

Chapter 5421

"What? The Empty City Strategy?"

Maria and Zeba exchanged puzzled glances upon hearing Charlie's words. They were well aware of the historical allusion he was referring to. In the famous novel 'The Kairice of the Three Kingdoms', Zhuge used the Empty City Strategy when he faced a siege from Sima's massive army. Zhuge calmly played the zither on top of the city walls, tricking Sima into thinking it was a trap and instilling fear in his heart.

But why was Charlie bringing up this strategy when discussing Morgana? Did he plan on climbing a tower and playing an instrument like Zhuge to intimidate her? Maria was the first to voice her concern, "Mr. Wade, the reason the Empty City Strategy worked for Zhuge was because he made Sima fear the unknown. However, if you reveal your identity, regardless of whether Aurous Hill has spies or not, Morgana will surely send her three trusted elders to test your true intentions. She will only fear you if you remain a mysterious figure lurking in the shadows. Once you step into the light, she will have no choice but to confront you head-on..."

Maria couldn't help but interject, trying to dissuade Charlie from taking unnecessary risks. "Indeed, My Lord, Zeba's words make sense. At this point, the chances of scaring Morgana away with your true identity are almost zero. I advise you not to take any reckless actions..."

Instead of heeding their advice, Charlie chuckled at their concern and responded with an enigmatic expression. "You two, don't underestimate my intelligence. I'm not foolish enough to willingly expose myself to Morgana."

His confident smile only deepened their confusion.

Sensing their curiosity, Maria surmised that Charlie must have a well-crafted plan in mind. She couldn't help but ask, "Do you have a clever trick up your sleeve, Young Master? Why don't you enlighten us, so that Zeba and I may learn from your wisdom?"

Charlie smiled and replied, "Both of you have far more life experience than me. I wouldn't dare claim to teach you anything. At best, we can learn and progress together."

With those words, Charlie rose from his seat and declared, "Wait a moment, I have something to show you."

The two women suppressed their doubts and watched as Charlie retrieved a scroll from a safe. Maria had already surmised its contents and couldn't help but ask, "Could it be the Master's portrait in your hands?"

Charlie nodded and brought the painting before them, carefully placing it on the coffee table. As they unfurled the scroll, a lifelike and extraordinary painting came to life on the paper.

Maria gazed at the depiction of an old man with an ethereal aura and exclaimed with reverence, "So this is the true visage of Morvel Bazin... Just as my father described, his spirit is extraordinary and he exudes an otherworldly presence!"

Zeba asked in surprise, "Could this be the Master that Morgana often speaks of Morvel Bazin?"

Maria gasped, "Morgana mentioned the Master to Marshal Zeba?"

Zeba blushed and responded calmly, "Miss Clark, please refrain from calling me Marshal. It was a title Morgana bestowed upon me. Frankly, I never liked it. Besides, I've severed my ties with my past and that title no longer holds any meaning for me... In fact, I wish to have no further association with those three individuals."

Maria smiled and nodded, saying, "Very well, from now on, I shall address you as Miss Salazar."

Grateful for the change, Zeba bowed her head in appreciation towards Maria and continued, "In the presence of the four of us, Morgana often spoke of Lord Bazin and her past as his disciple. She shared these stories to paint a picture for us, to make us understand that the path of cultivation can lead to longevity, even a thousand years. Her intention was to reinforce our commitment to follow her."

Maria nodded and sighed, "Without the Millenium Return Pill, Morgana has at most another hundred years to live. She must be feeling anxious now."

Zeba agreed with a smile, adding, "Indeed, Miss Clark, you speak the truth. In the past two years, Morgana has shown increasing signs of restlessness. Throughout the decades, she never worried about aging, as her appearance remained unchanged. But these past two years, she has become more conscious of skincare. Sometimes, I catch the scent of skincare products as she passes by. She's afraid of aging."

Maria sneered, "What is destined to happen will happen. What good does it do to fear it?"

Having voiced her thoughts, Maria returned her attention to the painting before her. Suddenly, a realization dawned on her and her eyes widened in excitement. She couldn't help but ask Charlie, "Young Master... are you suggesting that Master Bazin should employ the Empty City Strategy?"

Charlie, impressed by Maria's perceptiveness, couldn't contain his excitement and affirmed, "Miss Clark, you've hit the mark! I intend to have Old Lord Morvel employ the Empty City Strategy on my behalf!"

Zeba felt her brain struggling to keep up with their conversation and asked anxiously, "Mr. Wade, what are you and Miss Clark implying? Didn't Lord Morvel pass away centuries ago? Why would you ask him to use the strategy?"

Gazing at Morvel Bazin's painting, Charlie turned to Zeba and inquired, "Miss Salazar, in your opinion, why would Morgana send her three elders to Aurous Hill?"

After pondering for a moment, Zeba replied, "Gideon self-destructed and his survival is uncertain, The Evans Family remains unharmed. Morgana is uncertain of the enemy's identity, unaware of how many foes she faces, unsure of their strength and uncertain whether they are alive or dead. These are the reasons she wants to investigate. Moreover, she definitely intends to continue her assault on the Evans Family."

Charlie nodded, acknowledging Zeba's astute observation. "Miss Salazar is absolutely right. Those are Morgana's most pressing concerns at the moment."

Pointing to the painting of Lord Morvel, Charlie posed his next question to Zeba, "Tell me, how many people in this world would recognize this person as Lord Morvel?"

Zeba's eyes widened and she exclaimed, "Apart from us, I fear only... only Morgana!"

Zeba was unaware of the secrets surrounding Mrs. Treadway's lineage, but she knew that Morvel Bazin had passed away many years ago. Only Morgana had firsthand knowledge of him and was still alive to this day.

Charlie didn't delve further into the matter but followed Zeba's train of thought. He nodded in agreement and said, "Indeed, besides us, only Morgana recognizes him. If this painting suddenly surfaces in Aurous Hill, what do you think would go through her mind?"

Zeba responded with a hint of horror, "She... she would undoubtedly be shocked to her core! In her eyes, she is the only person in this world who has met Lord Morvel and is still alive. If a portrait of Lord Morvel suddenly appears in Aurous Hill, she would rush there without hesitation!"

Maria chuckled and reassured Zeba, "Miss Salazar, you worry too much. Even if this painting were to surface in Aurous Hill, Morgana would never dare to come."

Puzzled, Zeba asked, "Why not? This is a portrait of her Master. After hundreds of years, his face reemerges in the world. Wouldn't she be eager to find out who brought forth this painting?"

Maria smiled and replied, "Of course, she would be curious. But I'm afraid the more she desires to unravel this mystery, the less inclined she would be to venture into Aurous Hill!"

Maria glanced at Charlie and expressed her admiration, "Sir, you possess incredible wisdom. This Empty City Strategy is truly a brilliant plan. Once this painting emerges in Aurous Hill, it would surely shake Morgana to her core!"

Chapter 5422

Charlie nodded, his expression turning smug. "What a coincidence! Aurous Hill is currently hosting a grand exhibition of calligraphy and paintings and they are actively seeking exceptional artworks from across the country. I've been creating a buzz in the major media outlets... This painting, though lacking an attributed artist, displays remarkable skill and an extraordinary artistic conception. From an artistic standpoint, it easily rivals the works of renowned painters throughout Chinese history. Once this painting emerges, it will undoubtedly cause a sensation in the world of calligraphy and painting... Morgana has been closely monitoring Aurous Hill, hasn't she? The moment she catches wind of this painting, her curiosity will be piqued and a multitude of questions will arise in her mind! She must be dying to know who brought forth her Master's portrait."

"She must be yearning to unravel the connection between the person who presented the painting of her Master. Could it be someone her Master accepted as a disciple in secret? If that's the case, this person might be over five hundred years old, having obtained the Millennium Pill and likely possessing greater strength than her! Moreover, she must be desperate to find out why her two marshals, one dead and the other missing, coincided with the emergence of the portrait in Aurous Hill. She's probably keen on discovering whether the person who unveiled the painting is the same one who forced Gideon to self-destruct. If so, why did that person survive Gideon's explosion? She must be eager to understand why her Master passed away immediately after that," Charlie continued.

"Furthermore, she must be burning with curiosity about the other party's intentions. Is this person trying to convey that they know everything about her, including her true identity as Morvel Bazin's disciple? When she reaches that train of thought, she will realize that the other party has unraveled all her past secrets! At that point, this person will surely use a voice changer during their phone conversations. Morgana, who is accustomed to playing the masterful puppeteer, will feel as helpless as an ant facing imminent danger. The torment of not knowing what to do will eat at her. That's not even her biggest concern! What truly keeps her awake at night is whether this person is trying to lure her to Aurous Hill with this act. Or perhaps they're baiting her to send more of her people to Aurous Hill, resulting in their demise?"

Charlie sneered as he continued, "I can assure you that when Morgana is plagued with all these doubts, she will be wary of Aurous Hill. I will instill fear in her. Do you think she dares to come? Even if her three elders have already arrived in Aurous Hill, she will swiftly summon them back!"

Zeba, puzzled by matters of warfare and intrigue, confessed her lack of understanding. "Mr. Wade, I'm not well-versed in the art of war or conspiracy. I've always had one question about the Empty City Strategy. If Sima had 150,000 soldiers and Zhuge opened the city gates, why didn't he send 10,000 or even 20,000 troops to investigate the situation?"

Charlie smiled gently, ready to enlighten her. "Let me explain it this way. Imagine receiving a scam call where the other person promises to double your entire fortune of 150,000 in just one day. Deep down, you know it's a scam. Would you willingly give them 10,000 or even 20,000 from your 150,000?"

Zeba was stunned for a moment, then blushed with embarrassment. "I understand... Thank you, Mr. Wade, for your guidance. It seems my focus on cultivating has left me lagging behind in strategy..."

Maria gazed at Charlie, her eyes sparkling with amusement. She found him increasingly intriguing as an individual blessed with talent, kindness, capability, a strong sense of justice and rarest of all, a great sense of humor.

With a smile, she remarked, "Young Master, if Morgana ever discovers your plot against her, she will be so furious that she'll lose twenty years of her life..."

Maria's smile grew mischievous as she suggested, "Since you have such an impressive memory, why not inscribe a few words on this painting? It would certainly enhance the effect."

Charlie, amused, inquired, "What words do you suggest I inscribe?"

Maria's smile widened as she proposed, "Why not inscribe Old Lord Morvel's name and provide a brief biography? Morvel Sharad, born in the first year of Linde during the Tang Dynasty. Later, he adopted a new name and became known as Lord Morvel Bazin..."

Chapter 5423

In the depths of an uninhabited South American island, a breathtaking sight unfolded, the land, once a tropical paradise, was now enveloped in a pristine blanket of ice and snow. Morgana Mirren, a formidable leader, guided Aemon through the vast underground structure hidden beneath the island's surface.

Together, they ventured deeper into the labyrinthine building, until they reached the heart of it all. There, nestled among the rocks, lay a chamber sealed off from the outside world, with a single ventilation pipe acting as the sole connection to the Three Elders of the Warriors Den who sought refuge within.

It was fascinating to realize that, unbeknownst to them, these three elders had journeyed across continents, tracing the footsteps of the Warriors Den Society. From the ancient lands of China, through the sprawling expanses of Australia, they had finally arrived in South America. Throughout this odyssey, they had severed all ties with the outside world, their bodies cocooned in a shroud of aura, reducing their metabolism to a near standstill. Time slipped away from them, their isolation rendering them oblivious to the passage of years. The purity of their beings grew, fueled by relentless attacks on the Soul Palace as they aimed to unlock its secrets.

As Morgana entered the chamber, she beheld three emaciated figures resembling skeletal mummies. Yet, she sensed an immense and untapped power concealed within their withered frames. They stood on the cusp of a breakthrough, mere steps away from entering the realm of

the Soul Palace. One among them had made astonishing progress, with no more than a decade of cultivation remaining before reaching this coveted realm.

Regret laced Morgana's voice as she spoke, "If only you could endure another ten or twenty years, my dear Elders. At that point, not only would you have shattered the barriers of the Soul Palace, but the entire world would bear witness to the Warriors Den's dominance. Alas, I must awaken you prematurely, that you may aid me in eradicating a formidable hidden enemy lurking in the shadows."

With a gathering of reiki at her fingertips, Morgana directed her intentions towards the three Elders, silently manipulating the energy that surged forth. Swiftly, the currents of reiki inundated their frail and waxen bodies, breathing life into them like the Rejuvenation of a withered tree in the vernal embrace of spring.

After the passing of an incense stick's worth of time, the eldest of the trio, appearing to be in his fifties, stirred awake. He glanced at himself before fixing his gaze upon Morgana, disappointment fleeting across his features. However, that fleeting pang of dissatisfaction dissipated in an instant, replaced by an unhesitating rise to his feet. Bowing reverently, he exclaimed, "Your servant, Balin, pays homage to you Lady Morgana!"

The remaining two Elders also opened their eyes, disappointment flitting through their gazes as well. After a moment's pause, witnessing Balin's obeisance, they too knelt.

"Your servant, Talix, pays homage to you!"

"Your servant, Varis, pays homage to you!"

Observing the flicker of disappointment in their awakening eyes, Morgana couldn't help but remark, "You have all endured a great tribulation during your seclusion of a hundred years."

"A hundred years?" The three Elders exchanged incredulous glances, stunned by the realization that they had withdrawn from the world for such a vast span of time.

Moreover, they had not anticipated that their century-long retreat would still leave them short of breaching the formidable barriers guarding the Soul Palace.

Most unexpectedly of all, their imminent breakthrough was disrupted by the master of the Warrior's Den untimely awakening.

Though disheartened, the Elders dared not reveal their internal struggles in Morgana's presence. After all, they were descendants of the Mirren family, descendants whom Morgana herself had inducted into the path of martial arts.

While it was unfortunate that their retreat had not culminated in the shattering of the Soul Palace, their wait for another decade or two was but a fleeting span in the grand tapestry of time.

Thus, Balin respectfully spoke, "My Lady, you have awakened the three of us from our retreat. We presume that you have entrusted us with a momentous task. It is an honor for us to bear your burdens. We pledge our lives to your service!"

The other two Elders echoed in unison, "We pledge our lives to you, Lady Morgana!"

Morgana found solace in their unwavering loyalty, deeming it a satisfactory response. She had imparted the teachings of the Soul Palace to them, albeit with certain omissions. Even though their seclusion had spanned a century, their final breakthrough would have been impossible without Morgana's recent interventions. Without her guidance, they would remain forever halted, despite standing on the precipice of the Soul Palace.

Yet, at this moment, the Elders remained blissfully unaware of their dependence on Morgana.

Thus, in Morgana's eyes, it was crucial that their allegiance to her orders eclipsed their devotion to cultivation. She couldn't afford to unleash three unbridled forces once they transcended the barriers of the Soul Palace.

Addressing the Elders, Morgana spoke, "We are about to face formidable adversaries within the Warriors Den. Since your retreat, Three of the Four Marshals I trained have perished and we have yet to ascertain the identities of our enemies."

"Three!" The Elders exchanged grave glances, comprehending the imminent challenges that awaited them within the Warriors Den. While they had expected obstacles in dismantling the Warriors Den, the extent of the forthcoming trials surpassed their earlier estimates.

Without hesitation, Balin declared, "My Lord, the three of us willingly shoulder your burdens."

Morgana nodded approvingly and stated, "Time is of the essence. Follow Aemon's lead and make preparations. Within an hour, a plane will transport you to Aurous Hill."

She turned her attention to Aemon, gesturing towards the Elders and introduced, "Allow me to present Aemon, the eldest son of Alaric."

The Elders, taken aback by the revelation, were consumed by astonishment. Alaric Mirren stood as their eldest nephew and the premier descendant of the Mirren family's generation.

Through the ages, Morgana herself had personally nurtured the offspring of the Mirren lineage. It was inconceivable to them that the nephew's son had already reached the twilight of his life.

Aemon, recognizing their surprise, paid his respects with utmost reverence. "Aemon, grandson of the Mirren family, humbly greets the three elders."

Aware of their seclusion for a century, disconnected from the world's current state, the Elders recognized the importance of forging a bond with Aemon. Inevitably, they would require his assistance in the future, a realization that tempered their manners and encouraged a more amiable and respectful approach.

After exchanging pleasantries, Morgana interjected, "We are all one family. We can reminisce later. For now, the three of you must make your preparations under Aemon's guidance. The journey will consume at least twenty hours, during which Aemon will enlighten you regarding the world's current state."

Morgana turned to Aemon and inquired, "Aemon, can the Elders travel directly to Aurous Hill via plane?"

Aemon replied promptly, "My Lord, I have meticulously altered the Elder's identity records every twenty years. I possess the latest version of their passports. Rest assured, they shall encounter no hindrance when entering the country."

"Very well!" Morgana's countenance darkened as she issued a chilling command. "Hasten your departure! Once you reach Aurous Hill, eliminate not only the Evans family but also any suspected adversaries! Leave no future threats alive!"

In unison, the four responded, "We obey your commands, My Lord!"

Chapter 5424

On the opposite side of the spectrum, Charlie remained in the luxurious mid-level villa at Elys-Champ, engaged in a lengthy conversation with Maria and Zeba. The decision to present Morgana with the Empty City Strategy had been made, but there were still numerous details to iron out.

Maria, addressing Charlie respectfully, expressed her concerns, "Young Master, the concept of Empty City strategy is truly brilliant. However, the only risk lies in the possibility that the three elders might arrive in Aurous Hill before Morgana pays attention to the Master's portrait. How should we handle that situation?"

Charlie grinned and assured her, "Don't worry, the hottest trend on TikTok right now is the Wade Family's industry. I'll find a way to deliver this painting to the Painting and Calligraphy Association this morning. Within a few hours, it'll naturally create a buzz. As long as Morgana is still keeping an eye on Aurous Hill, she's bound to come across it."

After conveying his thoughts, Charlie added, "I presume that if what Miss Salazar said is true, Morgana will indeed send the three elders. It's likely they'll depart soon."

Maria nodded in agreement and added, "Traveling from the edge of Antarctica to China is a considerable distance. It's improbable for them to use ultra-long-range airliners on their island. Thus, they must first head to Argentina, most probably en route right now."

Glancing at the time, Charlie remarked with a smile, "If they're efficient, they might have already taken off for China by the time it's seven or eight o'clock in the morning here."

Pausing for a moment, Charlie continued, "Once they board the plane to China, I'll publicly reveal Lord Morvel's paintings. Morgana will undoubtedly summon them back in a hurry. At that point, these three individual's mental states will likely crumble."

Maria nodded in agreement, her smile widening. "These three elders have secluded themselves for a century, on the brink of success, only to be abruptly called back by Morgana to fulfill a task. Naturally, they will harbor discontent in their hearts. It's only human nature."

Both Charlie and Zeba concurred with Maria's perspective.

Sighing, Zeba interjected, "Discontent is guaranteed. After all, we've persisted for a hundred years, yet it's merely a step away from achieving our goal. Suddenly, everything comes to a halt. Who knows how long the delay will be?"

Charlie chuckled and replied, "The point is, if an urgent task arises, they are duty-bound to respond. However, they've been tossed around, yet to arrive in Aurous Hill and now they're being called back. If you yank a dog back immediately after setting it free, the dog won't be pleased."

With a smile, Maria inquired, "So, Young Master, what's your plan now? How will this painting fit into the painting and calligraphy exhibition?"

Charlie pondered for a moment and responded, "My father-in-law happens to be the executive vice president of the Painting and Calligraphy Association. Lately, they've been searching for exhibits everywhere. I can give this painting to him."

Concern crept into Maria's voice as she expressed, "Young Master's identity is sensitive. Morgana has always sought to discover the Young Master's whereabouts. If you give the painting to your father-in-law, Morgana might dispatch someone to investigate and they could stumble upon the Young Master's identity. Wouldn't that risk exposure?"

Charlie nodded thoughtfully and reassured her with a smile, "I'll need to find a clever way to get this painting into my father-in-law's hands."

Then, his gaze shifted to Zeba and he inquired, "Miss Salazar, does the formation Morgana left in your Soul Palace require a specific formula for activation?"

Zeba confirmed, "Indeed, it does."

Curiosity piqued, Charlie pressed further, "Have you attempted to use reiki to probe its secrets?"

Zeba replied, "I have investigated, but the Soul Palace remains sealed, impervious to our reiki."

Charlie sighed and lamented, "Morgana's power is undoubtedly formidable. I haven't even opened my own Soul Palace, let alone attempt to open someone else's. Therefore, it's unlikely that we can remove the self-detonation formation in your body anytime soon."

Softly sighing, Zeba admitted, "I never harbored the expectation of removing the formation. My only hope is that this formation won't harm innocent people. Time is short for me, with just over two years left to live."

Intrigued, Charlie asked, "Why is that, Miss Salazar?"

Zeba explained, "Morgana left a strange poison in my body. Every three years, I must ingest an antidote, otherwise, my meridians will be severed and my internal organs will be utterly destroyed."

Concern furrowed Charlie's brow as he proposed, "May I examine it?"

After a brief moment of hesitation, Zeba nodded slightly, extending her right hand to Charlie.

Charlie placed his fingers on Zeba's pulse, allowing a trace of aura to permeate her body. As it traversed through her body, he discovered that her meridians, dantian and even internal organs were enveloped in a peculiar energy.

Vaguely sensing the energy's ferocity, Charlie realized that despite its inherent volatility, it harmoniously coexisted with another energy, acting as a stabilizer. This stabilizing energy continuously interacted with the former, ensuring its stability.

Furthermore, Charlie detected a slow absorption occurring, where the latter was gradually being consumed by the former. This absorption not only maintained the former's stability but also allowed it to grow stronger over time. In contrast, the latter weakened as it was persistently absorbed.

Unable to contain his observation, Charlie commented, "Miss Salazar, your body houses two peculiar auras. Were you aware of this?"

Zeba nodded and confirmed, "These two auras are poison and antidote."

Charlie sighed and remarked, "It appears that the deepest energy within you is the poison itself, while the intertwined aura serves as the antidote's effect, maintaining stability. However, the antidote's slow absorption by the former will eventually lead to an explosive reaction, suffocating you."

Continuing, Charlie elucidated, "The toxin within your body differs entirely from that affecting the Dead Soldiers and the Cavalry Guards. The toxin found within their bodies is a complex compound, likely a unique drug crafted by Morgana. The toxin is combined with a specific antidote, forming a delicate balance. However, the poison in your body, Miss Salazar, is less a poison and more a distinct aura."

Zeba nodded, laughing wryly, "That's Morgana for you. She devised a cunning plan. The poison and antidote she provided us are, in fact, a specialized form of aura. The cleverness lies in the fact that if we fail to take the antidote, we'll be poisoned and meet our demise. Yet, when we do consume the antidote, it appears to stabilize the energy, but, in reality, it allows this energy to continuously enhance its own strength. It's akin to chronic poisoning, growing deeper over time."

Charlie couldn't help but express his admiration, "Morgana's intelligence is truly remarkable. Consequently, the longer you live, the more you'll rely on the antidote. However, the more you consume it, the stronger the toxins in your body become. Even if you train tirelessly and enhance your abilities, you'll forever remain under the control of this toxin, perpetually taking the antidote every three years!"

Chapter 5425

Charlie found himself at a loss when it came to dealing with the poison coursing through Zeba's body and the formidable barrier in her Soul Palace. The situation served as a stark reminder of the vast divide that still separated him from Morgana's level of power.

The recent sacrifice made by Gideon only deepened Charlie's concerns. Despite managing to escape with Maria's ring, he knew that if Morgana dispatched three Soul Palace Masters to Aurous Hill, his survival would hang by a thread. Even with Maria's ring, it might spell certain doom for him.

Morgana had opened her Soul Palace over a century ago, boasting an unfathomable level of cultivation that surpassed Charlie's by at least a hundred, if not two or three hundred, years. If she were to come in person, his chances of survival would plummet even further.

Charlie couldn't help but reflect on how fortunate it was that he had stumbled upon Mrs. Treadway and the troubled mother and son in Mexico. If not for that serendipitous encounter, he wouldn't have had the opportunity to acquire the portrait of Old Lord Morvel.

Without that portrait in his possession, his hopes of executing the Empty City strategy would remain a futile dream. Powerless against the impending arrival of the three elders, he'd be unable to stop their advance.

Grateful for the opportunity provided by Mrs. Treadway, Charlie silently vowed that, should he successfully deceive Morgana this time, he would express his gratitude by giving her another Life Saving Pill.

After his resolve, Charlie turned his attention to Zeba and apologized, "I'm truly sorry, Miss Salazar. While I can mend your wounds and gradually restore your cultivation, the poison in your body and the formation in your Soul Palace present challenges that I can't overcome at the moment. However, there's no need for excessive worry. I will exhaust all avenues in search of a solution."

Although Zeba knew that Charlie's words were meant to console her, she didn't feel disappointed. After all, her initial intention after the explosion was to distance herself from the British Lord and live out her remaining days. Considering the significant progress her body had made in recovery and Charlie's promise to aid her in the restoration of her cultivation, her expectations had already been surpassed. She couldn't dare hope for a complete detoxification and the resolution of the formation.

Expressing her gratitude to Charlie, Zeba replied, "Mr. Wade, you need not apologize to me. I'm already thankful for your assistance in healing my wounds. As for detoxification and the formation, I dare not hope to survive the next two years. I'm already content beyond measure!"

Observing her, Charlie responded seriously, "Even if it seems impossible, two years from now, I will have a solution. While it may not fully break the formation within you, I am at least 80% confident that it can detoxify your body."

Zeba's eyes flickered with excitement upon hearing this.

However, Charlie swiftly changed the subject, adopting a grave tone as he said, "Yet, Zeba, this method, even with an 80% success rate, might bring you tremendous pain. Should it fail, the suffering might be unbearable. Are you willing to take such a risk for the sake of an innocent calamity?"

Exclaiming with excitement, Zeba replied, "Mr. Wade, don't speak of an 80% chance. Even if it were a mere 10%, I'd gladly endure any hardship to give it a try!"

Nodding, Charlie said, "Allow me to explain the method. I possess a medicine known as the Reshaping Pill. As long as the human brain remains intact, even if the body has been reduced to ashes, the Reshaping Pill can aid in crafting a brand-new physique. I have noticed that the toxins in your body primarily reside in your meridians, dantian and internal organs. I can

surgically remove the affected areas and then administer the Reshaping Pill orally. It will facilitate the complete reshaping of your body, ensuring the elimination of these toxins."

Overwhelmed with surprise and joy, Zeba asked, "Young Master, do you truly possess such miraculous medicine?"

Charlie responded calmly, "I stand here before you unharmed because I consumed the Reshaping Pill."

Zeba widened her eyes, overcome with excitement. Tears welled up and she knelt before Charlie, saying with utmost respect, "Mr. Wade, if you are willing to employ this magical medicine to aid me, I swear to devote my life solely to following your lead. Even if you order me to face death, I will not hesitate."

Extending his hand to help her up, Charlie spoke solemnly, "My objective is to personally vanquish Morgana and avenge my parents. If you choose to accompany me, you will become Morgana's enemy. Can you accept such a role?"

With gritted teeth, Zeba declared, "Mr. Wade, fear not. Morgana is wicked and vile. Not only has she controlled me with poison for decades, but she has also turned me into a human bomb. I bear a sworn vendetta against her!"

Charlie lightly tapped his finger and stated, "Very well! If I manage to rid you of the poison within two years, I solemnly promise that, should the opportunity arise, I will do everything in my power to eliminate the formation within your Soul Palace once I successfully open it. After Morgana's demise, you shall be completely free. Regardless of your chosen path, I, Charlie Wade, will never impede you. This is my pledge to you today!"

Cupping her fists in gratitude, Zeba replied, "Thank you, Mr. Wade, for your righteousness!"

Outside, dawn began to break.

Charlie turned to Zeba and said, "Miss Salazar, I will arrange for someone to escort you to Elys-Champ Hot Spring at the base of the mountain. There, I will provide you with temporary accommodations. However, please bear in mind that the powerful formation within you necessitates constant preparedness for evacuation. In the event that my Empty City plan fails and the three elders do arrive in Aurous Hill, I will send you to a safe location, far from their reach. This will prevent them from exploiting your formation."

Zeba nodded and respectfully replied, "I will comply with Mr. Wade's arrangements in all matters."

After pondering for a moment, Maria suggested, "Young Master, it might be wise to establish surveillance on all civilian flights departing from Argentina to China. This includes both

passenger and cargo planes. Given the considerable distance between Argentina and China, direct flights are currently unavailable. If any flight requests a route to Aurous Hill, we should monitor its progress closely. Should your 'Empty City' plan conclude successfully and a plane from Argentina suddenly changes course back to its origin, it could be the vessel carrying the three elders."

Charlie agreed, nodding in approval. "Monitoring the flights is indeed an excellent idea. I used a similar method to locate one of their shipping companies, which eventually led me to Miss Clark in Northern Europe."

With a slight smile, Maria added, "My family suspected that this method would be employed by you, Young Master. It is the only way to track the movements of the Cavalry Guards and dead soldiers accurately."

At that moment, Zeba interjected, "Young Master, if you can track the plane carrying the three elders and find a way to shoot it down, wouldn't it make eliminating all three of them a breeze?"

Both Charlie and Maria exclaimed simultaneously, "Absolutely not!"

Charlie, upon hearing Zeba's suggestion and seeing Maria's matching reaction, firmly stated, "You mustn't consider that option!"

In agreement with Charlie, Maria added with seriousness, "Under no circumstances should we resort to shooting down a civilian aircraft. It would constitute an act of terrorism and be vehemently condemned and punished by the entire world. We must act with a clear conscience and avoid such actions at all costs."

Charlie reaffirmed, "A person can accomplish great things, but one can also commit grave mistakes. This sort of action is entirely beyond the scope of my consideration."

Filled with shame, Zeba quickly apologized, "I am truly sorry, Mr. Wade and Miss Clark. I spoke without thinking... I merely believed that if the three elders were all on the same plane, shooting it down might be the most effective way to eliminate them all at once. I did not consider the implications... It was a highly inappropriate suggestion... Please forgive me, Mr. Wade and Miss Clark..."

Charlie nodded and responded, "Our goal for today is to frighten Morgana and force her retreat. We must not be driven by greed. Once we achieve this objective, Morgana will hesitate to act audaciously in Aurous Hill for an extended period. This will grant us additional time to test our courage and improve our strength. Perhaps, by the time she uncovers our empty city plan and sends the three elders once again, we will possess the strength to forever trap them in Aurous Hill!"

Chapter 5426

In the early morning, as the sun began to paint the sky with shades of gold, Charlie emerged from his room, clad in his own attire. He beckoned Don Albert, asking him to accompany Zeba to the magnificent Elys-Champ Hot Springs Villa for a comfortable settlement.

Meanwhile, Charlie and Maria embarked on a captivating adventure with the portrait of Morvel Bazin in tow. They boarded a sleek helicopter and soared through the sky, heading back to Zilian Villa, Maria's residence.

Simultaneously, in the bustling city of Buenos Aires, the capital of Argentina, a majestic Boeing 777-200LR took flight. Its destination, Australia.

Despite being hailed as the world's longest-range aircraft, this magnificent machine had yet to breach the 18,000-kilometer mark. Hence, the captain's flight plan dictated a refueling stop in Melbourne before reaching Aurous Hill.

Inside the airplane, only four passengers occupied the spacious cabin. Among them were Aemon and the three venerable elders who had recently cleared customs. These elders had retreated from the world over a century ago, when the Chinese people had just shed their braided hairstyles. They had merely heard rumors of the remarkable flying contraptions created by foreigners, yet they had never experienced them firsthand.

Now, however, they found themselves seated within the opulent confines of a private plane that rivaled a royal palace, ascending to an altitude of 10,000 meters with utmost ease. This exhilarating sensation left the three elders in a state of awe that lingered long after takeoff.

Observing the elder's nervous demeanor from the moment the engines roared to life, Aemon felt compelled to reassure them. "Worry not, esteemed elders. Rest assured, air travel is currently the safest mode of transportation in the world, employing the most advanced and mature technologies."

Balin, the elder at the forefront, discreetly wiped a bead of sweat from his forehead before speaking with trepidation. "Aemon, this metallic behemoth soars to unimaginable heights, surpassing even the clouds. It's not that I, Balin, fear such heights, but rather the prospect of plummeting from such great heights terrifies me. Even with centuries of cultivation, our lives would surely be forfeit!"

Talix trembled in agreement, echoing his fellow elder's sentiments. "Aemon, my friend, perhaps you can implore the pilot to lower our altitude a tad. Thirty or fifty feet should suffice, providing us with a greater sense of security..."

Aemon helplessly explained, "Grandfathers, I implore you to cast away your worries. Part of the reason air travel is safe lies in its ability to reach great altitudes. The cruising altitude is over

11,000 meters in height. Why is this significant? Such a height difference allows the aircraft ample time to make adjustments. In other words, even if the engines were to fail, the plane could glide for tens or hundreds of kilometers using its speed and altitude. If we were to fly at a mere thirty or fifty feet, any malfunction would result in a catastrophic crash before adjustments could be made."

Then, Aemon continued, "Besides, even if an airplane were to fall from a height of ten feet, the consequences would likely be fatal. You see, this plane carries over 100 tons of fuel alone, weighing approximately 300,000 catties. Should it plummet from a mere ten feet, no one could survive such a catastrophe..."

Balin's horror was palpable as he exclaimed, "Damn it... We're flying inside a colossal reservoir of oil!"

Aemon calmly clarified, "The potency of aviation fuel far surpasses that of kerosene. Its power is truly awe-inspiring."

Wiping away his sweat, Varis murmured, "This is too terrifying... Should an explosion occur, our eight lives would not suffice to consume the burning kerosene, weighing hundreds of thousands of catties..."

Aemon smiled reassuringly. "Fear not, Master Varis. The plane is far safer than your imagination allows. I suggest the three of you close your eyes and engage in meditation. Who knows, you may even arrive in Aurous Hill with enlightenment."

"Over three thousand feet? I could never achieve such a state of transcendence..." Varis admitted, his fellow elders nodding in agreement.

Flying on an airplane for the first time proved to be a novel experience for them, though their predominant emotions were tinged with fear.

...

Simultaneously, upon landing the helicopter atop the villa's upper courtyard, Maria turned to Charlie, her voice filled with respect. "Young Master, please accompany the servant's household inside. They will prepare the necessary materials for you to inscribe the Master's portrait."

Curiosity danced in Charlie's eyes as he asked, "Should I really be the one to do it?"

"Indeed," Maria replied with a smile. "Morgana is acquainted with my family's handwriting. If she recognizes it, she may suspect that we're attempting to deceive her."

Puzzlement flickered across Charlie's face. "How could she recognize your handwriting? It's been a century since you last saw each other."

Maria pursed her lips, her voice gentle as she explained, "After the Young Master saved me during our last encounter, before my family evacuated Northern Europe, I left her a written message. This precaution ensures your safety when mentioning it."

Understanding dawned upon Charlie and he nodded. "Very well, I shall mention it then."

Entering the study on the ground floor, Maria guided Charlie to the expansive desk where she began grinding ink. Charlie selected a brush, its bristles supple and inviting and proceeded to inscribe Morvel Bazin's life story in the upper right corner of the portrait.

Upon completing the inscription, Charlie chuckled and confessed, "My handwriting may be a tad unsightly. I apologize for the mockery."

Turning her head to examine his penmanship, Maria smiled warmly. "Young Master, your writing is more than satisfactory. One can discern your skill and finesse. Did you study calligraphy during your childhood?"

Charlie nodded modestly. "Indeed. I pursued the art of calligraphy for a few years in my youth."

Maria, who had been observing the exchange, interjected with a thumbs-up. "Only a few years of study during childhood and you've achieved such proficiency! You are truly gifted!"

Bashfully, Charlie waved off the praise. "Miss Clark, please don't tease me. I am well aware of my own abilities."

Maria's smile remained radiant as she inquired, "By the way, how do you intend to unveil this painting?"

Charlie's grin widened. "Later, I shall take this painting to my father-in-law."

Curiosity piqued, Maria posed another question. "Will your father-in-law publicize this painting?"

Charlie nodded confidently. "Rest assured, he possesses the necessary connections. He will undoubtedly find a way to create a commotion. Moreover, I plan to share it on TikTok, exposing Morgana to a spectacle of unparalleled magnitude. I have faith that she will witness its splendor soon enough."

Maria voiced her concern. "Young Master, won't displaying such a sensitive portrait through your father-in-law attract unwanted trouble? Morgana could easily trace it back to you through him."

Charlie's smile remained unwavering. "Once this painting is released, Morgana will grow exceedingly cautious of Aurous Hill. In her mind, she will be thoroughly exposed, while I, the

enigmatic figure, remain concealed. Hence, she would never dare send anyone to Aurous Hill again."

He continued, emphasizing his point. "Furthermore, preconceived notions guide us all. The shrewder and more cunning an individual, the more entrenched these notions become. If this painting reaches the public eye through my father-in-law's hands, the millions of residents in Aurous Hill will be the first to exclude Morgana from suspicion. They will instead focus on my father-in-law."

Charlie leaned in and added, "Moreover, I shall concoct a tale for my father-in-law, tailored to his personality. His storytelling prowess knows no bounds. When he recounts the story I've crafted, Morgana will be left petrified."

Chapter 5427

Seeing Charlie's confident expression, Maria felt a weight lift off her shoulders.

Glancing at the clock, Maria spoke, "My lord, it's nearly eight o'clock now. When do you plan on heading home?"

Charlie replied, "My father-in-law usually leaves for the Painting and Calligraphy Association around nine o'clock, which is quite far from my place. Miss Clark doesn't need to see me off; the helicopter is too noisy in the downtown area. I can manage on my own."

Maria insisted, "Young Master, I can't let you go back alone. I'll drive you home myself."

Charlie waved her off, saying, "It's really not necessary. I can handle it on my own."

Softly, Maria implored, "If you just leave like that, passing by the courtyard below, the servants will see you leaving my quarters early in the morning. They might misunderstand..."

Charlie felt uneasy, asking, "Then what does Miss Clark suggest?"

Maria assured him, "Give me a moment, and I'll make the arrangements."

Charlie nodded, saying, "Please, take your time."

With a happy smile, Maria picked up her phone and made a call. "Marius, come up here."

Curious, Charlie asked, "Is this Marius the one you called Grandpa in Northern Europe?"

Blushing, Maria replied shyly, "My lord, please forgive me. In the past, I had to pretend that Marius was my grandfather, so people wouldn't suspect..."

Charlie waved it off, inquiring, "He's actually your adopted orphan, right?"

Maria confirmed, "Yes, the family adopted Marius and two other elderly people living here many years ago."

Charlie couldn't help but ask, "How do you feel seeing them go from babies to old folks? It must be a unique experience, given the special bond."

Maria nodded, "It's been the fate of our family. We have no blood relation, but we share a deep connection. They've grown close to everything."

Charlie nodded, still trying to grasp the feeling.

After a few minutes, an old man arrived at Maria's courtyard and gently knocked on the door. "Miss, the old servant is here."

Maria called him in, and the old man was taken aback to see Charlie sitting on the teacher's chair.

While bowing respectfully, he said, "I am old servant Marius Cross, I have met Mr. Wade. Thank you for saving my life!"

Charlie stood up, returning the gesture. "You're too kind, old man. It was just a small effort."

Maria interjected, "Charlie, this is Marius, my trusted butler. Don't be so formal with him. Treat him as your own servant."

Marius asked with excitement, "Miss, have you told Mr. Wade everything about you?"

Maria blushed, embarrassed, and replied, "I've been honest with him, sharing my past three hundred years. From now on, there's no need to hide anything from him."

Marius' excitement showed, "Mr. Wade, you are the only outsider whom Miss has truly opened her heart to in more than three hundred years..."

He quickly clarified, "What I mean is, you are the only adult whom Miss has befriended openly for so long. The rest of us, her servants, were carefully trusted with her secrets over time."

Charlie smiled awkwardly, uncertain how to respond to the conversation. He changed the subject, "You don't have to call yourself an old servant in front of me. I feel unworthy of such respect."

Marius disagreed, "No, since enlightenment, I swore to serve as a saddle for Miss, the benefactor of her life. I can't ignore proper etiquette."

He added emotionally, "For nearly ninety years, you've been Miss's only friend... I'm truly happy and sincerely hope that you and Miss can..."

Maria sensed the inappropriate direction the conversation was taking and interrupted, coughing twice. "Marius, what nonsense are you talking about?"

Marius quickly explained, "I got a bit carried away in front of your benefactor..."

Then he turned to Charlie and said eagerly, "Please, visit Miss more often. She has been alone for so many years, without any friends. It gets quite lonely..."

Maria blushed and hurriedly said, "Alright, Marius, go inform Mr. Cole. Ask him to have all the servants stay in their rooms and not come out. Prepare a car for me, and I'll take Mr. Wade back."

Marius promptly replied, "Yes, Miss. I will obey."

After saluting Charlie once again, he respectfully said, "Mr. Wade, I will take my leave."

Charlie nodded, saying, "Take care, old man."

Once Marius had left, Charlie turned to Maria and asked, "Miss Clark, did you name Marius?"

Maria smiled and replied, "Yes, my family named him Marius, which means possessing both ability and integrity. It's not about gaining wealth."

Charlie smiled and continued, "Where did the surname Cross come from?"

Maria explained, "Master, most of the children adopted by my family are nameless and unknown. We can't verify their original surnames, and we didn't want them to be named Clark to avoid any trouble. So, we wrote down hundreds of surnames on pieces of paper, crumpled them into small balls, and let the children pick one at random."

Charlie asked awkwardly, "Is it that random?"

Maria curiously asked, "What other option is there? If we give them names ourselves, what if they don't like them when they grow up? Would they blame us? It's fair and reasonable to let them choose their own surnames. They get to choose their surname, and we also make it a little game for them. It's the best of both worlds."

Charlie nodded, sensing that Maria, despite her nearly four hundred years of life, still had a youthful heart. Perhaps, as she had said, she always maintained the mindset and way of life of a young girl.

At that moment, the elderly Marius hurried down the stone steps.

Though his body couldn't handle the exertion, his excitement made him feel lighter on his feet.

As he reached the ground floor of the main building, he found Larry Cole and Keagan Myers drinking tea. Larry asked with curiosity, "Marius, why are you running so fast? At your age, you might collapse right here..."

Marius smiled at them, panting heavily, and said in a trembling voice, "Joyful... a joyful event... a great joyful event!"

Keagan Myers put down his teacup and teased, "Oh, Marius, are you getting married?"

Marius laughed and scolded, "You really have a way with words!"

After saying that, Jacob came to their tea table and sat down slowly, and said to them seriously, "I sense a stirring within Miss, as if something profound has touched her heart."

Chapter 5428

Upon hearing Marius's words, both Larry Cole and Keagan Myers were struck dumb with astonishment!

Trembling subconsciously, the two of them rose to their feet. Keagan Myers stared at Marius, unable to contain himself. He blurted out, "Marius, did you say the lady's heart has been stirred? What has stirred her heart?"

Marius replied in a hushed voice, "Do you remember what our three greatest wishes were?"

Larry Cole didn't hesitate and said, "Of course! We wished for Miss to find someone she loves, to start a family and a career, so she wouldn't spend her life in loneliness!"

"I've been thinking about it. When we were younger than ten, the Miss took us out to play. From ten to twenty, we played together. As we entered our twenties and matured, the Miss remained forever seventeen. Since we were ten, we hoped for the day when she would find her own path in life. We eventually left her. There were many occasions when we didn't hear from her for years, yet deep in our hearts, we always held onto that hope..." Larry Cole's voice trailed off.

As Keagan Myers spoke, his eyes darted between Marius and Larry Cole. He blurted out, "Marius, are you saying that the young lady's attraction to Charlie is connected to all this?"

Marius nodded excitedly and whispered, "Mr. Wade is currently in the lady's chamber. I believe she just flew in a helicopter to pick him up!"

Larry Cole furrowed his brow and said, "The lady was gone for a long time, could she have gone to see Charlie? I remember the lady saying that Charlie must never know she still remembers him. Why did she visit him at night? Now she's bringing him to her own courtyard. Isn't she afraid of being caught by Charlie?"

Marius whispered, "Afraid? Miss has already shared her entire story with him!"

"What?!" The two of them were even more shocked upon hearing this.

Keagan Myers exclaimed in horror, "Miss... Miss told him all her secrets?!"

"And..." Marius hesitated, watching their growing anxiety.

Keagan Myers impatiently stamped his foot and said, "Marius, why are you stuttering at such a crucial moment?"

Drawing closer, Marius leaned in and said, "Listen, only the three of us can discuss this matter. You two must not utter a word of it in front of the Miss!" Keagan Myers also approached and whispered, "Don't worry, Marius. I won't blabber about it."

Larry Cole leaned forward as well, patting his chest, and reassured, "Marius, God knows what you'll say next. The three of us are the only ones who know!"

Marius nodded solemnly and said, "Let me tell you, just now the Miss referred to herself as a servant in front of Mr. Wade. That's not all—when they spoke candidly, the Miss actually blushed with shyness! Have any of you ever seen Miss blush in all these years? Have you?"

"Goodness!" Keagan Myers trembled with excitement and hurriedly asked, "Is this for real? Is it true?"

Larry Cole was equally thrilled, his voice quivering, "Marius, you're not pulling our legs, are you?"

Eighty or ninety years ago, the three of them played together in shorts.

Their personalities were similar and their bond ran deep, akin to that of siblings. Despite choosing different paths in life, they had grown up alongside Maria and shared a profound connection.

Keagan Myers had held high positions, Larry Cole owned vast family estates, and though Marius seemed to have achieved little, the other two held him in high regard for his unwavering dedication as Maria's caretaker for nearly 90 years, starting from his infancy. They considered themselves fortunate to have crossed paths with him.

Throughout the years, Maria had taken in many children, but very few had stayed by her side. Both Keagan Myers and Larry Cole had expressed their desire to remain with her, yet Maria had always refused. Eventually, she sent them away—Larry Cole took charge of her business in Southeast Asia, while Maria supported Keagan Myers in his patriotic endeavors upon his return to China.

For the three of them, Maria's role and identity were immensely special. In their youth, she had been a nurturing mother figure; as they grew older, she became an educated elder sister. Now, in their hearts, she was once again the little girl they cherished the most.

Hence, the three of them yearned for Maria to find her true purpose in life after centuries of wandering and fleeing.

Upon hearing that Maria seemed to be captivated by Charlie, the two friends couldn't contain their joy.

Observing their lingering uncertainty, Marius leaned in and whispered, "I've spent countless years by the Miss's side, and I've never witnessed her blush in front of anyone, let alone with that kind of affectionate gaze. Today was the first time! Do you think this has stirred her heart?"

Larry Cole was overjoyed, his eyes welling up with tears as he smiled, "That's wonderful! If I could witness Miss getting married in my lifetime, I would have no regrets!"

"Yes!" Marius's eyes turned red as he sighed, "I don't expect to live long enough to witness Miss achieving her revenge. To see her happily married would be a peaceful departure for me."

Suddenly, Keagan Myers muttered with a hint of loneliness, "You two are in good health, and I suppose I've lived long enough. Half a year is sufficient, and now only five months remain. If the Miss can hasten her pace and marry before I pass, I would be content."

Larry Cole consoled him, "Keagan, don't be so pessimistic. Remember, the lady said you still have a chance, and that chance lies in Aurous Hill."

Keagan Myers nodded, a wry smile on his face. "It would be ideal to have a chance, but if I don't, I won't blame fate. My life has been a series of close calls. If the lady hadn't adopted me and shown me kindness, I would have perished in the hospital long ago. I barely survived infancy, and now I've reached such an old age. It's all a stroke of luck..."

Marius patted him on the shoulder, assuring him, "Keagan, don't be so pessimistic. Those of us who have encountered the Miss are destined to be blessed. Our paths have crossed for a reason. Consider that there are countless people in this world, and your fortune surpasses that of most."

Keagan Myers let out a soft sigh, nodding in agreement. Suddenly, he remembered something and asked, "Oh, isn't Charlie already married?"

Larry Cole whispered, "What's there to fear? Miss is from older times. It's normal for a man to have multiple wives and concubines. She wouldn't mind."

Keagan Myers blurted out instinctively, "But our lady needs to grow up first! I, Keagan Myers, will take the lead! You can't have her all to yourself!"

Larry Cole concurred, "Keagan is absolutely right! I share the same sentiment!"

After speaking, Larry Cole nudged Marius with his elbow and inquired, "What do you think, Marius?"

Marius was momentarily taken aback, recalling something, and quickly replied, "I was just joking. I got carried away with gossiping and almost forgot the main issue! Larry, you should inform everyone under your command not to leave their rooms once they return. The Miss intends to personally escort Mr. Wade home, and it wouldn't look good if the staff were to witness it."

Larry Cole hurriedly agreed, "Alright, I'll make the arrangements right away!"

Marius nodded and said, "Then I'll go and prepare a car for the Miss!"

Chapter 5429

A few minutes later, all the servants of Zilian Villa retreated to their rooms.

Marius, being meticulous as ever, even requested Larry Cole to temporarily suspend surveillance throughout the entire villa. After all, the reputation of their young lady was at stake, and they couldn't afford any hidden risks.

With everything settled, Marius contacted Maria to provide an update. Then, Maria turned to Charlie and said, "Master, Marius and the others are ready. Let's head downstairs."

Charlie nodded and replied graciously, "Thank you, Miss Clark."

Maria smiled sweetly and replied, "My lord, there's no need to be so formal with me."

Charlie carefully stowed away the painting and calligraphy, and together with Maria, he walked out of the courtyard on the top floor.

Upon reaching the courtyard's gate, they spotted three elderly individuals standing respectfully in a line at the base of the long stone steps.

To Charlie's surprise, among them was a prominent figure he had often seen on television before – Keagan Myers from the capital.

During his youth, he frequently heard tales of this remarkable and inspirational man from the elders around him. He even visited him once with his father. However, it wasn't until today that he discovered Keagan Myers was one of the orphans adopted by Maria all those years ago.

Charlie and Maria descended the stone steps together, and the three elderly individuals greeted Maria respectfully, saying, "Greetings, Miss."

Afterwards, they turned their respectful gaze towards Charlie and greeted him in the same manner, "Greetings, Mr. Wade."

Some found it a bit uncomfortable. After all, the combined age of these three individuals was nearly 300 years, and it felt somewhat odd to be so deferential to a 28-year-old young man.

Hence, Charlie reciprocated respectfully, "Greetings, esteemed elders."

Keagan Myers, observing Charlie, couldn't help but sigh, "Mr. Wade truly resembles your father. As the saying goes, 'A tiger father begets a tiger son.'"

Charlie replied respectfully, "Grandpa Myers, I visited your home with my father when I was young. I wonder if you still recall that."

Keagan Myers nodded and said, "I remember, of course I remember. Your parents brought you to my house for dinner. I still remember what transpired back then. I can't believe so many years have flown by." He couldn't help but express his emotions, "Your father was truly a world-class talent. He engaged me in extensive discussions about global economic development and the changing world order. His long-term vision and accurate assessment of the situation were unparalleled in my life. Sadly, fate can be envious of talent."

Charlie also felt a tinge of melancholy.

He had heard adults mention Keagan Myers in passing. During that time, his father had numerous aspirations upon returning to China, and Keagan Myers had always wanted to cooperate with him on a grand scale. Unfortunately, his father suddenly severed all ties with the Wade family due to irreconcilable contradictions, and he went to Aurous Hill.

While Charlie was lost in thought, he noticed that despite Keagan Myers's outward toughness, his aura was feeble, indicating that he was nearing the end of his lifespan. It seemed that he only had a few months left to live.

Therefore, Charlie remarked, "Grandpa Myers, you don't appear to be in good health."

Keagan Myers was taken aback and asked in surprise, "How did Mr. Wade notice that?"

"A little knowledge of medicine," Charlie replied.

As he spoke, he couldn't help but lament inwardly. These three individuals were all quite elderly, and they were indeed nearing the end of their lives.

Keagan Myers had only a few months left, while Larry Cole and Marius Cross, judging by their conditions, likely had only a few years at most.

Keagan Myers sighed, "When a person reaches my age, they're running on fumes. It's only natural to have poor health." Charlie nodded slightly, thinking to himself that Maria had saved his life, and he should repay that debt of gratitude. These three were orphans raised by Maria, and Keagan Myers, in particular, was in the most critical condition. He didn't have much time left to live, so Charlie felt compelled to offer assistance.

Moreover, Keagan Myers had shown kindness to his father by knowing him.

Considering both his emotions and rationality, he couldn't simply stand by and ignore Keagan Myers's current situation.

Thus, he said, "Gentlemen, I have urgent matters to attend to today. After I resolve them, I will visit you three again. At that time, I will prepare some things that can improve your quality of life. I believe it will be beneficial for all three of you."

The three of them were taken aback.

They didn't know much about Charlie, only that he possessed great supernatural powers and was Maria's benefactor. They were unaware of the effectiveness of Charlie's medicine.

At this moment, Maria, filled with joy, chimed in, "Keagan, as I've mentioned, your birthplace is in Aurous Hill. It seems that everything depends on Mr. Wade. Why don't you thank Mr. Wade for saving your life?" She raised an eyebrow, waiting for their reaction.

Keagan Myers's eyes widened in disbelief.

Maria turned to the other two and urged, "Marius, Larry, Mr. Wade is bestowing good fortune upon you. What are you waiting for?"

Excitement surged within them, and they were on the verge of bowing down to Charlie.

Charlie quickly intervened, using both hands to stop them. He said, "Please, esteemed elders, do not inconvenience yourselves. I am pressed for time, and I will come to visit tomorrow to discuss matters in detail." With that, he looked at Maria and added, "Miss Clark, let us depart."

Maria nodded gently and immediately addressed the three of them, "Later, you may resume your regular activities."

Larry Cole respectfully replied, "Yes, Miss."

In the courtyard of Zilian Villa, a Rolls-Royce awaited, its door open.

Maria prepared to take the driver's seat, but Charlie stepped forward and said, "Miss Clark, allow me to drive."

Maria nodded, making her way to the passenger seat.

After they entered the car, Charlie drove down the mountain toward Thompson First.

During the journey, Maria expressed her gratitude, saying, "Master, Marius and the others are quite old. If it weren't for your divine intervention, they would have difficulty surviving for another three to five years. On their behalf, I thank you for your kindness."

Charlie smiled faintly and responded, "It's merely three pills; it's not a great favor. Besides, Mr. Myers and my father were old acquaintances. Now that we've met, it's only natural that we can't stand idly by."

Glancing at Maria, he continued, "As you mentioned, you haven't taken in orphans since World War II. The youngest of these orphans must be seventy or eighty years old by now, correct?"

Maria suddenly appeared somewhat melancholic, letting out a soft sigh. She spoke, "These individuals... although I have always told them that I treat them as servants since they reached an understanding, in my heart, I've always regarded them as family. The strict master-servant relationship is maintained to ensure I don't reveal my vulnerabilities. But when they pass away, one by one, my heart aches deeply."

Charlie nodded earnestly, understanding her sentiments. He said, "Now, these three esteemed elders can finally accompany you. If I can extend their lifespans, they will be able to stay by your side for longer. As a young woman, you lack the ability to protect yourself. Having them by your side will provide much-needed support."

Then, Charlie continued, "If Aurous Hill can remain safe and secure, Miss Clark can live here permanently. I am here, and if you ever need assistance, I will be there to help. I will do everything in my power."

Maria recognized Charlie's genuine concern for her and his empathy towards her three-hundred-year-long struggle. She looked at him gratefully, her voice choked with sobs, "My dear, thank you for your love..."

Charlie spoke with utmost sincerity, "Miss Clark, in my eyes, the greatest acts of kindness in this world are those of parents and life-saving grace. You saved my life, and I will never turn my back on you in any circumstances."

Charlie's words resonated from the depths of his heart.

He understood the immense hardships that Maria had endured throughout her life. He knew that once these elderly individuals passed away, she would be left with no one to rely on, just like the early years after taking the Eternal Green Pill.

Hence, Charlie had made a firm decision that he would not let Maria lose her support in the next hundred years of her life.

At that moment, tears streamed down Maria's face.

For over three hundred years, she had never entertained the notion of relying on others. Reality had never offered her the opportunity to lean on someone. But now, for the first time, she felt that her life had finally found its pillar of support – and that pillar was Charlie by her side!

Chapter 5430

When Charlie returned to Thompson First, he found Jacob engaged in a heated argument with Elaine. As he entered the house with the cylinder containing Morvel Bazin's portrait, he overheard Jacob complaining, "You claim you do nothing all day, not even cooking breakfast. If you don't want to cook, fine, just order some extra portions. You're full after ordering, and you don't even leave me any leftovers. I have to rush to the association, and you can't let me go hungry!"

Elaine responded confidently, "Didn't you hear me? Cook for yourself. You have enough food and clothing. Why don't you wake up early and cook for me? It's wishful thinking to expect me to cook for you! Besides, ordering doesn't cost much. If you give me a monthly allowance of 180,000, I'll arrange three meals a day for you. Clear enough?"

Angrily, Jacob retorted, "You're obsessed with money!"

After venting his frustration, he made his way to leave the living room but was surprised to see Charlie entering. He quickly asked, "Good son-in-law, why are you back so early?"

Charlie smiled and replied, "The business with the client is almost done, so I hurried back."

Taking the opportunity, Charlie asked, "By the way, Dad, how is the calligraphy and painting exhibition of your Painting and Calligraphy Association coming along?"

Sighing, Jacob responded somewhat dejectedly, "The calligraphy and painting exhibition is still in preparation. The Cultural Department has been very supportive and provided significant assistance. The association members have also found some excellent paintings. We have finalized over 300 exhibits."

Charlie smiled and commented, "That sounds great. Why the frown then?"

Downcast, Jacob explained, "I'm worried because while everyone can find exceptional works, I can't seem to find any. They've been in this business for a long time, and they have connections with collectors. If they just speak a good word, they can borrow paintings for the exhibition. I feel helpless and don't know where to borrow from! I went to Zachary, but he's no longer involved in calligraphy and painting. Now he deals in wood, selling them for millions. He's even more money-minded than your mother. Apart from him, I don't know anyone else..."

Frustrated, Jacob complained with a displeased expression, "Those association members are the most irritating. Not only can I not find any works, but every time they find one, they expect me to comment on it. Many of them are works from the Aurous Hill School of Painting in the late Ming and early Quintong Dynasties, but the Aurous Hill School of Painting is not well-known, and I don't even know who their representatives are. It's become a source of mockery."

Elaine joined the conversation at this moment, mocking Jacob, "Jacob, it's clear that you have no knowledge! You know nothing about antique calligraphy and painting, yet you dare to hold such a position in the Painting and Calligraphy Association. Isn't that hypocritical? In the past, everyone played along to hide the fact that you are an amateur. Now that you're supposed to offer comments, it's no surprise they want to expose you!"

Elaine struck a nerve, earning her a disdainful look from Jacob. He retorted angrily, "Elaine! I'm talking to my good son-in-law. What's your business here? Are you satisfied after eating?"

Smirking, Elaine replied, "Yes, I'm quite satisfied. Just finished my meal, why? Do you have a problem with that?"

Impatiently waving his hand, Jacob dismissed her, saying, "Whether you're satisfied or not, I don't care. I don't want to talk to you."

Disdainfully, Elaine sarcastically remarked, "It doesn't matter if you're lazy or not. But you, the executive vice president, might not hold that position for long. Why would anyone seek your opinion? It's because everyone knows you're an amateur, and they want to expose you as soon as possible!"

Jacob's expression turned even uglier, and he quickly grabbed Charlie's arm, whispering, "Good son-in-law, let's talk outside!"

With a smile, Charlie nodded and followed Jacob to the yard.

Wearing a sad expression, Jacob confided in Charlie, "Good son-in-law, my current situation is quite disadvantageous. There are many rumors circulating in the association, and many people claim that I lack real talent and only hold the executive vice president position because of Chairman Price's support. They say I'm a nepotistic appointment, and now Chairman Price is also in a difficult position..."

Lowering his voice, Jacob continued, "Chairman Price invited me for a meal yesterday and dropped a few cryptic remarks. It seems that many people have been seeking his advice lately, and everyone wants to impeach me. If I can't come up with something substantial, it will be hard to win their trust..."

Nodding, Charlie replied with a smile, "Dad, that's an easy fix. My client has a vast collection of paintings, and it so happens that your Painting and Calligraphy Association is organizing an exhibition. I asked him if he could lend me some paintings."

Excitedly, Jacob asked, "Good son-in-law, what did your client say? Will he lend them to us?"

Charlie said, "My client has a special status, and many of his collections aren't easily shown. However, he was quite interested. When he learned that you were organizing an exhibition, he specifically took out one painting and said he would donate it to the calligraphy and painting exhibition."

With that, Charlie handed the painting tube to Jacob.

Surprised, Jacob exclaimed, "Donate a painting to the exhibition?! What painting is it?"

Casually, Charlie replied, "I'm not sure. This painting is quite mysterious. It has no signature or seal. There's only a line of text mentioning the word Bazin.' Open it and take a look."

Excitedly, Jacob took the tube and eagerly unrolled the painting inside.

Without even going inside, he unfurled the scroll right then and there, holding it in his hands and exclaiming in astonishment, "Oh my! This painting is truly exceptional!"

Charlie raised an eyebrow and curiously asked, "Dad, tell me about this painting. What makes it so remarkable?"

Smacking his lips, Jacob replied, "I can't quite put it into words, but the painting skills are extraordinary. It's so realistic! It's a rare form of realism in the realm of Chinese painting. Look at the old man depicted here; he looks astonishingly real! The way he stands on that massive rock, it feels like he's about to step out of the painting! It's a remarkable piece of art!"

Charlie couldn't help but laugh. He hadn't expected the old man's comments to be so down-to-earth. If Morvel Bazin himself heard those words, no matter how strong his heart was, he would surely be infuriated.

At that moment, Jacob focused on the text on the painting and muttered, "Morvel Sharad, born in the first year of Linde in the Tang Dynasty..." Suddenly, his eyes widened, and he blurted out, "Oh, no way! The old man in this painting is from the Tang Dynasty? Does that mean this painting was also created during that time?"

Charlie smiled and remarked, "Perhaps, but the artist didn't leave a name or date, so let's consider it a Tang Dynasty painting."

Elated, Jacob exclaimed, "The painters of the Tang Dynasty have been gone for over a thousand years, and their paintings are still this magnificent? Amazing!"

Shrugging his shoulders, Charlie chuckled and said, "The key is that this painting has no signature. Even if it was painted by a Tang Dynasty artist, it would be impossible to determine the actual creator. Such paintings are challenging to sell in the calligraphy and painting market. Even if the price is raised, it won't cause much of a stir."

Jacob grinned and exclaimed, "Well, regardless, this painting is exceptional, and it hails from the illustrious Tang Dynasty. It will certainly help me ace the performance appraisal of the Painting and Calligraphy Association!"

In a rush, he turned to Charlie and asked eagerly, "Good son-in-law, can I take this painting, then?"

Chapter 5431

Charlie nodded, a playful smile gracing his lips. "Dad, when someone asks about the painting, just say that you bought it from someone whose appearance you can't quite recall. As for the story of how you acquired it, let your imagination run wild! You can brag and embellish as much as you want, as long as it doesn't stray too far from the main idea."

Jacob looked surprised and suggested, "Good son-in-law, couldn't I simply say that it was a gift from a friend or part of my personal collection? Wouldn't that save face?"

Charlie's expression turned serious. "Dad, other people may not know about this painting, but my client does. If they discover that you've used someone else's painting to boast, they might hold me responsible. Follow my advice instead. If people find out that we are protecting their privacy and not trying to show off, they'll feel more at ease."

Jacob sighed with a hint of resentment. "Alright, I'll do as you say."

A slight smile played on Charlie's lips as he placed his hand on Jacob's arm. He spoke earnestly, "Dad, from now on, remember that you bought this painting near the gate of Thompson First. Someone whose face you can't recall stopped you and insisted on selling it to you for a mere hundred dollars."

As he spoke, a trace of reiki subtly entered Jacob's mind, planting a psychological suggestion that would only be triggered when asked about the painting's origin.

Subconsciously, Jacob nodded. In that moment, a seed had been firmly planted within him.

Charlie smiled and inquired, "Dad, where did you come across this painting?"

Jacob exclaimed joyfully, "I found it! Let me tell you, my good son-in-law, if it weren't for my discerning eye, this painting would still be hidden behind a fake! On Antique Street, someone tried to fool me with counterfeit celebrity calligraphy and painting. But my eye is keen, and I couldn't be deceived by such a scam. I noticed something off about the painting—it was thicker than usual! I suspected there was something hidden within, so I pretended to fall for the trick and bought the fake painting for 5,000 dollars. When I returned home, I tore it open and, behold, this Tang Dynasty masterpiece was revealed!"

Charlie couldn't help but be speechless. It seemed that Jacob, as an old man, possessed an inherent talent for bragging.

However, what Charlie wanted was for Jacob to naturally perform the role he had assigned to him.

He believed that Morgana wouldn't dare to investigate the background of this painting. Nevertheless, he couldn't rule out the possibility that Jacob, being the father-in-law, might inadvertently blurt out nonsense, leading to rumors that would reach Morgana's ears. So, he had given Jacob this particular psychological hint to exercise caution.

Seeing that his father-in-law had fully embraced the act, Charlie nodded with satisfaction. It appeared that not only had Jacob remembered the psychological suggestions, but he also remembered the instruction to freely brag.

He knew that at this moment, deep in Jacob's heart, he firmly believed that he had stumbled upon this painting himself. However, to avoid giving the impression that it was purely luck, he had to concoct a legendary story to enhance its intrigue and elevate his image.

Curiosity piqued, Charlie probed, "Dad, don't you think it's a bit too much to brag to our family like this? Tell me honestly, how did you really come across this painting?"

Jacob smiled, fully aware of the game they were playing. "My good son-in-law, you know me too well. Yes, I can admit that I'm bragging."

With a mischievous grin, Jacob continued, "But let me tell you the truth. I did purchase this painting, but it's not as mysterious as I just made it sound. Yesterday, as I was leaving, a man approached me near the entrance of Thompson First and insisted on selling me this painting for a mere hundred dollars. I thought it looked good, and even if it was a modern piece, it was worth more than a hundred dollars. So, I decided to make the deal!"

Charlie nodded approvingly, a smile playing on his lips. "That's the spirit, Dad! Now, hurry up and secure a place at the Painting and Calligraphy Association. Otherwise, being the executive vice president, you might find it hard to keep your position!"

Jacob's eyes gleamed with newfound determination as he prepared to embrace his role in the exhibition.

Chapter 5432

As the Boeing 777 carrying the three elders soared over the vast ocean, in Aurous Hill, Jacob couldn't contain his excitement. He tightly clutched the portrait given to him by Charlie and steered the magnificent Rolls-Royce Cullinan, a gift from Michaela. Determined and filled with confidence, he arrived at the grand entrance of the Painting and Calligraphy Association.

Jacob's demeanor exuded an air of triumph, akin to a ragtag army celebrating a hard-fought victory before the disciplined forces. Inside the association, he had never been the most popular figure. Most of the attendees were literati and scholars, who, even if lacking in true talent and knowledge, possessed a deep understanding of artistic principles. They were well-versed in the art of "playing a subordinate role," providing space for professionals to demonstrate their expertise while acting as a backdrop. It was a delicate dance, an intricate balance.

Yet, Jacob was the disruptive force challenging the established order—an old enemy redefining elegance. In truth, he knew very little about antique calligraphy and painting. Whenever he saw others engage in the art, he imitated them, albeit with shallow skills and a lack of true mastery.

Such a person was hardly qualified to serve as a foil in the Painting and Calligraphy Association. However, he had climbed the ranks step by step, eventually reaching the position of executive vice president. This achievement evoked envy and discontent among many, leaving a sour taste in their mouths.

Even Chairman Price acknowledged that Jacob was an amateur in the field. Yet, he dared not offend him, considering Jacob's influential connections, particularly with Don Albert. To overcome the opposition, Chairman Price had to set aside his reservations and support Jacob's rise to power.

However, not everyone shared Chairman Price's ambitions or coveted Jacob's connections. While Chairman Price could tolerate him, others couldn't bear his presence.

When Jacob parked his car and approached the entrance of the Painting and Calligraphy Association, he overheard a conversation from within. Someone exclaimed, "Hey, has our executive Wilson managed to find any exhibit worthy of sale?" Another person sneered, "Him? He knows nothing about calligraphy and painting. Where would he find valuable pieces for the exhibition?"

"Exactly!" chimed in a voice. "What did the painter say to him? What did he say to me? He claimed this painting lacks the essence of a mountain and the authenticity of water. At first glance, it's clear that this isn't the work of a renowned artist. I don't even want to waste my breath on him."

The person before them chuckled, saying, "Our Vice President Wilson is just a typical waste of space. He's always the jokester around here. I doubt he can go a single day without making a fool of himself. If Chairman Price wasn't in his favor, I would have scolded him right to his face. If he fails to present something worthwhile at this exhibition, I will publicly call for his replacement!"

These individuals joined forces, putting pressure on Chairman Price to take action.

Jacob's face turned ashen as he listened at the door. Angrily, he stormed in, clutching the painting tube, and scowled, "Are you all gossiping like old women? Whose tongues are you wagging here?"

Everyone glanced at him dismissively, and one person curled their lips, offering a sarcastic remark, "Oh, Vice President Wilson, our calligraphy and painting exhibition is about to begin, and here you are, the executive vice president, unable to showcase a single noteworthy piece. How inappropriate!"

"Yes!" someone chimed in. "Vice President Wilson, even if you can't borrow any remarkable works, you should at least display one or two treasures from your personal collection. As our executive vice president, don't you possess any decent artworks?"

A wave of people joined in, mocking Jacob without reservation.

With displeasure etched on his face, Jacob coldly replied, "You lot are clueless. How can I not possess high-quality goods? It's just that some of the paintings are too large to be brought here!" In that moment, Jacob transformed himself into the client Charlie had described.

The crowd sneered in contempt, paying no heed to his claims. Jacob wasted no time; he placed the painting tube on the imposing display desk reserved for appraisals and exhibitions by the association. He declared, "Well, today I will give you a chance to witness a lost treasure from the Tang Dynasty, a masterpiece!"

"Ha!" scoffed the crowd, their faces contorted with disdain. Calligraphy and painting were not easy to preserve, especially considering the fragility of traditional Chinese painting materials compared to the durability of Western canvases. Most Tang Dynasty artworks had been passed down through countless generations, making it highly unlikely for anyone to possess a genuine piece.

As Jacob unfurled the scroll, piece by piece, the onlookers prepared to relish yet another of his jests. However, their eyes widened in astonishment as the painting gradually revealed itself.

No one had expected the artwork to possess such vividness and life.

Despite harboring reservations about Jacob, their skepticism began to surface. "Isn't this painting style more reminiscent of the modern realist painters? Those who studied Western sketches are adept at capturing such realistic elements," one person questioned. "It doesn't resemble the Tang Dynasty style of painting to me. Tang Dynasty works should have a distinctive touch," added another.

"Exactly! If there truly existed such an exceptional painter during the Tang Dynasty, they would have achieved widespread fame by now!"

Yet, amidst the doubts, the same elderly gentleman who had previously mocked Jacob exclaimed in astonishment, "Oh my, this... the skill of the artist is extraordinary! To be honest, I have never witnessed such artistry before. This painting transcends ordinary measures. Every brushstroke is perfect, the attention to detail is beyond belief. Even lifelong painters may struggle to replicate such mastery!" His words rang true.

The intricate brushwork proved challenging for ordinary individuals to replicate. The renowned Treadway family's ancestor, who had lived to the extraordinary age of one hundred and thirteen, dedicated most of his life to the art of painting. Few artists could compare to his dedication.

Moreover, the Treadway family's patriarch had spent decades painting portraits of Morvel Bazin, awaiting his return. With unmatched proficiency, he flawlessly captured every aspect of Morvel

Bazin's likeness, delivering thousands of brushstrokes without a single flaw or omission. The perfection was absolute!

Another person stepped forward, carefully examining the portrait with a magnifying glass, their excitement evident. "This... this painting is undoubtedly a Tang Dynasty silk painting... The texture, the appearance—it bears the mark of age. It's unquestionably authentic. Moreover, Mr. Thornenn was right! The skill displayed here is truly unparalleled. I have never witnessed anything like it in my entire life."

Corey Dunn, one of the most esteemed figures in the Aurous Hill Painting and Calligraphy Association, held significant influence within the association. Many had called for him to assume the role of executive vice president, making him Jacob's greatest competitor in the eyes of the latter.

Even as everyone marveled at the painting, their initial skepticism gradually transformed into excitement. They gazed at the artwork, growing increasingly awestruck. In their eyes, the painting's skill had surpassed all the great painters of the Tang Dynasty. Its artistic conception was simply breathtaking.

The master, overwhelmed by curiosity, eagerly questioned Jacob, "Where did you come across this painting?!"

Jacob pointed at himself, a tinge of disdain in his voice. "I already told you, I stumbled upon this painting by chance!"

"How could an imbecile like you stumble upon such a treasure?" retorted the master, unable to fully believe it.

Jacob smirked and replied, "I know you look down on me, believing that I lack real talent and practical knowledge compared to you. But in life, sometimes one's worth is not solely defined by talent and knowledge. Sometimes, it's about seizing opportunities. Fortuity favors those who are prepared!"

He continued, "This painting was originally concealed within a seemingly insignificant artwork. But it was I, Jacob, who possessed the insight to perceive that another painting lay beneath the surface. That's why I purchased it and, upon returning home, carefully uncovered this extraordinary Tang Dynasty masterpiece. After all, which Tang Dynasty painting possessed such charm?"

Reginald Bost exclaimed, "Jacob, you truly discovered this painting?!"

Observing the lingering doubt, Jacob rolled up the painting tightly, saying, "If you don't believe me, don't bother examining it. I'll share my painting only to be doubted once more. I tire of this pointless effort." The master, eager to gain another look, quickly interjected, "Jacob—no, Vice

President Wilson—your painting is truly exceptional. Could you allow me the pleasure of admiring it once again?"

Jacob raised an eyebrow and questioned, "You claim my painting is extraordinary. Just how extraordinary is it?"

Without a moment's hesitation, the master replied, "The skill displayed in this painting is simply unparalleled. I have witnessed nothing like it in my entire life!"

Jacob nodded, satisfied with the response. He handed the painting to the master and said, "Since you're convinced, take a good look and indulge yourself."

He then turned to address the remaining onlookers. "You see, this is how individuals with true talent communicate! Unlike you, who waste your days gossiping, speaking ill of others behind their backs. You merely echo the words of others without comprehending a thing. It's like the dog at the head of the village barking twice, and all the other dogs blindly following suit. Yet, if you were to ask why the last dog barked, not a single one would have a clue!"

Chapter 5433

With the Master's approval, the portrait of Morvel Bazin caused an immediate uproar in the prestigious Painting and Calligraphy Association.

Jacob's confidence surged back, and he stood tall with a newfound pride.

Upon hearing the news, Chairman Price hurriedly rushed to the scene. Upon seeing the extraordinary painting, he immediately called his secretary and instructed him to record a video, capturing every exquisite detail of the artwork. The video was to be shared on the official TikTok account of the Painting and Calligraphy Association, aiming to amplify the influence of the ongoing exhibition.

Soon enough, Charlie stumbled upon an introduction to the painting on the association's official TikTok account.

In the video, the cameraperson meticulously captured the lifelike portrayal of the characters, paying special attention to Morvel Bazin's enchanting portrait, which was accompanied by Charlie's own calligraphy.

The release of this video sent shockwaves through the fan community of the Painting and Calligraphy Association's account. These avid enthusiasts, who had witnessed countless Tang Dynasty artworks, found themselves captivated by this unique style. They began flooding the comments section, eagerly sharing the video with fellow connoisseurs.

Before long, the video garnered significant attention and traffic within the local art circles, causing a sensation in the immediate vicinity.

Charlie wasted no time. He contacted the person in charge of TikTok, requesting adjustments to the internal algorithm to further boost the video's visibility. The aim was to push the video to a wider audience, specifically targeting users in Aurous Hill, thereby breaking the confines of the existing fan circle.

Such efforts to break free from the confines of a circle were not uncommon in the world of short videos. While catering solely to a user's preferences could yield positive outcomes initially, it often led to monotony over time. Users tended to gravitate towards a handful of interests, filtering out the vast pool of available content. The algorithm, therefore, had to strike a balance by occasionally pushing popular content from other tags to users who hadn't explored those areas. By introducing users to fresh content, the algorithm could enhance user engagement and retention. Occasionally, videos with exceptional conversion rates became powerful tools in breaking free from the confines of a circle, propelling them to sudden popularity.

The legal profession was typically unpopular, often overlooked by the general populace. However, with the emergence of a notorious outlaw on the Chinese internet, even individuals with minimal interest in the law found themselves captivated by videos related to the outlaw. This served as a classic example of breaking the circle.

While Charlie didn't intend to break Morvel Bazin's portrait out of the local confines, he deemed it crucial to create a ripple effect within Aurous Hill. Utilizing the algorithm's capabilities and internal support, he ensured that the video gained hundreds of thousands of views, eventually skyrocketing to the local hot list.

As Charlie meticulously tracked the video's progress, he simultaneously kept an eye on flights departing from Argentina, destined for the Northern Hemisphere, using aviation software. He deduced that the three elders would never opt for commercial airliners. Therefore, he dismissed ordinary flights and focused solely on private jets and cargo planes.

He monitored the routes of these aircraft closely, expecting that if the video gained significant traction, a particular plane would abruptly turn back towards Argentina over the ocean. This would undoubtedly be the vehicle carrying the three elders.

Meanwhile, on the outskirts of Antarctica, Morgana diligently observed every move in Aurous Hill.

Earlier that morning, a cargo plane dispatched by the Chinese military governor's office had flown over Aurous Hill, lowering its altitude in accordance with air traffic control regulations. The plane's flight path had provided a clear view of Aurous Hill's topography.

Photographs taken aboard the plane were swiftly transmitted to the headquarters of the Warriors Den, where Morgana scrutinized them. Within the valley near Willow Estates, she discovered a circular blank area with a radius of several hundred meters.

Almost instantly, she deduced that Gideon had triggered the formation she had left in his Soul Palace. Gideon was now eradicated and the chances of Zeba surviving were grim. Morgana grew anxious, concerned that the person responsible for forcing Gideon's self-destruction might still be alive and possibly stronger than herself.

Of course, Morgana realized she couldn't ascertain the person's fate. The best course of action was to locate the Evans family and take action once the three elders arrived in Aurous Hill.

Twice before, when she had sought to eliminate the Evans family, an unexpected savior had emerged in the nick of time, thwarting her plans. This clearly indicated that someone had secretly been protecting the Evans family. If that person was still alive, they would undoubtedly remain in Aurous Hill to safeguard the Evans family.

Currently, the Evans family's plane remained parked in Aurous Hill and Morgana had yet to hear news of their departure. Once the three elders arrived and launched an attack on the Evans family, that mysterious protector would undoubtedly reveal themselves.

Morgana intended to eliminate them along with the Evans family. If, during the annihilation of the Evans family, the three elders faced no opposition from any formidable Master, it would suggest that the enigmatic opponent who had been targeting Morgana had perished in Gideon's self-destruction.

Just when she felt that the three elder's trip to Aurous Hill was progressing smoothly, a mobile phone in front of her suddenly received a TikTok notification.

Morgana had altered the phone's IP address and location information, disguising it as being in Aurous Hill. This allowed her to stay informed about the latest happenings in the city.

Now, Charlie's effort to break the circle with Morvel Bazin's portrait had inadvertently included Morgana in the push notification.

The moment Morgana caught sight of the notification, her eyes widened in disbelief. A darkness seemed to envelop her, as if her blood had surged skyward in an instant! She questioned her own eyes, rubbing them subconsciously. Once her vision cleared slightly, she brought the phone closer again.

With a mix of fear and anticipation, she examined the message closely. The tweet began with a 'local' prefix and its title read, "In Search of Morvel Bazin, A Millennium of Traditional Chinese Painting Inheritance!"

With each word she confirmed, Morgana's shock deepened!

In the following moments, her legs gave way and she collapsed to the ground! Unfathomable as it seemed, after four centuries of life, she was confronted once again with the name Morvel Bazin! He was her Master, who had passed away over three hundred years ago, vanishing like a crane flying westward!

In a state of disbelief, Morgana quickly picked up the phone, her trembling hands navigating to the notification.

The phone instantly opened the short video app and the video from the Painting and Calligraphy Association began to play!

On the screen, Morvel Bazin stood at the edge of a cliff, his long hair, white beard and Taoist robes billowing in the wind.

Morgana instinctively covered her mouth, her eyes filled with dread. Her heart pounded erratically as she whispered to herself, "How can Master's portrait appear in Aurous Hill...? But the Master passed away three hundred years ago. Who painted this portrait?"

In the next instant, her heart felt as if it had been struck by a heavy hammer, and she gasped in terror, "So, at the very least, this painting existed before Master's death..."

Suddenly, a narration began in the video, capturing Morgana's attention, "According to expert appraisal from the Aurous Hill Painting and Calligraphy Association, this portrait of Morvel Bazin utilizes silk material and paint that align with the characteristics of Tang Dynasty paintings. However, the level of realism displayed by the painter far surpasses that of other Tang Dynasty artists. This style of Tang Dynasty artwork remains uncharted territory within the domestic realm of calligraphy and painting."

Morgana's fear intensified upon hearing these words! Her nerves were on edge as she muttered to herself, "A Tang Dynasty painting... Could it be... Could it be the work of the disciples Master accepted within the first five hundred years? Why has this painting appeared in Aurous Hill? Why has it emerged today, just after Gideon's demise in an explosion and Zeba's disappearance? Why does this painting suddenly appear now...?"

Lost in her thoughts, Morgana suddenly exclaimed in a panicked tone, "Oh no! That person knows my true identity! They must have discovered everything about me and intentionally revealed the Master's portrait as a warning...!"

The realization struck her like a blow and she continued in a frantic voice, "Who are you? If you are indeed Master's first disciple from almost a thousand years ago, then you must have consumed the Millenium Return Pill! If that's the case, we have no grievances between us. We were once fellow disciples under the same Master. Why do you persist in targeting me? Is there

a connection between you and the Evans family? If there is indeed a connection, speak clearly. I promise I will never interfere with the Evans family again and I will cease my pursuit of the secret of immortality. But why do you lurk in the shadows, relentlessly pursuing me?"

At that moment, Morgana's world crumbled! For centuries, she had guarded her identity with utmost secrecy, fearing that her true age of three to four hundred years would be exposed. But now, with the sudden appearance of Master's portrait in Aurous Hill, it felt as if someone had ripped away her protective veil, leaving her utterly exposed! She panicked like a headless chicken, her voice escalating into a desperate cry, "Furthermore! How did you discover my true identity? Have you known everything about me for a long time, or did you learn it from Gideon and Zeba? Did you acquire all their information? I want to know how powerful you are, strong enough to withstand Gideon's self-destruction! Another thing! By revealing the Master's portrait now, are you trying to intimidate me?"

The conversation inside her had reached its climax. The truth hung in the balance and the consequences were uncertain.

Chapter 5434

Morgana had lived for over 300 years, but she had never experienced fear as gripping as she did now.

A peculiar sense of dread surged through her heart like a torrent bursting through gates, causing her to feel as though she were falling at an ever-accelerating speed.

Despite reaching the age of four hundred, her strength growing with each passing day, her courage had waned over the years.

There were two things she feared most, growing old and dying, and having her true identity exposed.

Consequently, the Warriors Den had many members, but only a few knew the Lord's true identity.

Aside from the four marshals, all the other members belonged to the Mirren family.

These Mirren family members were descendants of Morgana's tribe, relying on her for a life of luxury, which fostered an unwavering loyalty towards her.

However, Morgana showed no mercy towards the few rebels within the Mirren family. She would eliminate those who deserved it.

Moreover, she kept secrets from the Mirren family.

They knew she possessed extraordinary powers and had achieved immortality, but they remained oblivious to her true origins.

The four marshals were no different. They knew she had lived for four centuries, but her master's identity remained a mystery to them.

Amidst her fear, Morgana contemplated this thought.

Initially, she believed Zeba had not perished but had leaked his information to their secret enemies.

However, upon closer reflection, she had never disclosed his master's identity to her.

Apart from herself, only three individuals knew that she was Morvel Bazin's student.

Morvel Bazin himself was one of them, as well as Lucius Clark, her older brother whom she had once deeply loved.

The last person was Lucius Clark's daughter, Maria.

As this realization dawned on her, Morgana's eyes widened, her teeth clenched, and she uttered in a cold voice, "Maria... Could it be that you betrayed me?" She paused, deep in thought.

Morgana recollected a crucial detail and murmured to herself, "The last time I sent someone to apprehend Maria, she was aided by an expert and escaped unscathed. The person I dispatched was the Cyprus cavalry guard. Soon after, Jarvis perished in the fortress where the dead soldiers and Cavalry Guards vanished without a trace... Could it be... Could it be that Maria truly found a powerful ally?"

Suddenly, Morgana entertained another idea—could the artist who created the master's portrait be the same person who aided Maria?

Almost instantly, she dismissed the notion. The mysterious person seemed more like the Evan's protector than Maria's. He had rescued the Evans family in Aurous Hill and guarded them throughout their journey. If he was so concerned about their safety, why would he travel to Northern Europe to protect Maria? However, if Maria hadn't exposed my identity, how did he come to know about me? Could it be... that he met the master on Shizun Mountain and learned of my existence from him? But why, after all these years, did he choose to reveal himself now?

"What's more perplexing," Morgana continued to muse, "if this person truly is a disciple accepted by the master within the last five hundred years, he should consider himself a disciple

of Morgana. Since my older brother must be stronger than me, why would such a formidable person protect the Evans family? How is he capable of protecting them?"

At that moment, a thought flashed through Morgana's mind, and she exclaimed, "Could it be that he too seeks the secret to immortality?"

Frowning once again, Morgana muttered to herself, "If he also desires the secret of immortality, then he should not protect the Evans family..." Her mind was flooded with countless vague and uncertain clues, leaving her feeling overwhelmed.

However, one thing was certain—the moment the other party produced the painting, it served as a clear warning to Morgana. If she persisted in attacking the Evans family, they would undoubtedly retaliate.

This reminded her of Gideon, who had perished in the explosion. She couldn't help but remark, "Come to think of it, Gideon discovered a mystical weapon as soon as he arrived in Aurous Hill, capable of summoning celestial thunder. Now it's evident that his encounter was not due to mere luck; it was a trap set by the enemy!"

"If that's the case," Morgana no longer concerned herself with sorting through the countless clues and possibilities in her mind. Her primary objective was to summon the three elders back immediately.

If the adversary had no fear even in the face of Gideon's self-destruction, then the three elders might prove inadequate against them.

If all three elders were to arrive in Aurous Hill and fall victim to the enemy's trap, their losses would be far more severe.

Three of the four esteemed marshals had already vanished. If the three elders were to follow suit, the Warriors Den would lose over half of its strength in terms of aura.

Furthermore, Morgana worried that by dispatching the three elders to Aurous Hill immediately after the enemy had revealed the master's portrait, she would essentially be declaring a direct confrontation. This would undoubtedly enrage the enemy.

Without further delay, Morgana reached for a satellite phone and called Aemon, who was on the plane.

At that moment, Aemon Mirren had just managed to calm the three elders' apprehensions about flying. Suddenly, he received a call from Morgana. Hurriedly answering, he respectfully inquired, "My Lord, how may I assist you?"

Without hesitation, Morgana declared, "Abort the mission and return immediately!"

"Eh?" Aemon Mirren hastily brought the phone to his ear and walked towards the back of the Boeing plane. Confused, he asked, "My Lord... Why was the mission canceled? The three elders finally left, what would you like me to tell them? They were on their way to Aurous Hill!"

Morgana scolded coldly, "I told you to come back, so come back! Who gave you the audacity to question my decision?"

Aemon Mirren broke into a cold sweat, hastily slapping himself twice before timidly responding, "I spoke out of turn, and I sincerely apologize, my lord. Please rest assured, I will instruct the crew to return to the departure point!" After hanging up, Aemon Mirren hurried to the cockpit.

Passing by the area where the three elders were resting, Balin inquired, "Aemon, what happened? Why did the Lord cancel the mission?" It was then that Aemon Mirren realized his foolishness. Why had he asked the Lord over the phone? What reason had been given? The three elders were present, and none of their conversations escaped their ears. Naturally, the Lord wouldn't share any secrets over the phone.

Quickly, he replied to the three elders, "The Lord suddenly announced the mission's cancellation, but I am unaware of the specific reasons." Bowing respectfully, he continued, "Grandfathers, please wait a moment. I will inform the crew and gather more details. Once we return, we can consult the Lord and determine the course of action."

Upon hearing this, the three elders couldn't help but feel a sense of disappointment. It wasn't that they were eager to carry out the mission in Aurous Hill; rather, they believed that the Lord of England had awakened them from their seclusion for an important reason. Although their retreat had been interrupted, completing the task would undoubtedly lead to rewards from the Lord, allowing them to resume their seclusion with peace of mind.

However, the sudden order to return meant not only the absence of rewards but also the possibility of entering an indefinite standby state. Once in this state, they had no idea when they would be able to retreat again.

Exchanging glances, they could sense each other's doubts and dissatisfaction, but within the confines of the uneasy plane, none dared to voice their thoughts.

Soon, under Aemon Mirren's instructions, the crew applied for a return route to Buenos Aires from air traffic control.

Five minutes later, the request was approved, and the Boeing 777 drew a massive circle in the sky, leaving behind a trajectory resembling a halo, before turning around and heading back to the airport of origin.

At that moment, Charlie, who had been monitoring numerous planes, noticed something peculiar. Most transoceanic flights traveled in a straight line, but one plane completed a 180-degree turn, leaving behind a circular trajectory as it headed toward Buenos Aires.

Observing this, Charlie finally felt a sense of relief.

He knew that his "Empty City Plan" had succeeded!

Chapter 5435

The plane carrying the three elders made a sudden turn, and Charlie felt an immediate shift in the situation deep within his heart.

Facing the imposing Warriors Den, Charlie had managed to secure several victories despite being at a clear disadvantage.

Now, not only had the Warriors Den suffered heavy losses in terms of soldiers, but they had also lost three of their marshals. Even more significant was the fact that Morgana's confidence was starting to waver due to the "Empty City Plan."

Charlie had formed a mental picture of Morgana based on his speculations. Although they had never met, he could sense certain traits in this woman. She was naturally suspicious and extremely cautious.

If it weren't for her inherent suspicion, she would never have been able to utilize nepotism to place the Mirren family at the core of the Warriors Den. If it weren't for her extreme caution, she wouldn't have been so adamant about concealing her true identity, fearing that outsiders might uncover her secret.

Therefore, the more pronounced these traits, the less willing she would be to take risks.

Based on this, Charlie concluded that once Morvel Bazin's portrait was revealed, Morgana would never dare to return to Aurous Hill.

Charlie let out a sigh of relief and planned to call Maria to share the good news, hoping it would bring her some peace of mind.

Unexpectedly, as he reached for the phone beside him, he received a call from Maria.

Charlie answered and heard Maria's voice on the other end, "Young Master, I just discovered that a Boeing 777 departing from Buenos Aires suddenly changed its course! The three elders should be on that plane. Did you see them?"

Surprised, Charlie asked, "You noticed that plane too?"

Maria replied, "Our family has been monitoring flight activities in South America. When I saw the change, I immediately contacted you. But it seems my call is a bit redundant since the young master is already aware."

Charlie chuckled and said, "It's not redundant at all. The fact that both of us noticed the same plane further confirms our suspicions. There might be some errors in our assumptions, and Morgana must have recalled the three elders."

Maria giggled and remarked, "Master, your plan was truly brilliant. Employing the 'Empty City Strategies' not only resolved the immediate crisis, but also forced Morgana to retreat like a frightened mouse. Compared to Zhuge Liang's famous arrow strategy, it's not far off!"

Blushing slightly, Charlie's aged face showed a hint of embarrassment as he replied, "Miss Clark, please don't praise me like that. How can I compare myself to the great Mr. Zhuge? No matter how intelligent he was, he could never match the capabilities of the young master."

After his response, Maria didn't continue on that topic and instead asked, "What are the young master's plans now?"

Charlie replied, "I don't have any immediate plans. My family is still in Aurous Hill, and I intend to meet them. It's time to address the grievances and misunderstandings accumulated over so many years, face to face."

Maria agreed, "Young Master should indeed go meet them. They have been waiting for their grandson since last night."

Checking the time, Charlie realized it was still before noon and said, "Yesterday's battle was truly exhausting. With Morgana now having defeated the three elders and retreated to the Warriors Den, I can finally catch a breath. I plan to rest at home in the afternoon and visit my grandparents in the evening."

Maria concurred, "From last night till now, the young master has gone through so much. A good rest is definitely necessary."

Softening her tone, she added, "In that case, I won't disturb the young master's rest. After you've taken care of your current affairs, if you wish to see me, feel free to contact me."

Charlie replied, "Tonight, I'll go to the Elys-Champ Hot Springs to meet my grandparents at the half-mountain villa. Later, I'll stop by Zilian Villa. Since I made a promise to the elders today, we can't keep them waiting for too long. Especially your grandpa, his health is deteriorating, and he can't afford to wait."

Excitedly, Maria asked, "Is the young master really going to Zilian Villa tonight?"

Charlie affirmed, "Absolutely. But if it's inconvenient for Ms. Clark and the elders, we can make alternative arrangements. If you don't want the staff at Zilian Villa to see me, I can arrive beforehand and keep a low profile."

Quickly responding, Maria said, "Master, the situation tonight is different from this morning. There's no need to hide in advance. Unless..."

Curiously, Charlie asked, "Unless what?"

Shyly, Maria replied, "Unless... unless the young master comes tonight and decides not to leave..."

Surprised, Charlie exclaimed, "Ahem... how could that be... Don't worry, Miss Clark. I won't overstay my welcome. After a brief visit, I'll make sure the three old gentlemen wait for me at your other courtyard."

Although Maria blushed, she couldn't help but pout and grumble inwardly, "Is the young master truly oblivious or is he pretending? Oblivious? The young master can outwit Morgana, so how can he not understand the boundaries between men and women? During the Ming and Tang dynasties, even a glimpse of a woman's arm was considered compromising, not to mention that the young master witnessed everything in my chambers last night. Yet, he's still by his son's side. If this were the era I grew up in, being so close to a man without being married would only lead to one outcome... being thrown down a well..."

Despite living for over three hundred years, Maria's core beliefs hadn't changed since the time she first consumed the Eternal Green Pill.

Since childhood, Maria firmly believed that chastity and finding a husband were of utmost importance for a woman. So, when Charlie emerged from the hot spring pool last night, she had convinced herself that she would never marry in this lifetime.

At this moment, she couldn't help but sigh in her heart, "Young Master, don't you know that the only solution for the Nujia in terms of love, reason and everything else is to marry the Young Master? The Young Master saved my life and I have developed genuine feelings for the Young Master. This is the first time I have experienced such emotions in over three hundred years. Naturally, I wish to marry the one I love. The Young Master has seen every inch of my body and has been intimate with me. If he doesn't marry me, how can the Young Master expect me to behave in the future? If the Young Master is willing to marry me, I can understand the laws and regulations. Since the Young Master has already married a legitimate wife, I don't require the formalities of matchmaking. For the rest of my life, I am willing to be a concubine by the Young Master's side. But if the young master refuses to marry me, then I... will remain unwed for the rest of my life!"

Chapter 5436

Unbeknownst to Charlie, the moment he was sent to Maria by the ring, he unknowingly shattered the girl's chastity. In the Ming Dynasty, a girl's virtue was of utmost importance. If she was seen by a man or engaged in any intimate act, her only choices, besides marrying him, were death or a life dedicated to showing her purity.

Charlie remained oblivious to the fact that Maria had already made up her mind to never marry in this lifetime. The stark contrast in their views on marriage escaped his notice, having been born and raised in a different era.

For Maria, who had experienced both the Ming and Quintong dynasties, it was completely normal for a man to have multiple wives and concubines. She would have readily accepted becoming Charlie's concubine and addressed Claire respectfully as her elder sister.

As Charlie finally relaxed, an unprecedented wave of exhaustion swept over his body and mind, catching him off guard. Although his cultivation had recovered and his reiki replenished, the weariness was overwhelming, discouraging him from even opening his eyes.

Thus, he tore apart the letter he had prepared for Claire and decided to rest at home for a peaceful afternoon. Later that evening, he would head to the Elys-Champ Hot Spring's half-mountain villa to meet his grandparents and their family formally.

Lying on the bed, his fatigued body temporarily relieved, but his mind continued to buzz like an overworked engine, spinning at full speed. Like a rapid slideshow, the events of the previous night played out swiftly in his mind.

Recalling the moment just before he was about to meet his demise, he vividly remembered the profound unwillingness that had gripped his heart. Fortunately, the ring given to him by Maria had saved his life at a critical juncture.

Gratitude welled up within him as he clasped the ring in his hand, closing his eyes to savor the smooth and warm sensation. Once, Charlie had believed that this ring was the grandest scam he had ever encountered, sucking away his reiki time and again, far more exasperating than any telecommunications fraudster. But little did he know that this ring had been silently protecting him and the absorbed aura was, in fact, the stored power that would eventually save his life. Without the ring's repeated depletion of his aura, he would never have found himself in front of Maria during those crucial moments.

Hence, Charlie took out two Regeneration Pills and continued to infuse the vigorous aura from his body into the ring. After a dormant day, the ring now thirstily absorbed every trace of reiki injected by Charlie, akin to a parched land eagerly drinking rainwater.

When the aura in Charlie's body had nearly been devoured, he hastily consumed the two prepared Regeneration Pills. This time, he spared no expense, focusing solely on nourishing the ring.

Several hours later, the Three Elders returned to Buenos Aires on a Boeing 777, transferring to a seaplane for their journey back to the Warriors Den residence.

Throughout the trip, resentment and dissatisfaction filled the hearts of the trio. Their retreat had been abruptly interrupted, just when they were on the verge of breaking through the Soul Palace. They had expected greater rewards after carrying out such a crucial mission. However, they had been deceived by Aemon, who took them on a pointless aerial detour at an altitude of 10,000 meters before bringing them back with nothing accomplished.

Among them, Morgana's state of mind was even more tumultuous. For hours on end, her thoughts were uncontrollable. At one point, she even contemplated personally traveling to Aurous Hill to confront whoever had produced the painting, the mysterious individual who had warned her from afar.

Yet, the idea quickly dissipated, as her cautious nature prevented her from taking unnecessary risks. The most daring act she had ever undertaken was the murder of Lucius Clark after he rejected her advances. Even then, she had caught him off guard, launching her attack from behind.

But now, a mysterious figure lurked behind her, making it too perilous for her to expose herself to their sight. Hence, she could only maintain a respectful distance.

Aemon arranged temporary lodgings for the Three Elders in the secret meeting hall before urgently seeking an audience with Morgana. Once they met, he couldn't contain his curiosity and asked eagerly, "My Lord, did you summon me back due to an emergency?"

Morgana's expression was clouded with gloom as she coldly replied, "My true identity has been exposed."

"What?" Aemon gasped in horror. "My Lord... You haven't left this place in twenty years. Who could have revealed your identity? Could it be Zeba?"

Morgana shook her head, replying, "No, it's not her. She's insignificant. What matters is that this person not only knows my true identity but also knows my Master. Most importantly, they know about my teacher!"

"Ah?" Aemon staggered backward, his astonishment evident. He exclaimed, "My Lord... Your Master passed away over three hundred years ago. How could anyone in this world know him?"

Morgana presented the short video, handing it respectfully to Aemon. Her voice cold, she commanded, "Watch it."

Aemon received the phone with reverence, carefully scrutinizing the video. Shocked, he inquired, "My Lord, is this... the old man depicted in this painting truly your Master?"

"Yes," Morgana nodded solemnly. "The person in the painting is my Master, Morvel Bazin. The artist has captured at least ninety percent of his essence."

Adding further, Morgana speculated, "I believe there's a high probability that this individual knew my Master long before I did. The painting itself was created during the Tang Dynasty, so it's possible that the other person or their ancestors were already acquainted with my Master during that era."

"The Tang Dynasty..." Aemon Mirren's eyes widened as he murmured, "Tang, Quanton, Yuan and Ming... spanning over a thousand years. If the other party truly knew your Master back then, they would be over a thousand years old now. If their ancestors were aware of your Master, it means they belong to a reclusive lineage that has persisted for centuries..."

Morgana nodded gravely, stating, "Now that this person possesses knowledge of me, none of the possibilities you mentioned bode well for my future."

Furthermore, Morgana voiced her confusion, questioning, "What I can't comprehend is why they are determined to protect the Evans family. How are they even capable of safeguarding them?"

Aemon exclaimed, "Could this person have some connection to Lily and Bruce?"

Gritting her teeth, Morgana responded, "Impossible! If they were linked to Lily and Bruce, then what was said between Gideon, his wife and this person over twenty years ago? If the two parties were to engage in conflict, he wouldn't remain idle!"

Aemon frowned, pondering the matter for a while before turning to Morgana and asking, "My Lord, don't you believe there's another possibility?"

"Speak," Morgana commanded.

Aemon deliberately lowered his head and then met Morgana's gaze. He said, "Master, I believe it's plausible that the other person has no connection to your Master whatsoever. They might have obtained the painting by chance, perhaps through Zeba or Maria. Upon learning your true identity and your status as Morvel Bazin's disciple, they deliberately employed the painting to frighten you. Consider this, why would a genuinely powerful individual waste time showing you a painting? Wouldn't it be more authentic for them to lie in wait in Aurous Hill?"

Chapter 5437

Morgana furrowed her brows and inquired, "So, you mean the other party is just bluffing and using the 'Empty City Strategy' on me?"

"Yes!" Aemon Mirren replied firmly. "I believe that might be a possibility."

Morgana nodded, her tone cold. "I've had doubts about what you said, but I have no way to prove it. If I were to send the Three Elders to Aurous Hill, there's a risk that not only will the Warriors Den suffer heavy losses, but we might also provoke the other party even further if the Elders meet a similar fate as the Marshals."

Aemon pondered for a moment before asking, "My Lord, can we send one of the Elders to Aurous Hill to investigate the truth?"

"But who?" Morgana shook her head. "Although I don't know the true strength of the other person, the fact that Gideon's self-destruction failed to kill them proves that they are undoubtedly more powerful than any of the Three Elders. Sending them there would be sending them to their deaths. If the other party is stronger than me, then sending three people would yield the same result."

Morgana continued, "Have you considered that the other party might not be using my Master's portrait to frighten me? They could be using it as a provocation, aiming to lure me out of hiding!"

Aemon Mirren exclaimed with a shocked expression. "You're right... The 'Empty City Strategy' and the aggressive general's tactics may seem similar on the surface, but the potential outcome is different, either one day, one place, or one death. The opponent has had the upper hand in our previous secret encounters and now they likely want to force you to reveal yourself."

Morgana nodded and added, "Furthermore, this person is somewhat similar to me."

Aemon asked hastily, "My Lord, what do you mean?"

Morgana explained, "This person is not only a Martial Artist but also highly skilled in firearms. Since I understand the characteristics of Martial Artists and practitioners of Taoism, I had you train with modern weapons, the firearms and knights. The Dead Soldiers we trained can handle Martial Arts Masters as easily as chopping melons and vegetables. They become nothing more than low-level beings when faced with a hail of bullets. But this person, he's even more adept than me, able to deliver a single shot! He must have thought of using a close-in defense cannon to eliminate a cultivator. His methods are truly ruthless and extraordinary!"

Aemon couldn't help but shudder at the memory of Jarvis's fate, being shot into dust by a close-in defense cannon. Trembling, he said, "Last time, we discovered that three members of the Blackwater Company purchased three close-in defense cannons from the black market in

Eastern Europe. They were the same model as the ones that killed Jarvis. However, besides the Blackwater Company, Landon has been conducting investigations, but we haven't found any significant leads. We even secretly detained and interrogated several Blackwater executives, but they revealed no clues. The suspicious death of the high-ranking official and the subsequent halt in overseas troop deployment indicates that Jarvis's death might have been deliberately attributed to the Blackwater Company."

Morgana let out a hum and commanded, "Inform Landon that there's no need to continue investigating the Blackwater Company. Also, notify the Five Governor's Mansion to cease all external operations immediately and maintain complete secrecy for the next three months."

Aemon replied without hesitation, "Understood, My Lord. I will deliver the message."

Morgana added, "By the way, instruct the crew to prepare. I will depart for Myanmar tomorrow."

Aemon exclaimed, "My Lord, I dare not question your decision, but why would you leave at such a critical moment?"

Morgana glared at him with an icy gaze and scolded, "You impudent fool! Is that a question you should be asking?"

Chapter 5438

Aemon quivered, overwhelmed by the fear in Morgana's eyes. He swiftly fell to his knees, banging his forehead on the ground and pleaded, "I deserve death. I beg for the Lord's forgiveness!"

Morgana snorted coldly, scolding him, "From now on, if you utter another word, you will go back to the ancestral mausoleum in Eastern Shore and fend for yourself!"

The Mirren family's ancestral home lay in Eastern Shore and their ancestral graves were located there as well. However, for the Mirren family in the Warriors Den, being ordered to return to Eastern Shore to guard the ancestral graves was akin to being exiled to the afterlife. Once there, they would spend their entire lives in isolation.

Aemon was gripped with terror. He slapped himself twice, kowtowed and wept, "I deserve death. I deserve death! Thank you, Lord, for your mercy!"

Morgana paid him no attention and calmly instructed, "Leave and make the arrangements as I have instructed."

"Your subordinate obeys!" Aemon kowtowed thrice, as if he had been granted a pardon and quickly scurried out of the room.

Just as Aemon was about to make his exit, Morgana suddenly called out, "Stop!"

Aemon's back went cold and he swiftly turned around, trembling as he inquired, "M... My Lord... do you have any further commands?"

Morgana asked him, "How are the Three Elders?"

Relieved that Morgana was not pursuing the matter further, Aemon replied, bowing respectfully, "My Lord, the Three Elders are currently waiting in the secret hall."

Morgana furrowed her brow and asked, "When I ordered their return, did you notice any changes in their demeanor?"

"This..." Aemon Mirren hesitated for a moment before respectfully answering, "Master, when you ordered their return, the Three Elders appeared somewhat displeased."

"Displeased?" Morgana sneered and calmly said, "These three individuals are dissatisfied because I disturbed their seclusion. It seems that human nature works that way. Offer someone a bowl of rice and they may not show much gratitude. Take away half of their meal and they will hate you instead."

Aemon cautiously asked, "My Lord, what do you think should be done?"

Morgana responded indifferently, "Rewards! Naturally, they should be rewarded! When you lead troops into battle, they should be rewarded for victory, rewarded for their exhaustion and rewarded for their fruitless efforts. However, the rewards will come later. Let them wait and allow them to complain silently. Rewarding them outright will make them feel entitled. It's better to let them contemplate their previous complaints and feel a sense of shame when the time is right."

Aemon was perplexed but could only offer flattery, saying, "The Lord is wise and I am inferior in comparison."

Morgana, recognizing the flattery for what it was, waved her hand impatiently. "Very well, go and prepare a place for them to stay. You shall accompany them for a few days and we shall discuss the rest upon my return."

Aemon didn't hesitate and quickly responded, "Your subordinate obeys!"

After Aemon departed, Morgana paced toward a wall in the main hall where a world map was projected using laser technology.

The main hall had a ceiling height of over six meters and a colossal world map, measuring six meters in height and twelve meters in width, was projected onto the entire wall. Her gaze fixed on Myanmar on the map, then shifted to the neighboring southern province and finally traveled

to the Dian Mountains, thousands of miles away from the southern province. Her thoughts drifted away. She thought of her old friend and then her Master.

The portrait of her Master being used to warn her by someone else today made her whisper to herself, "Master, it seems you underestimated me and my brother. When you left, both of us were by your side, yet you never revealed the secret of longevity to us. After more than three hundred years since your passing, I had to learn the details of the secret from others. Am I, Morgana, truly unworthy of your attention?"

With that thought, Morgana's mind instantly traveled back to 1650, more than three hundred years ago.

In the vast Dian Mountains lay a forbidden place rarely visited by people.

For hundreds of miles, no residents dared to settle there. The reason being that for hundreds of years, an unfathomable miasma had plagued the area. No matter where one ventured, they would end up on the outskirts of the miasma. Inhaling it would result in months of excruciating headaches, nausea and unbearable pain. Some desperate souls, driven by curiosity, ventured into the heart of the miasma, only to meet their demise. Over time, the local mountain folk came to revere this place as an absolute forbidden zone.

However, they were unaware that the epicenter of the miasma was none other than the cave where Morvel Bazin secluded himself for cultivation. The miasma was merely a formation he had set up to shield mortals from the troubles within.

With unwavering determination, he pursued the path to longevity, residing in these mountains alone for centuries.

When Morgana and Lucius Clark were pursued by the invading army into the mountains, they found themselves with nowhere to turn, plunging into the endless miasma.

Had the invading army not set fire to the mountain, infuriating Morvel Bazin, he would never have coincidentally saved the two of them. It was through this rescue that Morvel Bazin learned of the sudden changes in the outside world, with the Han dynasty being overthrown by the Jurchens.

Hence, he accepted Morgana and Lucius Clark as his disciples, imparting his skills and allowing them to continue the fight against the invading rebels. As for himself, he could not abandon his pursuit of longevity and continued to endure rigorous cultivation within the Mountains.

At that moment, Morgana's thoughts jumped to 1662.

During that time, her sole focus was on joining her friend, who was like her older brother, Lucius Clark, in dedicating herself to the cause, even at the cost of her life.

Together, they attempted to assassinate William Saint. However, they had not anticipated the formidable individuals and capable strangers he had gathered. The assassination failed and nearly all the righteous men who had participated in the operation were slain. But she and her brother fought to the death, carving a bloody path for themselves.

Following the operation's failure, both of them were filled with despair. The region was on the brink of collapse and the mainland lacked a main force to resist the Warriors Den. In desperation, Lucius Clark proposed that they seek refuge in Taiwan.

The two struggled to escape the invading army's encirclement in the southern province. Sadly, fate did not favor their aspirations. Before they could complete even half of their journey, news of the Emperor's sudden death reached the mainland.

At that time, the rebels reveled in nationwide celebration.

Overwhelmed by disappointment, both Morgana and Lucius Clark were disheartened.

They realized their limitations in terms of military might. Additionally, the rebel army pursued them relentlessly. Left with no choice, the two returned to the mountain to seek refuge with Morvel Bazin once more. But little did they know that Morvel Bazin was nearing his end during that period.

Recalling these events, Morgana fast-forwarded to the spring of 1663.

The scene from that year reemerged vividly in her mind. She and her brother were meditating when Morvel Bazin, with his brows and beard already white, approached them with a stooped figure. He calmly said, "Lucius, Morgana, come with me."

Although they sensed their Master's fatigue that day, they failed to notice anything amiss. Hence, the two followed Morvel Bazin into his stone chamber.

Morvel Bazin pointed to two cushions in front of him and instructed them, "Sit!"

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Witnessing this, the two of them respectfully seated themselves in front of Morvel Bazin.

Only then did Morvel Bazin begin speaking, saying, "Though the bond between us may be shallow, we are Master and apprentices. You both carry the noble cause of resisting the rebels within your hearts. As teachers and patriots, I hope that you will carry forward this great cause and restore the Chinese nation..."

After finishing his words, he retrieved two pills from his pocket, placing them gently on the stone table before them. He spoke lightly, "These two pills are the same ones Master once mentioned to you. They are called the Eternal Green Pill. If you take one, you can live for five hundred years, five hundred years to witness the twists and turns of history. With these pills, I hope that you can fulfill the grand task of fighting against the rebels."

Upon hearing that the pill before her could grant her five hundred years of life, Morgana's excitement soared. She expressed her gratitude, exclaiming, "Thank you, Master! Rest assured, I will drive the new false Emperor to the afterlife!"

Lucius Clark gazed at the two pills, then lifted his eyes to meet Morvel Bazin's gaze. Anxious, he asked, "Master, why would you bestow such a precious pill upon your disciple today?"

Morvel Bazin remained calm as he responded, "A thousand years may seem lengthy, but it is not so. With a snap of one's fingers, so-called longevity appears to be a mere extension of a normal lifespan. It's like an ingot of gold that can be stretched into an incredibly long golden wire, yet its essence remains that of an ingot of gold."

Lucius Clark's expression turned puzzled. He stammered, "Master, this disciple is ignorant and fails to comprehend your words. I hope the Master can explain..."

Morvel Bazin spoke indifferently, "Lucius, as a middle-aged teacher who has entered the Tao, even though I have lived for a thousand years, more than 900 of those years were spent in meditation and cultivation. Had I not met you, I would have remained oblivious to the changes in the outside world. Reflecting on it now, although I have lived for a thousand years, the true beauty of life lies within those few decades. The remaining 900 years were dull. In hindsight, perhaps it would have been better if I had never embarked on this path and had the joy of family, with children and grandchildren..."

Lucius grew even more perplexed and blurted out, "Master, after cultivating for thousands of years to defy fate, if you were to achieve ascension one day, wouldn't you truly attain longevity?"

Morvel Bazin offered a wry smile and lamented, "Defying fate... How can one truly defy fate? It has been a dream for thousands of years and I, as a dull teacher, have finally realized it."

Lucius sensed a change in Master's mood and quickly inquired with concern, "Master, what troubles you today? Have you recalled something sorrowful that angers you?"

Morvel Bazin waved his hand dismissively and calmly stated, "There is no sorrow, my disciple. It's merely that the deadline is approaching and I feel reluctant."

"Deadline?" Both Lucius and Morgana turned pale with shock.

At that moment, Morvel Bazin spoke indifferently, "The thousand-year deadline for me as a teacher has arrived. Unfortunately, I have yet to solve the next puzzle and cannot extend my life. When the time comes, after you become teachers yourselves, you shall consume the elixir and continue the fight against the rebels!"

Lucius burst into tears instantly, his expression one of disbelief as he asked, "Master, you can't... You can't be joking... You are so strong, how could..."

Morvel Bazin sighed wistfully, "No matter how strong one is, they cannot defy the heavens. All one can do is delay the inevitable. It seems that the end is merely two days away for me as a teacher."

Morgana, standing nearby, had a thought that suddenly struck her. She stuttered, unable to find the right words, "Master, if the end is near... then... then..."

At that point, Morgana hesitated, unable to express her next question.

Morvel Bazin looked at her, a smile on his face as he encouraged, "Morgana, speak your mind. It's all right."

Summoning her courage, Morgana pursed her lips and said, "Master, if your end is imminent, could you pass down to me and Lucius everything you have learned in your lifetime, as well as the instruments and elixirs you have cultivated? Otherwise, if you were to... pass away... all these treasures would go to waste..."

Morvel Bazin glanced at the two eternal green pills and then at Morgana. He understood what she was thinking. Morgana must have believed that after cultivating for thousands of years, he possessed countless treasures that shouldn't go to waste with his passing.

Before Morvel Bazin could respond, Lucius reprimanded Morgana sharply, "Morgana! What are you saying? How dare you speak to your Master in such a manner!"

"No need to reprimand her, Lucius," Morvel Bazin interjected, looking at Morgana with a smile he said "Morgana, I do possess many treasures and knowledge acquired throughout my life, but it is not that I am unwilling to pass them on to you. It's simply that you lack the destined connection to inherit and share in this knowledge, which has been the culmination of my lifelong learning."

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"Do we lack the destined connection?"

Upon hearing these four words, Morgana furrowed her brow and blurted out, "Master, why do we lack the destined connection?"

Morvel Bazin responded indifferently, "Your time spent cultivating is too short and there are many aspects of understanding that practitioners can only grasp through analogy. But once you comprehend the symbolism within the Book of Changes, you will understand that humans possess numerous fates and fate holds the key to everything."

Surprised, Morgana asked, "Master, what exactly is fate?"

Morvel Bazin explained, "Fate is the very foundation of humanity. Specific fates are represented by heavenly stems and earthly branches, or by birds and animals. The emperors of the Manchu and Qing Dynasties, at best, had a strong orientation toward the Ming style. However, if they aimed to defy the heavens, they would need the power of the tiger or python style, or even ascend to the rank of the dragon. The higher the fate, the smoother the path to cultivating the Tao, and the greater the chance of defying one's own destiny."

Morvel Bazin sighed as he continued, "My own fate is that of the Chilin and although the Chilin is mighty, it is insufficient to truly change my destiny."

Curiously, Morgana asked, "Then what kind of fate is sufficient?"

Morvel Bazin sighed once more, "If one aspires to change their fate, the dragon fate is merely a beginner's level. But even so, the dragon's fate alone is only qualified to defy their own life, while those who can truly change their destiny are the very best among the dragons."

After a slight pause, Morvel Bazin continued, "If one possesses the fate of ascending to the dragon rank, their chances of success would be significantly higher."

Anxiously, Morgana inquired, "Master, what are the fates of my brother and me?"

Morvel Bazin replied indifferently, "You and Lucius both have the fate of tigers, which is the lowest among Tao practitioners. Although it won't be difficult for the two of you to enter the Tao, progressing further will be like chasing a dream. The elixir is the opportunity I'm granting you."

With a dejected expression, Morgana asked, "Master, is it because my brother and I are unworthy that you refuse to offer us more assistance? The rebel dogs have nearly unified the Central Plains and we are already weak. Without stronger skills and magic tools, it will be difficult to accomplish the great cause of resisting them..."

Morvel Bazin smiled and replied, "Morgana, my lifelong knowledge and treasures have already been allocated. Only those with a fate greater than mine can unlock them and whoever obtains them will become my true successor."

A glimmer of gloom flashed across Morgana's face. She hadn't anticipated that her master, who was nearing death, would utter such cruel words. According to him, she wasn't qualified to

inherit his skills and magic artifacts at all. The elixir he gave her was already a generous gesture. Deeply disappointed, Morgana concealed her hatred in her heart, not daring to reveal it before Morvel Bazin.

At that moment, Morvel Bazin retrieved a ring and handed it to Lucius. He spoke, "Lucius, you possess a righteous and noble spirit, yet kindness still resides deep within your core. It may bring you suffering in the future. This ring holds great value to me as a teacher, but I no longer need it. So, I bestow it upon you. If you can unravel its mysteries before your time expires, you will gain an additional five hundred years of life, just like me. As a teacher, I hope you will recover our country and land for our people, just as the great General Sima and General Hussars once did. Drive the Huns back to the Northern Desert, conquer the vast ocean on horseback, and seal wolves within the borders of China!"

These words pierced Morgana's heart with even greater sorrow. She understood that the hidden meaning behind her master's words was that she lacked righteousness and fell short compared to her brother. It only served to deepen her unhappiness.

Lucius hesitated to accept the ring and quickly refused, "Master, you have already done too much for your disciple. I cannot accept this ring..."

With a light smile, Morvel Bazin tossed the ring toward Lucius. In an instant, the ring vanished into thin air and reappeared on Lucius Clark's finger.

Before Lucius could comprehend what had happened, Morvel Bazin explained, "Lucius, the ring has recognized you as its Master. Keep it safe, for in times of need, it may save your very fate."

At that moment, two cranes, raised by Morvel Bazin, strolled in. They positioned themselves on either side of him, gently nuzzling against his body while whimpering.

Morvel Bazin caressed the cranes with his hands, then rose to his feet. He declared, "The end of my time as a teacher has arrived. Let us depart from here and never return."

Lucius burst into tears, his voice choked with sobs as he pleaded, "Master, let me bid you farewell one last time!"

Morvel Bazin waved his hand dismissively, "I have practiced within these grounds for hundreds of years. This cave is not just my abode, it is also my final resting place."

He glanced at the two cranes and continued calmly, "Having them with me is enough."

With a flick of his right hand and a wave of his sleeve, Morgana and Lucius's vision turned dark. In the next moment, they found themselves instantly transported back to the cave where they had meditated and practiced before.

Lucius shouted, "Master!"

He dashed out of the cave, only to find that Morvel Bazin's dwelling had vanished without a trace, as if it had never existed.

Stunned, Lucius Clark failed to comprehend what had transpired.

In the valley, mournful crane cries echoed, growing more distant as they traveled westward.

Aware that his Master had departed, Lucius fell to his knees, tears streaming down his face. Choked with emotion, he uttered, "Master... I am grateful for your teachings!"

He struck the ground with his hands three times, producing a resounding bang.

At that moment, Morgana's voice emerged from behind him, "Brother! Why are you paying homage to that old bastard!"

Lucius turned his head immediately, his eyes filled with tears. He shouted, "Morgana! What nonsense are you spouting! Slap your own mouth!"

"Slap my mouth?" Morgana sneered. "That old bastard has cultivated for thousands of years and surely possesses countless techniques, pills and magic tools. Yet, before he died, he only gave you and me a single pill each. His generosity knows no bounds!"

Furious, Lucius scolded her, "This is utter nonsense! Our Master saved us, initiated us into the Tao and aided us in the fight against the rebels. His kindness is like that of our own parents. How can you utter such outrageous words! Cease this!"

"Did I say something wrong?" Morgana roared in anger. "He is about to die, yet he is stingy toward you and me! Why are you holding onto those techniques and treasures? Are you planning to bury them with him? Is there some special bond between you and that old man? If there is, don't we share a similar bond with him?"

Through gritted teeth, Lucius retorted, "Morgana, your words today have left me dumbfounded! I never imagined that you would turn against your own Master! From this day forward, I no longer recognize you as my sister and you no longer acknowledge me as your brother. Henceforth, I only acknowledge you as Morgana and nothing else matters!"

Chapter 5441

Morgana grew immediately anxious, blurting out, "Brother, how could you be so foolish? That old man has lived for a thousand years and he only gives us an elixir to last five hundred years? It's a grand reserve, only for you and me!"

Lucius waved his hand dismissively. "That's enough, Morgana. Let me have a moment. You should leave and go your own way. I will stay here and pay my respects to our Master for three years. You're on your own."

Stamping her feet in anger, Morgana blurted out, "Brother! How can you abandon me at a time like this? Don't you know the love I've held for you all these years? Since you think I blame the Master, then I take back what I said earlier. If the Master gave us two pills to live five hundred years, why don't we take them together, become husband and wife and make the most of these five hundred years?"

Lucius Clark's face turned cold. "Morgana, since Maria's mother passed away, I made a vow. In this lifetime, apart from fighting the rebels and restoring the Ming Dynasty, my only wish is to take good care of Maria. Though this elixir can grant five hundred years of life, I don't know how to spend it. I can't bear to witness Maria grow old and eventually pass away. If you have the heart to live for five hundred years, you can do so yourself!"

Gritting her teeth, Morgana asked, "Brother, after all we've been through, you still refuse to marry me?"

Lucius nodded solemnly. "I've said it before. In this lifetime, I won't remarry."

Morgana questioned further, "Then what about your elixir? Don't you plan on taking it?"

Once again, Lucius nodded. "To someone else, it's nectar, but to me, it's poison. This everlasting elixir would make a father watch his daughter grow old and see his granddaughter age and perish. To me, it's no different than poison, so I won't take it."

"Fine!" Morgana declared coldly. "Since you don't cherish this elixir, why don't you give it to me? If I find a good husband, I can live with him for five hundred years and enjoy the splendors of this world. Moreover, there's the ring Master gave you. Since you lack the will to fight, it's useless for you to keep it. Why not give it to me? If you hand over these two things, I will leave immediately. From today onward, you can walk your path and I will cross my own. In this lifetime, I won't bother you again."

Lucius shook his head, gazing into the distance and muttered, "The reason the Eternal Green Pill is poison to me is because I still have a daughter named Maria. But she's only seventeen and not yet married. I want to give her the elixir so she can live through the five hundred years."

Morgana stood behind Lucius, her veins bulging with anger. Quietly, she placed a hand on her waist and spoke in a cold voice, "Brother, you've truly broken my heart. I, Morgana, have led a remarkable life. Countless young talents wished to marry me, but you were the only one who never considered it, always looking past me. Today, you shattered my heart so severely that I can't bear to live through the remaining four hundred years!"

With those words, she didn't wait for Lucius's response. In one swift motion, she drew a soft sword from her waist, flicking her wrist to turn it rigid. Without hesitation, she thrust the blade into Lucius's back with incredible speed.

Lucius never expected that Morgana, who had always been by his side, treated him like a brother, would strike him from behind. He felt an intense pain in his heart and couldn't help but think of his beloved daughter.

Then, darkness consumed his vision and he vanished from the Mountains and from Morgana's blade.

As Morgana believed her strike would surely end his life, Lucius disappeared before her eyes, leaving no trace behind. All that remained was a dangling sword, stained with dripping blood...

Chapter 5442

Lucius vanished before Morgana's eyes, leaving her utterly bewildered. She couldn't fathom how he disappeared into thin air in an instant. However, it didn't take long for her to deduce that he must have been transported to another realm through the power of the ring. Her shock transformed into furious rage, her teeth gritting together as she let out a roaring protest. "You're so biased, old man! You claimed that neither Lucius nor I were worthy of your inheritance, yet you gifted him a magical weapon capable of teleportation! Why should I be denied such power? Why? Tell me! Tell me!"

As Morvel Bazin's cave and the grievously wounded Lucius vanished, the valley echoed only with Morgana's hysterical outburst. After a while, she wiped the blood off her sword with an expressionless face, returning it to its sheath. Her voice turned cold as she declared, "Brother, from this day forward, we are sworn enemies."

With a step back, she descended the mountain.

Over ten days later, as she relentlessly rushed through the southern province, Morgana discovered that Lucius Clark had been buried deep within the earth and his cherished daughter Maria had disappeared without a trace.

Morgana exhumed Lucius's tomb, confirming his demise and the absence of the ring. From that moment on, she embarked on a three-hundred-year pursuit of Maria. Having witnessed the ring's power to teleport individuals over vast distances when lives hung in the balance, she stressed to those hunting Maria that she must be captured alive and unharmed. However, despite her relentless efforts, Morgana failed to capture Maria throughout the years. This failure left her seething with anger.

After some time, Morgana found herself lost in her thoughts while at the residence of the Warriors Den. Reflecting on those past centuries, a deep resentment lingered within her.

In her relentless pursuit of Maria, she had also sought the master's inheritance. Yet, despite her tireless searching, she had found no leads for countless years.

Over two decades ago, a young couple had entered the Mountain armed with clues they had stumbled upon overseas. Morgana had always suspected that they had obtained the Master's inheritance, but this hypothesis remained unverified. For more than two decades, she had strived to confirm her conjecture, exhausting every avenue available to her, yet the answer she sought remained elusive.

Now, with the sudden revelation of another descendant claiming the Master's legacy and using the Master's portrait as a warning, Morgana experienced an unprecedented sense of crisis and oppression.

Although she dared not venture to Aurous Hill, she decided to return to Shiwan Mountain in her quest to find the Master's millennia-old practice. Ever cautious, she refrained from entering China directly, choosing instead to journey through Burma.

Myanmar shared a border spanning thousands of kilometers with the southern province. Morgana chose this route because it allowed her to cross the border alone and infiltrate the southern province unnoticed.

To reach Shiwan Mountain, one could fly to Vietnam, which was actually closer than Myanmar. However, Morgana planned to visit Lucius Clark's grave in the southern province before proceeding to Shiwan Mountain from the south.

Simultaneously, at the Elys-Champ Hot Springs Villa in Aurous Hill, the Evans family anxiously awaited Charlie's return. An entire day had passed and there was still no sign of him. Food and drink were forgotten as the family longed to see Charlie and confirm with their own eyes that he was safe and sound.

During dinner time, Don Albert arrived at the door accompanied by a few individuals. Knocking politely before entering, he addressed Desmond, who opened the door, "Mr. Evans, I have prepared a sumptuous feast for all of you. These dishes come straight from my Heaven Springs Restaurant, prepared by our finest chef. I personally supervised the ingredients and watched over the cooking process. When I serve the food, I'll have a small portion myself to ensure it's safe. You can dine with complete confidence!"

Desmond never expected a middle-aged man like Don Albert to be so meticulous and thorough. Surprised and grateful, he exclaimed, "You've gone through so much trouble, Don Albert!"

Don Albert hastily replied, "No trouble at all, Mr. Evans. You are all Master Wade's relatives and I am just a subordinate of Master Wade. It is only right for me to serve you."

At that moment, Lady Evans approached and whispered softly, "Mr. Albert, we haven't had much appetite lately. Honestly, we're not very hungry at the moment. We don't know what's happened to our Charlie, no news, no sign of him. We can't put it out of our minds..."

"That's true..." The elderly Samuel Evans sighed involuntarily. "Don Albert, is there any way to contact Charlie?"

Don Albert smiled and replied, "Mr. Evans, Mrs. Evans, Master Wade instructed me to prepare the finest banquet and wine, but he didn't disclose any further details. However, I believe you can make an educated guess."

Mr. Evans's eyes widened in surprise. "Don Albert, are you suggesting... Is Charlie coming to dine with us tonight?"

Excitement filled Lady Evans's voice as she exclaimed, "So could it be true? Is Charlie really coming?"

Don Albert chuckled, "Mr. Evans, Mrs. Evans, Master Wade merely tasked me with arranging the grandest feast and acquiring the finest wine. He didn't reveal any specifics, but I believe your conjectures are quite accurate."

"Wonderful!" Lady Evans's eyes welled up with tears of joy. As she wiped them away, she stammered, "Charlie is coming... Desmond, hurry and prepare everything. We don't have much time!"

Desmond asked hastily, "Mom, if there's anything I can do to help, just let me know."

Nervously, Lady Evans replied, "I'm not sure... It's just that Charlie hasn't dined with us in twenty years. We need to prepare some of his favorite childhood dishes. I still remember he loved my fried eggplant boxes. Go and gather the ingredients as soon as possible, the sooner the better!"

Desmond patiently explained, "Mom, we were brought here by Don Albert in a hurry last night. We might not even have the necessary ingredients, let alone the proper kitchen utensils. Besides, Don Albert explicitly stated that we shouldn't leave this place."

Lady Evans hurriedly said, "Then call someone to bring the ingredients. As a grandmother, I can't just skip the preparations when my eldest grandson comes back!"

Desmond declared "Mobile phone signals have been blocked and we can't make calls through the landline. It's unrealistic to have someone deliver ingredients temporarily."

Don Albert quickly clarified, "Mr. Evans, Master Wade had the mobile phone signals blocked in this area. For the time being, you are prohibited from contacting the outside world."

Surprised, Desmond asked, "There are informants within the Evans family?"

Don Albert explained, "Master Wade is naturally cautious and he suspected the presence of informants. As a precautionary measure, he ordered that you refrain from contacting anyone outside. The outside world has been instructed not to contact you."

He then turned to Lady Evans and said, "Mrs. Evans, I have brought all the chefs from Heaven Springs. They are waiting at the foot of the mountain, equipped with all the necessary ingredients and kitchen utensils. If you need anything, I'll have it prepared and sent to you!"

Lady Evans was overjoyed upon hearing this. With gratitude, she exclaimed, "Oh, thank you so much!"

Chapter 5443

Knowing that Charlie was coming for dinner, the Evans family was as joyous as the celebration of Chinese New Year.

Lady Evans gathered her children to lend a hand, sprucing up the dining table and arranging the delectable cold dishes ordered by Don Albert.

The old man kept proclaiming, "Today is a splendid day! When Charlie arrives, I shall indulge in a few glasses of whatever I please!"

Tece, who stood nearby, quickly interjected, "Dad, you've only just recovered a bit. It's best to avoid alcohol. How about a different drink?"

"A jest," the old man responded without hesitation. "Hasn't the recovery of my health been for this very day? How can such an important occasion pass without a drink?"

Lady Evans smiled and remarked, "Oh, your father wishes to have a drink. So let him have one. After twenty long years of anticipation, he has finally brought his grandson back. Not to mention, I would even like to raise a glass or two."

Desmond hurriedly chimed in, "Mom, why don't you ask Don Albert to prepare two bottles of red wine? You and Dad can enjoy a sip later as well."

Samue Evans beamed, "Alright then! Your mother and I will savor some red wine, while you two can have some white wine with your father and Charlie."

"Sounds good!" Desmond agreed with a nod.

Lady Evans turned to Jack and asked, "Jack, do you fancy a drink too?"

"Returning to reunite with one's family on such a joyous day, I must indulge in more than a few!" Jack exclaimed.

Lady Evans readily agreed, her anticipation evident on her face as she eagerly awaited the arrival of her grandson.

Just as the family finished arranging the cold dishes, they heard Don Albert suddenly shout from the entrance, "Master Wade is here!"

Upon hearing this, the Evans family grew even more excited, and the old man blurted out, "Let's go! Let's all go together!"

"Let's go greet Charlie!"

The other members of the Evans family and Jack followed Samuel Evans as they hurriedly made their way outside without any hesitation or pause.

Meanwhile, Charlie had already arrived at the villa's entrance in the BMW 5-series that his father-in-law had given him.

As the car came to a stop in the yard, the entire Evans family emerged, led by Mr. Evans.

Charlie hadn't stepped out of the car yet, but upon seeing his grandparents and family waiting in front of his vehicle, he couldn't help feeling a tinge of nervousness.

Likewise, the Evans family had stopped about two meters away from Charlie's car, wearing warm smiles on their faces, eagerly anticipating Charlie's arrival.

Taking a deep breath, Charlie composed himself and opened the car door, stepping out.

As soon as he emerged from the car, Lady Evans couldn't contain her emotions. With teary eyes, she stepped forward, tightly grasped Charlie's hand, and sobbed, "Charlie, your grandma has been yearning for you for twenty long years, and finally, you're here..."

Charlie, too, felt a wave of emotions. No matter how much he may have complained in the past, the feeling of reuniting with family overwhelmed any resentment. The bond of blood ran deep, and he felt a sense of guilt. "I'm sorry, grandma, for keeping you waiting all these years..."

Mrs. Evans shook her head, tears streaming down her face, and replied, "No need to apologize, my dear. It wasn't you who should have said sorry—it was your Grandpa Evans and I who should have been sorry!"

The old man's eyes welled up with tears, and he murmured beside them, "Charlie, for the past twenty years, the Evans family has been searching for you tirelessly. We scoured the world, mentioned your name countless times, but never did we imagine that you were right here in Aurous Hill..."

Charlie nodded and confessed, "To be honest, after my parents' accident, my Butler, Stephen, arranged for me to be placed in an orphanage. I hid my true identity all these years."

Mr. Evans couldn't help but sigh, "It seems I underestimated your father's resourcefulness. Only he could have come up with such a daring plan hidden in plain sight."

Relieved, he continued, "I used to believe that your father was the most talented young man I had ever met, but Charlie, you have surpassed even him. Without your secret assistance, I'm afraid your grandma, myself, and your aunts and uncles wouldn't be here today."

Charlie spoke earnestly, "Grandpa, there's no need for such flattery. I carry the blood of the Evans family within me, and I won't simply stand by and watch the family suffer."

Tears welling in his eyes, Mr. Evans choked up, "When your grandfather fell critically ill, and our daughter-in-law came bearing the life-saving pill, did you ask her to deliver it?"

Charlie nodded, saying, "Upon learning of my grandfather's illness, and unable to come personally, I requested Stephanie to rush over with the medicine. Fortunately, she arrived in time."

Mr. Evans sighed, extending three trembling fingers. "Charlie, counting that occasion, I owe you three lives, three lives!"

Charlie smiled and reassured him, "Grandpa, it was a small effort on my part. There's no need to dwell on it."

"That won't do!" Grandpa Evans exclaimed, "Charlie, you are the savior of the entire Evans family. We will repay you in any way we can!"

Charlie waved his hand, smiling, "Grandpa, your words are too kind. Let's focus on the matter at hand."

Quick to intervene, Lady Evans said, "Samuel, Charlie has just arrived. We can discuss these matters later!"

Without waiting for the old man to respond, she turned to Charlie and asked eagerly, "Charlie, what were you talking about? Since you've already met Stefanie, why didn't you bring her along? Grandma is eager to meet her!"

Charlie explained, "Stefanie is currently on a concert tour in the United States. She should be returning to China in a few days. I will bring her here then, so she can meet you and grandpa."

Lady Evans nodded enthusiastically, "Wonderful! That's great news! Charlie, this girl is truly the finest young lady your grandma has ever seen. She was even betrothed to you by your mother a few years ago. You should marry her as soon as possible. Your union will not only be a love story but also a celestial blessing for our family. Your parents in heaven will surely be pleased!"

Charlie replied, "Grandma, I'm already married."

"Ah?" Lady Evans exclaimed in surprise, "Married? To whom?"

Charlie revealed, "Claire, the daughter of the Wilson family in Aurous Hill."

Lady Evans was taken aback, her astonishment evident.

Being the matriarch of the most prominent Chinese family in the world, her stature was unparalleled, and she hadn't even heard of the Aurous Hill Wilson family.

Curious, Lady Evans inquired, "Charlie, when did you get married?"

"Four years ago," Charlie responded earnestly. "At the time, I had nothing and was considered worthless."

Everyone looked at Charlie with anticipation, waiting for more details.

Charlie awkwardly rubbed his nose and confessed, "We haven't had a child yet..."

The news surprised and disappointed them to some extent.

Quickly changing the subject, Samuel Evans said to Charlie, "By the way, Charlie, allow grandpa to introduce you to your three uncles and aunts. It has been so many years, they have changed quite a bit, and you might not recognize them."

Starting with Desmond, Samuel Evans began the introductions. "Charlie, this is your uncle. You've already had some contact with each other recently."

Charlie nodded and calmly remarked, "Uncle, Aurous Hill's Rejuvenation Pill auction—the one where I was monitoring the live feed from behind the scenes."

Desmond chuckled and said, "I had a hunch it was you who kicked me out. You didn't disappoint, kid!"

Charlie smiled and responded earnestly, "Uncle, there are laws within the family, just as there are laws within the state. The first rule of the Rejuvenation Pill auction was that no one could take the pill away. My actions were merely in adherence to the rules."

Desmond hastily added, "I bear no ill will for being held accountable. I indeed violated the rules of the auction and deserved to be expelled."

Curiously, he asked, "Charlie, there is one question your uncle has been itching to ask. Would you be willing to entertain your uncle?"

Charlie nodded, saying, "Of course, Uncle."

Desmond inquired, "Did you know about my true identity back then?"

"I didn't," Charlie truthfully replied. "At the time, you used an alias. I didn't question it much. It was Ferdie Joules, the Lord of the Joules family, who revealed your true identity to me."

Desmond nodded, musing to himself, "I see..."

At that moment, he recollected the recent changes within the Joules family and couldn't help but ask, "Charlie, what exactly happened to the Joules family? Did their significant transformation occur because of you?"

Chapter 5444

The Evans family knew that their 'Benefactor' was the same person as the 'Benefactor' of the Joules family.

However, when Desmond learned that the mysterious figure behind it all was, in fact, his long-lost nephew, missing for twenty years, it felt almost too incredible to believe.

Charlie couldn't keep the secret any longer and spoke nonchalantly, "During the Rejuvenation Pill auction, Mr. Joules planned to purchase a pill, but unexpectedly, his son schemed to seize the power. I had some friendship with Miss Joules, so I helped her and her grandfather."

Desmond nodded thoughtfully and sighed, "Truly unexpected... My own nephew possesses such extraordinary abilities, what a treasure he is!"

Jack, who had remained silent all this while, finally spoke, "Desmond, let's not forget that Mr. Wade once brought me back to life."

"Yes, Yes," Desmond replied, snapping back to the conversation. "It's astonishing! I used to hear my brother-in-law talk about these extraordinary matters and I must admit, I was a little dismissive. I always thought of him as a scholar, a young financial talent who dabbled in strange pursuits. But now, it seems he had already glimpsed the mysteries of the world. No wonder he was so resolute..."

Charlie couldn't help but ask, "Uncle, did my father study the inheritance of cultivation and destiny?"

Desmond nodded, saying, "When your parents were in the United States, they began their exploration. At that time, I didn't believe it, foolishly."

Charlie eagerly inquired, "Uncle, could you tell me more about it? Why did my father delve into these things?"

Desmond pondered for a moment and then began his tale, "It's a long story. At that time, when your father was in the United States, I admired him greatly. I had just graduated from college and he taught me valuable knowledge every day. Your father had a natural gift for learning, not only did he excel in financial management, but he also delved into antiquities and ancient literature. Back then, he frequently kept an eye on the antique and auction markets in the US. If he came across Chinese cultural relics that were lost abroad, he would go to great lengths to photograph them and donate the pictures to Chinese museums. However, one day, he bought a set of books from an antique store in New York. He locked himself in his study for three days. For those three days, he neither ate nor drank, refusing to step out of the study. Concerned, your mother wanted to persuade him to come out, but she ended up keeping vigil by the door with him..."

Desmond couldn't help but sigh at this point, saying emotionally, "You cannot imagine how obsessed they were. For three whole months, they secluded themselves, like hermits, ignoring the outside world. They even had servants leaving food and drinks outside their door."

Charlie's eyes widened and he instinctively asked, "Uncle, do you remember the name of the book my parents were reading?"

Desmond pondered for a moment before replying, "If I recall correctly, it was called something like 'Preface to the Apocra...' or something like that, but I can't remember the exact title."

Charlie gasped, blurting out, "Uncle, could it be the Apocalyptic Book?"

Desmond's face lit up, "Yes, yes! It's Apocalyptic! 'The Preface to the Apocalyptic Book' that sounded peculiar. At first, I thought it was some scripture, but your father claimed it was the key to unlock another world. I thought he was just deluded..."

Charlie mumbled, "The Preface to the Apocalyptic Book... Could it be the preface to the Apocalyptic Book?"

Desmond casually replied, "The preface to the preface, 'Preface to the Apocalyptic Book Collection'."

Intriguing! He couldn't help but think, "The Preface to the Apocalyptic Book... Does that mean the book my dad acquired is the preceding book to the Apocalyptic Book?"

The term 'preface' typically refers to an introductory section before the main text begins. Charlie surmised that if the book his father obtained was genuinely titled 'Preface to the Apocalyptic Book', it might indeed be the introduction to the Apocalyptic Book!

Lost in thought, he quickly inquired, "Uncle, after obtaining this book, were there any peculiar actions or remarks from my father that you couldn't comprehend, or anything that stood out to you?"

Desmond thought for a while and said, "Your father had plenty of actions I couldn't understand. He researched ancient texts and materials and he frequently went on long expeditions with your mother. Sometimes, he'd be gone for weeks, even months. Back then, I thought he was acting a bit mad. I didn't pay much attention to his doings."

Suddenly, Desmond recalled something and blurted out, "Oh, I remember! Your father talked to your mother about something more than once. He said something about people's lives being divided into dragons and phoenixes. He claimed that ascending to the dragon was the most respected, that only those who achieved dragon status could truly ascend to heaven."

Charlie replied solemnly, "My father indeed mentioned that. He was referring to people's destinies."

"Perhaps," Desmond said, frowning. "He didn't bring up these matters too often, but Divine Dragon came up frequently, like a Ph.D. student immersed in their research, muttering about it all day. The odd thing was your mother got involved too, as though they were both brainwashed."

Charlie urgently asked, "Uncle, do you remember any other details?"

Desmond shook his head with a sigh, "It's been too long and I can't recall the specifics clearly. But what struck me the most was your father often talking about ascending to heaven riding on a dragon. He would say things like 'If this doesn't work, then...' 'And then...' as if considering

different scenarios. To be honest, I thought they had joined some sort of cult, obsessing over ascending to heaven."

At this moment, Charlie was even more shocked. He had never imagined his father's connection with the 'Apocalyptic Book.'

Dragon, Phoenix were they referring to him and his mother? Or was Dragon indicating himself? Then there was Divine Dragon, what was it all about? Charlie suddenly felt like he had plunged into a realm of unknown knowledge.

In the 'Apocalyptic Book,' there was no mention of Divine Dragon, and today was the first time he heard of it. He also remembered another word he had recently learned, the secret of longevity that Gideon, Morgana's subordinate, mentioned before he died.

Recalling his parent's tragic demise at the hands of Gideon, Charlie speculated that they must have stumbled upon a remarkable treasure or practiced some profound cultivation method, which led Morgana to target them, ultimately resulting in their deaths in Aurous Hill.

With all these thoughts swirling in his mind, Charlie couldn't help but think of Maria.

While Maria might not know about the secret of longevity, she surely had deep knowledge about matters of fate! Having lived for over three hundred years, her Mastery of the 'Book of Changes' and divination surpassed anyone, even Master Exeor. Perhaps she could shed light on the meaning of a Divine Dragon!

Chapter 5445

Charlie had originally planned to meet Maria at Zilian Villa after having dinner with his grandparents. Consequently, he wasn't in a rush to inquire about the Divine Dragon's fate from her. Deep in his heart, he was still reeling from the shock of his parent's fate.

Charlie's perception of his parents underwent a radical transformation when his uncle disclosed that they had studied something similar to the prologue of the Apocalyptic Book more than two decades ago.

He had never imagined that his parents were deeply involved in cultivation. Even more surprising was the revelation that they had obtained the prologue of the 'Apocalyptic Book' more than two decades ago.

For Charlie, this revelation was like a nuclear bomb exploding in his mind!

"My father accidentally got the 'Preface to the Apocalyptic Book,' whereas I chanced upon the 'Apocalyptic Book' itself twenty years later at Jasmine's antique store. Is it truly just a coincidence? Or is there a hidden connection that spans across these two events?"

As he pondered these questions, a chill ran down Charlie's spine.

After his parent's passing, he unknowingly ventured down the path they had left behind. Was this some divine arrangement for him to inherit their legacy? But then, why hadn't his parents said a word about it back then?

Unable to contain his doubts, he turned to Desmond and asked, "Uncle, did my parents mention crossing paths with someone or some organization?"

Desmond replied, "About a year before your mother passed away, when she took you back to the United States to visit your grandparents, she told me that she and your father had offended a very ancient organization while exploring a significant matter."

Curiously, Charlie inquired, "What is this organization called?"

Just as Desmond was about to respond, the wise old man, Samuel Evans, interjected, "Charlie, your mother had already revealed that the group your parents encountered was none other than the notorious Warrior Den. They've existed since the end of the Ming Dynasty and remain a powerful force today. At the time, I didn't take it too seriously, as I thought organizations like the Quin Gang, which have histories spanning hundreds of years, are merely famous but lack substantial power. Furthermore, your mother mentioned that the leader of the Warrior Den might have lived for over 300 years, which I dismissed as nonsense and couldn't shake off my skepticism."

The old man's voice carried a tone of deep regret, "If only I had paid more heed to your mother's words, perhaps things would have unfolded differently."

Desmond sighed, "You're right... Back then, we didn't take my sister's words seriously. We assumed she was just following her husband into something eccentric and didn't think her words could turn out to be true."

Charlie observed the deep remorse on the old man's face and felt some of his earlier grievances dissipate. He consoled him, "Grandpa, there's no need to blame yourself. Even with the combined strength of the Evans family, confronting the Warrior Den could have resulted in disaster over 20 years ago. The Warriors Den's power exceeds your imagination and they could have easily dealt with the Evans family."

The old man sighed, acknowledging, "I experienced their strength firsthand during my last visit to New York. I never would have thought that they had secretly inserted an undercover agent into our midst for such an extended period, orchestrating events such as weddings and births in such a calculated manner that it would arouse no suspicion whatsoever. When I think about it now, it sends shivers down my spine. Who spends that much time planning a conspiracy?"

Moreover, they already have eyes and ears everywhere, making it difficult for us to remain hidden while they've been planning all this time."

Charlie added seriously, "I don't understand either. With their strength, they could have easily wiped out the Evans family by sending one or two real Masters. But they haven't taken action in over two decades. I can't fathom why they suddenly chose to attack the Evans family recently."

His second uncle, Marcus, chimed in, "Perhaps the Evans family possesses something they desire? Something they've been seeking all this time?"

The old man inquired, "What could that be?"

Marcus shook his head, "Dad, I don't know what it could be. I'm just throwing out possibilities to see if they resonate with anyone."

Samuel Evans paused, his brows furrowing in deep thought.

After a moment of reflection, he spoke with a sense of intrigue, "As my condition worsened, the details of what happened after your sister's death eluded me. However, the days leading up to that moment have started to resurface in my memory with increasing clarity. I carefully recollected everything, from when your sister followed your brother-in-law to China until the year she passed away, every single detail. In those years, your sister mostly resided in China, but she would return with Charlie to visit us during the holidays. During this time, your sister never mentioned anything strange nor entrusted us with anything. It was only during her final visit to the United States, one year before her death, that she revealed information about the Warrior Den. But she didn't leave us anything.... I can't understand why the Warrior Den has been observing us for two decades. What are they looking for?"

Charlie's third uncle, Martel, had been quiet for a while before voicing his doubts, "Dad, could it be that they believed my sister left something for us, but after two decades, they finally realized she hadn't left them anything valuable, so they became enraged and wanted to kill us?"

After contemplating for a moment, Samuel Evans replied, "Your theory does make sense. However, I don't think they'd be that foolish. They are incredibly powerful and spending twenty years just to confirm such a trivial matter seems illogical. There must be a motive behind their investment of time and energy."

Martel nodded in agreement, "Dad, what you say is true..."

Samuel Evans then turned to Jack, the renowned detective and asked, "Jack, what's your take on this matter?"

Jack shared his insights, "Based on my years of experience in solving crimes, a major case like this would require significant preparation time. Uncle Evans, your analogy earlier about

someone staring at an ant for twenty years just to pass the time is highly unlikely. If someone spends twenty years studying ants, they must be doing so to find a way to exterminate them completely. Hence, I agree with you that there must be a significant motive behind the Warrior Den's actions."

Jack continued, "As for why they're acting now, I believe there are two possibilities. First, they've planned to execute their real purpose at this moment. Second, external factors may have forced them to take action prematurely."

Deep in thought, Charlie asked Desmond, "Uncle, have you read the Apocalyptic Book Preface?"

Desmond shook his head, admitting, "I was never interested in such matters, so I paid no attention."

Charlie inquired further, "Do you have any idea where this book went?"

Desmond replied, "I don't know. After your parents studied that book, they returned to China and I have no idea where it went."

Charlie nodded, realizing that his parent's departure from the United States was not as he had assumed. Previously, he had thought that his father's decision to return to Eastcliff was due to pressure from his grandfather. However, it appeared that his parents had stumbled upon the 'Preface to the Apocalyptic Book' in the United States, which compelled them to embark on a journey back to China to delve into the depths of the 'Apocalyptic Book'.

The secret of longevity that Gideon mentioned before his death might be related to the clues found in the 'Preface to the Apocalyptic Book'.

As this realization dawned upon him, Charlie suddenly recalled a crucial detail. Turning to Samuel Evans, he inquired, "By the way, Grandpa, before my parents left Eastcliff for Aurous Hill, they had some disputes with the Rothschild family, right? Do you know anything about it?"

Samuel Evans confirmed, "Yes, your father did have some issues with the Rothschild family back then. According to rumors, the Rothschild family wanted to establish a foothold in China and expand their interests there. They were openly and covertly competing with several prominent Chinese families. Your father rallied these families together and declared war on the Rothschild family. After several confrontations, the Rothschild family eventually withdrew from China, but they held a grudge against your father."

Charlie frowned, saying, "You mentioned the widely rumored version. But what was the actual situation?"

Samuel Evans sighed and said, "The actual situation is quite complex. From what I know, the Rothschild family didn't initially intend to target those prominent Chinese families. They had been seeking joint ventures and even showed favor to your father. However..."

He hesitated before continuing, "Your father accused them of financial intrusion right from the start, amassing considerable resources to strike them a heavy blow. Later, the head of the Rothschild family's Asia-Pacific division visited him in Eastcliff, but your father refused to negotiate and struck him instead. The head of the division returned to the United States with a red face and the Rothschild family lodged a complaint against your father."

Charlie was taken aback, blurting out, "It doesn't sound like my father's style to resort to violence when negotiations don't go well."

Samuel Evans nodded, "You're right. It wasn't like your father to resort to physical aggression. But he indeed slapped the other person."

Charlie was even more puzzled, muttering, "In my memory, my dad was always a gentleman. Why would he get into a physical altercation?"

Everyone present was equally bewildered.

Samuel Evans continued, "At that time, the head of the Rothschild family's Asia-Pacific division and the person in charge of the complaint called me. I couldn't understand why your father acted that way."

Jack chimed in, "Uncle Evans, can you recall the year when Bruce slapped the head of the Rothschild family's Asia-Pacific division?"

Samuel Evans thought for a moment and replied, "It was a few months before their accident. After that incident, Bruce was kicked out of the Wade family."

Jack theorized, "Perhaps he did it intentionally to provoke the Rothschild family, creating a reason for himself to be expelled from the Wade family. He might have sensed the danger and wanted to sever ties with them."

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Jack's words ignited a spark of enlightenment among everyone present.

Despite living with the family for so many years, he could never understand why Bruce, a man of great knowledge and refinement, had such a violent clash with the powerful Rothschild family all those years ago. Even Charlie, who had always been puzzled by his father's animosity towards the Rothschilds, had harbored the belief that this wealthy super family was responsible for the death of his parents.

However, after engaging in deep conversations with his grandfather's family and Jack today, Charlie finally grasped the true motive behind his father's actions. It was to create a suitable opportunity for himself to sever ties not only with the Wade family but also with the Evans family.

Charlie's father and mother had likely sensed impending danger at that time and their decision to distance themselves from the two families was most likely an act of protection.

Overwhelmed with emotion, Samuel Evans burst into tears and choked out, "Bruce and Lily, those two fools. Why did they choose death over seeking our help back then? As a father, I failed to realize the grave danger they were in and even complained about their estrangement from the family... Now I understand that they simply didn't want to drag us down..."

Jack offered comforting words, "Uncle Evans, you mustn't blame yourself so harshly. Both Lily and her husband knew well, even better than I did, that even if the Evans and Wade families joined forces, they wouldn't stand a chance against the Warriors Den. How could they bear to bring harm upon their own family?"

Unable to restrain her emotions, tears streamed down the Lady's face. Her eyes were bloodshot as she let out a heavy sigh and said, "Lily has always been so independent, never willing to ask for assistance from her family when she encounters hardships. Her brilliant strategic thinking in Silicon Valley catapulted her wealth to unprecedented heights two or three decades ago. Surprisingly, when she joined Bruce on their journey to China, she embarked without a single cent from her fortunes."

The Lady's words added an even heavier weight to the hearts of the Evans family.

The bond among the Evans siblings was unbreakable. Family meant more to them than any amount of wealth. Even though Lily had been gone for over twenty years, they couldn't let go of her.

Now, with the realization that they had been in grave danger back then and had distanced themselves from the family to protect them, their sorrow deepened.

As everyone fell into a somber silence, Tece, Charlie's aunt, suddenly spoke up, "I understand why my sister and brother-in-law didn't want to involve the two families, but what about bringing Charlie with them?"

Her words shocked everyone to the core. A wave of astonishment rippled through the room.

They immediately realized that Tece was right. If the couple had distanced themselves from their own families, why did they bring their only son along?

They must have made up their minds to face death, but if they knew they were going to die, they shouldn't have taken eight-year-old Charlie with them.

Under normal circumstances, any parent would do everything in their power to send their child to a safer place when faced with such imminent danger. But after severing ties with the Wade family, they brought Charlie to Aurous Hill.

Upon closer examination, it seemed unbelievable and incomprehensible.

Samuel Evans couldn't fathom it. He furrowed his brows and looked at Charlie, asking, "You're right... Charlie is their flesh and blood and the more dangerous the situation, the more they should have wanted to keep him far away. So why did they take Charlie to Aurous Hill?"

After finishing his question, he turned to Charlie and asked, "Charlie, do you remember the details before and after your parents brought you to Aurous Hill?"

Charlie pondered for a moment, then spoke up, "It's been over half a year since we arrived. I can't recall all the details, but upon reflection, nothing seems out of the ordinary. I've always believed that my parents came to Aurous Hill because they had fallen out with Grandpa and the entire Wade family. They had to find a new place to settle down. In my mind, it was Grandpa and the Wade family who drove them out of our home and indirectly caused their deaths. For a long time, I held a deep resentment towards Grandpa and his family."

At that moment, Jack interjected, "Uncle Evans, Aunt Evans, Lily and her husband must have made careful preparations for Charlie. They had a contingency plan in place. Otherwise, Charlie wouldn't have been safely transferred by Bruce's subordinates on the day of the accident. Bruce even arranged for Charlie to be placed in an orphanage, replacing all the staff with his own people ahead of time. Anyone searching for Charlie would have encountered only Bruce's loyal subordinates. This alone proves that he had planned everything meticulously."

Jack then spoke with great seriousness, "So, to address your earlier question, I believe that Lily and Bruce took Charlie to Aurous Hill not only out of necessity but also because they held their own secret motives."

Samuel Evans muttered, "I still can't comprehend... Even if they had everything planned, what was the purpose behind it all? No matter how well things are arranged, there's always a chance for mistakes. Facing such formidable opponents, one misstep could be fatal. Moreover, let's not forget that the object of this perilous adventure was not someone else, but their own flesh and blood!"

By all normal accounts, no parent would willingly expose their child to such risks. It would be deemed irresponsible to do so.

In a calm tone, Charlie responded, "Grandpa, I believe that dad had his reasons for making that choice and I don't feel that he was being irresponsible towards me. Everything in life carries a risk of death. Taking a child out in a car comes with the risk of an accident, going swimming carries the risk of drowning and even feeding a child holds the risk of choking to death. Parents must consider these risks, but they can't avoid them entirely. The question they should ask themselves is whether the benefits outweigh the risks. I don't think there are many parents who would keep their children locked indoors to prevent the possibility of a car accident. Nor would they watch their children starve to avoid the risk of choking. I believe my parents had their own reasons and motivations for what they did. I trust that they did it for my own good."

Samuel Evans was momentarily taken aback, then nodded gently. "Charlie, what you say makes sense. Although your parents were young at the time, they were both wise individuals. The abilities and blessings you possess today couldn't have been nurtured within the confines of a sheltered environment. Whether it was the Wade family or the Evans family raising you, it would have been an arduous task, if not impossible, for you to become the person you are today. Perhaps your parents had the foresight to anticipate your future development."

Just then, Jack, unable to contain his curiosity, turned to Charlie and asked, "Mr. Wade, since your parents had already dabbled in extraordinary powers or had some understanding of them, do you think there's a connection between their knowledge and the power you eventually acquired?"

As Charlie posed the question, a chilling thought struck him. "Could it be that acquiring the 'Apocalyptic Book' wasn't a mere stroke of luck? If it wasn't by chance, then what sort of causality led to you inheriting this power, twenty years after your parents passed away?"

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Twenty years had passed and Charlie found himself having dinner with his grandparents and their extended family for the first time. However, he hadn't eaten anything yet and his mind was racing. He hadn't disclosed to his grandparents and Jack that he had obtained the 'Apocalyptic Book.' So far, only Maria knew about it. He had chosen to confide in her not only because she had revealed her own secret of nearly four centuries of life, but also because he felt an inexplicable connection with her. They were kindred spirits, confidants.

At this moment, Charlie longed to see Maria as soon as possible. He believed that he could only reveal the truth about the dragon's fate, the 'Preface to the Apocalyptic Book' and the 'Apocalyptic Book' to Maria. Even if she didn't possess any knowledge of the secret, Charlie felt that she was an excellent person to confide in, someone he could trust with the doubts in his heart. Though he had never expressed it, ever since he had shared his deepest secret with Maria in her secluded courtyard, he felt an unprecedented sense of relief in his heart.

Despite having met only a few times, he already considered Maria his most reliable ally.

At that moment, the elderly Samuel Evans seemed to sense Charlie's unease and quickly changed the topic. He said, "Charlie, I've introduced you to your uncle earlier and now I'll introduce you to the remaining two family members, your other uncle and aunt."

He pointed to Marcus and continued, "Charlie, this is your second uncle, Marcus. He is responsible for the Evans family's international business."

Charlie smiled and greeted him, "Hello, Second Uncle."

Marcus stepped forward and embraced Charlie warmly. He said, "Charlie, from now on, the Evans family is your own. If you ever need the resources and support of the Evans family, just ask!"

Charlie nodded in acknowledgment, and then Samuel Evans introduced Martel, saying, "Charlie, this is your third uncle, Martel."

Charlie greeted his third uncle with respect, saying, "Hello, Third Uncle."

Martel approached Charlie gently and embraced him, unable to hide a sigh. "Charlie, I will always be grateful to you for what happened in New York. If it weren't for you, I would have been blinded by self-doubt and might have destroyed the entire Evans family..."

Charlie patted Martel's arm reassuringly and replied earnestly, "Uncle Martel, don't blame yourself. You were the biggest victim in that situation. You suffered the most. If it weren't for you, my parents, siblings, and I might have lost our lives. So, please don't burden yourself with guilt."

Martel let out a long sigh upon hearing Charlie's words. He had been deceived by his own wife for over a decade, a wife who had become an assassin targeting him and his loved ones. He was undoubtedly the most injured party in the entire incident.

Sensing his uncle's melancholy, Charlie comforted him, "Uncle, what happened to you was not your fault. You were the primary victim of Amelia's actions. Don't blame yourself."

Samuel Evans didn't dwell on the matter and instead introduced Charlie's aunt, saying, "Charlie, this is your aunt, Tece. The last time you went to the United States with your mother, she was just a young girl. She was the one your mother loved the most." Charlie greeted his aunt politely, "Hello, Auntie."

Tece's eyes welled up with tears as she approached Charlie, hugging him tightly. She choked back her sobs and said, "Auntie has been waiting for this day for so many years, finally hoping for our family's Charlie to return. Our Charlie has grown up and achieved great things. Your parents would be so proud..."

Being the youngest in the Evans family, Tece had always been the most cherished. Raised by her older sister, she was like a half-mother to her. Moreover, her three elder brothers doted on her. Although Lily was the eldest and held a special place in their parents' hearts, she received an abundance of love and attention from her siblings.

Tece never took her favored position for granted. She was the most caring daughter and sister in the family. From an early age, she had been greatly influenced by her sister, and their bond had been the closest. Even though her sister had passed away twenty years ago, and she was now older than her sister had been, the image of her dear sister remained alive in her heart.

Seeing Charlie triggered memories of the love and attention she had received from her sister. An overwhelming sense of sadness washed over her.

Samuel Evans glanced at Jack and said with anger, "Charlie, I won't introduce that scoundrel Jack to you. He knew about your true identity before any of us did." Samuel Evans was slightly resentful that Jack had kept Charlie's identity a secret.

Jack, understanding Samuel Evans's complaint, responded helplessly, "Uncle Evans, Mr. Wade is my savior. Without him, I would either be buried in the ground or frozen in a liquid nitrogen tank. Mr. Wade explicitly asked me not to reveal his identity. Can you blame me for respecting my savior's wishes?"

Samuel Evans rolled his eyes and retorted, "I'm not really blaming you, kid. I know you did the right thing. I'm just a little unhappy. Don't I have the right to be unhappy?"

Jack nodded repeatedly and said, "Yes, yes... Uncle Evans, I didn't say anything. During our previous conversations, I discreetly hinted at the high possibility of finding Charlie in Aurous Hill and even analyzed the orphanage for you. The suspicions were significant..."

Samuel Evans interrupted him, annoyed. "You may have analyzed it for us, but you did it too late. If you had mentioned it half an hour earlier, Charlie would have walked in on himself!"

Jack smiled awkwardly, scratching his head, and muttered, "Oh, I didn't expect..."

Samuel Evans waved his hand dismissively. "Alright, I won't hold it against you any longer. I know you did your best. Your uncle isn't angry with you." Clearing his throat, he continued, "Since Charlie is back and everyone in the Evans family is gathered here today, I have an announcement to make in front of all of you."

Everyone turned their attention to the old man, eager to hear what he had to say.

Samuel Evans declared, "From today onward, 60% of the Evans Family assets in various sectors will be given to Charlie. I don't need your opinions. Let me provide three reasons for my decision. First, at least half of our current assets were earned by Charlie's mother. Second,

Charlie has been away from home for so many years, and our Evans family owes him. Lastly, Charlie has saved the Evans family twice and has shown great kindness towards us. Do you all understand?"

Charlie's three uncles and aunt echoed in unison, "Dad, we have no objection!"

At that moment, Charlie spoke up, "Grandpa, the Evans family's wealth belongs to the Evans family, not to me. I cannot accept it."

Samuel Evans waved his hand dismissively and said, "Charlie, grandpa isn't being polite to you. Money isn't important to the Evans family. 60% is just a number, it won't affect your life. However, you need to confront the Warriors Den and enhance your overall strength. Remember, the Warriors Den isn't your sole enemy; they are the common enemy of our family. The wealth of the Evans family can be used to its fullest potential in your hands."

Charlie smiled and responded, "Grandpa, I appreciate your kindness, but I genuinely don't need the money. Furthermore, money isn't very effective against the Warriors Den."

With that, Charlie pulled out two Rejuvenation Pills from his pocket and calmly stated, "Look at these two Rejuvenation Pills. Each one can be sold for one to two hundred billion, or even two to three hundred billion dollars. If I ever need money, I can privately trade them with a few wealthy individuals and accumulate a substantial fortune."

Desmond stared at the Rejuvenation Pills, somewhat embarrassed. "Oh, these are the Rejuvenation Pills I failed to acquire for over 300 billion dollars..."

Charlie smiled and confirmed, "Exactly." He then handed the two pills to his grandparents and said, "Grandpa and Grandma, these two pills are a small gift from your grandson. Please accept them. You're both getting older and suffer from various ailments. These pills can extend your lives by at least twenty years."

Charlie's grandparents instinctively stepped back, and his grandmother protested, "Charlie, these pills are incredibly valuable. You can exchange them for an immense amount of money. It's a waste to give them to us."

Samuel nodded in agreement, "Charlie, you previously gave a pill to save your grandpa's life. How could grandpa accept it again? Moreover, since I came to Aurous Hill, my health has improved significantly. Even my Alzheimer's disease has lessened, and your grandma is also in good health. This time, let's not waste the pills on the two of us."

Charlie smiled faintly and replied, "You mentioned that your health has improved since coming to Aurous Hill. Did it improve during the few days you stayed at Willow Estates?"

Grandpa Samuel confirmed, "Yes, it was after staying at Willow Estates that our health noticeably improved. It wasn't just me, your grandmother and uncle also experienced improvements. I heard that your grandmother consulted a Fengshui master for the villa, and though I was skeptical at first, I'm now convinced."

Charlie nonchalantly stated, "Willow Estates's ability to enhance your health has nothing to do with Fengshui. Fengshui can alter a person's fortune and energy, but it doesn't have an immediate effect like this."

Samuel Evans asked, surprised, "Then how does it work?"

Charlie shrugged and smiled, "When Master Vail visited the villa to assess the Feng Shui, I went along. Knowing about your health issues and grandma's aging, I left a formation and a Rejuvenation Pill there. The logic is simple, the formation can't control the medicinal properties of the Rejuvenation Pill. I designed it to release the medicine slowly within the villa, allowing the occupants to absorb its benefits."

The Evans family was dumbfounded, and the old man exclaimed, "Charlie... you... you left a Rejuvenation Pill worth 300 billion dollars in that house?"

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Facing the old man's inquiry, Charlie didn't hold back and spoke candidly, "I understand that your health hasn't fully recovered, especially concerning Alzheimer's disease, the outlook isn't optimistic. So, before you and grandma arrived, I placed a formation and a Rejuvenation Pill in the villa. The formation will gradually release the medicinal effects of the pill, improving the health of everyone residing there. Interestingly, the worse the health, the more effective the medicine becomes."

The Evans family was left speechless and the old man tried to say something, but his vocal cords seemed partially paralyzed, leaving him mute for a while.

Despite his silence, tears streamed down the old man's face.

At the same time, the lady by his side was also in tears.

Initially, the Evans family offered a staggering 300 billion Dollars for the Rejuvenation Pill, but even if Desmond was willing to pay that amount, Charlie refused to sell it and kicked him out.

However, little did they know that Charlie had secretly placed the 300 billion dollars Rejuvenation Pill in the Willow Estates villa for the well-being of the elderly couple! Not only that,

but now Charlie took out two more rejuvenation pills, making it a total of three! If he were to sell these to the highest bidder, it would be an astronomical sum!

However, Charlie chose to give all three rejuvenation pills to the Evans family. This gesture deeply moved the entire family.

Unable to contain her emotions, the lady grasped Charlie's hand and tearfully said, "Charlie, you're right. We're all family and with this perspective, grandma can now pass away in peace."

Charlie smiled and replied, "Grandma, you're too kind."

He then presented the two Rejuvenation Pills to the elderly couple again, saying earnestly, "Grandpa and grandma, I want you both to know that while the Rejuvenation Pills are valuable, they are much more precious to you in terms of health and longevity. Take them without any psychological burden."

Desmond quickly chimed in, "Yes, Dad and Mom, you both are getting older and Dad still has health issues that need stabilizing. This magical medicine is exactly what he needs. Charlie's showing true filial piety here and you shouldn't refuse."

The lady looked at the old man with a questioning gaze, as she didn't dare to make such a significant decision on her own.

The old man hesitated for a while before looking at Charlie and saying, "Charlie, Grandpa knows that this gift is your filial piety. Your grandma and I accept it, but you must accept the Evans family's shares and assets too! It doesn't matter if you have money or not, this is our sincere wish. Accept our filial piety and our wishes, this is what being a family truly means!"

Charlie's three uncles and aunts all nodded in agreement, especially his second uncle, Marcus, who added, "Charlie, from now on, you're free to manage the assets and resources of the Evans family as you see fit. Count on me, your second uncle, to assist you in whatever you need!"

Desmond also chimed in, "Yes, Charlie, you'll make better decisions for the Evans family's future than any of us. You can't turn down your grandfather's heartfelt offer!"

Charlie had saved the Evans family countless times and generously gave them three Rejuvenation Pills one after another. Touched by this affection, the Evans family held a deep sense of gratitude. They were not ones to owe favors, but now, they felt indebted to Charlie and they all wanted him to accept the family's assets to put their minds at ease.

Charlie responded, "Grandpa, I promise to accept the Evans family's property, but not right now. The Warriors Den is unaware of my existence. If the Evans family transfers all assets to my name directly, my identity might be exposed the same day. So, please hold on to these assets for now and I'll receive them once I deal with the Warriors Den."

Samuel Evans nodded in understanding. He knew that promises alone didn't mean much when it came to assets. In order to provide funds, it was necessary to transfer the money to the recipient's account. Similarly, shares or real estate had to be officially transferred and registered in the other person's name.

However, Charlie's true identity remained a well-kept secret for now. The Evans family couldn't transfer the assets to him just yet. Regardless of whether Charlie genuinely agreed or not, the part of the assets intended for him had to stay under the Evans family's control.

The old man, addressing Charlie, said, "Charlie, put away these two Rejuvenation Pills for now. Once you've dealt with the Warriors Den and the promise to the Evans family is fulfilled, then you can take them out and use them."

Charlie shook his head and replied, "Grandpa, you mentioned that the Rejuvenation Pill is my filial piety to you and the assets are your will. They can't be compared. My filial piety shouldn't be traded for your will. Will you accept my filial piety when you genuinely feel it?"

Desmond chimed in, unable to resist, "Yes, Dad, the Rejuvenation Pill is Charlie's way of showing his filial piety to you and mom. Why do you keep refusing it?"

The old man looked at him, then at Charlie and sighed. He calmly admitted, "Hey, I desire these Rejuvenation Pills more than anyone else. They would free me from Alzheimer's disease and I'd gain ten or twenty more years at least. To someone my age, that's the most precious thing in the world, none can compare."

He paused, feeling ashamed as he continued, "But when I think about Bruce and Lily being murdered and my inability to avenge them, along with the suffering Charlie endured for the past 20 years, I feel deeply ashamed. I let my daughter, son-in-law and grandson down, but ultimately, it was my grandson who saved my life repeatedly, which fills me with even more shame. My words come from the depths of my heart."

Having something but not feeling worthy of it, that's where he stood mentally.

Hearing this, Charlie sighed softly and said with a smile, "Today is a day of celebration. I not only met you, aunt and uncles, but also learned about some past events regarding my parents that I didn't know before. I even untangled a knot in my heart that persisted for the past two decades. It truly warms my heart!"

Samuel Evans couldn't hold back his tears upon hearing Charlie's words. The reason he resisted accepting the Rejuvenation Pill was that he felt unworthy of it. Even though it's his grandson's filial piety, he still doesn't believe he's deserving of such filial piety.

When he heard that Charlie no longer blamed him, the heavy burden in his heart was finally released.

Charlie looked at Samuel and said, "Grandpa, on such a joyous day, I truly want to share a drink with you. So please, enjoy the Rejuvenation Pill first and we can have a good time drinking later!"

Samuel Evans, now relieved, nodded solemnly and said, "Alright! Then, Charlie, you can join me for a good drink later!"

The grandmother, brimming with joy, added, "Charlie, I had Don Albert prepare the ingredients to make you the eggplant box that used to be your favorite when you were young. Do you still remember how delicious it tastes?"

Charlie nodded and smiled, "Of course, I remember. The eggplant box is crispy on the outside and tender on the inside."

Delighted, she took Charlie's arm and exclaimed, "Let's go, let's head to the restaurant! The meal is already prepared!"

Charlie, however, remained firm and said seriously, "Grandpa and grandma, take the Rejuvenation Pill first and then we can eat. There's no rush."

Samuel Evans agreed and said to his wife, "Since it's a gift from our grandson, we should accept it, no matter how serious it is! We owe Charlie so much and if we're blessed with a longer life, we might be able to repay some of it!"

Charlie smiled faintly, knowing that the old man needed a reason to convince himself, but he didn't need any reward in return.

Seeing this, the Lady no longer refused and nodded, sighing, "It's our grandson's filial piety. We can't let it go to waste..."

Charlie saw the opportunity and handed the pills to the two of them.

Inwardly, he thought that delivering medicine to the old man was indeed a complicated process, never straightforward. Unlike the rough and straightforward Don Albert, who took the medicine himself, Charlie had to kneel down, place the medicine on the country's head, take it, knock his head on the ground and thank Master Wade for giving the medicine. It was quite an ordeal.

After sighing, Charlie said to them, "Grandpa and grandma, take the pill now and then we can eat. We've talked for so long and I'm already starving!"

The rest of the Evans family and Jack stared at the elders with wide eyes, watching intently to witness the Rejuvenation Pill's effects firsthand. Even Charlie's uncle, Desmond, had only seen the effect of taking a quarter of a Rejuvenation Pill at the auction but never saw the full effect of taking the entire pill.

The two old couples exchanged glances, eager to see the legendary effects of the Rejuvenation Pill on each other's faces.

The Rejuvenation Pill, however, never disappointed anyone. As the medicine took effect, it was like watching a fast-forward slide show.

The snow-white hair of the old couple rapidly turned mottled black and the deep wrinkles on their faces seemed to fill in. Their slack skin tightened, as if gravity had been defied.

They both stared at each other, experiencing a rapid Rejuvenation. The memories they couldn't grasp before flooded back instantly, yet they didn't feel overwhelmed. Everything that had collapsed seemed to rebuild quickly in their minds.

The Lady felt a significant improvement in her physical condition, making her feel like she did twenty years ago. But this journey through time also brought back painful memories of her beloved daughter and son-in-law, who were killed twenty years ago.

Seeing the Rejuvenation of his partner who had aged together with him, the old man couldn't hold back his emotions and began to cry silently.

The others, not having experienced the Rejuvenation themselves, assumed these were tears of joy and joined in, thinking the elders were just overjoyed. They tried to comfort them, but it took some time for the old couple to regain composure.

Desmond said, "Dad and Mom, why are you two still crying? You both look so much younger all of a sudden. We should be celebrating!"

Tece echoed, "Yes! Dad and Mom, your facial features have gone back at least ten years. It's incredible!"

The two elderly exchanged a look, understanding the reason behind each other's tears.

The old man wiped away his tears and gently embraced the Lady, comforting her like a child, "It's okay, don't cry. Today is a day of great joy, so let's stop crying in front of Charlie!"

The Lady nodded, forcing a smile, "You're right, no more tears. Charlie must be hungry, so let's eat! I've waited for this meal for twenty years, I can't wait another minute!"

Chapter 5449

The chefs of Heaven Springs worked their magic, crafting a plethora of delectable dishes that tantalized the taste buds.

Charlie, no stranger to the delights of Heaven Springs, was not taken aback by the culinary mastery on display. However, amidst the array of flavors, it was the eggplant dish prepared by his grandmother that transported him back to his cherished childhood memories.

The joyous atmosphere of the Evans family was infectious as they raised their wine glasses, toasting and celebrating the reunion with Charlie.

Laughter and excitement filled the air as the family members savored their wine, delving into conversations. They inquired about the details of Charlie's life over the years, and in return, they enthusiastically shared the achievements and events that had shaped the Evans family.

As the evening progressed, stories of Charlie's heroic feats in saving the Evans family from perilous situations emerged, sparking admiration and gratitude from all present.

In the midst of the revelry, Charlie took the opportunity to voice his concerns about potential threats looming over the family. He revealed his suspicions that the Warriors Den might have covertly infiltrated the Evans family, possibly using informants to monitor their every move. To counter this threat, Charlie had entrusted Don Albert to block external signals, ensuring their safety.

"I'm convinced that the traitor won't be someone obvious within the Evans family itself," Charlie asserted. "It's more likely that they are individuals very close to us, perhaps even among those who settled here after my parents left the United States."

Grandpa Evans nodded gravely, recalling a previous incident involving Amelia, who had entered the family's life shortly after Charlie's parents passed away. "You might be right, Charlie, that incident with Amelia still haunts us. It seems that the Warriors Den had already started their infiltration then."

Charlie nodded, his mind focused on the possible link between his parent's past and the current threat. "Before my parents left the United States, they seemed to have no involvement with the Warriors Den. It's likely that any connection lies within that period and the Warriors Den has a unique pattern of operating, they only deploy their own trusted operatives for missions. These 'own people' are fiercely loyal, be it the Dead Soldiers, the Cavalry Guards, or the members strategically placed in different countries and professions. This leads me to believe that the informants within the family are most likely among those who arrived after my parents left the United States. We must thoroughly investigate them."

The old man's brow furrowed, deep in thought. "There were only two individuals who settled down after your parent's departure. One is your so-called third aunt and the other is Tece's husband..."

At that moment, he glanced up at Tece, his mind racing with thoughts.

Tece, too, suddenly felt a surge of nerves and blurted out, "Dad, Eddie shouldn't be doubted, right? His family has a long history in the United States, just like ours. Plus, we've known each other in the business field. Over the years, we've grown closer..."

Samuel Evans spoke gravely, "Tece, we mustn't underestimate the cunning of our adversaries. We can't afford to be overconfident in this matter."

Tece's expression turned uneasy. She had known her husband for more than a decade and their daughter was now twelve years old. It was hard to believe he could be involved in anything suspicious. But she also knew that before the incident with her sister-in-law, she and her husband had a close bond. Everyone saw him marry a beautiful, generous and gentle wife, but who would have imagined that she would turn out to be the one plotting against them? The entire Evans family would have been wiped out, leaving no one behind.

Samuel Evans continued, "After the incident in New York last time, both Marcus and I found Eddie highly suspicious. Shortly after that, Amelia committed suicide by poisoning herself. Our focus shifted to her and it made it difficult to place suspicion on Eddie."

Charlie chimed in, "Grandpa's reasoning makes sense. Going by the timeline, my uncle is indeed the prime suspect. But we can't jump to conclusions just yet. Let's refrain from contacting anyone for now. Once I gather more information, we can discuss the next steps."

Everyone agreed, well aware that until they unmasked the hidden enemies, the Evans family would never find peace.

Tece, too, understood that they couldn't rely solely on intuition to judge her husband. Except for Charlie, no one could provide a guarantee with 100% certainty. Only through a thorough investigation would they discover the truth.

Charlie nodded thoughtfully and proposed, "Since you've already informed my uncle about what happened last time, covering up yesterday's attack will only make him suspicious. So, when he and others inquire, tell them openly that the Evans family was attacked yesterday. Name the assailant as Gideon Alastair from the Warrior Den, claiming to hold the secret of longevity. Mention that the person who saved you last time also confronted Gideon and drove him away with a loud bang, leaving you unaware of what transpired afterward."

Tece quickly asked, "What if he asks about you?"

Charlie replied, "Simple. Tell him I did the same as last time, concealing my identity and revealing myself only through my voice. Say that it was me who rescued you in New York when you were under attack. When the time is right, casually mention that I told Gideon in front of you last night that I would one day take Morgana's head with my own hands!"

Chapter 5450

Charlie knew that this was the perfect moment for a daring move.

Since the plane carrying the three Elders of the Warriors Den had made a sudden U-turn over the ocean, it was a clear sign that Morgana was already rattled.

Seeing her fear, it was time to strike while the iron was hot.

The Evans family wouldn't leave Aurous Hill anytime soon, and they still had connections to the Warriors Den. Capitalizing on this opportunity to spread the word would send a powerful message and make others think twice before challenging them.

With full trust in Charlie, the Evans family had no objections to his plan, and everyone agreed to proceed with it.

As for Tece's husband, Charlie wasn't in a rush to deal with him. He believed that as long as the Evans family kept their affairs clean and secrets well-guarded from outsiders, the situation would stabilize.

Morgana had received her warning, so she wouldn't dare to harm the Evans family again. They could finally breathe a sigh of relief.

During dinner, Charlie shared drinks with his grandfather, three uncles, and Jack.

Even his grandma and aunt joined in, raising their glasses of red wine to celebrate, and the atmosphere among the family became more joyous.

Grandma couldn't resist teasing, "Charlie, you've been married for four years now. When will I get to see my grandchild and daughter-in-law?"

Charlie responded earnestly, "Grandma, until the Warriors Den is dealt with, I can't reveal my identity publicly. Please be patient with this matter."

Understandingly, Grandma asked, "But what about your wife? Won't she be heartbroken if you keep her in the dark?"

Caught in a bit of a dilemma, Charlie replied, "Grandma, this is a delicate issue... I'm not sure what to do at the moment, so I have to put it on hold."

Interjecting, Grandpa said, "Charlie, it's alright to postpone it for now, but have you considered her future? If you delay too long, what if she decides not to wait for you and marries someone else?"

Desmond chimed in, "Dad, Mom, Charlie's personal life is his own business. We should let him decide for himself." The old man nodded, raised his glass, and said, "Cheers, Charlie, have another drink!"

As the family gathering wrapped up, everyone, except Charlie, seemed visibly tipsy.

Then, Charlie announced, "By the way, Grandpa and Grandma, I'll transfer the Rejuvenation Pill Formation of Willow Estates tomorrow. You both should stay in Aurous Hill for a while, and your health will improve even further."

Charlie had already taken the entire Rejuvenation Pill, and the formation itself wasn't crucial to him. What mattered most was the principle of trust and commitment. Since they pledged to follow his decisions, they would stick by them, whether they turned out to be beneficial or not.

Before getting into the BMW, Charlie said to everyone, "It's getting late, Grandpa and Grandma should rest as well."

Grandma quickly asked, "Charlie, will you come over tomorrow?"

"Yes," Charlie nodded, "Tomorrow, I'll head to Willow Estates first to remove the formation, and then I'll come to visit."

Grandma corrected him, "It's not a visit, it's coming home! From now on, wherever Grandpa and I are, it's your home! Let me know in advance, and I'll cook your favorite childhood dish!" She smiled with reassurance, "Now go on, get to work."

Charlie bid farewell to everyone, started the car, and left the Elys-Champ Hot Springs Villa.

En route to Zilian Villa, he made a call to Maria.

As soon as the phone call was made, Maria asked him joyfully, "Is Master done with his work?"

Charlie Wade gave a hum and said, "Miss Clark, I'm driving over to meet you now, I'll be there in about thirty minutes, it's a bit late, I don't know if it's convenient for Miss Clark?"

Maria said without thinking, "Mr. Larry has been waiting for Master, Master will just come directly, Mr. Larry has asked the Old man to settle his subordinates, the three of them have also been waiting for Master."

"Good!" Charlie hummed then said again, "By the way, Miss Clark, there are a few things I wish to discuss with you privately. Would you please grant me some alone time beforehand? Once I have finished addressing these matters, I will be glad to engage in a face-to-face conversation with the three esteemed gentlemen."

Maria said, "Of course there is no problem, I'll let them evade first, after you arrive, you can directly come to my special courtyard!"