

"And then we can only wait until next winter."

Maria smiled and said, "It's not that bad."

"If the Arctic aurora disappears, there will definitely be the Antarctic aurora."

"From September to April of the following year in the Northern Hemisphere,"

"You can see the Arctic aurora, and from March to September in the Southern Hemisphere."

"You can see the Antarctic aurora."

"That is to say, if you don't mind the trouble,"

"You have a chance to see the aurora throughout the year."

"If you can't see the aurora in Northern Europe,"

"I will accompany you to Antarctica."

"In short, wherever there is an aurora, we will chase it there."

"That's it."

Charlie exclaimed, "So that's how it is!"

"It seems I was quite ignorant."

"I always thought the aurora only appeared in winter,"

"But I overlooked the fact that the seasons in the Southern Hemisphere are the opposite of ours!"

Maria smiled and asked him,

"So, when has Young Master decided to set off?"

Charlie gritted his teeth and said decisively,

"Tomorrow!"

Seeing his resolute attitude and the fact that he was leaving tomorrow,

Maria was overjoyed and immediately said,

"Good!"

"Then I will immediately begin preparations and accompany Young Master to Northern Europe tomorrow!"

Charlie said, "I need to speak with Helena."

"I still need her help with my entry permit."

"And I also need to borrow her holiday home in the Arctic again."

Maria said, "Young Master... "

"You'd better bring plenty of medicine and be prepared for a long battle."

"If everything is as we think,"

"And if we haven't uncovered all the secrets contained within the aurora before it disappears in Northern Europe,"

"Then I'll accompany you to Antarctica."

Charlie sighed, "Antarctica..."

"I don't know anyone there..."

Maria smiled, "There are no countries in the Antarctic Circle."

"Only penguins and research stations."

"It's normal that you don't know anyone there."

"However, as far as I know, the Nordic countries also have research stations in Antarctica."

"If necessary, you can ask their Queen for help."

## Chapter 7078

Charlie was somewhat surprised.

He hadn't expected that the Nordic countries,

With part of their territory in the Arctic, they would build research stations in Antarctica.

If they couldn't explore all the mysteries before the aurora ended in April,

They might really have to go to Antarctica.

Helena might be of great help then.

So, Charlie didn't dare delay and hurriedly said,

"In that case, Miss Lin, please make the preparations."

"I'll arrange the plane and let you know as soon as the itinerary is finalized."

Maria nodded, smiled sweetly, and said softly,

"This servant will be at your service at any time, young master."

Charlie looked at the kitten in his arms and asked her,

"By the way, this trip might take a long time."

"How will Xiao Xiao be settled?"

Maria said, "Leave her to Old Zhang and the others."

"Old Zhang has taken care of all sorts of small animals for me over the years—pigs, horses, cattle, sheep, cats, dogs, rats, rabbits—he can raise them all,"

"And he raises them even better than I can."

Charlie looked up at the lush and verdant Pu-erh tea tree and said,

"Then Old Zhang should be able to take care of this tea tree, too, right?"

Maria smiled and said,

"The Pu-erh tea tree has a very strong vitality, and it's not an ordinary plant."

"It doesn't need the kind of soil loosening, fertilizing, and pest control we might think of."

"The only two things it fears are lack of water and fire."

"As long as these two things don't happen,..."

"You can rest easy."

After saying this, she murmured softly,

"Since we might be gone for a long time,"

"I'll pick more tea leaves to take with me tonight."

Then, Maria asked Charlie, "Young Master, have you decided what you need to bring? Don't forget anything important."

Charlie thought for a moment and said, "I don't have any special luggage to prepare for going to Northern Europe."

"I can ask Helena to help me prepare many daily necessities."

"Given our friendship, there's no need to be polite."

"Letting her help will save me a lot of energy."

"I don't plan to carry many things with me, just the Qi-Nourishing Pills I've refined,"

"And the medicine cauldron I got from Mateo some time ago."

At this point, Charlie suddenly thought of something and blurted out,

"Besides these things, we might need to bring two people with us."

Maria asked in surprise, "Who are you going to bring, Young Master?"

Charlie sighed, "One is the Warriors Den."

"The previous Duke of Dingyuan, Yun Ruguo, and the former Vice Commander of the Right Army, Ria."

Maria suddenly realized and said, "Young Master, are you worried that if you go for too long this time, something might happen that will delay your detoxification of the two of them?"

Charlie thought to himself, "Smart,"

And said frankly, "That's right. They both sincerely want to join hands with me to fight against the Warriors Den."

"However, the poison in their bodies doesn't have much time left."

"I've been having them cultivate in seclusion for the past few days,"

"But judging from my state during seclusion, I think it's difficult for them to calm down."

"If I'm gone for a long time this time, firstly, I'm afraid it will delay my detoxification of them,"

"And secondly, I'm afraid that if they don't see me for a long time and feel that the hope of detoxification is getting slimmer,"

"They might think of returning to the Warriors Den for survival."

Maria's expression immediately became serious, and she said earnestly,

"Young Master's consideration is very correct."

"If one gets closer and closer to death, one's mentality will mostly change."

"If one is facing death..."

At this critical juncture, their only hope for survival was Victoria's antidote.

It was understandable that they wanted to go back.

Moreover, going back would allow them to exonerate themselves,

Claiming they were merely captured by the young master and had not escaped the Warriors' Den.

Furthermore, bringing back information about the young master would be a great achievement,

As this was extremely important strategic intelligence for Victoria.

Charlie nodded and said, "Therefore, it's more appropriate to keep them by your side."

Maria said, "I think so too."

Charlie smiled slightly and said,

"In that case, I'll take my leave now."

"I'll inform Miss Lin as soon as the itinerary is finalized."

Maria was also straightforward, smiling and saying,

"I'll see the young master off."

With that, she beckoned to the kitten in Charlie's arms,

"Xiao Xiao, come quickly, the young master is leaving."

Whether the kitten understood Maria's words or her gesture,"

"It immediately got up from Charlie's arms and hopped to Maria in a few leaps.

Charlie got up and walked out, with Maria and Xiao Xiao, the kitten, following behind.

As Charlie exited the gate of the top-floor villa, he said to Maria,

"Miss Lin, please stay."

"There's no need to see me off any further."

Maria nodded and said, "Then I will await your news, young master."

## Chapter 7079

Since Claire left, Charlie's sense of belonging to Aurous Hill has faded considerably.

It's not that he's lost affection for the city,

But rather that the city no longer holds him back,

Preventing him from leaving.

Now, he's like a free-spirited bachelor,

Able to go wherever he wants without any ties.

His friends in Aurous Hill are all doing very well.

They might have been business competitors before,

But thanks to his efforts over the years,

They've become good friends, supporting each other in life and business.

Interestingly, the fierce competition that once made them all less profitable,

Now stems from their mutual respect and consideration.

While they are all business elites, their perspectives are sometimes limited by territoriality,

Viewing everyone else as a rival leads to significant internal friction.

Once this friction is overcome, the situation naturally improves considerably.

This situation is somewhat similar to that of the European Union.

Without the EU, Europe was devastated by both World Wars.

Germany and France, long-time rivals, had been fighting since the 17th century, continuing until the end of World War II.

Neither has it achieved global superpower status.

Later, they came to terms with each other, abandoned their past prejudices,

And banded together for mutual support,

Which led to a much brighter future.

Besides his friends, Charlie's maternal grandparents' family no longer required his attention.

They were now wealthy businessmen who had returned from overseas to contribute to the nation's development,

And China placed great importance on them.

Unless Victoria was determined to fight to the death,

She would never dare to harm them again.

Furthermore, he had a large pool of martial arts talent at the Champs-Élysées Hot Springs,

Who could ensure the safety of his family and friends in Aurous Hill?

These were the multiple reasons why Charlie could leave with peace of mind.

Upon returning to Champs-Élysées, he didn't immediately go to his villa on the hillside,

But instead, I visited Jeremiah and Ria at their secluded villa.

These two women, who had shared many hardships, had become inseparable best friends after spending time together.

They were overjoyed to see Charlie's sudden visit and warmly invited him into the living room.

After sitting down in the living room, Charlie asked the two women,

"Miss Yun, Miss Song, how have you both been lately?"

Jeremiah smiled and said, "Thank you for your concern, Mr. Wade."

"Ria and I have been getting along very well these days."

Ria, no longer displaying her usual coldness and arrogance, smiled and said,

"Sister Yun is so good to me, like a real sister."

"We've both decided that if we're lucky enough to survive."

"We'll live and cultivate together."

"If we don't survive, we'll trouble Mr. Wade to choose a scenic spot in Aurous Hill to bury us together."

Charlie was slightly surprised, but smiled and said,

"It's too early to talk about death now."

Jeremiah smiled easily and said,

"Mr. Wade, time flies like an arrow; a year will pass quickly."

Charlie nodded and said to the two women,

"Gentlemen, I've come today to discuss something with you."

Jeremiah immediately said seriously, "Please speak, Mr. Wade."

Ria, sitting upright beside him, stared intently at Charlie,

Waiting for him to continue.

Charlie said earnestly, "During this time, I have been deeply troubled by the stagnation in my cultivation."

"So I plan to go to Northern Europe for a period of seclusion to see if I can find an opportunity to open my Niwan Palace."

"And also to see if I can find a way to detoxify you two."

"I hope you can come with me."

The young Ria blurted out excitedly without any hesitation,

"Thank you for your guidance, Mr. Wade. Ria is willing to go with you!"

A trace of worry and disappointment flashed between Yun Ruge's brows,

But she quickly adjusted her mindset and smiled,

"Ruge is also willing to go."

Charlie nodded with satisfaction and said,

"In that case, please make your preparations."

"We will set off tomorrow."

The two immediately agreed.

Seeing that it was getting late,

Charlie did not want to disturb them any longer,

So he got up to take his leave.

Ria and Jeremiah saw Charlie off at the door.

After watching him leave, Ria whispered to Jeremiah,

"Sister Yun, why is Mr. Wade suddenly going to Northern Europe for seclusion?"

"Isn't his wife in Aurous Hill?"

"This..."

Jeremiah shook her head and murmured,

"I'm not really sure either."

Ria smiled and said, "Mr. Wade is still thinking of taking us with him during his seclusion."

"It seems he really cares about us."

Jeremiah sighed softly and said,

"Mr. Wade is probably afraid that we might have other ideas..."

Ria paused slightly and smiled bitterly,

"Is Mr. Wade worried that we might be afraid of dying in a critical moment?"

"Perhaps,"

## Chapter 7080

Jeremiah said. "If he really intends to remain in seclusion for an extended period,"

"It's probably because he's worried that if we have no way to survive,"

"We'll return to the Warriors Den."

Ria said firmly, "Even if I die, I will never go back."

After saying that, she muttered somewhat sullenly,

"It seems Mr. Wade still doesn't trust us."

Jeremiah smiled and said, "I'm the same as you."

"I'd rather die than go back."

"But Mr. Wade's concerns are not unreasonable."

"A person's will to survive is directly proportional to the crisis."

"The more dangerous the situation, the stronger the will to survive."

Ria shook her head and said seriously,

"Survival also depends on what kind of survival you're seeking."

"If it's still the same as before, if we have to live under the control of the Warriors Den, and also... "

"To aid and abet evil in exchange for the antidote?"

"I'd rather die. As the saying goes, 'Give me liberty or give me death.'"

Jeremiah patted her shoulder and smiled, saying,

"We both want to escape the Destroy the Warriors Den."

"But neither of us has the power to control our destiny."

"So, we'll follow Mr. Wade's orders."

Ria felt a pang of sadness, gently hugging Jeremiah and murmuring,

"Sister Yun, do you think we can overcome this hurdle?"

Jeremiah smiled and said, "Whether we can overcome it depends on our fate."

"Victoria's poison is beyond our ability to cure."

"Everything depends on Mr. Wade."

Ria nodded slightly, her feelings of shared misfortune with Jeremiah growing even stronger.

...

Far away in Northern Europe, Helena had just finished a state visit to several friendly countries and returned to the palace by plane.

Although the royal family was merely a figurehead in these constitutional monarchies,

She had gained many supporters both domestically and internationally through her personal charm and influence.

This elevates her beyond a mere national mascot.

On many things the Prime Minister can't agree on, she can, especially in attracting foreign investment to the Nordic countries.

Helena consistently convinces top international companies to invest in the Nordic market.

Moreover, Helena tirelessly works for the Nordic countries, rarely resting,

Sometimes even more diligently than the Prime Minister.

Her efforts and charisma are evident to the entire Nordic population,

Leading to unprecedented levels of public support and a continuously increasing presence for the royal family.

Helena doesn't truly love the role and job of Queen.

It's just that the royal family is monotonous and lonely,

So she doesn't want to be idle.

Filling her life with work does alleviate her loneliness,

But her longing for Charlie is deeply rooted and difficult to diminish.

Seeing Helena return exhausted and listless,

The old empress felt a pang of heartache and couldn't help but ask,

"Helena, have you taken some time to rest lately?"

"Don't always be running around like this."

Helena smiled and said,

"Resting feels boring, and going on vacation isn't convenient."

"Staying in the palace is so cold and quiet all day."

"It's better to be busy with work outside."

The old empress said helplessly, "You know,"

"I've said it before: you need to achieve something in your family life."

"Otherwise, this palace will always be cold and quiet for you."

"I'm still alive now; if I die, won't it be even more desolate here?"

Helena smiled bitterly, "Grandma, haven't we discussed these things?"

"I have my own life to live; I don't want to settle."

The Empress sighed, "If you've made up your mind about Charlie for life,"

"Then you should try to take things a step further."

"Otherwise, continuing like this will only waste your own time."

"I mentioned last time that you should reconsider having a child with him."

"Having a child will make the palace less lonely."

Helena sighed, "Grandma, these things aren't as simple as you think."

The old Empress quickly said,

"That's precisely why you must try your best,"

“Otherwise, it will truly be a long and uncertain journey.”

Helena rubbed her temples and said,

“Now it’s not even easy to see Mr. Wade...”

“Last time he brought that little girl to Northern Europe,”

“We didn’t even have a chance to be alone.”

Speaking of this, Helena thought of the time Charlie fainted on her bed.

She couldn’t help but feel a little regretful.

If she had seized the opportunity then, would it really have been possible for her to conceive Charlie’s child?

She didn’t dare to think of using a child to tie him down,

But having one of his children would be enough for her in this life.

At this moment, her phone suddenly rang.

The moment the ringtone sounded, she instantly went from being exhausted to excited and thrilled.

Because this ringtone was specially designed for Charlie.

## Chapter 7081

Seeing Charlie's call, Helena's fatigue vanished instantly.

Holding the phone in both hands, she happily told the Empress,

"Grandma, Mr. Wade is calling."

"I'll go answer it."

Without waiting for the Empress's reaction,

She immediately got up and went back to her room.

The Empress watched her retreating figure, sighed helplessly,

Then looked out the window and murmured,

"The royal family's status is currently at its highest point since the establishment of the constitutional monarchy."

"But the number of its members is also at its lowest."

"Is it truly as the old Eastern saying goes,"

"'One thing rises while another falls'?"

As she spoke, the wrinkles on the old woman's face seemed to deepen even further.

A moment later, Helena ran out excitedly and said to the old queen,

"Grandma, Mr. Wade is coming to Northern Europe!"

"Really?!"

The old queen asked with some surprise,

"When is he coming?"

"What is he coming for?"

Helena said, "Mr. Wade is coming tomorrow, Beijing time, which is tonight for us."

"He's going to his holiday home in the Arctic again."

"Saying he'll be staying there for a while."

The old queen was surprised and asked doubtfully,

"Mr. Wade is so busy usually. Why is he going to the Arctic again?"

"Could it be that he's bringing that little girl from last time?"

"Is that girl his new lover?"

"How could that be?"

Helena said without hesitation,

"Mr. Wade is not that kind of person at all,"

"And besides, it's obvious that he and that young girl could not possibly have that kind of relationship."

The old empress smiled and said,

"I wish he were that kind of person,"

"So that even if he were to share his affections equally,"

"You should get a share."

Helena shook her head helplessly and said,

"Grandma, I can't talk to you anymore."

"Mr. Wade needs four legal identities and a lot of daily necessities."

"I have to go and arrange them."

"Four?" The old empress asked in surprise.

"The other three wouldn't all be women, would they?"

Helena nodded and said,

"They are indeed all women."

"This..." The old empress was also somewhat surprised and asked in confusion,

"What's going on... Mr. Wade has brought three women to the polar regions for a vacation?"

Helena said, "It's not as bad as you think."

"Mr. Wade said he's going to go into seclusion in the polar regions."

"Seclusion?"

The old empress couldn't help but ask,

"What does 'seclusion' mean?"

Helena said, "It means shutting yourself off and focusing on researching something."

The old empress chuckled, "Is that even a question?"

"It's definitely about shutting yourself off and researching some inappropriate things with three women!"

Helena shook her head and said,

"Impossible. Mr. Wade isn't that kind of person."

"Grandma, you rest first, I'll go make the arrangements."

Helena naturally trusted Charlie's character very much.

She knew that she had tried to win Charlie's heart many times but failed,

This showed that Charlie was definitely not that kind of person.

Although he brought three women with him this time,

Helena believed that Charlie must have his own reasons.

## Chapter 7082

The next morning, Aurous Hill time.

A cargo plane belonging to Scandinavian Airlines landed safely at Aurous Hill Airport.

Although this plane belonged to Scandinavian Airlines,

It was carrying out a mission commissioned by the Scandinavian royal family.

On the surface, this plane was carrying out a mission to transport valuable cargo,

But in reality, it was to pick up Charlie,

Maria, Jeremiah, and Ria take them to Scandinavia.

Charlie had Orvel drive an inconspicuous minivan from the Champs-Élysées Hot Spring Hotel,

And together with Jeremiah and Ria,

They left the Champs-Élysées and headed straight for Aurous Hill Airport.

Maria didn't have Charlie pick her up at Zijin Villa.

Instead, she had Larry's servant drive her directly to the airport.

Maria felt that both the Champs-Élysées Hot Spring Hotel and the airport were in the suburbs,

Not far apart as the crow flies,

And having Charlie return to Zijin Villa in the city to pick her up would actually take much longer.

With Sun Zhidong's help in making arrangements,

The airport had already given them the green light.

Neither of Charlie's nor Maria's cars passed through security or customs upon entering Aurous Hill Airport, leaving no official record.

At the furthest remote gate, a Boeing 747 stood silently in the darkness.

Although registered as a passenger plane,

The upper deck wasn't designed as a cargo hold.

Instead, a high-standard passenger cabin seating twenty people was reserved.

The aircraft had no service crew.

Aside from the two pilots, the cabin crew consisted entirely of royal butlers and servants.

The pilots didn't even have the opportunity to see the passengers on their flight.

The cockpit was completely covered by opaque curtains, supervised by royal personnel.

All crew members were required to remain in the cockpit,

Forbidden from leaving or looking out.

Charlie and Maria's cars arrived one after the other.

After Charlie got out of the passenger seat, Jeremiah and Ria in the back also got out.

Maria's car arrived shortly after.

Mr. and Mrs. Larry accompanied Maria to the airport.

Upon disembarking, they respectfully followed Maria to Charlie.

Jeremiah, seeing Maria again, bowed respectfully and said,

"We meet again, Miss Lin."

Maria smiled slightly and returned the bow,

Then looked at Ria beside her and said with a smile,

"This must be Miss Song?"

Ria stared at Maria, somewhat stunned.

Her family was originally an appendage of the Wu family,

So she knew some of the high-level secrets of the Warriors Den.

She had known since childhood that the Warriors Den had searched for a girl named Maria for hundreds of years without success.

This "Maria" was like a legendary figure,

Making her believe she would be an extraordinary woman.

But she never expected that Maria would be so young,

Even appearing to be an underage girl,  
With a beautiful face and a youthful innocence,  
Looking just like a little girl.

Suppressing her shock, she respectfully said,

“Hello, Senior Lin... I’ve long admired your name,”

“And today I finally have the opportunity to see you in person...”

Maria covered her mouth and smiled, saying,

“Miss Song, you don’t need to be so polite, just call me Xiao Wan.”

The royal steward had seen and recognized Charlie before.

Initially, seeing Charlie accompanied by three stunningly beautiful women of very different styles,

He was speculating about the relationship between Charlie and them,

But he couldn’t figure it out, no matter how he looked.

So, after the women exchanged pleasantries, he stepped forward and said respectfully,

“Hello, Mr. Wade, Her Majesty the Empress has ordered me to come to China to pick you and the others...”

“Distinguished guests are traveling to Northern Europe.”

“Today, all the service staff in the cabin are composed of royal personnel.”

"We will fly directly from Aurous Hill to Ausu City."

"Upon arrival in Ausu City, the motorcade will escort the four of you directly to the Arctic."

"Her Majesty the Queen will be waiting for you at her resort villa in the Arctic."

Charlie asked curiously, "Helena has already gone to the Arctic?"

"Isn't she busy lately?"

The butler respectfully replied, "Reporting to Mr. Wade."

"Her Majesty the Queen also needs to rest for a while."

"Since you are going to the Arctic, she means that if you don't mind, she can act as your guide."

Charlie was a little surprised,

Not expecting Helena to also be going to the Arctic.

However, he didn't mind too much,

Because Helena had witnessed his methods at Waderest Mountain,

And he didn't have many secrets from her.

Since she wanted to stay in the Arctic, he would let her be,

After all, she was the true host.

So he smiled and said to the butler,

"Then you've all had a hard time on this journey."

The butler humbly replied, "Mr. Wade, you're too kind."

"It's our duty. It's almost time. Shall we board now?"

Charlie nodded, said goodbye to Mr. and Mrs. Larry, waved to Orvel, and then said to the butler, "Let's go."

## Chapter 7083

As the Scandinavian Airlines plane pierced the sky,

Margaret, far away in Japan, finally breathed a sigh of relief.

When Maria revealed Charlie's suspicions about Master Jingqing to Margaret,

Margaret was momentarily flustered.

If Charlie decided to delve deeper into Jingqing's line of inquiry,

Then, without a doubt, to ensure her own safety,

Jingqing would have to disappear like Leon.

Although Jingqing was completely obedient to her,

Fundamentally speaking, Jingqing wasn't her subordinate.

Margaret felt a pang of reluctance to ask him to make such a sacrifice for her.

Fortunately, Maria brought back good news.

This woman, with unparalleled wisdom and extremely clear logic, persuaded Charlie to stop obsessing over finding Claire immediately.

Hearing her convince Charlie to go to Scandinavia,

She felt even more grateful to Maria.

She hadn't known about the aurora borealis incident before,

But after hearing Maria's account, she shared the same conclusion:

The handprint displayed by the aurora couldn't possibly be the work of some polar force;

That force must be on or near Charlie.

Both she and Maria felt that the ring left by Maria's father was the most likely suspect.

In any case, going to Northern Europe to clarify the matter was a very wise choice.

No one knew if there were other secrets hidden behind those handprints.

Maria sent her a message as the plane took off,

And only after takeoff did the weight finally lift from her heart.

So, she called over Sister Sun and Jing Qing, who were originally about to set off to return to China but were urgently stopped, and said to them,

"Charlie has already gone to Northern Europe with Senior Lin."

"And it seems he won't be returning to China for a while."

"Jing Qing, you can finally go back too."

Jing Qing respectfully said, "Amitabha, if Madam still has any concerns,"

"I can temporarily not return to China."

"So as not to delay Madam's important matters."

Margaret smiled and said, "You have so many followers."

"You shouldn't disappear for too long."

"You should go back, go back to preach and debate the Dharma as usual, and spread Buddhism."

Jing Qing pondered for a moment.

At that moment, she tentatively said,

"Madam, if the young master finds me,"

"I might not be able to keep it from him..."

Margaret nodded and said, "Don't worry too much."

"This time, I trust Senior Lin."

"Charlie should also focus on important matters."

"If he still puts Claire first and comes to you,"

"Then I might as well meet with him and have a heart-to-heart talk."

In Margaret's view, Maria had already made her point so clearly.

If Charlie still hadn't come to his senses,

Then she, as his mother, might really have to take matters into her own hands.

The reason she didn't want to see Charlie,

Her parents, or other relatives, were because she knew that Victoria had never given up searching for her,

And hadn't even given up trying to force her to reveal herself.

Once she met with outsiders, even her closest relatives,

The risk of exposure would increase exponentially.

However, if Charlie remained obstinate,

It wouldn't matter whether she exposed herself or not,

Because only Charlie had a chance to defeat Victoria.

However, she hoped that Charlie wouldn't stoop to the point where she would have to step in and persuade him.

Jing Qing also understood Margaret's intention.

Now, this is Margaret's critical moment.

If Charlie can come to his senses, he won't come looking for clues before he gets his revenge.

If he can't, even if he doesn't expose Margaret's clues,

Margaret will show up herself.

Since that's the case, he has nothing to worry about.

So, respectfully said, "In that case, Jing Qing, please make preparations."

"We'll depart for home tomorrow."

## Chapter 7084

Margaret nodded slightly and said, "Go."

After Jing Qing took her leave, Sister Sun respectfully said,

"Madam, if there are no further instructions,"

"I will also take my leave."

Margaret waved to her and said with a smile,

"Sister Sun, please wait a moment."

Sister Sun nodded, came to her side, bowed, and asked,

"Is there anything else Madam wishes to instruct?"

Margaret smiled and said, "Nothing much."

"I just wanted to chat with you for a bit."

Sister Sun couldn't help but smile and said,

"Madam seems to be in a very good mood."

Margaret nodded without any attempt to hide it and said,

"I don't know why, but just thinking about Senior Lin makes me feel exceptionally good."

Sister Sun smiled and said, "Senior Lin is extremely learned and knowledgeable."

"Madam feels an instant connection with her, as if you've known her for a long time."

Margaret sighed. "Yes and no."

She then looked at Sister Sun and said earnestly,

"She's lived so many years."

"She's truly a senior among seniors."

"I'm not qualified to say I admire her,"

"But I genuinely respect her."

"I still can't imagine how such a seemingly frail woman could possess such immense power."

"Like water, when still, she's undisturbed; when surging, she's devastating."

"Every word, every action, every smile seems to contain an indescribable, boundless power."

"Even Charlie, with his stubborn personality, could be tamed by her."

"It's truly amazing."

Sister Sun quickly said, "Madam, the young master is a dragon among men."

"Isn't it a bit inappropriate to use the word 'tamed' to describe him...?"

"No." Margaret shook her head and said solemnly,

"The word 'tamed' is extremely apt."

"I can't think of a more suitable word."

"Even Charlie's own instincts, which he couldn't control, were dissolved in front of her,"

"And willingly dissolved. She's truly amazing!"

Sister Sun smiled and said, "As you said before, she was unarmed and had no cultivation."

"Yet she was able to survive for over three hundred years under Victoria's pursuit."

"She must have many extraordinary abilities."

"Moreover, she has been at the peak of her life for such a long time."

"And the accumulated knowledge would make her learning efficiency higher and higher."

"In these hundreds of years, the knowledge she has learned is probably dozens of times or even more than what an ordinary person learns in a lifetime."

"Yes." Margaret smiled and sighed softly,

Then hesitated for a moment and said to Sister Sun,

"I suddenly have a strange feeling that I can't explain."

Sister Sun asked carefully,

"What is Madam's strange feeling?"

Margaret said seriously,

"I feel that she is the most suitable life partner for Charlie."

Sister Sun was startled by her words and blurted out subconsciously,

"Madam, but she is already over three hundred years old!"

"Yes," Margaret said, "But so what?"

"Over three hundred years old, she still looks like a seventeen or eighteen-year-old girl."

"And for the past few hundred years, she has lived the life a seventeen or eighteen-year-old girl should live."

"She's not one of those mythical creatures who grow old and then rejuvenate."

"She's not some old monster either."

"She's just a pitiful little girl who has been stuck at seventeen or eighteen for over three hundred years."

At this point, Margaret felt sympathy for Maria, but also said with some excitement,

"Think about it from another perspective."

"She's been stuck in the same place for over three hundred years at the age of seventeen or eighteen."

"If this is fate, then think about it,"

"Why did fate arrange for her to stay stuck in the same place for so long?"

Sister Sun asked blankly, "Yes, why?"

Margaret said excitedly,

"It must be so that she can wait in the same place for the right person to appear,"

"And then walk forward hand in hand with that person!"

## Chapter 7085

Margaret's words gave Sister Sun a jolt.

If everything was preordained, then there must be a reason why fate had kept Maria stagnant for so long at the age of seventeen or eighteen,

Much like she was waiting for the right person to appear.

The fact that Maria hadn't taken the next step in her life despite growing older over the past few hundred years suggested that she herself was unconsciously waiting for that person to appear.

So, she said excitedly, "Madam, after hearing you say that,"

"I suddenly feel incredibly excited..."

"Senior Lin is truly a unique and extraordinary woman in this world."

"If Young Master can be with her in the future, it would be like a divine couple described in martial arts novels."

"Oh no, even in martial arts novels,"

"There has never been such a magical couple as them."

"They are a match made in heaven!"

Margaret looked up at the dazzling sunrise in the east and said wistfully,

"What she is waiting for is a partner with whom she can grow old slowly,"

"Or perhaps someone with whom she can continue to live forever."

"If Charlie's cultivation cannot achieve a greater breakthrough,"

"Then he will be the one who grows old with Maria."

"If Charlie's cultivation can achieve a great breakthrough, and he even finds the methods to refine the Eternal Green Pill and the Hundred Turns and Thousand Returns Pill, then Maria can stay with Maria for another six hundred years."

"No matter how you look at it,"

"He and Maria are a match made in heaven."

Sister Sun, she asked cautiously,

"Madam didn't like Miss Ito very much before."

"But now that she has attained enlightenment,"

"Perhaps she will also have the opportunity to achieve immortality with the young master."

Margaret smiled and said, "To be honest,"

"I also like Nanako very much,"

"And Nanako is also one of my favorites."

Sister Sun was speechless for a moment before smiling and saying,

"These girls are indeed one in a million."

"In my opinion, they are all outstanding."

"It's really hard to choose..."

Margaret smiled self-deprecatingly and said,

"If I keep talking, I'll become a wicked mother-in-law from the feudal era."

"Forget it, let Maria decide his own life."

As she spoke, she couldn't help but sigh softly and said in a low voice,

"It's just that Maria must have had a very difficult life all these years,"

"Unlike other girls who have mostly grown up in luxury."

"So I'm more biased towards her."

Sister Sun couldn't help but nod repeatedly.

She actually understood Margaret's feelings very well and even empathized with them.

Maria's life could be described as both magnificent and arduous,

Inspiring both admiration and pity.

...

At this moment, Charlie on the plane was unaware that his mother was playing matchmaker for him.

Inside the cabin, after the royal staff served the passengers their meals,

They all moved to the crew rest area to await further instructions.

Gazing at the rising sun outside the window, he made a silent vow:

"Claire, wherever you are right now, please wait for me there."

"After I've cleared away all the dangers,"

"I will personally bring you back and tell you everything..."

Beside him, Maria was silently reading an ancient book.

On the other side, Jeremiah and Ria, like Charlie, were also silently looking out the window.

Their hearts were filled with complex emotions.

Leaving Aurous Hill, leaving China, felt like entering an unknown black hole;

They had no idea where their fate would lead.

However, both knew in their hearts that if the worst happened,

They might never have the chance to return to Aurous Hill.

Today might be their final farewell to Aurous Hill.

After a ten-hour flight, the plane arrived in Osu,

The capital of Northern Europe, at 10:00 AM.

Helena had already arrived at the royal family's Arctic resort villa.

She had set off early, bringing not only a large amount of daily necessities but also the royal cleaning and repair team,

Intending to get the house in top condition before Charlie's arrival,

And then have all the staff leave to avoid disturbing him.

## Chapter 7086

After Charlie and his companions disembarked,

They also bypassed Nordic customs and, accompanied by royal personnel, left Osu by car, heading straight for the Arctic.

March in Northern Europe is already warming up.

Even as the car travels north, the temperature, while still cold, isn't too harsh.

The days are much longer now than when I last visited.

Last time, it started getting dark even past noon,

But this time, the convoy drove until 4 PM,

And when we arrived at the Royal Resort Villa in Ling'en, the sky was still bright.

Charlie began to worry; in this weather,

Even if we could still see the aurora borealis,

It seemed unlikely we'd see it often.

Maria seemed to know his worries and whispered beside him,

"Young Master, don't worry."

"If we encounter a large aurora zone,"

"It can stretch for thousands of kilometers."

"We only need to catch up with a section to confirm our previous guesses."

Charlie nodded and said, "Since we're here, let's make the best of it."

"Let's see tonight; it should be getting dark soon."

The convoy arrived at the resort villa halfway up the mountain before dark.

Following Helena's instructions,

The royal staff escorted the four to the villa's gate and respectfully said,

"Mr. Wade, Her Majesty the Queen has instructed all of us not to wait to enter."

"Please go in on your own."

Charlie nodded slightly, seeing that it was Helena's arrangement.

The four got out of the car, and the convoy immediately began to retreat down the mountain without any delay.

Helena, having received a report from her subordinates,

Immediately came out of the villa to greet them.

Today, Helena wore a pure white, knee-length fur robe, her fair legs exposed to the chilly air.

She wore short white fur-lined snow boots,

Crunching happily under her feet as she walked through the thick snow.

Having been informed beforehand,

She wasn't surprised to see Charlie with three beautiful women,

And quickly recognized the prettiest girl as the one who had accompanied Charlie last time.

The other two women were also beautiful, possessing a distinctly Eastern charm,

But Helena sensed a subtle, unapproachable aloofness emanating from Jeremiah and Ria.

Seeing the stunningly beautiful empress running towards them,

Jeremiah and Ria, while shocked, couldn't help but exchange a glance.

Being women, they could see the undisguised joy in Helena's expression,

Almost unbridled, like that of a young girl experiencing first love.

They, who usually paid some attention to international affairs,

Knew that this was the Norse Queen,

Who had been very active and highly regarded on the international stage recently.

Seeing the Norse Queen rushing towards Charlie with such adoration,

Like a young girl, the two women were speechless with surprise.

In her own country, in her own palace, Helena didn't care about royal etiquette at all,

So she happily came to Charlie.

Before she could even catch her breath,

She looked at Charlie and said softly,

“Mr. Wade, you must be tired from your long journey!”

Ria sighed inwardly, “Well, there are four of us.”

“But in the eyes of the Norse Queen, it seems that there is only Mr. Wade.”

“The rest are like air...”

Helena, dressed in a white robe, with her graceful figure, long golden hair,

And blue eyes, and the surrounding snow-covered environment,

Surprised Charlie slightly.

In this fairytale-like Norse scene,

Helena blended perfectly with her surroundings, complementing them,

As dazzling as a princess who had stepped out of a fairytale.

However, he quickly regained his composure and said with a smile,

“Helena, you’re too kind. We’ve been bothering you.”

“And you’ve had to come early to prepare.”

“I should be the one thanking you for your trouble.”

Helena smiled sweetly, “Mr. Wade, there’s no need for formalities between us.”

"As long as I'm here, Scandinavia is your second home."

"Coming here feels like coming home; this is your home."

Upon hearing this, the three women around him were stunned.

Good heavens, the Queen of Scandinavia,

So direct and unrestrained?

She's already asserting her dominance after only meeting us?

## Chapter 7087

Helena's passionate, outgoing, and direct approach is quite different from the reserved nature of most Eastern women.

However, Maria understands Helena's behavior.

She knows Helena's feelings for Charlie,

And seeing Charlie bring three women here, even without a sense of crisis,

She'll definitely feel a competitive spirit.

Jeremiah and Ria, however, are somewhat uneasy,

Feeling that Helena's directness towards Charlie makes them feel like they shouldn't have come along as third wheels.

Charlie is also a little embarrassed.

He vaguely knows that he and Helena may have had some ambiguous relationship,

But he has no memory of it and only guesses based on Helena's subsequent reactions and details from her bedroom.

They've both kept quiet about it,

A tacit understanding, so he hasn't pressed for details.

Seeing Helena even more direct and proactive than before,

He feels that living with these women here might be more troublesome than he imagined.

Led by Helena, the group arrived at the royal polar villa.

The house had clearly been meticulously cleaned and furnished, appearing much more refined than when Charlie had last visited,

No longer feeling like it had been idle for a long time.

Inside the living room, a fireplace was already lit,

The crackling sound of burning firewood echoes throughout the room,

Creating a particularly comfortable atmosphere.

Helena invited them to sit on the sofa by the fireplace,

Then smiled and said, "This villa has five rooms in total."

"Three upstairs and two downstairs. Mr. Wade's room is the master bedroom on the first floor."

"And the three ladies' rooms are on the second floor."

"I'll take you upstairs later so you can discuss how to allocate them."

Ria thought to herself,

"This queen is shameless!"

"She brazenly arranged her room on the same floor as Mr. Wade's."

"Even if it's a choice among the four of us,"

"It should be Miss Lin and Mr. Wade sharing the same floor."

"It's not her turn."

Maria didn't seem to mind the arrangement,

And instead said to Ria and Jeremiah,

"Miss Song and Miss Yun, please choose first."

"I don't care where I stay."

"You can leave the remaining room for me."

Jeremiah and Ria knew Maria's background and held her in awe,

So they both said, "Miss Lin,"

"Please choose first. We're fine with whatever is there."

Helena, standing nearby... Seeing that the three women had tacitly agreed to stay upstairs, felt a small sense of triumph.

She then smiled and said, "I had a lot of ingredients prepared when I came."

"Because I was worried about disturbing you, I didn't leave any servants."

"Also, considering that everyone's living habits and tastes are different,"

"We may need to prepare meals together in the coming days."

Jeremiah raised a hand and said, "Your Majesty,"

"I have been practicing abstinence from grains for many years and only need drinking water."

Ria also raised her hand and said,

"I have also practiced abstinence from grains."

Helena looked blank:

"May I ask what abstinence from grains... means?"

Charlie explained, "These two, like me, are practitioners of Taoism."

"Their bodily functions no longer need to rely on food for energy."

Helena didn't know what Taoism was.

She only knew that Charlie had many mysterious and powerful abilities,

Which, in Western terms, could be considered supernatural abilities,

But she didn't understand the specifics of them.

However, upon hearing Charlie mention the word "cultivation" today, although she didn't understand it, she was very happy.

In her view, this meant that Charlie had decided to reveal this secret to her,

And it also meant that the distance between them had lessened.

So, she looked at him and said softly,

"So Mr. Wade's strength belongs to cultivation."

"It seems that this must be a supernatural power unique to the East,"

"Which is probably similar to the magic and witchcraft in legends here."

Ria muttered, "Magic and witchcraft are probably just things used to fool children in movies and fairy tales, right?"

Helena smiled and said, "Whether it exists in reality or not, I wouldn't dare to say."

"But since the East has this kind of supernatural power, it wouldn't be surprising if the West had something similar."

Charlie asked with interest,

"Has your royal family never had any related legends or records over the years?"

Helena replied truthfully, "There are legends and records."

"But many of them are from the Middle Ages,"

"So it's hard to verify their authenticity."

## Chapter 7088

At this moment, Maria spoke up,

"What the West calls magic is actually just cultivation in disguise."

"The underlying logic is almost identical."

"It's all about manipulating spiritual energy in various ways and then transforming it into all sorts of spells."

"Just like how Easterners turn dough into steamed buns and flatbreads,"

"While Westerners turn dough into bread and pizzas."

Charlie asked in surprise, "So, Miss Lin,"

"You've seen it with your own eyes?"

Jeremiah and Ria also looked at her, knowing that Maria had lived for nearly four hundred years and must be very knowledgeable,

So they all waited for her to explain to everyone.

Maria nodded and said casually,

"Actually, many fields are not unique to the East or the West."

"For example, the East uses the I Ching and Bagua for divination."

"While the West has astrology, tarot cards, and crystal balls."

"It's hard to say which is more advanced."

"It's just that in the last two hundred years, both Eastern and Western societies have undergone modernization, industrialization, and technological revolutions to varying degrees."

"The West went even further during the Industrial Revolution,"

"So there may be fewer people in these fields who have inherited these skills than in the East."

"For example, the masters of the past could use tarot cards to divine with unpredictable and profound effects, making accurate predictions."

"But now, so-called masters are mostly charlatans who only know a little bit."

"Times have changed, and some things have gradually been eliminated."

Charlie had never heard of the idea that Western magic and Eastern cultivation share the same underlying logic before.

However, upon closer reflection, since spiritual energy is the purest and most refined energy in the world,

If Easterners can find a way to control it, Westerners must be able to as well.

Thinking about it, Western legends about magic and Eastern cultivation do indeed have some similarities, even some striking similarities.

First, everyone possesses the ability to mobilize supernatural energy,

Transforming it into wind, rain, thunder, lightning, and various offensive methods.

Second, everyone also has various magical artifacts that can enhance their strength,

As well as various medicines that can improve cultivation or bring special effects.

Third, the jade tablet she once obtained from Zhang Ermao contained a large amount of spiritual energy,

Which, now that she thinks about it, is what is called a spirit stone in cultivation,

And in magical legends, there are also magic stones containing super-powerful magic.

Ultimately, they should be the same thing.

Helena didn't expect that Maria, the youngest among them, seemed to have more knowledge.

Even Charlie had to consult her, and she looked like she was humbly seeking knowledge.

Helena couldn't help but feel a little puzzled and asked her,

"Miss Lin, you...you've seen a magician?"

Maria smiled and said, "I have indeed seen one."

Helena exclaimed, "So that means magicians still exist?"

Helena didn't know Maria's age and thought she was seventeen or eighteen.

Since she had seen a magician at seventeen or eighteen,

Then magicians must exist in the world today.

Maria simply smiled and said, "Your Majesty,"

"I did indeed see the magician, but I'm not sure if he's still alive."

Helena couldn't help but feel somewhat disappointed,

Doubting the veracity of Maria's words.

Charlie didn't think much of it.

He understood the implication in Maria's words.

She had likely encountered the magician when she came to Europe over two hundred years ago.

However, after so many years, most cultivators would hardly live to such an old age,

Suggesting that the longevity threshold for magicians was also quite high.

By this time, it was completely dark outside.

Maria went to the French windows and looked out, exclaiming with delight,

"Young Master, it's the aurora borealis!"

Hearing this, Charlie got up and went to look.

Indeed, a faint green glow had appeared on the distant horizon.

It was the tail end of the aurora season in Northern Europe,

And the aurora in the distance wasn't as clear and dazzling as it had been on his last visit.

Its scale seemed much smaller,

And the distance was also further north than before.

However, this was a perfect opportunity to verify whether the source of the aurora's change lay here or within himself.

If he caught up with the distant aurora, it would undergo further mutations,

Suggesting the source was indeed within him!

So, somewhat excited, he turned to Jeremiah and Ria and said,

"Miss Yun, Miss Song, besides my secluded cultivation,"

"I also wanted to guide you both to understand the mysterious changes here."

"If you're interested, why not join me in exploring this place!"

## Chapter 7089

Jeremiah and Ria initially thought Charlie was simply worried about them and wanted to keep them by his side.

They never expected him to want to guide them in comprehending a certain celestial phenomenon.

For cultivators, opportunities are top secrets; no one shares them.

To obtain an opportunity from another requires a tremendous price.

Like their years in the Warriors Den, while they received some cultivation resources,

The price was becoming Victoria's henchman, even risking their lives in her hands.

Only in this way could they obtain so-called opportunities from Victoria.

But Charlie never made such deals.

Whether it was elixirs or cultivation opportunities,

He wouldn't be stingy with his own people.

If they studied together, they might even inspire each other.

Jeremiah and Ria were deeply grateful and immediately knelt on one knee,

Thanking Charlie in unison.

Charlie raised his hand and said,

"Don't rush to thank me. Whether this phenomenon will continue today,"

"And if so, whether it will be useful to you, is still unknown."

"It all depends on everyone's fate and destiny."

"If it truly helps you, then you can thank me later."

After saying this, he immediately stood up and said,

"The nights in the Northern Hemisphere are getting shorter and shorter."

"We need to hurry and set off immediately."

Helena was a little flustered and quickly asked,

"Mr. Wade, can I come with you?"

Charlie said, "We may have to stay in the freezing cold all night."

"Your body definitely can't handle it."

"So you should stay here and rest early."

Helena was stunned.

She had the advantage of being close to Charlie and had arranged to share a room with him,

But Charlie was going to stay in the freezing cold all night.

What was the point of her little scheme?

However, she also knew her own limitations.

In this weather, she figured she could only last an hour at most if she went out for a walk.

If she tried to stay out all night, even if she didn't freeze to death,

She'd at least fall seriously ill.

She wasn't someone with cultivation like Charlie,

So naturally, she couldn't withstand it.

Thinking of this, she could only sigh and say,

"Since Mr. Wade says so,"

"Then I won't pretend to be something I'm not."

After saying that, she looked at Maria and asked,

"Miss Lin, are you going too?"

Maria nodded and smiled, saying,

"Yes, I'm not afraid of the cold."

Although Maria wasn't a cultivator,

She had taken the Eternal Green Pill,

And even Charlie's psychological suggestion had no effect on her.

A slight cold was nothing to her.

Helena hadn't expected the four of them to leave so soon after arriving.

The thought of being left alone at the villa that night filled her with disappointment.

But even with her disappointment,

She had no other choice but to say, forcing herself to be careful...

Charlie nodded, said goodbye to her,

And then led the three women into the darkness, heading north.

As the aurora season drew to a close,

The aurora's span and intensity were significantly reduced compared to the depths of winter.

The four walked for several tens of minutes through the snow before finally arriving directly beneath the aurora.

The predominantly green aurora stretched from the ground to the high sky,

Swaying in the air under the influence of the magnetic field.

Its shape resembled the visual effect of a long, narrow, smoldering fireplace.

## Chapter 7090

Charlie stood beneath the aurora, sitting cross-legged on the snow,

And said to Jeremiah and Ria, "You two, focus your attention on the aurora above you."

"If the aurora changes, be sure to remember all the changes."

The two were completely bewildered.

The changes in the aurora seemed entirely irregular to them,

And its constant fluctuations were endlessly varied—how could they possibly remember them all?

Ria couldn't help but look at Maria beside her, pleading,

"Miss Lin, if it's convenient, could you please use your phone to record it for me?"

"I'm afraid I'll miss some details later."

Maria smiled and nodded, taking out her phone as she said with a smile,

"Okay, Miss Song, don't worry."

Charlie, sitting cross-legged, continuously changed hand gestures,

Performing the eight hand seals he had learned for the first time.

As before, the moment these hand seals were performed,

The abundant spiritual energy within his body seemed to suddenly crack open, rapidly draining away.

Charlie dared not slacken; he already held two Qi-Nourishing Pills in his palms,

Ready to swallow them if he couldn't withstand the pressure.

At this moment, a golden pagoda less than ten centimeters tall suddenly emerged from his sea of consciousness, slowly rising to mid-air.

This golden pagoda was identical to the Four-Sided Treasure Pagoda, like a miniature version, or even a micro-model.

Meanwhile, the spiritual energy within Charlie's body was being frantically absorbed from his sea of consciousness by this golden pagoda.

However, Charlie himself couldn't sense the existence of the golden tower at all.

He couldn't even feel the spiritual energy surging within his body, draining away into his sea of consciousness.

Just as Charlie was about to reach the point of no return and was preparing to swallow a pill to withstand the pressure,

The golden tower suddenly flashed with light, illuminating his entire sea of consciousness in gold.

As the golden tower emitted a burst of golden light,

The frantically draining spiritual energy within Charlie finally stabilized,

And the tower quickly sank into his sea of consciousness and disappeared.

Jeremiah and Ria, who were staring intently at the sky, suddenly noticed that the aurora above their heads,

Which had been swaying erratically like flames, had suddenly changed shape.

The aurora had transformed into a pair of giant hands, slowly moving across the sky!

Maria was overjoyed and quickly said to Charlie,

“Young Master, look!”

“The aurora has turned into handprints!”

Charlie, almost on the verge of exhaustion, immediately looked up and saw the giant hands demonstrating the details of the first handprint.

Charlie only glanced at it for a few seconds before concluding that this handprint was none of the eight he had seen before.

It seemed the handprints were new!

He was overjoyed.

Although he didn't know the effects of these new handprints,

Or if they would be even more deceptive than the previous ones,

The fact that they were in a different location meant he was certain of one thing.

The mysterious power influencing the aurora was within his own body!

However, he couldn't understand what could be absorbing his spiritual energy and affecting the aurora in the sky.

This time, he had deliberately kept the ring Maria had given him hidden in his suitcase.

Since he hadn't carried the ring with him,

The artifact affecting the aurora must be something else entirely.

At this moment, the handprints in mid-air changed again.

Charlie didn't dare delay, memorizing every detail of the handprints.

This time, the handprints were far more complex than before.

Not only were each handprint performed with both hands,

But the details of the movements had also greatly improved.

The four focused all their attention on the hand seals.

The hand seals in the sky continued for four hours.

To Charlie's surprise, the number of hand seals manifested by the aurora this time was twice as many as last time, a full sixteen.

After all sixteen hand seals were demonstrated,

The aurora in the sky returned to its usual disorderly swaying state.

Charlie didn't dare to delay, immediately closing his eyes and mentally reviewing all sixteen hand seals.

Then, he slightly raised his hands and began to attempt to reproduce the sixteen hand seals in the air.

Soon, as the hand seals were repeatedly reproduced, Charlie suddenly discovered a strange phenomenon.

The spiritual energy within his body was no longer being absorbed by the hand seals.

On the contrary, after completing the hand seals,

His spiritual energy actually increased slightly out of nowhere!

## Chapter 7091

To confirm whether his perception was misjudged,

Charlie carefully repeated the hand seals several times.

The result delighted him immensely.

Each time the hand seals were fully completed, an extra surge of spiritual energy seemed to appear out of thin air,

Flowing into his sea of consciousness like a gentle stream.

Compared to the original spiritual energy in his sea of consciousness,

This extra energy was pitifully small,

But even so, it filled Charlie with ecstasy.

This new hand seal had overturned Charlie's worldview since he began cultivating.

He had always believed that the world was in the Dharma-ending Age,

And that natural spiritual energy was almost nonexistent.

The only way for cultivators to improve their cultivation and increase their spiritual energy was to consume elixirs.

In other words, although natural spiritual energy was no longer readily available,

Alchemy could still find a way to artificially synthesize spiritual energy from various rare and precious materials to sustain the arduous cultivation of the Dharma-ending Age.

Based on this premise, spiritual energy was the most precious resource in the world for cultivators.

However, the hand seals he was now using had suddenly opened up a new world.

Because it is actually a way to generate spiritual energy!

Moreover, it doesn't rely on any materials.

Simply by using this set of hand seals,

One's own spiritual energy can slowly increase!

With this set of hand seals, cultivation in the Dharma-ending Age will become much easier.

Of course, the efficiency of this set of hand seals in generating spiritual energy is also quite low.

To replenish all the spiritual energy in one's body,

It would probably require at least several months of diligent practice.

At this moment, Charlie finally understood why,

In legends, those high monks who spent their entire lives meditating and practicing Zen could be reborn in the Pure Land,

Become gods or Buddhas, and possess countless supernatural powers.

This is because they spent their entire lives meditating and practicing Zen simultaneously.

A meditation cushion, a few drops of sandalwood incense, and a person sitting devoutly in meditation before the Buddha for a hundred years—even if outsiders cultivated for a hundred years,

They could not achieve the same purity or dedication.

Thinking of this, Charlie suddenly felt that the legends of the sweeping monks in martial arts novels seemed to have some truth to them.

At the same time, Jeremiah and Ria, standing to the side,

Also painstakingly completed the entire set of sixteen hand seals for the first time.

Having never encountered Buddhist hand seals before,

They found them obscure and difficult to understand,

And struggled to execute them smoothly.

Naturally, they weren't as skilled as Charlie,

The unlucky fellow who had been tricked for so long.

When they finally completed a full sequence, they were still wondering what the hand seals could possibly be for.

Surely it couldn't be an offensive technique?

If launching an attack required this much effort,

Then, in actual combat, no amount of life would be enough.

But after completing it, they suddenly felt a small surge of spiritual energy appear within their bodies, seemingly from nowhere.

At first, both of them were utterly shocked.

Like Charlie, they didn't dare to hope that spiritual energy could appear out of thin air.

So, they exchanged a glance, neither of them certain that the suddenly appearing spiritual energy was related to the hand seals they had just painstakingly completed.

Therefore, without delay, they quickly tried again.

Jeremiah's comprehension, cultivation, and experience far surpassed Ria's, allowing her to complete the task much faster.

When she felt the renewed spiritual energy within her,

She instantly understood the secret, bursting into tears of excitement.

This feeling was like someone who had relied on others for water their entire life had finally dug their first well—even if the flow was slow,

It was still a monumental step forward for them. Overwhelmed with emotion,

She immediately stood up, knelt before Charlie, and choked back tears, saying,

"I kowtow in gratitude for the unparalleled opportunity bestowed upon me, master!"

Charlie was still savoring the wonder of the hand seals when he heard the sound and opened his eyes.

Seeing Jeremiah kneeling before him, tears streaming down her face,

He knew she had also gained something from the hand seals.

So he smiled and said, "No need to thank me."

"Perhaps this is a shared opportunity bestowed upon us by Buddhism."

## Chapter 7092

Ria also opened her eyes at this moment,

And excitedly stepped forward, kneeling beside Jeremiah.

Just as she was about to express her gratitude, Charlie reached out to stop her, saying,

"The aurora has disappeared, and it should be getting light soon."

"We need to get back before dawn and then properly meditate,"

"And comprehend these hand seals."

"If there are still auroraes tonight, then we'll come again!"

The two nodded emphatically.

Such an astonishing discovery filled them with immense joy,

And they couldn't wait to calm their minds and repeatedly practice these hand seals.

Seeing the three of them so delighted,

Maria couldn't help but ask Charlie,

"Young Master, what did you gain from this set of hand seals last night?"

Charlie truthfully replied, "This set of hand seals is completely different from the last one."

"The last one drained all the spiritual energy in my body,"

"But this one brings in extra spiritual energy."

"I suppose this set of hand seals is the foundation of Buddhist cultivation."

Maria exclaimed, "It can bring in extra spiritual energy."

"Isn't that similar to the breathing techniques of cultivators?"

Charlie said decisively, "This set of hand seals is stronger and more suitable for the present moment than breathing techniques!"

"Because breathing techniques absorb and precipitate the spiritual energy in the world,"

"Constantly purifying it within one's body."

"Once the spiritual energy in the world is gone,"

"This breathing technique becomes useless."

"Having lost its greatest significance, its only remaining function is to purify the spiritual energy converted from elixirs within the body."

"However, without elixirs or a sufficient source of spiritual energy, it becomes utterly useless."

Speaking of which, Charlie sighed,

"But Buddhist hand seals are different."

"As long as they are fully activated, spiritual energy can be generated out of thin air."

"I can't understand it,"

"I can't understand where this spiritual energy comes from, yet it truly exists."

Jeremiah nodded, saying,

"That spiritual energy does indeed appear out of thin air, it's truly miraculous..."

Maria thought for a moment, then smiled and said,

"Perhaps the underlying logic of Buddhist hand seals is more complex,"

"More inclined towards a certain energy conversion,"

"Just like cutting magnetic field lines can generate electricity..."

"Like this, a hand-cranked generator, once it's turned, can produce electricity."

"If you don't understand the principle, you'd definitely find it amazing."

"But essentially, it converts mechanical energy into electrical energy."

Charlie's eyes lit up, and he exclaimed,

"Miss Lin's words make a lot of sense.

The breathing technique is like a step-up circuit that boosts electrical energy to high voltage or even ultra-high voltage."

"But essentially, it can only boost the voltage."

"It can't generate additional electrical energy."

"In fact, there will be some losses during the continuous boosting process."

"Once the input power is insufficient, it will stop."

"But the hand mudras of Buddhism are more like a hand-cranked generator."

"Although the power is small, its advantage is that it can continuously generate electrical energy."

"If you persist, the accumulated electrical energy will definitely..."

"It will grow stronger and stronger."

"Combined with breathing techniques, the trickle of energy it generates is continuously pressurized and stored,"

"Forming an internal circulation that doesn't require external force."

"This cultivation method is a qualitative leap compared to before!"

At this point, Charlie sighed with some regret,

"However, the spiritual energy generated by these hand seals is pitifully small."

"If this method is used, the cultivation process will be continuously prolonged."

"With each seclusion lasting at least several months,"

"Or even several years..."

Maria smiled and said, "Young Master, there's no need to sigh."

"Any cultivation method is gradual."

"Behind this set of hand seals,"

"There must be even more profound and powerful ones."

"What you need to do is practice diligently and wait patiently."

## Chapter 7093

Maria's words always managed to soothe Charlie's emotions.

That too at the most opportune time and with the greatest efficiency.

He immediately realized that these hand seals might not be over yet.

If, as Maria said, it was truly a constantly evolving cultivation technique,

Then, as long as he persisted, he might reap even greater rewards.

Therefore, he said to the three of them,

"In that case, let's go back first and come back tonight."

The three nodded in agreement,

And Charlie returned with them to the Nordic royal family's vacation villa.

At this time, Helena, wearing a smooth and soft silk nightgown, was busy preparing breakfast for the four of them.

She fried sausages, eggs, toasted bread, made sandwiches, and heated milk, waiting for them to return and enjoy it together.

When the four returned to the warm villa,

None of them expected that the dignified Queen would personally prepare a sumptuous breakfast for them.

Although Jeremiah and Ria had already abstained from grains,

Seeing the Queen's hospitality, neither of them could refuse,

So they sat down at the table with Charlie and Maria.

It was only then that the women noticed Helena's figure.

Beneath her nightgown, it was full and alluring,

Especially her proudly erect breasts,

Which made them, as women themselves, secretly envious.

Whether it was Maria, Jeremiah, or Ria, they were all typical examples of classical Eastern beauties in terms of temperament and figure.

Compared to Helena, they were much thinner and naturally lacked those curves.

After everyone finished breakfast, Helena smiled and asked,

"What are your plans for this morning?"

"Would you like me to show you around?"

Charlie said, "Helena, Miss Yun, Miss Song, and I will be going into seclusion later."

"For safety's sake, it's best if you and Miss Lin don't leave the villa."

Helena was immediately disappointed.

She had waited for Charlie all night, only to find that he was going into seclusion after just breakfast.

She had put aside royal affairs to come here, hoping to have more opportunities to spend time with him,

But if this continued,

The chance for them to speak each day privately might become extremely rare.

However, Helena was a sensible woman.

She knew Charlie had important matters to attend to,

And she couldn't hold him back at this time.

So she nodded and said, "Okay, Mr. Wade."

"If you need anything, just let me know."

"I won't leave while you're in seclusion."

After breakfast, Charlie said to Jeremiah and Ria,

"Miss Yun and Miss Song, if you don't mind,"

"Please come to my room later to join me in seclusion."

"I have a set of hand seals that I need you two to verify."

Ria nodded immediately without hesitation,

"Okay, Mr. Wade."

Jeremiah was a little stunned for a moment,

But quickly recovered and smiled, saying,

“I will follow Mr. Wade’s instructions.”

Charlie then instructed Maria and Helena not to leave the villa again,

And then went with Jeremiah and Ria to the room.

Fortunately, the royal villa was spacious enough,

With each room having its own living room.

So Charlie sat cross-legged on the carpet in the living room with the two of them.

The first set of hand seals was a reactive technique for Charlie.

It drained his spiritual energy rapidly,

Far exceeding the speed at which the second set of hand seals generated spiritual energy—the difference was more than a hundredfold.

## Chapter 7094

However, Charlie sensed that his spiritual energy hadn't vanished inexplicably.

It was most likely absorbed by some mysterious entity within him,

The very entity responsible for demonstrating the hand seals with the aurora twice.

To verify his hypothesis, Charlie asked Jeremiah and Ria to try the first set of hand seals.

If their spiritual energy didn't disappear inexplicably,

Then his hypothesis would be correct.

Meanwhile, to prevent himself from making a mistake and causing a significant loss of spiritual energy within the two women,

Charlie also prepared two Qi-Nourishing Pills.

He would use these pills to help them recover should their spiritual energy be damaged.

In short, he couldn't let them suffer because of him.

Afterward, he completely taught them the first set of hand seals.

To avoid triggering the hand seals, he absorbs a large amount of spiritual energy from his body,

Charlie deliberately reversed the order of the hand seals,

Only telling them the correct order after they had both learned them.

The first set of hand seals consisted of eight seals,

And Charlie intentionally used the order 1234 and 8765 when teaching them.

When he completed the first four hand seals,

The golden pagoda in his sea of consciousness eagerly emerged,

Ready to absorb spiritual energy.

However, unexpectedly, Charlie's hand seals went awry, causing the golden pagoda's light to extinguish momentarily.

A moment later, it seemed to plunge back into his sea of consciousness with resentment and frustration.

Charlie cautiously demonstrated the eight hand seals in a scrambled order.

Finding no change in his internal spiritual energy,

He finally breathed a sigh of relief and then asked the two,

"Have you both memorized those eight hand seals?"

They both nodded simultaneously,

"Yes, we have."

Charlie nodded and said, "Now, change the order."

"The first four hand seals remain in the same order,"

"But the last four should be repeated in reverse order."

The two were completely confused,

But fortunately, they trusted Charlie,

So they tacitly refrained from asking why.

Instead, they immediately rearranged the order in their minds and then performed the eight hand seals in the correct sequence.

Charlie had been observing the changes in the two women.

After completing the eight hand seals,

He didn't notice any significant loss of spiritual energy within them.

He then asked, "Do you feel anything?"

Jeremiah shook her head: "Mr. Wade, these hand seals seem to have no effect."

Ria echoed, "Yes, Mr. Wade, I don't feel anything either."

Charlie asked again, "Has there been any subtle change in your spiritual energy?"

Jeremiah replied, "No, the spiritual energy hasn't increased or decreased."

Charlie nodded, already having an answer in his mind.

First, the cause of all this lay within his own body.

Second, while he didn't yet know what it was,

He was certain it wasn't the ring Maria had given him.

As for why it showed him the hand seals,

Charlie's doubts gradually cleared, and he formed a reasonable guess.

The first time it showed the hand seals,

It was likely to absorb his spiritual energy.

The second time, it showed the hand seals,

It seemed more like a way of repaying him for giving it so much spiritual energy.

However, people say that a drop of kindness should be repaid with a spring of gratitude,

But this thing was doing the opposite,

Draining his spring and squeezing out a few drops in return.

Of course, Charlie understood the principle of perseverance.

This set of hand seals was actually extremely significant in the Dharma-ending Age.

If it truly had even more powerful effects later on,

Then it would truly be a blessing in disguise!

Thinking of this, Charlie's unease about the unknown lessened considerably.

He smiled and said to the two, "Since this set of hand seals does not affect you,"

"Then don't worry about it."

"Focus on practicing the second set of hand seals you learned last night!"

## Chapter 7095

Night fell.

The aurora borealis, like a dream, once again appeared on the horizon.

Charlie, accompanied by three beautiful women, headed towards the aurora.

This time, Maria had packed an extra-large travel bag for Charlie to carry.

The weight of several dozen kilograms was negligible for Charlie,

But it was still somewhat strenuous for her to carry it through the snow.

Jeremiah and Ria moved with the lightness of swallows,

Their hearts were pounding with excitement at the thought of possibly obtaining even stronger Buddhist hand seals tonight.

Charlie also harbored anticipation.

Yesterday's hand seals could indeed resolve the breakthrough of spiritual energy from zero to one in the Dharma-ending Age,

But for him, they seemed rather useless.

He could temporarily accept Claire leaving him so he could better pursue his revenge,

But how long that temporary departure would last depended entirely on his own fate.

If he struggled to break through and couldn't open his Niwan Palace for a long time,

His revenge plan might not be completed for decades.

Although Charlie knew Claire still loved him,

He wasn't sure how long that love would last after their separation.

A year or two might be possible,

But three to five years, or even eight to ten years, was uncertain.

Therefore, he desperately craved a way to quickly improve his cultivation.

He hoped to settle all his grudges with the Warriors Den and Victoria within the next five years.

Under the aurora borealis, the three sat cross-legged, gazing at the sky.

Maria stayed by Charlie's side,

She took a folding egg roll table and a folding moon chair from the travel bag he had brought for her.

After setting them up, she took out a small charcoal stove and a cast-iron kettle,

Using the kettle's lid to shovel the untouched snow from the ground into the kettle.

Then, she took out some charcoal made from olive pits,

Added a small piece of solid alcohol and lit a small fire.

As the fire simmered, she took out a travel tea set and carefully placed it on the table.

It was clear she intended to use the snow to boil water for tea.

Charlie admired her.

She was almost always calm and composed,

And never forgot her beloved leisurely pursuits.

A pot of snow melted and boiled,

The boiling water then brewed a piece of Pu'er tea, releasing its aroma.

The aurora borealis in the sky still showed no sign of forming hand seals.

Charlie was surprised.

Could it be that this mysterious thing only had the set of hand seals that worked last night?

Jeremiah and Ria were also somewhat puzzled,

But they knew that opportunities couldn't be forced or spoken of lightly,

So they remained silent.

Maria broke the silence first, pouring four cups of tea before softly saying,

"Young Master, the hand seals haven't appeared yet today."

"Has something happened?"

Charlie's face turned grim, muttering,

"It shouldn't be anything unusual."

"I suspect this ba5tard won't act until he sees the benefit."

Maria asked, puzzled, "Why do you say that?"

"Young Master?"

Charlie sighed, "The first time, it suddenly conjured eight hand seals, which drained almost all of my spiritual energy."

"The second time, yesterday, was after I cast those eight hand seals again,"

"Expending most of my spiritual energy,"

"Before the Aurora conjured a second set of sixteen hand seals."

"I suspect it wants me to give it spiritual energy first,"

"Which is like asking for money before it will deliver the goods."

Charlie continued, "Today, while I was in seclusion with Miss Yun and Miss Song, I deliberately passed on those eight hand seals to them the first time."

"They didn't experience any effect after using them."

"But every time I fully circulated those eight hand seals,"

"A large amount of spiritual energy was lost from my body."

"This further solidified my theory that the thing is inside me."

"Moreover, the first time it passed on those eight hand seals to me,"

"It was to get me to transfer spiritual energy to it."

"Yesterday, I also gave it spiritual energy first before it taught me the useful hand seals."

"It seems this is a transaction."

"This..." Maria was momentarily stunned, then said,

"If that's the case, then the thing inside you,"

"Young Master also needs a large amount of spiritual energy."

## Chapter 7096

At this point, she added with some confusion,

"But if this thing is truly inside your body,"

"And can absorb spiritual energy from it,"

"Why doesn't it absorb it directly?"

"Why does it require you to perform a specific hand seal?"

"And strangely, it taught you this hand seal,"

"As if it could simply take it, yet it insists you give it to it willingly."

"How odd!"

Charlie pondered, "Thinking about it that way,"

"It does seem a bit redundant."

Maria suddenly remembered something and excitedly said,

"Does Your Highness remember that during the first aurora,"

"It initially transformed into the Buddhist swastika?"

"Of course I remember,"

Charlie nodded, saying, "I even joked back then that if viewed from the sky,"

"The swastika in the mirror image would look like the Nazi symbol."

Maria excitedly said, "So, it seems that no matter who or what is inside the young master's body, it must be related to Buddhism!"

"Since it comes from Buddhism, it must follow the strict rules and regulations of Buddhism."

"Just like monks begging for alms, they can only accept alms if given to them by a donor."

"If the donor leaves it unattended, they would rather starve than take it without asking."

"It seems that the thing inside the young master's body is the same."

"Even if it can directly absorb spiritual energy from the young master's body,"

"The rules of Buddhism prohibit it from doing so, so it can only..."

"It's a roundabout way to get the young master to give it to me willingly."

Charlie complained, "They didn't explain the numbers clearly the first time."

"Causing me to lose so much spiritual energy without even realizing it."

"That doesn't seem very fair."

Maria said helplessly, "What else does the young master want from it?"

"It can't speak."

"The only thing it can do is change the aurora to convey information to the young master, and it doesn't just take."

Charlie nodded, "That's true."

Maria sighed, "If it's really as we speculate, then this thing might have a spirit..."

Charlie said dejectedly, "Whether it really has a spirit or not,"

"We'll find out by trying."

After saying that, he took out a Qi Cultivation Pill and reluctantly put it in his mouth.

After the Qi Cultivation Pill released its surging spiritual energy,

He calmed down and circulated the eight hand seals again.

Hand seals, like incantations, must be in the correct order to have the desired effect.

Today, he used the order 1234, 8765, which disrupted the end of the hand seals, hence the lack of effect.

As he performed the first four hand seals again, the golden pagoda in his sea of consciousness resurfaced.

Unfortunately, Charlie couldn't sense its presence or see the numerous cracks covering its surface.

Ignoring its proportions, the pagoda resembled an ancient building weathered by time,

Appearing somewhat shaky and on the verge of collapse.

If it stood in an ancient temple,

It would likely have been reinforced and protected as a cultural relic long ago.

The pagoda paused slightly as it surfaced,

Seemingly worried that Charlie might trick it again,

So it subconsciously paused briefly.

Then, as Charlie correctly executed the entire set of hand seals,

The spiritual energy in his sea of consciousness immediately surged into the pagoda.

In that instant, the pagoda burst forth with dazzling golden light,

And the countless cracks on its surface began to repair themselves at a visible speed.

The pagoda's overall size seemed to have increased slightly as a result.

However, Charlie's spiritual energy was also limited.

After nearly 90% of his spiritual energy was absorbed by the pagoda,

Many cracks remained on its surface that hadn't yet been repaired.

His spiritual energy was rapidly depleted,

And he broke out in a cold sweat.

He, who was normally immune to the cold, found himself shivering involuntarily from the chilly wind.

However, this also made his mind clearer.

He looked up and stared intently at the aurora borealis,

Hoping that the mysterious phenomenon would give him some fair feedback.

Just then, the aurora borealis, which had been swaying wildly in the sky, suddenly changed.

The particle-like points of light rapidly converged,

And a pair of giant hands reappeared in the night sky!

## Chapter 7097

Everything unfolded as Charlie had predicted.

The mysterious entity within his body was making a silent deal with him.

After taking ninety percent of his spiritual energy,

It displayed new hand seals one by one in the sky.

This time, it still displayed sixteen hand seals,

However, they were more complex than those of yesterday.

After memorizing all the hand seals, Charlie tried to execute them completely.

However, what puzzled him was that after completing the entire set of hand seals,

His spiritual energy remained unchanged.

Jeremiah and Ria, who were not as fast or skilled as he,

Completed the hand seals more than a minute later.

Their experience was the same; their spiritual energy remained unchanged.

Maria inquired with concern and,

Upon learning that the new hand seals were ineffective, she fell into deep thought.

Charlie suddenly seemed to be in a daze and said,

“Perhaps today’s sixteen hand seals belong to the same group as yesterday’s sixteen hand seals.”

He then immediately said to Jeremiah and Ria,

“Try to connect yesterday’s hand seals with today’s hand seals and circulate them together.”

The two agreed and thus entered meditation,

Circulating the obscure Buddhist hand seals one by one.

Charlie completed all thirty-two hand seals first.

Immediately afterward, a stream of spiritual energy flowed into his sea of consciousness from all directions,

At least three or four times stronger than yesterday.

This delighted Charlie.

Yesterday’s sixteen hand seals, today’s thirty-two—although the cycle time for each circulation had doubled,

The spiritual energy had increased by at least three or four times.

This meant that the overall cultivation efficiency of the thirty-two hand seals was more than double that of before.

More than doubling was an absolute huge improvement!

Of course, since the base number was already minuscule,

Even with double the efficiency, the speed of acquiring spiritual energy was still very slow.

However, this gave Charlie great hope.

If there were follow-ups to this set of hand seals, if sixteen more hand seals were added later,

Or even thirty-six or seventy-two hand seals,

The efficiency might increase tenfold or even dozens of times.

If that were the case, the speed of replenishing spiritual energy would be quite substantial,

And he wouldn't have to rely entirely on pills to endure it.

He could replenish the spiritual energy in his body in just a few days.

At that time, everything would enter a completely new world.

A moment later, Jeremiah and Ria also opened their eyes.

Compared to yesterday, they were even more excited,

Tears were streaming down their faces.

They both clearly felt the huge increase in efficiency.

This cultivation speed was far higher than the efficiency they had previously achieved when with Victoria, which had taken them a long time.

In the past, they were already grateful to get one small cultivation pill every one or two years,

But with the efficiency of the thirty-two hand seals,

They could get the same amount of spiritual energy in one or two months.

Seeing the undisguised joy on the faces of the three,

Maria knew that Charlie's experiment had been effective,

And she was also extremely gratified.

Upon learning that the overall efficiency of the thirty-two hand seals had more than doubled,

She was overjoyed and couldn't help but exclaim,

"I just observed that the speed at which you,"

"Young Master, Miss Yun, and Miss Song performed the thirty-two hand seals differently."

"It seems that if one can thoroughly master the hand seals and further improve their speed,"

"Then the efficiency of cultivation will continue to increase."

Charlie, suddenly reminded by her, excitedly said,

"Miss Lin is right. Buddhist hand seals are obscure and difficult to understand."

"Even imitating them is not easy."

"It takes me at least ninety seconds to perform one."

"But everything is subject to a law, which is what the oil seller said..."

"Practice makes perfect," he said.

"If one truly becomes familiar with each hand gesture,"

"Doubling the speed is not impossible."

He then sighed, "When I was young, my mother taught me to play the piano for a few years."

"Back then, no matter what instrument one played, people liked to play a piece called 'Flight of the Bumblebee' at their fastest speed."

"When I was young, it took me at least five or six minutes to play the whole piece, stumbling and fumbling."

"But top masters can complete the entire performance in under a minute—a difference of seven or eight times."

"Buddhist hand gestures are like a musical score."

"The speed at which one plays them depends not only on talent but also on diligence."

Practice is also very important."

Maria nodded: "That's what I think too."

"Young Master currently expends a lot of spiritual energy every day to exchange for hand seals."

"To replenish this energy, he has to constantly take precious pills."

"If this continues, the pills will soon run out."

"Leading to a depletion of medicinal materials for alchemy."

"Such extremely precious items as pills should be saved for crucial moments."

"Not wasted on daily cultivation."

"If we could replenish spiritual energy through hand seals, that would be perfect."

Charlie agreed, saying, "That makes sense."

"However, I plan to make another deal with it to see if there are any new..."

"If I have the handprint, how much will it improve my overall cultivation efficiency?"

"If the improvement is still doubled, then investing in some pills is worthwhile."

"If the improvement speed isn't that fast, I'll slow down, go back and cultivate in seclusion before trying again."

"Otherwise, my pills really won't be able to hold up."

Currently, Charlie only has ten Qi-Nourishing Pills left,

And the raw materials for refining Qi-Nourishing Pills are exhausted.

Although Maria instructed Old Zhang to help find them,

Raw materials aren't something that can be obtained simply with money.

It also depends on opportunity and fate.

Therefore, until the raw material problem is solved, Charlie plans to keep at least five pills for himself to deal with unforeseen circumstances.

Therefore, he only had five pills left to trade with the mysterious entity within his body.

## Chapter 7098

Returning to the villa in the early morning,

Charlie, Jeremiah, and Ria began their seclusion.

During this seclusion, the three focused primarily on mastering the thirty-six hand seals.

However, memorizing the thirty-six hand seals was not easy.

Performing them required prior thought,

So improving efficiency was not something that could be achieved overnight.

Like a difficult piano piece, one must develop strong muscle memory to significantly improve and break through speed.

This muscle memory is a long process.

Referring to pianists, it might take more than ten years of diligent practice to reach the pinnacle.

They remained in seclusion until evening when Charlie's alarm clock rang.

When he opened his eyes, Jeremiah and Ria had also been awakened from their meditation by the sound of the alarm.

Charlie told them to prepare to go out,

Then pushed open the door first.

In the living room, Maria and Helena were chatting happily.

Helena initially harbored some wariness and a competitive spirit towards Maria,

But after talking with her more, she discovered that this young girl's personal charm far exceeded her expectations.

Not only were her IQ and EQ astonishingly high,

But her knowledge was also frighteningly broad.

So, while Charlie and the other two were in seclusion,

She would chat with Maria, and before long, they became best friends.

Seeing Charlie emerge, Maria quickly stepped forward,

Bowed slightly and said, "Young Master, after consulting some classical materials and combining them with my own past observations,"

"I have a general understanding of the hand seals you have been practicing these past two days."

Charlie exclaimed with delight,

"Miss Lin, please tell me!"

Maria said, "If I am not mistaken, the hand seals that the mysterious entity transmitted to you through the aurora should be the true hand seals of the Great Sun Tathagata of Buddhism."

"Also called the Vairocana Mudra."

"The Vairocana Buddha Mudra?"

Charlie asked, "What's the origin of this?"

Maria explained, "The Vairocana Buddha Mudra of today is completely different from the true Vairocana Buddha Mudra."

"The true Vairocana Buddha Mudra is the meditation mudra of Vairocana Buddha,"

"A mudra that truly possesses magical power."

"In other words, it's a mudra used in Buddhist practice."

"However, this kind of mudra with magical power was gradually lost,"

"And the mudras that have been passed down have become a kind of Buddhist ritual."

Charlie didn't understand religion, so he humbly asked,

"Miss Lin, who is the Vairocana Buddha you just mentioned?"

Maria smiled and said, "Vairocana Buddha, also known as Shakyamuni."

"However, they are not absolutely equivalent."

"You can understand it as Shakyamuni..."

"It is a 'manifestation body' that Buddha manifested to adapt to the mortal world."

"Buddha has three bodies: Dharmakaya, Manifestation Body, and Sambhogakaya. Buddha's 'Dharmakaya' is Vairocana Buddha."

Charlie sighed, "Although Buddhism and Taoism have different thoughts and purposes,"

"They lead to the same goal in cultivation."

"It seems that the legend of cultivating to sainthood is not a myth."

"Perhaps those sages of the past really created their own Pure Land of Ultimate Bliss!"

"I just never expected that I would have such an honor to learn the true secret methods of Buddhism."

"It is truly an honor."

Maria nodded and said devoutly,

"I have been a devout Buddhist since childhood,"

"But I have never been as fortunate as you, young master."

"It seems that you are the one who truly has a connection with Buddhism!"

Jeremiah and Ria were already moved to tears upon hearing this.

Ever since they first saw the hand seals up close,

Their emotions had become extremely fragile and sensitive,

And they would cry at the slightest provocation.

Already incredibly grateful for the opportunity Charlie had given them,

They were even more overwhelmed with gratitude upon learning that it might be the invaluable Great Sun Tathagata Handprint.

They had never imagined in their entire lives that they would have such good fortune,

And all of this was thanks to Charlie.

So, hand in hand, they knelt before Charlie once more, weeping uncontrollably.

Charlie was somewhat exasperated; these two were truly addicted to kneeling.

Wanting to kneel at the drop of a hat, he was finding it hard to keep up.

He quickly stepped forward to help them up,

But to his surprise, they did not attempt to rise,

Their legs remain bent at a ninety-degree angle.

Jeremiah choked back tears as she spoke,

"Mr. Wade, you may not know this,"

"But since the day I attained enlightenment, I have been like a rootless duckweed,"

"A beggar in cultivation."

"Obtaining a cultivation technique or a single elixir is as difficult as ascending to heaven."

"I was even forced to grovel before Victoria,"

"Acting as her accomplice and doing all sorts of evil deeds for her,"

"Just to barely obtain a few cultivation resources."

"But since I met you, Mr. Wade, I have not yet done anything of value for you,"

"Yet I have already received all sorts of incredible opportunities from you."

"The gratitude in my heart is beyond words."

"I can only say that I wish that one day I could give my life for you, Mr. Wade."

"And repay your kindness with my death!"

## Chapter 7099

In the following days, the aurora borealis no longer appeared precisely every night.

Charlie waited a week in the polar regions, only to witness the aurora twice.

To obtain more Great Sun Tathagata Hand Seals,

He used a total of four Qi Cultivation Pills in these two encounters,

Trading for another thirty-two hand seals from a mysterious entity.

These sixty-four hand seals more than doubled the efficiency of his spiritual energy growth.

Although he only had six pills left,

Charlie still hoped for the aurora's appearance.

Unfortunately, the warm current from the North Atlantic caused temperatures in northern Europe to rise rapidly,

And the snow began to melt.

Helena told Charlie that the arrival of the North Atlantic warm current signified the end of the long winter.

The end of winter also meant the aurora's performance in the Northern Hemisphere would come to an end.

To see the aurora in the Northern Hemisphere again,

One would have to wait until the end of the year when winter returned.

Without the aurora, staying in Northern Europe became meaningless.

However, Charlie felt that if the hand seals taught to him by the mysterious entity within him were truly the hand seals of the Great Sun Tathagata,

Then, with the Great Sun Tathagata's supernatural powers,

The sixty-four hand seals he had learned were likely just the tip of the iceberg.

A powerful thirst for knowledge, like an invisible hand, propelled his mind and body forward relentlessly.

However, he didn't know what other medium,

Besides the aurora borealis, it could be manipulated by the mysterious entity.

Therefore, the safest approach was to head to Antarctica.

Winter had already arrived in the Southern Hemisphere, the aurora season.

Moreover, Maria had told Charlie that March and September were the optimal months for aurora formation in Antarctica,

When the angle between the Earth's magnetic field and the solar wind was at its best.

During these months, solar particles were more likely to enter the Earth's atmosphere,

Resulting in the highest aurora activity and brightness—the best time to observe the aurora.

It was currently mid-March.

So Charlie immediately asked Helena, "Does Northern Europe have research stations in Antarctica?"

Helena nodded and said, "We have three research stations in the Antarctic Circle."

"But they are all summer stations."

"People are only sent there in the summer."

"And the stations are closed, and the researchers are withdrawn in the winter."

Charlie asked, "So that means these stations are currently unmanned?"

"It should be,"

Helena said. "I need to check with the relevant departments for specifics."

She then took out her phone and said,

"Mr. Wade, please wait a moment while I make a call."

Charlie nodded slightly, and Helena dialed a cabinet member.

After consulting with the member, she told Charlie,

"Mr. Wade, I just inquired about the specifics."

"Two of the three research stations have already been seasonally closed,"

"And the other is conducting early winter testing in preparation for becoming a permanent station next year."

"There are currently four staff members there,"

"And they will be returning home soon."

"Our research vessel is currently being prepared in a port in Argentina."

"Some supplies and new equipment need to be transported to the research station."

"After the staff completes the installation and debugging of the equipment,"

"They will leave Antarctica with the ship."

Charlie asked her, "Could you arrange for me to go to Antarctica with the research vessel while waiting for your people?"

"After we leave, will I stay there for a while?"

Helena asked, somewhat surprised,

"Mr. Wade, the temperature in the Antarctic Circle is already very low."

"It's reached minus forty degrees Celsius near the research station,"

"And it can drop to minus seventy or even lower during the coldest periods."

"Wouldn't it be too dangerous for you to stay there?"

Charlie replied, "It shouldn't be dangerous."

"But the main issue is whether it's feasible to stay at your research station."

Helena thought for a moment and said,

"I'm not sure if it's feasible right now."

"In principle, the directly managed department definitely won't agree."

"I can try to see if I can mediate."

Maria chimed in, "Young Master, directly asking to stay at a national-level research station is unlikely to be approved by anyone in charge."

"This not only involves the misuse of public resources but also poses numerous safety hazards."

"I doubt they'll open that door through normal channels."

"That's true,"

Charlie sighed. "But it's winter in Antarctica,"

"And the climate is harsh."

"Without a place to stay, it will be very difficult to survive."

"Even if I can barely hold on, you, Miss Yun, and Miss Song probably won't be able to."

## Chapter 7100

Maria said, "How about we try a different approach?"

"For example, we could have Helena put in a good word for us."

"Letting us go to Argentina first to catch up with that research vessel."

"We could say we're just hitching a ride to Antarctica and then coming back with the ship."

"It should be easy to pull those strings."

"Once we're in Antarctica, you can use some psychological manipulation to get them to complete their work and leave."

"Tacitly agreeing that we're staying and not making it public."

Charlie nodded slightly, "That's one way. Anyway, let's go first."

Helena agreed, saying, "Miss Lin's method is feasible."

"After the research station is sealed off, it will be a long time... "

"It's a state of being forgotten."

"As long as those involved don't speak recklessly after they return,"

"The relevant personnel in China won't know the specifics."

"Besides, these same frontline researchers will be going there again after the station opens next year."

"As long as they keep it a secret, no one will know."

Charlie snapped his fingers:

"Let's do it this way."

"Helena, could you please help us communicate with them?"

"We'll go to Argentina to catch up with that research vessel."

Helena nodded, then asked him,

"Mr. Wade, if you want to stay there,"

"After the research vessel leaves, you might have to stay in Antarctica for the next few months."

"If you want to come back, I'm afraid no ship can pick you up."

"It's nothing,"

Charlie said. "The main reason is to cultivate in seclusion."

"If I'm immersed in it,"

"A few months will pass in the blink of an eye."

After saying that, he looked at Maria and said,

"Miss Lin, the environment in Antarctica is probably much harsher than here."

"It's easy to go in but difficult to come out."

"Why don't you consider going back to Aurous Hill first?"

Maria shook her head: "If I go back to Aurous Hill by myself,"

"I will definitely be thinking about you all day long,"

"And it will be difficult to concentrate on anything."

"It's better to go with you."

"When you are in seclusion, I can read books and write calligraphy."

"I can manage to get by."

Helena was shocked. She could tell from Maria's words that she made no attempt to hide her feelings for Charlie."

"She was also very surprised that Maria,"

"Who was so young, would fall in love with Charlie,"

"A man who was nearly thirty years old."

"She couldn't understand why Charlie always kept her by his side.

Charlie himself could understand Maria's dependence on him.

For so many years, she had shouldered everything alone.

Not only that, but many children also depended on her.

She had to be strong and carry the burden forward.

Now that she no longer needs to care for her adopted children or shoulder responsibilities for others,

She's more like a little girl.

Moreover, he can now protect her to some extent, allowing her to finally experience a carefree life.

It's normal for her to rely on him more under these circumstances.

Besides, he himself feels that if Maria is willing to go to Antarctica with him,

That would be the best outcome.

He also has a hidden worry that Maria might encounter danger if he's not by her side.

So he readily said to Maria,

"In that case, Miss Lin, you can prepare more living and entertainment supplies to avoid being too bored in the polar region."

Helena chimed in, "After winter sets in in Antarctica,"

"The closer you get to the South Pole,"

"The shorter the daylight hours become."

"By May, it's basically polar night, which lasts for more than two months."

"The icy landscape and constant darkness must be quite dreary."

"Miss Lin, you should try to avoid that."

Maria didn't seem to mind, smiling as she said,

"How could I feel bored being with you, young master?"

"If it were you, would you be willing?"

Helena hadn't expected the girl to be so direct,"

"And her question immediately made her blush.

Yes, the Antarctic Circle is freezing cold."

"With long periods of polar night and months without seeing the sun."

"Who would willingly spend months there?"

But the thought of spending months with Charlie instantly banished all the boredom.

But she also knew very well that it was fine for an empress to disappear from the public eye for a few days,

Just like taking a vacation.

But if she disappeared for several months, wouldn't the people go crazy?

With this thought in mind, Helena thought dejectedly,

"Maybe I should just abdicate."

"Let whoever wants to be this lousy empress be it."

"I don't want to be empress for even a day longer."