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Charlie had a revelation during his recent trip to New York.

He realized that no matter how strong a person may be, they cannot maintain their power in every situation. This truth applied not only to himself but also to Morgana.

It struck Charlie deeply when he obtained image data from the Rothschild family. He saw that Morgana, even in New York, was forced to keep a low profile. She was constantly confined to a helicopter with the registration number N77DT, under the watchful eye of the Rothschild family.

Her proud lineage, cultivated over four hundred years, was tightly suppressed by modern AI models and advanced weaponry, leaving her no room to breathe.

The reason for this suppression was her lack of subordinates to deploy. If she wanted to fight, she had to rely solely on her personal strength and take great risks.

Once Charlie could eliminate all her forces, the unnamed island in Antarctica where Morgana resided would become a larger version of N77DT. He would force her to remain confined, just like the Rothschild family did.

Samuel agreed with Charlie's observation and asked, "Charlie, how much do you know about the external forces of the Warriors Den now?"

Charlie replied honestly, "Apart from Morgana, the Lord, the Warriors Den consists of the Three Elders, Four Great Marshals, and the Five Military Governor's Office. I have already eradicated the Four Great Marshals completely. Under the Five Military Governor's Office, I have eliminated the Assassin's base in Cyprus commanded by the Right Military Governor's Office. It is also likely that the higher-level base, a copper smelter located in Turkey, has been internally cut off by the Warriors Den."

Samuel inquired further, "Do you have any knowledge about the number of Assassin's bases under the Right Military Governor's Office?"

"I don't know," Charlie admitted. "There may be only one, or there could be multiple bases."

Continuing, Charlie added, "I haven't discovered any clues regarding the location of the Right Military Governor's Office yet. It is said that they frequently change their base, being extremely cautious."

Samuel couldn't help but sigh, "You have eliminated one Assassin's base under the Right Military Governor's Office, but you still haven't found any concrete leads on the office itself. It's already challenging enough to find one office, let alone five. It will be a difficult task."

Charlie nodded, "Currently, the Warriors Den has gone silent. It will be even harder to find their clues. But I believe their silence won't last long. Once they start acting again, we will surely uncover some leads."

Jack suddenly spoke up, "Mr. Wade, let me help you with the investigation. I have years of experience in criminal investigation, and I excel at digging deep into things."

Even if there are five military governor's offices in the Warriors Den, they must have left some clues, and I believe I can be of assistance."

Without hesitation, Charlie replied, "Detective Lee, you have retired now, and you just narrowly escaped death recently. Don't take such risks. You already have a good relationship with my grandfather's family. The Warriors Den will undoubtedly keep a close eye on your every move."

"It's fine," Jack reassured him. "My target is indeed significant, second only to Uncle Evans's family, but I can assemble a well-organized team to help me with the investigation and gather intelligence. I will command them from the headquarters base, analyzing and evaluating all the information and clues. This way, the Warriors Den won't pay attention to me."

Desmond chimed in with joy, "Charlie, this is a brilliant idea! In this age of information, not everything requires hands-on work from Jack. As long as we provide him with capable manpower to work under his command, we will undoubtedly achieve great results."

Jack was concerned that Charlie might not want his help, so he spoke up, "Mr. Wade, I have an idea now. If you don't mind, I can share it with everyone and discuss it."

Charlie eagerly replied, "Detective Lee, please share your idea!"

Jack spoke earnestly, "Based on Mr. the Wade's previous explanations, I understand that the five military governor's offices in the Warriors Den are equivalent to the ancient emperor's five feudal lords. They control their own territories, where they establish economic and military systems. They accumulate wealth through various resources and strategic planning over centuries, while secretly nurturing a large number of assassins to bolster the Warriors Den's military power and funding. Am I correct?"

Charlie nodded, "That's correct."

Jack continued, "Although these five military governor's offices have their own territories, these territories only exist within the Warriors Den. In reality, their so-called territories are mostly sovereign countries on different continents, such as the copper mine in Cyprus and the copper smelter in Turkey. Therefore, their primary goal is to hide themselves and avoid arousing suspicion from the host country's government."

Charlie nodded in agreement. "Inspector Lee is absolutely correct."

A slight smile graced Jack's lips as he began to expound on the Dead Soldiers Station. "Allow me to elaborate on the Dead Soldiers Station. Essentially, it serves as a clandestine hub for an illicit militia group. This facility is sprawling, hosting thousands of individuals intermittently. The crux lies in its complete concealment within a sovereign nation, ensuring its operations remain undetected—an imperative for establishing such a sizable enterprise."

"Furthermore, it cannot be just any large enterprise; it must operate in manufacturing or industrial mining to secure extensive land, undertake large-scale civil construction, and procure materials discreetly."

"Moreover, the industry they engage in must possess sufficient tradition, thereby facilitating easy recruitment and deflecting attention from outsiders."

"For instance, an automobile factory with thousands of employees would attract substantial attention globally as a prominent manufacturing entity. Governments, media, and industries would scrutinize it closely. Conversely, a mine with a similar workforce would largely escape notice unless a major incident occurs."

Jack paused momentarily before continuing, "To pinpoint the Dead Soldiers' residence beneath the Right Army Governor's Mansion in Europe, we must amalgamate all traditional industrial and mining enterprises across Europe. Subsequently, employing the process of elimination, we can filter our search."

"European state-owned enterprises or those with state ownership are excluded since the Qing Dynasty wouldn't establish a death camp within such entities."

"Enterprises with fewer than 300 employees are also disregarded as they fail to meet the necessary criteria."

"Leading companies in their respective industries with impeccable reputations are omitted, as the Warriors Den wouldn't convert its death camp into a high-profile corporation."

"Companies with a history of significant safety incidents are eliminated since the Qing Dynasty wouldn't risk exposing its operations."

"Similarly, entities accused of tax evasion, environmental violations, or labor disputes are excluded. The Qing Dynasty invested significant effort into establishing these camps and wouldn't jeopardize them over minor infractions."

Jack's excitement grew palpable as he continued, "Following these criteria, the remaining companies are large yet relatively obscure, moderately profitable, and maintain legal compliance with stable operations and limited growth potential. This

winning process could potentially reduce the initial 100,000 base to merely a few hundred or even a hundred, significantly narrowing our focus."

Desmond, unable to contain his enthusiasm, slammed the table, exclaiming, "Bravo, Jack! You've managed to crack the case with this ingenious strategy! This winnowing process will expedite our investigation, saving us considerable time and effort!"

Charlie, equally exhilarated, chimed in, "Inspector Lee's brilliance shines through! Your insights have illuminated our path forward!"

He then proposed, "I suggest adding a few additional filters. For instance, companies situated more than 100 kilometers from an airport should be excluded. The Warriors Den operates globally and values mobility. Lack of nearby airports would severely impede their logistical maneuvers."

"Absolutely," Jack concurred. "Apart from North America, Asia and Europe have relatively fewer airports. Incorporating this criterion could further slash our scope by over half."

Charlie, struck by another idea, added, "We could also scrutinize the recruitment practices of these companies. The Dead Soldiers Station likely operates as a closed-loop system, recruiting internally. Companies without external recruitment postings should raise suspicion. While this isn't foolproof, it could help pinpoint key suspects for closer examination."

"Indeed," Jack remarked, impressed. "Mr. Wade possesses remarkable investigative acumen."

Modestly, Charlie interjected, "I'm merely an amateur compared to Inspector Lee."

Charlie concluded, "Now that we have a strategy, let's initiate our actions. If there's anything requiring my assistance, please don't hesitate to ask."

Jack nodded, outlining the investigation's stages: "First, we gather information. Then, we filter it. Finally, we conduct on-site investigations."

"The initial phase, information collection, is the most arduous. With countless industrial and mining companies worldwide, meticulous data compilation is imperative. Any oversight could render subsequent screening efforts futile."

Marcus, responsible for the Evans's external affairs, sighed, "The sheer volume of data is staggering. While connections may grant access to corporate information in some countries, acquiring data from most nations would necessitate online searches. Subsequent screening entails extensive manual comparison and verification."

Jack agreed, acknowledging the daunting workload. "Undoubtedly, it's labor-intensive, yet it offers a promising direction. It's akin to finding a needle in a haystack but within manageable bounds."

Undeterred, Samuel proclaimed, "Regardless of the workload, we must press on! Let's allocate one billion US dollars for this endeavor!"

Charlie interjected, "Perhaps it's not as daunting as we anticipate."

All eyes turned to him expectantly.

Charlie elaborated, "AI could streamline these tasks. With updated databases containing vast amounts of internet-sourced data, we can train AI to sift through the information, making our task more manageable."

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"AI?!"

After the old master recovered from his illness, he found himself puzzled by the concept of AI. However, Desmond and Marcus, being younger, had a deep understanding of the global trends in various industries. Detective Lee Jack, with his background, had also been exposed to high-tech advancements, so he had some knowledge of AI.

When they heard that Charlie planned to utilize AI technology to uncover the Warriors Den's assassin base, all three of them felt that while the idea was promising, its execution would be challenging.

Marcus, who was well-versed in the American business landscape, instinctively remarked, "Nowadays, this kind of technology is primarily concentrated in the hands of American companies. Other countries may aspire to catch up, but the gap is insurmountable. These countries may want to develop their own AI models, but the practical difficulties are immense. It's comparable to the chip industry; it's not something that can be accomplished easily. Moreover, the Evans Family's current industrial layout does not encompass AI. How can we leverage AI? We can't simply approach AI companies with our requirements and expect them to do the calculations for us, can we?"

Charlie smiled and revealed, "There's something I haven't mentioned yet. Howard Rothschild has agreed to construct a complete AI model for the Norway Royal Family. The Royal Family will serve as mere custodians, and the true owner of this AI model will be me. I will inform Helena and urge her to press the Rothschild family to build the AI model as swiftly as possible. Once it's constructed and debugged, it

can be trained to serve me. At that point, I will have it focus all its computing power on this matter."

Jack's eyes brimmed with excitement, and he couldn't help but exclaim, "Mr. Wade, once this AI model is built, please grant me access to train it for global screening work!"

"No problem," Charlie readily agreed, stating, "When we return to Aurous Hill, I will have a vacant room cleared out in the half-mountain villa at the Elys-Champ Hot Springs. The control of the AI model will be placed in that workstation. Detective Lee can complete the work there."

"That's fantastic!" Jack exclaimed with joy. "If we can recruit some computer engineers from the Dragon Temple, it would be even better. This colossal AI model is too much for me to handle alone. If the Dragon Temple could have a team of professionals well-versed in AI working with me, we might even be able to cultivate a professional team that possesses expertise in both AI and criminal investigation for the Dragon Temple in the future!"

Upon hearing this, Charlie couldn't help but laugh and shook hands with Jack, saying, "Detective Lee, you hit the nail on the head! The AI model is indeed intended to be operated and trained by the Dragon Temple in the future. With this cutting-edge AI model, combined with the communication satellites and encryption technology the Dragon Temple is developing, it will undoubtedly prove invaluable in the future!"

Marcus couldn't contain his excitement and exclaimed, "This is fantastic! It's like being tired and having someone bring you a pillow, but now it's like being tired and having someone hand you a five-star hotel!"

He couldn't help but continue, "Charlie! Your trip to the United States has truly been worthwhile! You have the Rothschild family, which has dominated Europe, America, and even the world for centuries, under your control. Who would have thought they would be so powerless in front of you?"

Charlie smiled and responded, "It's all due to personal desires. Even the Rothschild family cannot escape the clutches of individual desires. Moreover, the Rothschild

family has already lost the Four Treasures of the Study. According to common sense, their fortune should have declined, making them more and more helpless. It's the natural order of things."

"Excellent, excellent!" Samuel couldn't contain his excitement and repeated his words. He then looked at Charlie and said, "Charlie, Grandfather fully supports your current thinking. Don't rush to meet the leader of the Warriors Den and their elders face-to-face. Make good use of your advantage in the shadows, eliminating their living forces first, while wearing them down and strengthening ourselves. Always remember the great leader's 16-word strategy: 'Enemy advances, we retreat; enemy camps, we harass; enemy tires, we strike; enemy retreats, we pursue.' Once the scales of victory start to tip in our favor, then we can confront them head-on! At that point, the Evans Family will spare no effort, utilizing all our financial and human resources to help you win this battle!"

He continued, "Good, it's not just helping you, it's helping us, helping us win this battle together!"

Charlie witnessed his grandfather's unwavering determination and couldn't help but be moved. Despite being an old man in his twilight years, he was willing to gamble everything and stand by his side. Charlie couldn't disappoint him and couldn't let him lose the bet!

With a resolute expression, he stated, "Grandfather, rest assured, I will do everything in my power to completely eradicate the Warriors Den!"

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After the conversation, Charlie's emotions were stirred. It was already late at night, and his grandfather needed rest. So Charlie addressed everyone, "It's getting late, Grandfather, you should retire early. Uncle, Second Uncle, and Detective Lee, thank you for accompanying Grandfather and successfully carrying out the investment matters. I will return to Aurous Hill now."

Samuel was surprised and asked, "Charlie, are you leaving now?"

"Yes," Charlie replied. "I have a lot to attend to when I return, so I won't linger here for long."

Samuel suggested, "After traveling for more than ten hours, you should at least sleep and leave tomorrow morning."

Charlie smiled and explained, "It's already past 2 o'clock, and by the time I reach the airport, it will nearly be dawn. If I sleep here, it might already be noon tomorrow by the time I return to Aurous Hill."

"Alright," Samuel understood that Charlie was extraordinary and didn't require as much sleep as an average person. He nodded and said, "Since you have made arrangements, then follow your own plan."

Charlie nodded, and Jack, who stood nearby, offered, "Mr. Wade, let me drive you to the airport."

Charlie politely declined, saying, "It's too late, Detective Lee. You don't need to trouble yourself. Just prepare a car for me, and I'll make my own way."

Without giving Jack a chance to insist, Charlie assured him, "In the coming days, I will urge Howard Rothschild to construct the AI model as soon as possible. Detective Lee, take this time to rest and recharge. Once the AI model is officially operational, you will be quite busy."

"Okay!" Jack didn't say much and readily agreed, "I am at your disposal, Mr. Wade."

Ten minutes later.

Charlie arrived alone at the villa gate, and Desmond handed him the keys to the red flag sedan. Charlie then embarked on the drive to the airport, while instructing the Wade Family to prepare their private jet at the Eastcliff Airport.

On his way to the airport, Charlie dialed Helena's number.

When the call connected, Charlie said to Helena, "Helena, urge Howard to construct the AI model as soon as possible. The sooner, the better."

Helena replied, "Okay, Mr. Wade, I'll call him right away."

Then, Helena asked, "Mr. Wade, have you been following the tech news? The AI company controlled by the Rothschild family has just completed another major upgrade and has caused quite a stir in the tech circles of Europe and America!"

"Really?" Charlie asked with curiosity. "What new features did they introduce?"

Helena explained, "I took a look. The significant new feature they introduced is video generation. They have now harnessed their computing power to generate AI videos of approximately 60 seconds based on specified text. Although the video effects are not yet hyper-realistic, they surpass many animations created with expensive virtual engine 3D modeling. It's quite impressive."

Charlie suddenly recalled what Maria had mentioned a few days ago when he was still in the United States.

At that time, this AI model hadn't announced the upgrade yet, but Maria had wholeheartedly praised this AI model. She even predicted that its future advanced functions would include images and videos. She even foresaw a future where, with a simple script, it would be able to generate an entire movie. It had only been a few days, and her prediction had already come true?

Pondering over this, Charlie swiftly inquired, "Since it already possesses the ability to generate videos based on text, why is it limited to just one minute? In theory, it has made a remarkable leap from nothing to something. It should be able to extend the duration to an hour, or even several hours, right?"

Helena explained, "According to the explanation provided by the tech media in Europe and America, although this AI model possesses immense computing power, when faced with millions or even tens of millions of enterprise-level users, the

computing power becomes significantly distributed. That's why they limit the available computing power for ordinary users of this AI model. It's akin to a nuclear power plant; despite its vast power generation capacity, once it has to supply several tens of millions of people, the capacity available to each individual is limited."

Continuing, Helena added, "However, when the exact same model is built in the Nordic region, all the computing power will be at your disposal. At that time, I believe even generating a hundred-hour video will be feasible."

Charlie sighed, "I didn't expect that in just a year or two, the development of AI would be so incredibly rapid. Give it a few more years, and who knows what heights it will reach."

Helena agreed and said, "Your decision to have Howard Rothschild construct an AI model for you is truly a stroke of genius. This model will only become more and more potent in the future."

As she spoke, Helena added, "By the way, NVIDIA's stock price has risen again, and the Rothschild family is the biggest beneficiary."

Charlie also believed that in the future, AI could bring about a revolutionary change in the fundamental logic of numerous industries. It was an absolute disruptor in the industry, and its value would undoubtedly continue to soar.

Moreover, he was grateful to have acquired this top-notch AI model in advance.

Although it couldn't be utilized for commercial purposes, it already held tremendous significance for him.

With this AI model in his possession, the gap between himself and the Warriors Den would undoubtedly diminish significantly. It was even possible for him to uncover the key to tipping the scales in his favor!

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In the midst of his excitement, Charlie couldn't help but acknowledge that this stroke of genius did not originate from himself, but from the hands of Maria.

Just the mere thought of it filled him with immense gratitude towards Maria.

If it hadn't been for her reminder, how could he have ever thought of extracting an AI model from Howard?

Initially, his intention was solely to use the elixir as leverage to keep Howard and Steve under control.

As for the money from selling the elixir, he had only planned to give it to Helena as a favor, both as a reward and to help strengthen the Royal Family.

But now, as he examined the situation, this unintentional AI model could potentially be the greatest gain from his trip to the United States!

With that realization, Charlie immediately turned to Helena and said, "Helena, find a way to push Howard to expedite the process. If he can complete this AI model as

quickly as possible, I will grant him an additional half of the purchasing rights for the elixir. As long as the AI model is implemented promptly, he can pay and acquire it at any time."

Upon hearing this, Helena couldn't help but smile and replied, "Mr. Wade, with your words, I estimate that even someone as old as Howard would be willing to go all out."

Charlie grinned and responded, "That's exactly what I want, for him to give it his all, and the faster, the better!"

"No problem," Helena assured him, "I will contact him right away."

At that moment, in Canada, it was already afternoon.

Helena had just concluded her final public event with the Canadian officials. After attending the government banquet later that evening, she would return to the Nordic region the following morning.

Taking into account the time she had left in Canada, there were still over ten hours remaining.

After ending her call with Charlie, Helena's first action was to immediately reach out to Howard Rothschild.

Meanwhile, Howard was preparing to hold an unprecedentedly large conference.

This meeting would not only be attended by all members of the Rothschild family but also by all related collateral families.

Howard, who had regained his health, was eager to showcase his strong physique, boundless energy, and determination to lead the Rothschild family to new heights, solidifying his unassailable position as the family patriarch.

Just moments before the conference was scheduled to commence, Howard received a call from Helena.

He quickly instructed his subordinates to postpone the meeting by ten minutes and then proceeded to a completely secure room to answer Helena's call.

As soon as the call connected, he respectfully greeted, "Good afternoon, Your Majesty the Queen!"

Helena smiled and replied, "Good afternoon, Mr. Rothschild. I hope I'm not interrupting anything with my call?"

"Not at all!" Howard quickly responded politely, "You're not interrupting me at all! Your Majesty, how can I assist you with this call?"

Helena began, "I wanted to congratulate you, Mr. Rothschild, on the latest upgrade to your AI model. It has caused quite a sensation and appears to have the potential

to revolutionize the current landscape of internet technology! In the future, the Rothschild family will reap substantial rewards, both from the AI model itself and from the rise in NVIDIA's stock. It is truly commendable and astonishing!"

Howard chuckled and said, "Thank you for your affirmation, Your Majesty. I never anticipated that AI technology could have such a tremendous impact!"

Helena continued, "By the way, Mr. Rothschild, regarding the implementation of the AI model in the Nordic region, I hope you can expedite the process and have it up and running as soon as possible."

Howard readily agreed and replied, "Your Majesty, please rest assured. I have been closely monitoring this matter. I have already given instructions for the necessary hardware preparations. The team responsible for establishing the cloud center is ready to proceed to the Nordic region to select the site. Everything is progressing in an orderly manner, so you can be reassured."

Helena inquired, "Then, Mr. Rothschild, how long do you anticipate it will take to complete everything?"

Howard explained, "Well... I have already discussed this with the AI project leader.

He believes that it will take at least two years."

"Two years?!" Helena exclaimed, surprised, and furrowed her brow, "Why would it take so long?"

Howard quickly clarified, "Two years is not a long time at all, Your Majesty. I have thoroughly investigated this matter. The length of time is due to the numerous challenging aspects involved."

"For instance, our team first needs to select a suitable location in the Nordic region to establish the data center. From site selection to design, bidding, and construction, it takes a considerable amount of time to prepare. The procurement and installation of rack equipment, cooling systems, power supply units, and communication cables also require a significant amount of time to complete."

"In addition to that, I have inquired about the most critical hardware for building the AI model—the NVIDIA h100 graphics card. This card is specifically designed to provide the computing power necessary for AI models, and nearly all AI models rely on it. However, these cards are currently in high demand. Not only have their prices skyrocketed, but many cash-rich companies have been unable to purchase them at inflated prices. The futures contracts for these cards are scheduled years in advance."

"To build this AI system, we would need at least 35,000 of these graphics cards. Just waiting for this batch of cards alone could take up to two years. I am planning to contact NVIDIA and see if they can expedite the process and compress the timeline."

Howard continued, "Oh, by the way, there is another troublesome matter. It involves the replication and migration of the AI model's database. Since the AI model has absorbed almost all human knowledge and information, the data volume is extremely vast. They estimate that if all the data were stored on hard drives, the weight of those hard drives would exceed 150 tons."

"Moreover, transferring such an enormous amount of data through existing bandwidth would take years. Therefore, after backing up the data at the Silicon Valley data center, we would need several specially designed trucks for large-scale data migration to transport the over 150-ton heavy hard drives with the backup data to the Nordic region. While this method is much faster than transferring the data directly to the Nordic region, it still requires a significant amount of work. Overall, two years is already a very fast timeline."

Upon hearing this, Helena immediately stated, "Mr. Rothschild, every task presents its own difficulties, but I believe that with full effort and the utilization of every possible means, any difficulty can be overcome. If you can do everything in your power and exhaust all possible avenues to expedite the process, I will grant you the purchasing rights for half of the elixir. You can purchase it immediately and take it without any delay."

After hearing this, Howard's excitement surged, and he blurted out, "Queen...are you serious about that?!"

Howard, who had come to understand a core truth after experiencing hardships, now grasped that the Rothschild family was vast and could withstand any losses. They were not afraid to spend money. The most crucial thing was to live a long life.

If he could acquire the second elixir, his probability of living beyond ninety years would increase infinitely.

And if he could obtain three, wouldn't he be able to live to one hundred?

Therefore, Helena's words struck a chord with him.

In that moment, Helena earnestly declared, "I assure you that everything I have said is true. I guarantee it with my own reputation and the reputation of the entire Royal Family."

Howard pressed further, "How quickly must I act to obtain this purchasing right?"

Helena pondered for a moment and then responded earnestly, "Of course, the faster, the better. If I were to provide a specific deadline, I personally believe that it should not exceed one month!"

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"How...one month?!"

Howard gasped, his mind racing to find a solution. "Your Majesty, it's simply impossible to accomplish this in one month. As I mentioned before, our data centers in the Nordic region are still in the early stages of site selection, let alone the design process. It would be impractical to construct this hardware model in an open environment, wouldn't it?"

Helena pondered for a moment, then spoke up. "Mr. Rothschild, while I may not fully comprehend all this high-tech jargon, I don't believe it's necessary to start from scratch, selecting a site, designing, and building a new house just to settle in a new location. Why not find a suitable property locally that meets all my requirements and simply purchase it?"

She added, "And don't worry about the cost, I can cover it."

Howard's heart skipped a beat, but he quickly reassured her. "No, no, money is not an issue. I will take care of it! I'll have someone investigate which data processing centers in the Nordic region meet the requirements. If there are any, I'll do whatever it takes to secure them!"

Helena then mentioned, "By the way, I recall that the largest data center in the Nordic region is owned by Microsoft. My grandmother, who was once the Queen of Northern Europe, attended the inauguration ceremony when it was built. From what I gathered at the time, it should be the largest data center in northwestern Europe. I believe it should meet the requirements for the AI model."

"Microsoft, huh..." Howard breathed a sigh of relief and smiled. "If it's Microsoft, then it's a breeze. I'll contact them today and establish communication. I happen to be quite familiar with their founder."

Helena quickly inquired, "Are you confident that they will sell you the data center?"

Acquiring such a massive facility would surely have a significant impact on their own business, possibly even affecting cloud services throughout Europe."

"I am," Howard replied confidently. "While I may not be their major shareholder, their founder has always held me in high regard. Who wouldn't give the Rothschild family face when it comes to making money in the United States? Besides, this young man owes me quite a few favors. As long as I ask, he won't dare to say no."

Helena was slightly taken aback by Howard's unwavering confidence, but she quickly recalled the recent news of intense pressure from Europe and the United States. She understood the underlying logic. Smiling, she said, "Alright, then I will await good news from you, Mr. Rothschild!"

Howard assured her, "Your Majesty, rest assured, I will take care of everything!"

Helena then inquired, "Speaking of which, Mr. Rothschild, once we resolve the issue of the location, we must address the matter of acquiring the necessary graphics cards for the AI model. Is there any way to expedite the procurement process?"

Howard responded, "Since Your Majesty has expressed her wishes, I will personally speak with the person in charge at NVIDIA and ensure they have enough graphics cards ready within three days. It may require prioritizing your order over others, but that's not a problem. All companies waiting for delivery will have to step aside for Your Majesty's needs. No exceptions!"

Helena felt a sense of satisfaction, yet she still had concerns. "But what if NVIDIA doesn't have enough graphics cards readily available? We cannot make bricks without straw. We must consider the risks."

Howard's mind was consumed with obtaining the AI model for Helena, and without her urging, he was eager to make it happen. He was even willing to dismantle the running system in Silicon Valley if necessary.

With confidence and respect, he assured her, "Your Majesty, please rest assured. I will oversee this matter from beginning to end! If NVIDIA doesn't have enough graphics cards in stock, I have other options! The AI project manager mentioned that Zuckerberg, who is working on the metaverse, seems to have hoarded hundreds of thousands of H100 cards. If NVIDIA cannot resolve the issue within three days, I will personally approach Zuckerberg for the remaining cards. This young man won't dare to refuse me!"

Helena listened intently and finally felt at ease. She smiled and said, "With your words, Mr. Rothschild, I can truly rest assured. If Zuckerberg has hundreds of thousands of graphics cards, I suggest you gather enough for 40,000 cards. Your AI model updates and upgrades rapidly, and with each update, it will undoubtedly require more computing power. The remaining 5,000 cards can serve as backups."

Without hesitation, Howard enthusiastically agreed, "Since Your Majesty has spoken, you can be assured that I will procure exactly 40,000 cards, not a single one less!"

He then added, "As for data migration, Your Majesty, you need not worry. I will have them transfer all the data onto dedicated trucks as soon as possible. Shipping from

the United States to the Nordic region by boat is too slow. Instead, I will arrange for a US military C-5 transport plane to deliver 150 tons of hard drives. It will only take a few hours to transport everything to the Nordic region!"

Helena was somewhat surprised and asked, "Using a US military transport plane, won't that attract too much attention?"

"No problem at all," Howard said nonchalantly. "We are all NATO member countries, and there is already frequent military cooperation. Military transport planes fly every day, and a couple of extra flights won't raise any eyebrows. And even if they do notice, what can they do? If they try to obstruct us in New York, I'll make a big fuss. Who would dare to utter a word? Your Majesty, please rest assured, I will take care of everything."

Helena smiled and said, "Mr. Rothschild, your dedication is truly touching. As a vulnerable woman, I have nothing to offer but my heartfelt gratitude to you. I wish you a long and healthy life."

"A long...and healthy life?!"

Upon hearing Helena's words, Howard grasped the profound significance behind them. His joy overflowed, prompting laughter to bubble forth uncontrollably. "That's it! Thank you, Your Majesty the Queen, for your blessing!"

In response, Helena remarked, "Mr. Rothschild, you're too kind. My words carry both a blessing and a commitment. As long as you maintain a close cooperative relationship with us, longevity is a promise I extend to you."

With a sense of urgency, Helena added, "By the way, Mr. Rothschild, I'll be returning to Northern Europe early tomorrow morning. I eagerly await your positive updates from there."

"Absolutely! Not a problem!" Howard exclaimed eagerly. "Rest assured, Your Majesty, I'll arrange for discussions with Microsoft about the data center today. In three days' time, I'll personally deliver 40,000 graphics cards to Northern Europe!"

With their conversation concluded, the call ended. Howard clutched his phone tightly, his excitement palpable as he paced around the room, repeatedly murmuring, "Long life...Long life...Long life..." His excitement crescendoed into triumphant laughter. "How marvelous! How absolutely marvelous! Sixteen years until I'm one hundred! I must seize this opportunity and live for at least another sixteen years!"

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Howard was taken completely by surprise by Helena this time.

He had initially believed that obtaining a second elixir within the next three to five years would be the best outcome he could hope for.

But little did he know that a golden opportunity would present itself so swiftly.

With just half an elixir, never mind the possibility of extending his life by another two or three years, the real key was that the elixir had an immediate effect. Howard had already regained the physical state he had several years ago, so if he were to receive another half, wouldn't his physical condition reach an even higher level?

As an individual, once money is no longer an issue, the only question is how to live longer and live well.

And the elixir that Helena had bestowed upon him could solve both of these dilemmas.

Therefore, he was determined to acquire this half elixir!

After ending the call with Helena, he immediately dialed the executive at NVIDIA.

Surprised, the person on the other end asked, "Mr. Rothschild, why are you personally calling me?"

These corporate managers may be the trendsetters in the world of technology, but almost none of them can escape the influence of Jewish capital. After all, even if the company is in Silicon Valley, the capital behind it still resides on Wall Street.

And Howard could certainly be regarded as a prominent figure behind Wall Street.

Receiving a call from him was a great privilege for all entrepreneurs relying on Wall Street.

Howard didn't even know the person's full name, he simply smiled and said with an unwavering tone, "I'm calling you because I need your assistance with something. Can you prepare forty thousand of those graphics cards you produce for providing computing power to AI models within three days?"

The other person was taken aback and asked, "Mr. Rothschild... Are you referring to the H100 graphics card?"

"That's correct!" Howard immediately replied, "It's this graphics card. Can you prepare forty thousand within three days?"

The other person found themselves in a difficult position and said, "Mr. Rothschild, this graphics card is indeed in high demand. Our orders are already..."

"Stop." Howard interrupted, "I called you to solve a problem, not to hear about how popular your product and orders are. Just tell me, can you solve it within three days? If you can, I, Howard Rothschild, will owe you a favor. If you can't, then I won't waste any more of our time."

With that, Howard added, "Of course, if you can solve part of it, just tell me the number. How many can you solve within three days?"

The other person didn't expect Howard to be so decisive and not leave any room for complaints.

However, forty thousand within three days was an outrageous number.

In any industry, when a product is in high demand, it's definitely difficult to have enough inventory, unless deliberately hoarding to raise prices.

Engaging in such unscrupulous practices is common for small and medium-sized companies or companies without vision, but NVIDIA's market value is already approaching two trillion dollars. At this point, they couldn't possibly resort to such low-level marketing tactics.

So, apart from the graphics cards that haven't been produced yet, NVIDIA only had the finished products ready for delivery.

Since the H100 graphics card chips were manufactured by TSMC, the chips were shipped from the other side of the world to the United States, where NVIDIA's assembly line would package them before delivering them all at once.

For example, if Company A ordered three thousand cards last year, those three thousand cards would be delivered in three separate batches. At this moment, it

might be their turn to be notified for pickup, so these one thousand cards would temporarily remain with NVIDIA.

Normally, according to current production capacity, NVIDIA could deliver about four to five thousand graphics cards per day.

The crux of the matter was that many companies had a strong demand for this graphics card and didn't even need to be notified for pickup. They would usually go to the assembly plant's delivery center two or three days before the scheduled delivery date, and some even had helicopters waiting directly at the assembly plant. As soon as the cards were produced, they would be immediately transported by helicopter to their own company.

After all, AI was the biggest trend in the world of technology, without a doubt. Not only the top companies, but even small and medium-sized companies in Silicon Valley were tightening their belts to purchase H100 graphics cards to train their own AI models. Some companies had even announced they were going "All In AI," so the demand for this graphics card was incredibly high.

However, all the graphics cards ready for delivery added up to just over ten thousand.

He could only grit his teeth and say, "Mr. Rothschild, we can monitor the real-time production, packaging, and pending delivery status of all H100 graphics cards.

Currently, we have just over eleven thousand cards that haven't been delivered to customers yet, and there will be around thirteen thousand cards that can be produced within the next three days. I can take the liberty of giving you all these cards, and I will find a way to appease our customers. But for forty thousand, I really can't do it..."

Howard, not beating around the bush, said directly, "Alright, help me make up twenty-five thousand cards, and I won't shortchange you on the money. I'll figure out the rest."

The other person hurriedly said, "Alright, Mr. Rothschild, there's absolutely no problem delivering twenty-five thousand cards within three days. I assure you!"

Howard expressed his satisfaction, saying, "Very well, I appreciate your efforts. I owe you one for this. If you need any help in the future, just give me a call."

The other person expressed his gratitude.

After ending the call, Howard immediately dialed Zuckerberg.

Zuckerberg, who had risen to fame in just over a decade, was practically the golden child of these financial giants on Wall Street.

The risk investment fund behind the Rothschild family was already a shareholder of Zuckerberg's, and a few years ago, Howard even had a special meeting with him. In his presence, Zuckerberg was very humble and sensible, leaving a good impression on Howard.

However, even though he was admired by Howard, Zuckerberg didn't dare to casually call Howard. So when he suddenly received a call from him, he was shocked and respectfully asked, "Mr. Rothschild, why are you calling me? How can I be of service to you?"

Howard got straight to the point and said, "Zuck, I need fifteen thousand H100 graphics cards. I heard you've hoarded hundreds of thousands. Can you help me fill this gap?"

At first, Zuckerberg was flattered when Howard called him "Zuck." After all, Zuckerberg was his full surname, and being called "Zuck" was clearly a sign of familiarity.

But when he heard that Howard wanted graphics cards from him, he suddenly felt a sharp pain in his heart, as if someone had cut out a piece of it with a knife.

Sometimes, human nature is contradictory.

When you don't have money, even if you spend all your money at once or even go into debt, you don't feel any pain. But when you have money, even if you spend a fraction of your total assets, it feels incredibly painful.

People have a natural desire to hoard, and the more they hoard, the stingier they become.

Whether it's money or possessions, it's the same.

Zuckerberg had hoarded hundreds of thousands of graphics cards at once, and they were even purchased at a lower price. But he considered these graphics cards more important than anything else, and he wouldn't sell a single one no matter who asked.

Facing Howard, this super tycoon, he instinctively didn't want to give in. Moreover, he couldn't understand why Howard, who was already in his eighties, needed so many graphics cards? Didn't their AI investment already shine brightly? Why would he need graphics cards from him?

So, he could only vaguely ask, "Mr. Rothschild... What do you need these graphics cards for? Are you... Are you also starting to research the AI field?"

Howard, straightforwardly, said, "Zuck, let's skip the unnecessary pleasantries. I just want to know if you can give me fifteen thousand graphics cards within three days, yes or no."

He added, "Don't worry, I'll purchase them at market price, not for free."

Zuckerberg, upon hearing this, knew that Howard wouldn't give him any room for negotiation or make any compromises. So, even though he was reluctant, he could only say helplessly, "Since you've asked, I'll prepare them for you no matter how nervous I am... Don't worry, I'll personally deliver fifteen thousand graphics cards to you within three days!"

Chapter 5678 bookmark

After experiencing the miraculous effects of the Life Saving Pill, Howard came to understand the true value of rare treasures.

Sometimes, no matter how much wealth one possesses, there are certain things that cannot be bought.

The Life Saving Pill was one such thing, and NVIDIA graphics cards fell into the same category.

Nevertheless, Howard was generally satisfied with the performance of NVIDIA and Zuckerberg. Though they had shown some hesitation and reluctance, they ultimately delivered the results he desired.

The hurdle of acquiring forty thousand graphics cards stood between him and half a pill. Once this obstacle was overcome, Microsoft's data center would be a piece of cake.

Buoyed by his success, Howard made another call, this time to one of the founders of Microsoft.

The world of capital operated under a strict hierarchical system, akin to that of the Mafia.

However, unlike the Mafia, the world of capital could easily identify a true Godfather.

The only Godfather in the entire European and American capital circle was none other than Howard Rothschild. The Rothschild family held a significant percentage of shares in every listed company within this circle, not to mention their ownership of renowned banks and top venture capital firms.

As a result, Howard wielded extraordinary influence over every American company.

After two rings, the call was answered. A middle-aged voice came from the other end, "Mr. Rothschild, it's been at least ten years since your last call. Hasn't it?"

Howard smiled and replied, "Bill, how have you been?"

Bill chuckled and said, "Not bad, you know. Retirement is all about traveling, spending money, giving speeches, and doing charity work."

"Very good," Howard said with a smile. "If you do bad things while doing good things, the positives and negatives will cancel each other out, and even God will forgive you, don't you think?"

Bill understood that Howard was teasing him and could only laugh and say, "Charity is about not expecting anything in return."

Bill's tone gradually relaxed and he said with a smile, "If God were to calculate my merits and faults, it would take a powerful auditing team to figure it out."

Curious, Bill asked, "Mr. Rothschild, did you call me today just to tease me?"

Howard smiled and said, "Many years ago, people said that when you bend down to pick up a dollar, you lose a thousand dollars. I am no exception. Time is precious, especially for old folks like us in our seventies and eighties."

With a serious tone, Howard continued, "Bill, there's something I need your help with."

Without hesitation, Bill said, "Tell me. Our relationship doesn't need to be mentioned. If I can help, I will."

Howard said, "I heard that Microsoft has a data center in Northern Europe, and I want to buy it."

"Buy it?" Bill was taken aback for a moment, then said, "Mr. Rothschild, if Microsoft's cloud service is a Boeing 747, the data center in Northern Europe is one of the four engines of that plane. The airline cannot just take out one of the engines and sell it. Once sold, half of Europe's cloud service will be paralyzed, and the other data

centers will struggle to handle such a huge demand in a short period of time. We didn't design it with such redundancy."

"It's impossible," Howard said lightly. "When the Boeing 747 made its first flight over fifty years ago, I was one of the invited guests. At that time, you were just a teenager, and there's no way you would know more about the Boeing 747 than me. Even for twin-engine planes, one engine can ensure that the plane continues to fly for 180 minutes in the event of engine failure. For a four-engine plane like the Boeing 747, losing one engine will have no impact at all. Didn't your data system leave any design redundancy?"

Bill quickly said, "Mr. Rothschild, it's not that simple. The demand for cloud processing is currently very high, and the storage demand for cloud data is astonishing. We need to leave some redundancy for peak data processing. If we take out the data center in Northern Europe, it will affect users in half of Europe."

Howard paused for a moment and said with emphasis, "Bill, I have known your mother for a long time, even before she worked at IBM. I have watched you grow up to this day. Don't forget how much help I have given you during this time, including

when you were in deep trouble. I had someone help you. Now this old man needs your help. It's not appropriate for you to be bothered by one problem after another, right?"

After a moment of silence, Bill reluctantly said, "Alright, Mr. Rothschild, give me some time. I will prepare for the data migration. Once the migration is complete, the data center will be yours."

Only then did Howard feel satisfied and smiled, "Bill, God bless you, so I will do the same."

Gratefully, Bill said, "Thank you for your blessings, Mr. Rothschild."

Howard chuckled, "Come to the Rothschild Estate at 7 o'clock tonight. I'll treat you to a meal."

Without hesitation, Bill said, "Sure, Mr. Rothschild, I will be there on time."

...

A few minutes later, in the family conference room of the Rothschild family.

All the members of the Rothschild family had gathered, filling the seats on both sides of the long conference table, except for the empty seat reserved for the family head.

Behind the seats on both sides, two rows of temporary small stools were arranged for the leaders of the collateral families who were also present.

The room buzzed with conversation. The direct members of the Rothschild family chatted happily, while Steve and his son seemed somewhat downcast. The representatives of the collateral families whispered to each other, unaware of the recent events within the Rothschild family and the reason behind the patriarch's summons.

Most of these collateral families were from outside the family, but there were also a few with the Rothschild surname. However, almost all the collateral families bearing the Rothschild name were either Howard's brothers or cousins, while the outsiders were mostly individuals who had married into the Rothschild family and pledged their loyalty to the Rothschilds.

For these collateral families, the opportunity to attend high-level meetings organized by Howard at the Rothschild Estate was rare. They usually dealt with professional managers from the Rothschild family, and even Steve couldn't meet them whenever he pleased.

Today, the sudden convening of a meeting here left all the members of the collateral families speculating about Howard's intentions. Could it be that he was planning to pass on the position of family head to his eldest son?

However, what puzzled them even more was that Steve, who should have been the happiest person in the room if he were going to succeed as the family head, seemed to be one of the only two individuals who appeared unhappy. The other was his eldest son, Royce.

According to their expectations, if Steve were to become the family head, he and Royce should have been the happiest or the only two happy people in the room.

Upon assessing the situation, it appeared that today's meeting might not bode well for Steve. Could it signify a change in the successor?

Unable to resolve their curiosity, various branches of the family congregated to whisper amongst themselves, with none able to restrain their speculation.

Such a scene filled Steve with unease.

Indeed, he aspired to facelessness, feeling exposed and the subject of private discussions, akin to a young woman in the Middle Ages awaiting her dowry, which left him exceedingly embarrassed.

As the murmurs persisted, the conference room door abruptly swung open. The butler, having opened it, promptly stepped aside, allowing Howard Rothschild to enter confidently.

His arrival instantly silenced the crowd, who then turned their attention to him, greeting him with respect.

During this moment, it became apparent that Howard Rothschild was in an exceptionally good mood.

His cheerfulness was akin to that of an eighteen-year-old awakening with satisfaction the morning after his graduation prom, a stark contrast to his usual demeanor.

Given Howard's age and wealth, having experienced nearly everything, his current exuberance was unexpected, even to the direct members of the Rothschild family who were puzzled by his sustained joy, wondering what could have further elevated his spirits from the day before.

Steve, witnessing Howard's jovial demeanor, felt a surge of anxiety, "Could this be another breakthrough for the old man? Otherwise, why would he be so excited?"

Meanwhile, Howard was indeed exhilarated.

With the graphics card project completed and the data center established, only the AI model's data migration and its deployment in Northern Europe remained. Since no external assistance was needed for the data migration, Howard considered this a success, with all preparations in place except for the final step.

Before entering, he had discussed with the AI team leader that with 40,000 graphics cards ready and Microsoft's data center soon to be available, the chances of resolving their challenge within a month had significantly increased from nearly impossible to almost certain.

This also indicates that there is less than a month left between him and the half pill!

Chapter 5679 bookmark

Howard, brimming with joy and excitement, took his place at the head of the conference room, capturing the attention of everyone present.

He scanned the room, filled with hundreds of individuals, and smiled, saying, "Please, have a seat!"

One by one, the crowd settled into their chairs.

Howard beamed at the gathering and began, "Today marks a momentous occasion as we have never seen such a large assembly in our family conference room. I notice that some of you may not have a designated seat. Originally, I had planned to hold this meeting at the group headquarters for your comfort. Unfortunately, due to my absence from the headquarters in recent days, I had to bring everyone here. I apologize for any inconvenience caused and hope it doesn't bother you."

"No problem at all..." the members of the branch families quickly reassured, their faces filled with humility. They dared not display any other emotions, not even a hint of weariness.

They never anticipated Howard, who had always kept his distance, suddenly becoming so humble, with a touch of kindness.

Howard continued with a smile, "I have called you all here today to make a few announcements. Firstly, the Rothschild family has decided to offer more opportunities and benefits to all the loyal branch families. Your income is guaranteed to increase in the future!"

Upon hearing this, the crowd erupted in excitement, unable to contain their cheers and applause.

No one expected the old man to be so generous. With a single statement, he pledged to boost their income.

Observing the crowd's elation and joy, Howard raised his hand, gesturing for silence before continuing, "Though you are all branch families of the Rothschild lineage, you share close family ties and blood connections with us. As the head of the Rothschild family, it is my duty and responsibility to ensure that you earn more and never face mistreatment!"

Thunderous applause resounded once again.

Howard motioned for everyone to quiet down and proceeded, "In the future, the Rothschild family will establish a Family Relations Liaison Office. My eldest son, Steve, will oversee this office. Any branch family members in need of assistance from the Rothschild family or those with ideas and suggestions for collaborative projects can directly communicate with this office."

The branch families had never heard of such an office before, but the name alone conveyed the intention to strengthen the bond between family members.

In the past, they rarely had the opportunity for face-to-face interaction with the core Rothschild family members.

If the core members of the Rothschild family were a real estate development company, most of the branch families were akin to small subcontractors. Some families might be responsible for providing boxed meals for the entire construction site, while others might handle the disposal of construction waste. None of them were entrusted with major tasks such as construction machinery or commercial concrete and steel bars.

Consequently, these branch families were considered lowly in the eyes of the main family, even lower than servants.

Now, Howard's sudden appreciation for them instilled a strong sense of belonging. They felt immense gratitude towards the Rothschild family.

Previously, Howard held no interest in these relatives, and his objective was to strictly limit their growth to prevent them from overstepping their boundaries or aligning with one of his sons to oppose him.

However, his perspective had drastically shifted this time.

He realized that his focus should not be solely on the future of the Rothschild family, but on securing his own future.

As he aged and refused to pass on the family head position to his sons, it was inevitable for them to become dissatisfied, and one of his sons might even attempt to overthrow or sideline him in the future. Thus, he decided to extend goodwill to the branch families, trading a portion of the benefits for their unwavering support, ensuring his own security.

With this in mind, amidst the applause, he stood up and confidently declared, "From this day forward, remember this: as long as you stand firmly with the Rothschild

family, we will never allow you to suffer losses or endure humiliation because we are one family!"

The applause surged like a wave, threatening to turn the conference room upside down.

This time, Howard did not interrupt the applause but smiled contentedly, witnessing the crowd continue to applaud and cheer. It filled him with immense satisfaction.

The applause persisted for an astonishing five minutes.

As the applause gradually subsided after five minutes, the tearful plea of a woman shattered the silence, "Mr. Rothschild! Honorable Chief of the Family! Please help me!"

Howard directed his gaze towards the source of the voice. Amidst the jubilant crowd, a woman in her sixties sobbed uncontrollably.

Being eager to win over the branch families, Howard became intrigued. He swiftly rose to his feet and pointed at the woman, displaying genuine concern as he asked, "What can I do for you? Don't worry, as long as I'm here, nothing is beyond my reach! Tell me, which family do you belong to?"

Seeing this, everyone stopped applauding and cheering, and their eyes switched back and forth between Howard and the woman.

The woman tearfully explained, "My husband and son have been missing for quite some time. I've spent considerable resources, enlisted numerous people, and searched far and wide, yet they remain untraceable. Now, their fate—whether alive or deceased—eludes me. I implore you, please assist me in finding them!"

Howard, with a gravity befitting the situation, reassured her, "Do not fret. In matters of life and death, the Rothschild family shall not remain indifferent. May I know your family background?"

With urgency, the woman replied, "Patriarch, I hail from the Hogwitz family. My name is Jenny Hogwitz. My husband is the son of your cousin Julia. Perhaps, you might recall me..."

Howard, pausing to reflect, acknowledged the connection. "Julia..." He remembered having such a cousin, whose lineage became a secondary branch following the family inheritance, and upon her marriage, she aligned with one of the more modest collateral families, adopting their surname. Her son, therefore, was not immediately familiar to him.

Despite the distant relation, Howard saw this as an opportunity to reinforce his credibility among the extended family. He encouraged, "So, you are Julia's daughter-in-law, Jenny. Could you elaborate on how your husband and son vanished?"

Jenny Hogwitz, through her tears, shared, "Patriarch, last year my son Walter Hogwitz was dispatched to oversee our family's ventures in China. However, shortly after his arrival, he vanished in Aurous Hill. In pursuit of him, my husband Steve Hogwitz also went missing in Aurous Hill!"

Unknown to Howard, Walter Hogwitz had previously engaged in reprehensible acts, including poisoning the father of Doris Young, a prominent figure in the Emgrand Group, leading to the latter's renal failure. Walter also sought to manipulate Doris Young into divulging trade secrets of the Emgrand Group under duress.

At present, Walter and his father Steve were detained in Don Albert's canine kennel.

Howard, oblivious to the deeper entanglements, could scarcely fathom the connection to his financial patron. Upon learning of the unresolved disappearance, he declared with conviction, "This is unconscionable! Let it be known, any affront to the Rothschild lineage is a perilous folly! Jenny, rest assured, I will personally ensure justice is served in this matter."

Chapter 5680 bookmark

Howard's statement filled Jenny Hogwitz with overwhelming excitement, causing tears to stream down her face as she repeatedly expressed her gratitude with deep bows. "Thank you, Patriarch! Thank you!" she exclaimed.

For Jenny, she had reached a point where she had no other options and didn't know what to do. She couldn't ask for help from the Rothschild family, as she was well aware of how they looked down upon distant relatives like them.

But today, fortune seemed to smile upon her.

Howard unexpectedly extended a helping hand to the branch families, giving Jenny the realization that this was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

The other branch families were also filled with gratitude and excitement upon witnessing Howard's sense of responsibility towards them.

At that moment, Howard rose from his seat, his smile warm and genuine. "In the future, if you encounter similar issues, please don't hesitate to reach out to the Family Relations Liaison Office. I will assign my most trusted subordinates to handle any difficulties you may face."

As Howard mentioned "subordinates," his sons couldn't help but notice something.

Their father was wary of them.

Typically, when establishing a family relations liaison, one would choose the most suitable family members to make the branch families feel valued and appreciated.

However, Howard chose to bypass his own sons and grandsons, opting instead for his trusted subordinates. This decision revealed his true intentions - he desired to strengthen the connection with the branch families while creating a division between his descendants and them.

In doing so, Howard made it clear that his goal was to prevent his sons and grandsons from joining forces with their in-laws.

The eldest son, Steve, grew increasingly frustrated at this realization.

Internally, he cursed, "Father fears that I will ally with the in-laws to rebel. Now he's attacking me from both inside and outside. If I can't break free internally and can't find external support, I'll remain under his control as his heir..."

These thoughts weighed heavily on Steve's mind, and he couldn't help but sigh.

"Thankfully, Charlie has only extended Father's life for a few more years. Even if Father tries to cling to power, it won't be for much longer. When his health deteriorates, he'll have no choice but to pass on the position..."

Suddenly, panic washed over Steve as he exclaimed, "But if Helena's prediction is true, and Charlie can prolong Father's life longer than mine, I'm finished! If Charlie continues to extend Father's life, I won't outlive him... I'll be at his mercy!"

In that moment, fear consumed Steve.

He understood that his father, in his current state, would do anything to prolong his life and maintain a tight grip on the position of family head. He would never willingly

allow Steve to succeed him. As a result, Steve's future was entirely in Charlie's hands.

With this realization, Steve longed to approach Charlie and repent, to express his loyalty and allegiance.

Meanwhile, Howard's attitude deeply touched the branch families present, instilling in them a sincere sense of trust.

For Howard, winning over these branch families and setting an example was his intention all along. Unexpectedly, Jenny Hogwitz had presented her request in front of so many people. From Howard's perspective, this was the perfect opportunity to showcase his leadership, strength, and credibility as the clan leader.

Moreover, the matter at hand didn't seem too complicated.

It simply involved the disappearance of the Hogwitz father and son in China.

Regarding their disappearance, there were only three possibilities. They were either dead, alive and hiding on their own, or alive and hidden by someone else.

If it was the first possibility, it would be the simplest. Find their bodies and provide this woman with an explanation.

If it was the second or third possibility, they just needed to locate the father and son, whether they were hiding voluntarily or being concealed by someone else. In any case, bringing them back to the United States would be considered a great accomplishment.

With this in mind, Howard looked at the Rothschild direct descendants on either side of the conference table and posed the question, "Who among you is willing to step forward and go to China to bring back the Hogwitz father and son for Jenny?"

The sons and grandchildren exchanged glances.

In a time like this, who would willingly leave New York?

If something were to happen in New York during this period, wouldn't they lose out on competitive opportunities?

Howard grew annoyed as he saw no volunteers. These sons and grandsons, obedient and respectful in normal circumstances, seemed to lack courage when it came to volunteering. If no one stepped forward, where would he find his dignity?

Just as Howard felt trapped, his eldest son, Steve, suddenly stood up and declared, "Father, I will go! The safety of our clan members is of utmost importance, and we must take it seriously. You are getting older and cannot go personally, so please allow me, your eldest son, to represent you in China!"

"Damn it!"

Howard felt a surge of joy and silently praised Steve's actions.

He thought to himself:

"What is foresight?"

"This is foresight!"

"These other bastards, not being the eldest son, are reluctant to leave New York. But my eldest son has volunteered!"

"It seems that Steve truly is a good son to me! A loyal and filial son!"

Think of this, Howard exhaled deeply, his excitement visible. With a decisive slap on the table, he rose to his feet, "Excellent! Splendid! Steve, you truly embody the essence of the eldest son of Howard Rothschild! Your caliber is unmatched by any other! With your determination, this task is rightfully entrusted to you!"

Steve made the decision to personally travel to China. His primary objective wasn't to locate the Hogwitz father and son; rather, he saw it as an opportunity to bid farewell to Charlie.

However, Howard perceived his son's proactive request for assistance as a genuine effort to resolve his issues.

In reality, there existed a significant information gap between Howard and Steve. Howard was unaware of the true owner of the elixir; he only knew of its connection to the Queen of Norway without understanding the underlying narrative.

Conversely, Steve was well aware that the Queen merely acted as a front for Charlie. The future acquisition of the elixir rested solely on Charlie's discretion. Thus, seizing the chance to persuade Charlie became imperative for Steve.

Initially, Howard presumed that the elixir arrived due to Steve's filial piety, hence his satisfaction with Steve's plea for aid. He declared in front of the gathering,

"Furthermore, I have an announcement to make. As of today, Steve Rothschild shall officially assume the mantle as the next head of the Rothschild family! Upon my retirement, he shall lead our family forward."

Applause erupted among the attendees, yet Steve's younger brother and nephews remained impassive.

They understood that with such a public proclamation, Howard's decision was irrevocable. Consequently, upon Howard's passing and Steve's assumption of leadership, they would be relegated to a secondary branch of the family, consigned to a fate akin to the other collateral branches.

Ironically, Steve himself exhibited little joy. Understandably so, given his knowledge that his ascension to leadership was far from certain.

Hence, his urgency to meet with Charlie heightened.

After the assembly, the collateral family members departed from the Rothschild Manor contentedly. Howard summoned Steve to his study, imparting, "Steve, during your journey to China, you must succeed. The Hogwitz family's return is eagerly anticipated by the other branches."

Steve replied respectfully, "Rest assured, father. I shall spare no effort."

Howard nodded, adding, "Though I typically hold our relatives in low regard, they will prove invaluable in solidifying your future position. Thus, I've established a clan liaison office to foster unity among them under the Rothschild banner."

"Through this office's benevolence, they'll be staunch guardians of our family's legacy, safeguarding their own interests in the process. You and I represent the current and future orthodoxy of the Rothschild family. Every action I take today is a step towards securing your path. Do you comprehend?"

Internally, Steve scoffed, "Securing my path? You've nearly severed it entirely, yet you claim to pave the way? You can't even clear the path for me!"

Previously, Steve might have placed some trust in Howard's words. However, armed with insider knowledge, he now harbored no faith in his father's assurances.

Indeed, he possessed greater insight than Howard, understanding that his father's actions merely aimed to bolster his own authority. Howard's lofty rhetoric served only to deceive Steve, painting him as an unwitting heir apparent.

A glaring example was Howard's decision to appoint trusted confidants rather than direct family members to oversee the clan liaison office. This maneuver ensured that any future favors dispensed to collateral branches would be attributed to Howard, thus ingratiating them to his legacy.

Consider if a worker, uncertain whether the boss's son would lay off staff or enact sweeping changes upon inheriting the business, suddenly received a substantial raise and promises of assistance with personal matters. Would he trust the boss's son to lead?

Unlikely.

Instead, he would pray fervently for his father's continued good health, as the son's ascent could signal an end to his prosperity.

Despite his understanding, Steve still bowed respectfully to Howard, declaring,

"Thank you, father, for your guidance. I shall endeavor to exceed your expectations."

Chapter 5681 bookmark

When the radiant morning sun bloomed from the eastern horizon, Charlie's plane touched down at Aurous Hill Airport, facing the rising sun.

Little did he know that Steve Rothschild, who was thousands of miles away in the United States, eagerly planned to visit him in China.

As soon as the plane landed, Charlie couldn't wait to call Maria.

The call connected, and Maria's soft voice came through, "Master, why are you calling so early?"

Charlie smiled and replied, "Miss Clark, I just landed in Aurous Hill. If you're available, I'd love to come to Zilian Mountain Villa and see you."

Maria chuckled sweetly and said, "I have some refreshments prepared, and I was just about to boil water for tea. If you don't mind, it's the perfect time for you to join me."

With a smile, Charlie responded, "I'll be there in half an hour."

Inside the hangar, Don Albert had already prepared the vehicle. As soon as Charlie stepped off the plane, Don Albert respectfully approached and greeted him.

"Master Wade!"

Charlie nodded and said to Don Albert, "Don Albert, please take me to Zilian Mountain."

Don Albert bowed respectfully, opened the rear door, and said, "Alright, Master Wade, please get in the car."

Charlie entered the car, and Don Albert drove them out of the airport towards the city center.

During the ride, Charlie asked, "Has everything been going smoothly with Elys-Champ recently?"

Don Albert respectfully replied, "Yes, Master Wade. Everything is going well with Elys-Champ. Everyone's martial arts training is progressing smoothly. We have also taken good care of your grandmother. There haven't been any abnormalities in Aurous Hill recently."

"Good." Charlie nodded and inquired, "How is your progress in martial arts training?"

"It's... it's going okay..." Don Albert chuckled and said self-deprecatingly, "It seems that both Isaac and I don't have much talent for martial arts. Although we have made some progress, we are still far behind others. Isaac has been in Eastcliff for the past few days, taking over Stephen, the housekeeper's work. He hasn't been able to come back. I estimate that in a few days, I will surpass him in martial arts."

Charlie smiled and reassured him, "Martial arts training should not be rushed. Many people practice for years before truly reaching a higher level. You have just started, so it's normal to progress slower."

Don Albert chuckled and said, "Master Wade, I have come to realize that I started a bit late in this field. It's unrealistic to have high expectations for achievements. Since I have this opportunity, I will learn and train with you. If we succeed, it will bring great joy to everyone. If not, at least it's beneficial for our physical health."

Charlie nodded in agreement and said, "Having that mindset is the best approach."

Speaking of which, Charlie suddenly asked, "By the way, Don Albert, have you heard any news about Stephen, the housekeeper from Isaac recently?"

Don Albert shook his head and replied, "No, Master Wade. Since you asked me to take over for Isaac and become the representative of the Wade Family in Aurous Hill and the entire province, I have been in regular contact with other representatives of the Wade Family in different places. We often discuss Stephen, the housekeeper, but none of us have heard any news about him."

Charlie nodded thoughtfully and sighed, "It seems that he won't appear anytime soon."

Curious, Don Albert asked, "Master Wade, where did Stephen, the housekeeper go? He has always been loyal to the Wade Family. Why would he suddenly leave without saying a word?"

Charlie pondered for a moment and replied, "I'm not sure, but based on my understanding of him, I believe he is not a bad person, and he definitely doesn't have any intentions to harm me or the Wade Family. His sudden departure must have reasons that he finds difficult to explain. If the time is right in the future, we may still receive news from him."

As he said that, the question in Charlie's mind resurfaced.

Previously, he had believed that Stephen Thompson was loyal to his father.

But Stephen Thompson's sudden departure, along with the high probability that he left behind the photo album, suggested that there was someone else he was loyal to.

Moreover, considering Stephen Thompson's character, consistent actions, and the clue that the photo album brought him good fortune, it was likely that he and the person he was loyal to were not his enemies.

It was even possible that they were his allies.

However, Charlie couldn't understand why, if they were allies, they would choose to hide in the shadows. Wouldn't it be better to face each other openly and work together to fight against common enemies?

Due to the early morning hours, the traffic flowed smoothly, and the car swiftly made its way along the road. Half an hour later, they arrived at the entrance of Zilian Mountain Villa.

Seeing the grand signboard of Zilian Mountain Villa, Charlie collected his thoughts and said to Don Albert, "Alright, Don Albert, I'll get off here. You can go back to your duties."

Don Albert bowed respectfully and stopped the car outside the gate of Zilian Mountain Villa.

At that moment, the gate of Zilian Mountain Villa opened, and Mr. and Mrs. Cole, along with Marius Cross, emerged, descending the steps with a spring in their step.

Before stepping out of the car, Charlie asked Don Albert, "What has Zachary been busy with lately?"

Don Albert replied, "Zachary has taken charge of the business I used to handle. He is doing quite well, even better than me. The performance and income have significantly improved."

Charlie nodded and inquired, "How much can you earn from your business in a year?"

Don Albert pondered for a moment and replied, "Previously, by the end of the year, after deducting expenses and various fees, I could earn around one hundred million. But now, with more opportunities and responsibilities given to me by Miss Moore and the Emgrand Group, as well as the Wade Family's business, I earn around 50 to 60

million per month. Calculating for a year, it's estimated to be around seven hundred million."

Charlie nodded approvingly and said, "After I narrowly defeated Gideon Alastair, Zachary played a significant role. I promised him a life of wealth and prosperity, Zachary has great potential, but it's not suitable to give him a large sum of money all at once. Give him 30% of the income from his current business, and if he works harder, he will earn more. I'll replenish the 30% later."

Don Albert hurriedly protested, "Master Wade, you don't have to do that... You saved my life, and I owe my current situation to your guidance. I can't ask for more money from you!"

Charlie waved his hand dismissively and said, "One thing at a time. I can't use your money to repay my favors. It's a matter of principle."

After speaking, he saw that Mr. and Mrs. Cole, along with Marius, were waiting outside the car respectfully. He said to Don Albert, "That's settled then. You can go back now. Remember what I told you, and make sure to get it done today."

Don Albert respectfully agreed and quickly got out of the car, going around to the right side to open the door for Charlie.

Charlie stepped out of the car, Larry Cole and the other three said respectfully:

"Hello, Mr. Wade!"

Charlie nodded slightly and said, "I'm here to see your lady."

Marius hurriedly said: "Mr. Wade, the lady specially asked me to pick you up. She is already waiting for you in the top courtyard."

"Okay." Charlie smiled and said to Don Albert: "Okay, Don Albert, you go back, remember what I said, and make it happen today."

Don Albert said respectfully: "Don't worry, Master Wade, I will get it all done today!"

Charlie nodded, and Don Albert bid him farewell before returning to his duties.

Charlie then walked with Mr. and Mrs. Cole and Marius towards the Zilian Mountain Villa.

When they reached the stone steps leading to the top floor villa, Charlie said to the three of them, "You can go about your tasks now. I'll go up by myself."

Larry Cole respectfully asked, "Does Master Wade want to stay for lunch? I can have it prepared in advance."

Charlie considered meeting Maria first, then visiting his grandmother, and his need to return to the Thompson First residence later. So he smiled and said, "I have something to do at noon, so I won't have lunch here."

Larry Cole nodded and watched as Charlie entered the villa.

Inside the villa, Charlie approached the door and heard Maria's melodious voice saying, "Master, you can come in directly. I didn't lock the door."

Charlie's heart fluttered like a calm pool of water stirred by a gentle breeze. He pushed open the door and saw Maria, dressed in traditional Chinese clothing, sitting elegantly at a tea table under a tree, boiling water and making tea.

Upon Charlie's arrival, Maria couldn't conceal the joy written across her face. She promptly set the kettle of boiling water aside, rose from her seat, and delicately smoothed the hem of her skirt with her slender, white hands. With a light trot, she approached Charlie.

Upon standing in front of him, she gazed up at Charlie with evident joy and exclaimed, "I've awaited your return day and night, Young Master!"

Before Charlie could respond, she gently took his right hand and led him beneath the tree. Simultaneously, she gestured with her other hand towards a branch, extending over half a meter high beside the hot spring pool, and exclaimed excitedly, "Look, Pu'er mother has sprouted ninety-six leaves!"

"Wow!" Charlie couldn't help but be amazed. "It's growing so fast! Do you count the leaves every day?"

"Yes!" Maria replied happily. "I count them every morning and evening. Her sprouting speed is quite remarkable."

Saying that, she asked Charlie, "Would you like to taste the tea made from the leaves of the mother of Pu'er tea? If you want to try it, I can pick some tender leaves and make tea for you."

Charlie laughed and said, "If you pick all her tender leaves, it would probably be enough to make one cup of tea. Let's wait and let her grow longer."

Mischievously, Maria smiled and said, "Master, since you said so, I won't pick them for now!"

Charlie teased her, "Are you just being polite to me?"

"No way." Maria blushed and said shyly, "I have always said that as long as you ask, I am willing to give up anything."

Quickly changing the subject, she asked Charlie, "By the way, did Mr. Peter Cole come back with you this time?"

"Not yet." Charlie replied, "Uncle Cole has to wait for two days. He will go to Scandinavia with Queen Helena first and then return to China."

Maria nodded slightly and inquired, "Did you find answers to the doubts that troubled you?"

Charlie's expression shifted to one of melancholy, and he sighed before responding, "He clarified the nature of Divine Dragon to me. As you suspected, Miss Clark, Divine Dragon isn't a natural occurrence."

Surprised, Maria asked, "Then how did Divine Dragon come into being?"

Charlie lowered his gaze and murmured, "Divine Dragon arises when an individual willingly relinquishes their Dragon Formation and bestows it upon another Dragon. The recipient, then blessed by two dragons, transforms into a Divine Dragon..."

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Charlie's words didn't particularly astonish Maria.

It took her just a moment to process Charlie's words before responding softly, "I had speculated along these lines before, though uncertain. Now, it seems everything falls into place. Dragon is unique, and not every Dragon descendant inherits Dragon's traits. Conversely, the likelihood of a Dragon descendant inheriting Dragon is exceedingly low. Moreover, they must also be willing to relinquish their 'dragon

formation' to their offspring. Considering these factors, it would be challenging to find anyone in the world besides the Young Master who could fulfill the criteria to ascend to the Divine Dragon..."

Curiosity sparked in Charlie, prompting him to ask, "Isn't Dragon's child inevitably Dragon?"

"Indeed," Maria affirmed, nodding. "Young Master, consider this, Dragon possesses exceptional qualities. His fate ensures that regardless of circumstances, he'll possess superior strength and acquire more resources. During the era of polygamy, Dragon men likely had multiple wives and children. If every Dragon offspring inherited Dragon's traits, our world would be overrun by Dragon descendants."

Maria continued, "In truth, a person's destiny, apart from being influenced by their parents' fate, is largely their own. It's akin to randomly selecting numbers from 1 to 100. To be a 'dragon,' you'd have to pick 100s continuously without error. The probability is naturally minuscule. While having a Dragon father may slightly improve the odds, achieving such consistency is still as improbable as reaching for the sky."

She added, "Moreover, in our world, rare occurrences exist simultaneously. Even if there were only a few Dragon births, the chance of one being born among them is almost negligible. In the five millennia of Chinese history, there may have been only one instance where both father and son were Dragon. Despite our family's long history and extensive study of ancient texts, we've never encountered such a case."

Charlie couldn't help but sigh, "I've never contemplated this issue before, assuming destiny was solely hereditary. It appears I've been ignorant."

Maria offered a reassuring smile, "Young master, there's no need to underestimate yourself. In truth, most people remain unaware of their destiny until their journey's end."

Pondering Charlie's father's technique of manipulating destiny, Maria voiced her curiosity, "I have delved into Feng Shui secrets and the Book of Changes for years, yet never encountered mention of peeling off fate. Where did your father acquire such knowledge?"

Charlie speculated, "Most likely from the 'Preface to the Apocalyptic Book.'"

With a hint of confusion, he continued, "Uncle Peter left behind a photocopy of the 'Preface to the Apocalyptic Book,' which I possess. However, I haven't found the courage to delve into its teachings."

Unfurling the copy of the "Preface to the Apocalyptic Book," Charlie placed it on the table, admitting, "These are the teachings, yet I've refrained from exploring them."

Understanding his apprehension, Maria remarked, "Given the profound implications of the 'Preface to the Apocalyptic Book' on your father's fate, it's understandable why you hesitate. If it were me, I might burn the copy and never touch it again."

Charlie confessed, "It's not lack of preparation that holds me back, but rather, fear."

Fear is a rare admission from Charlie.

But sitting with Maria, he was able to express his innermost feelings without reservation.

Surprised by Charlie's vulnerability, Maria gently prodded, "I wonder, Young Master, if you'd share with me what exactly you fear?"

After a moment of silence, Charlie gathered his thoughts and articulated, "Having divulged my journey to acquire the 'Apocalyptic Book' and the subsequent events, you've been privy to our shared experiences. My recent trip to the United States further confirmed our suspicions. The 'Apocalyptic Book' wasn't a stroke of luck but rather a meticulously crafted plan by my father following his bequeathal of destiny to me."

Expanding on this revelation, Charlie continued, "Consider the interconnected clues. My father stumbled upon the 'Preface to the Apocalyptic Book' over three decades ago, granting him enlightenment and mastery over fate manipulation. I suspect this

'Preface' contains insights into immortality, attracting the attention of Warriors Den and making my parents their enemies."

He further hypothesized, "Reflect on the timing of my father's discovery of the 'Preface to the Apocalyptic Book.' Was he entangled in the pursuit of immortality? What's more puzzling is how the 'Preface' led my father to the 'Apocalyptic Book,' which only individuals with a Divine Dragon character can unlock. Subsequent events compelled my father to sacrifice himself for my sake, passing his destiny to me and orchestrating Uncle Cole's transmission of the 'Preface to the Apocalyptic Book' to me two decades later. Do you not see this as an intricate web of traps?"

Maria's eyes widened with horror at the implications of Charlie's words. "You're suggesting everything was orchestrated by others?!"

Charlie nodded solemnly, "Indeed. The 'Preface to the Apocalyptic Book' seems akin to Pandora's box. Once it falls into the hands of the chosen, its effects subtly influence events, setting off a chain reaction as predetermined..."

He continued, "It's plausible that both the 'Preface' and the 'Apocalyptic Book' are predetermined dominoes. Only a person with a Dragon Grid can activate the 'Preface,' triggering a cascading sequence of events."

Perplexed, Maria mused, "The author of the 'Preface to the Apocalyptic Book' and the 'Apocalyptic Book' is likely Morvel Bazin, my family's master. If your speculations hold true, he orchestrated a series of events culminating in a Dragon inheritor. But for what purpose? Merely to pass down his unique knowledge?"

Charlie disagreed, "No. The 'Apocalyptic Book' contains myriad knowledge but lacks true Taoist cultivation methods. Despite my enlightenment, genuine techniques are absent. If Morvel Bazin lived for over a millennium, he undoubtedly possessed profound methods, yet these are absent from the scriptures."

Maria puzzled over Morvel Bazin's motives, "If not to pass on knowledge, what was his purpose? He passed away three centuries ago, planning such far-reaching schemes requires foresight beyond comprehension."

Charlie admitted, "I'm uncertain."

An idea struck Maria, "The master's wife at Shiwan Mountain likely knows something! Why else would she anticipate our arrival and warn us of danger? If we find her, we might uncover more!"

Charlie lamented, "I've tried locating her to no avail. While I'm eager for insights, it's proving as elusive as Morgana's pursuit of me."

He added, "What perplexes me most isn't the false teacher's identity, but her motive for dissuading us."

Maria confessed, "Charlie, I must admit, I withheld information that day..."

Charlie, unsurprised, urged her, "Please, share it now."

Maria revealed, "The false master possessed detailed knowledge of my family, your history, and Morgana's strength. She claimed the real danger ahead wasn't Morgana, but someone else, someone she deemed far more formidable than Morgana... She said that compared with 'that person', Morgana is just a clown who has lived for three to four hundred years..."

"Someone else?" Charlie interjected, "Who?"

Maria shook her head. "She didn't elaborate, fearing that disclosing too much might cloud the Young Master's judgment. If you were to perceive her words as mere attempts to cultivate mystery, it could lead to irreversible consequences,"

Charlie murmured, "If even Morgana pales in comparison to this individual, then their strength must be truly extraordinary."

Charlie pondered, "Could it be Morvel Bazin?"

Maria expressed her doubts, "Initially, I also had suspicions... but... it just doesn't add up!"

After a moment's thought, Maria continued, recalling her father's words, "According to my father, the master reached his end over three hundred years ago, making it impossible for him to be alive today. Furthermore, if he had discovered a method to extend his lifespan beyond a millennium, his power would undoubtedly surpass any in this world. Morgana's dominance over three centuries proves this. There's no conceivable reason for him to remain hidden for over three hundred years, concealed within the Eternal Mountains."

Charlie furrowed his brow and responded with seriousness, "What you're saying does make sense. There are aspects I've yet to unravel, but I'm inclined to believe that Morvel Bazin orchestrated all of this deliberately. My father's demise and my current predicament likely stem from his designs laid out centuries ago."

Maria then interjected with a realization, "If indeed this is the master's doing, it presents a paradox. Most of the connections align logically, yet there's a discrepancy."

Curious, Charlie inquired, "What inconsistency are you referring to?"

Maria elaborated, "As you mentioned, the chance of a Dragon offspring being born is exceedingly slim, akin to finding a needle in a haystack. If the master's plan hinges on your future, then success seems improbable. If you were not a Dragon, the chain of events would unravel. Your father wouldn't be able to transfer his destiny to you, preventing you from ascending to Dragon status and consequently triggering the 'Apocalyptic Book.' It seems illogical to stake everything on such an unlikely occurrence, with odds less than one in a billion."

Acknowledging the complexity of the situation, Charlie concurred, "Indeed, it's a perplexing dilemma."

Maria then glanced at the "Preface to the Apocalyptic Book" on the table, raising a tentative question, "Young master, do you think this text might contain a method for guaranteeing the birth of a Dragon heir? If so, it would strongly suggest the master's involvement in all of this!"

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Maria's deduction suddenly illuminated Charlie.

He felt a mix of excitement and nervousness, exclaiming, "Miss Clark, you're absolutely right! If this was a game set more than three hundred years ago, the orchestrators wouldn't leave any link beyond their control. If indeed Morvel Bazin orchestrated all of this, then there must be a method in the 'Preface to the Apocalyptic Book' for me to inherit the Dragon Grid like my father!"

With renewed determination, he turned his gaze back to the photocopy of the "Preface to the Apocalyptic Book," proposing, "Miss Clark, if it's convenient, let's study this book together."

Maria readily agreed, swiftly rising from her seat. "Young master, please allow me to prepare the tea," she said, motioning for Charlie to join her in moving the table back to the main room.

Without hesitation, Charlie assisted in relocating the table, and together they entered the main room upstairs, which served as the living area.

In the center of the room lay a long book table, untouched since Maria's landscape painting. They settled by the desk, Maria preparing tea while Charlie meticulously disassembled the bound pages of the "Preface to the Apocalyptic Book," arranging them in sequential order.

The "Preface to the Apocalyptic Book" was a comprehensive text, spanning over 400 pages of dense content. It begins with an elaborate introduction to the meaning and characteristics of the spiritual cultivation path. Following introductory remarks, it delves into a detailed spiritual cultivation method known as the "The Nine Hidden Soul Paths," which occupies a significant portion of the book.

Charlie perused this mental method, noting its thoroughness in guiding practitioners from basic to advanced levels, even including instructions on opening the Soul Palace, a crucial step in spiritual cultivation.

Initially thrilled by his findings, Charlie's excitement waned as he continued, prompting him to briefly set aside the mental method section and explore other contents.

Beyond the "Hidden Soul Paths," Charlie encountered an autobiography penned by Morvel Bazin in classical Chinese. In it, Morvel Bazin outlined his life experiences and the true purpose behind writing the "Preface to the Apocalyptic Book."

Morvel Bazin openly declared his intention to seek a worthy successor capable of inheriting his teachings. He emphasized that only individuals possessing the Dragon fate were qualified to obtain the "Preface to the Apocalyptic Book." However, he also introduced the concept of ascending to Dragon, stating that while Dragon heirs could inherit his legacy, true destiny transformation could only occur by ascending to the Dragon Level. Without achieving this, one would remain susceptible to ultimate disaster, regardless of their efforts.

Next, the text delved into the concept of fate. It mentioned both Dragon and Divine Dragon.

Furthermore, the book elaborated on the process of ascending to Dragon. It stated that this ascent required both father and son to sacrifice themselves and work towards each other's success. Additionally, it detailed methods for peeling off Dragon.

Charlie and Maria revisited the content and encountered the section titled "The Art of Dividing Dragons."

Studying it together, they were both taken aback.

Charlie pondered a line and quietly murmured, "One dragon divides into two dragons, and two dragons turn into dragons again. If two dragons transform into dragons, does this mean... Could it be a method for the son to also become a dragon? Is this Dragon's technique?"

After Maria read the passage, she couldn't contain her surprise. "Sir, according to the records, a water snake can transform into a dragon in five hundred years, and a

dragon can further transform in another thousand years. Here, it suggests that one dragon can split into two. That means, Dragon's father must first split his dragon into two, keeping one for himself and giving one to his son."

Continuing, Maria explained, "Delivery represents the fate closest to Dragon. It's the only fate capable of 'turning into a dragon.' When the dragon's pattern evolves into a dragon, it becomes a dragon pattern. This indicates that when the Young Master's mother was pregnant with him and his destiny remained undecided, the Young Master's father underwent a transformation. He split his dragon grid into two and bestowed one part upon the Young Master."

"Consequently," Maria concluded, "the Young Master's father and the Young Master underwent a dragon transformation together, sharing a dragon grid."

"This is how your father employed this method to enable the Young Master to possess Dragon!" Maria explained.

Charlie couldn't help but feel tears welling up in his eyes as he murmured, "I heard Uncle Cole mention that the separation of fate is excruciatingly painful. It's the most agonizing experience he's ever witnessed. The notion of 'one dragon divided into two dragons,' as mentioned here, while it may not completely sever destiny, it certainly entails immense suffering... My father... actually endured such extraordinary pain... all for me... twice..."

Nodding slightly, Maria spoke with empathy, "The hearts of parents in this world are truly admirable. There are likely countless parents who would endure extreme hardships for their children... My father, despite having the opportunity for five hundred years of immortality, chose death over abandoning that chance to our captors. I believe I share the same sentiment as your father..."

Charlie mused, "But why... Why did he go through all that trouble... When he employed the 'Dragon Splitting Technique,' I hadn't even been born yet. Why go to such lengths for me? Why didn't he consider... perhaps I didn't desire the Dragon Rank or immortality..."

With a bitter smile, Maria responded, "My father never contemplated such thoughts. In truth, our family doesn't yearn for such prolonged existence. I doubt anyone could fathom the hardships I endured over more than three hundred years..."

Charlie sighed and posed a question, "After my father used the 'Dragon Splitting Technique,' his destiny was reduced from a dragon grid to two dragon grids. Surely, his own fortune must have been greatly affected, correct?"

"Indeed," Maria affirmed. "If his destiny underwent a downgrade, it would naturally impact his fortune. Mine would also suffer a similar fate."

Charlie wrestled with conflicting emotions, silently wiping away his tears before continuing, "Uncle Cole mentioned that my father severed my destiny before whisking me away from Eastcliff. Essentially, by the time I was eight years old, he had already completed the transformation to Dragon. I must have undergone the transformation into a dragon during those eight years, yet I was too young to recollect anything about it. There was something remarkable about my childhood that I didn't understand at the time. It indicates that my father not only divided his own dragon grid into two but also exerted considerable effort to elevate both of our

dragon grids to Dragon status. The amount of effort and sacrifice involved in accomplishing this in just a few years... I can't even begin to fathom..."

Maria nodded in agreement, remarking, "Sir, if we presume that all of this was orchestrated by the master, then every detail must have been meticulously calculated. Since the 'Dragon Splitting Technique' is outlined in the 'Preface to the Apocalyptic Book,' it follows that there must also be a 'Dragon Transformation Technique,' which enables the recombination of two dragons into one. Otherwise, if after that, one couldn't transform into Dragon, the entire plan would collapse."

With a sense of urgency, she directed Charlie's attention to the next section, exclaiming, "Look, sir, there it is, the 'Dragon Transformation Technique!'"

Captivated, Charlie eagerly delved into its contents. Indeed, it was exactly as Maria had surmised, "The Art of Transforming Dragons"!

Clarke by line, Charlie absorbed the technique's requirements. It mandated that the individual who employed the 'Dragon Dividing Technique' must continuously use mental methods to enhance the destinies of both parties involved.

In essence, since his father had divided their shared destiny into two dragon grids, their destinies were intertwined like quantum entanglement, advancing and retreating in unison.

Every exertion his father made affected both dragons simultaneously. From that moment forward, the responsibility of transforming both dragons rested solely on Charlie's shoulders.

It was conceivable that during the eight years after his birth, his father, Bruce, had diligently worked to facilitate their transformation into dragons.

Yet, in his youth, Charlie remained oblivious to it all.

Unexpectedly, his father had first divided his own dragon grid into two, then independently elevated both dragon grids to Dragon status before relinquishing his own dragon grid entirely.

In that moment, Charlie was overwhelmed with shame. If given the choice, he would prefer to be an ordinary person, ignorant of Taoism, rather than the recipient of his father's sacrificial efforts, which ultimately led to their tragic demise.

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As Charlie grappled with deep guilt over his parents, Maria, by his side, experienced a profound sense of complexity.

She revisited the contents of the "Preface to the Apocalyptic Book" once more, and with each read, her unease heightened.

Handing a piece of paper to Charlie, she remarked, "Master, this section details how to locate the Eternal Mountains... So, it seems the master's parents must have

discovered the Eternal Mountains based on these instructions, uncovering the secret of immortality, and ultimately extracting the 'Apocalyptic Book.'"

Charlie nodded thoughtfully, recalling, "Gideon did mention the secret of immortality during our confrontation that day, and various clues seem to corroborate your theory."

Maria's expression shifted as she queried, "Sir... Why do I continually sense that the master set in motion an elaborate scheme over three hundred years ago?"

Charlie inquired, "You mean, he orchestrated my present circumstances over three hundred years ago?"

With a solemn nod, Maria affirmed, "Perhaps. It appears as though this is the longest of long games. However, the master's target wasn't your father..."

"His target is me..."

"Yes," Maria asserted firmly. "I share the same belief! The master's motivations extend beyond mere inheritance. He seemed disinterested in worldly power struggles throughout history, focusing solely on longevity."

Charlie concurred, reflecting, "While I'm not well-versed in his history, anecdotes hint at his obsession with immortality. Yet, shouldn't he have perished hundreds of years ago?"

After contemplating for a moment, Maria posed a question, "The Rothschild family that the Young Master encountered in the United States this time is one of the wealthiest families globally. What do you believe that Howard's foremost concern currently is?"

"His primary concern would naturally be lifespan," Charlie responded.

Continuing, Charlie inquired, "Miss Clark, are you suggesting that Morvel Bazin devised this trap solely for the sake of longevity?!"

Maria nodded solemnly, affirming, "Father mentioned that the master is inherently disinterested in material wealth or carnal desires. Throughout the late Yuan, Ming, early Ming, late Ming, and early Ching periods, he could have pursued immense riches, yet he remained indifferent to worldly conflicts. Longevity was his sole preoccupation."

Concurring, Charlie added, "While I lack extensive knowledge about him, various accounts suggest an obsession with immortality. However, shouldn't he have perished centuries ago?"

Maria suggested, "I dare not speculate on the master's fate, but it's apparent that he devised this intricate trap. He likely requires a rising dragon like you, Young Master, to fulfill his immortality ambitions. He's likely counting on you to venture to Shiwan Mountain and walk into his trap. That's why the imposter master intervened that day, hoping for a persuasive explanation from me to dissuade you from proceeding."

She continued, "So, regarding this trap, I see two possibilities. First, the trap might have a specific activation window, only meaningful while the master is alive.

However, he might not have anticipated such a lengthy delay, rendering the trap inert until your father discovered the 'Preface to the Apocalyptic Book.' If so, Shiwan Mountain might not pose a significant threat to you."

Maria then rose, her tone solemn as she added, "Alternatively, the master could foresee the trap activating at an unspecified time in the future. For him, the timing might be inconsequential, as long as it's eventually triggered. If this is the case, then the master... may still be alive!"

"Not dead yet?" Charlie's brow furrowed in concern. "If he's alive, he must have discovered a method to extend his lifespan beyond a thousand years. And if he's still alive, he should be far more formidable than I am now, perhaps even surpassing Morgana. Why endure years of silence in Shiwan Mountain?"

Adding, "In other words, if he needs someone with a rising dragon rank like me, he could approach me directly, without orchestrating such an elaborate scheme."

Maria turned to Charlie, then gazed out at the lush, vibrant Mother of Pu Tea in the courtyard, prompting Charlie's reflection on her resilience. "Master, consider the Mother of Pu Tea's resilience. Despite our belief that she perished in that catastrophe three hundred years ago, she found a way to preserve a spark of life. Her vitality is akin to an eternal seed lying dormant until the right conditions arise. Without the nourishment of spring rain, she can remain dormant for centuries. But once the rain falls, she will rejuvenate and flourish."

In unison, Maria and Charlie murmured, "I believe the master likely possesses a similar means of preserving his dwindling existence indefinitely within Shiwan Mountain. When he desires it, he can undergo a rebirth, akin to the Mother of Pu Tea. And you, Young Master, are the rain he awaits..."

Observing the unfolding bud on the Mother of Pu Tea, Charlie sensed a palpable tension, his nerves tingling with anticipation.

Sensing his unease, Maria grasped Charlie's hand, her expression anxious as she recalled, "Master, do you recall what you said to me during the clash with Gideon?"

Charlie affirmed, "Of course."

Maria pressed on, "The Young Master once mentioned that Gideon suggested, before opening the Soul Palace, that even if the Young Master destroys his body, he can seek revenge by inhabiting another body. Do you believe such a sinister method exists?"

Charlie pondered for a moment before responding gravely, "Though I've never encountered such techniques, it's plausible they exist. When examining the inner workings of beings, such as people, mobile phones, and computers, the body serves as hardware while the mind acts as software. Transferring one person's consciousness into another's body is akin to transferring data between devices—replacing the original data with new information."

Maria elaborated, "If you retain a mobile phone's data before its hardware fails and find a suitable replacement, theoretically, you could resurrect the original. Similarly, when Master Bazin's life nears its end, he may not find a means to extend it independently. Yet, he might have devised a method to retain his consciousness, awaiting a suitable vessel."

She continued, "Body snatching must be a drastic measure. Otherwise, he would have seized my father's body before his demise. For someone solely fixated on immortality, seizing a body shouldn't merely ensure survival but facilitate the chance to start anew. Rushing into a mediocre vessel might hinder his previous heights. Thus, he not only requires a vessel for rebirth but a formidable one, capable of challenging the laws of nature!"

Charlie exhaled heavily, his mind grappling with the revelation. "So... what he needs is a body that ascends to the divine dragon level?"

Maria nodded vigorously. "Exactly! I find this reasoning sound and plausible. It aligns with what the imposter's wife mentioned—how anyone can venture into the Eternal Mountains except for the Young Master. She also warned that the person there is far

more terrifying than Morgana. Now it appears that she was referring to the Master, waiting for you in the Eternal Mountains!"

Accepting this conjecture, Charlie clenched his teeth. "Morvel Bazin is quite the schemer. I've heard of people playing the long game, but this is the ultimate scheme!"

Adding to his statement, Charlie remarked, "Now that we've unraveled his scheme, does it mean he'll wait endlessly as long as we steer clear of Shiwan Mountain?"

Maria concurred, "I share the same sentiment!"

Relieved, Charlie declared, "Alright, from this moment forth, I won't even take half a step closer to the Eternal Mountains. If not for the false teacher's warning earlier and our discussion today, I might have rushed back to Shiwan Mountain after obtaining the 'Preface to the Apocalyptic Book,' or rather, the second thing I'd do."

Inquisitive, Maria queried, "And what's the first thing the Young Master should do?"

Charlie responded earnestly, "Certainly, it would be to delve into the 'Hidden Soul Paths.' That's where true cultivation lies. If I aim to unlock the Soul Palace, this mental method is likely my best bet at the moment."

Maria absorbed this information, carefully perusing the first section of the "Nine Hidden Soul Paths" before remarking, "My father once aspired for me to comprehend this, but I was evidently not suited for enlightenment. After numerous attempts, Father abandoned the notion. However, he imparted a spiritual teaching to me, which I've cherished for over three centuries. Despite the passage of time, its essence remains nearly identical to what's documented here."

She added, "However, my father mentioned that his master never assigned it a name. It was merely the culmination of his lifelong practice. Father believed that something his master gleaned over his lifetime shouldn't be labeled. Hence, I christened it the 'Secret of Immortality' in honor of his master."

Charlie sighed deeply, contemplating the depth of Morvel Bazin's secrets regarding his father and Morgana. "It seems Morvel Bazin withheld a lot from both your father and Morgana. He didn't even disclose the name of the 'Hidden Soul Paths.' Since they were unaware of the 'Hidden Soul Paths,' it's likely they were also oblivious to the 'Preface to the Apocalyptic Book' and the 'Apocalyptic Book.'"

Reflecting on this, Charlie couldn't shake off a sense of foreboding. "Initially, I was grateful for the significant changes brought by the 'Apocalyptic Book and 'Apocalyptic Book.' Weaver's Pharmaceutical's transformation into Oracle Pharmaceutical was a sincere endeavor. But now, it seems trouble is endless... If Morgana learns about the 'Nova Dias,' Oracle Pharmaceutical could become a target for her..."

Maria nodded slightly, sharing Charlie's concern, and then asked with a hint of unease, "Does the Young Master intend to practice the 'Nine Hidden Soul Paths'?"

Charlie replied earnestly, "Considering my current circumstances, a structured mental cultivation method presents the greatest opportunity for strength improvement. Morgana managed to unlock the Soul Palace over a century ago,

indicating that mastering this mental method to a certain level will enable me to do the same. This is a rare opportunity for me..."

Despite his optimism, Charlie couldn't shake off a sense of apprehension. "However, logic dictates that the 'Preface to the Apocalyptic Book' is a genuine lure. The 'Apocalyptic Book may merely be an encyclopedic facade lacking essential content. To err on the side of caution, I cannot place my trust in any information provided in the 'Preface to the Apocalyptic Book.'"

Maria nodded emphatically, echoing Charlie's sentiments. "Then we share the same apprehension. We cannot afford to trust a single word in the 'Preface to the Apocalyptic Book!'"

Chapter 5685 bookmark

At that moment, Charlie surveyed the stack of photocopied contents of the "Apocalyptic Book Preface" and couldn't help but exhale heavily. "If our assumption holds true, then the false teacher last time saved my life."

Maria nodded subtly, then rested her chin on her hand as she mused, "I believe the false teacher likely acted under someone else's orders, with the true benefactor being the person behind her."

Charlie found her perspective quite satisfactory, though he expressed some uncertainty, "This individual, who sees through Morvel Bazin's intricate plans and intervenes at critical junctures, must have an extraordinary background. However, I can't fathom why, if this person is willing to aid me, they remain secretive. If we were to meet face to face, perhaps we could collaborate and confront the Warriors Den together."

Maria offered a gentle smile, remarking, "Perhaps each of them harbors their own secrets, much like myself. Were it not for the Young Master's intervention, saving our lives and bringing us here through my father's ring, I would have concealed my true identity and experience."

She added, "Nevertheless, it's certain this person is observing the Young Master covertly. When the time is right, they may initiate contact."

Charlie nodded, reflecting, "I've often wondered whom Stephen Thompson has been serving all these years. Stephen's sudden departure without a word gives me pause. I can't shake the feeling he's remarkably similar to the false teacher we encountered in Shiwan Mountain. They're likely one and the same individual behind the scenes. What embarrasses me is that this person may have been monitoring me for years, yet I remain oblivious."

As he spoke, Charlie instinctively retrieved the agarwood bracelet he obtained from the nunnery that day from his pocket. The twenty-eight precious Chinan agarwood beads felt warm and smooth in his hands, emitting a fragrant aroma.

Gazing at the bracelet, Charlie sighed, "Fortunately, this individual isn't an adversary. They're unable to reveal themselves presently, perhaps due to their own reasons."

Maria nodded in agreement, remarking, "Master, despite meticulous planning spanning centuries, it's unforeseen that one's schemes could be thwarted and discovered by the Young Master. Presently, as long as the Young Master refrains

from venturing to Shiwan Mountain and abstains from practicing the 'The Nine Hidden Soul Paths,' he should remain unaffected by the master's machinations. At present, the Young Master's primary adversaries remain Warriors Den and Morgana."

She then inquired, "What are the Young Master's plans moving forward?"

Charlie responded, "During my encounter with Grandpa in Eastcliff, Inspector Lee proposed an idea, investigating suspicious companies worldwide, rooting out and dismantling Warriors Den's foot soldiers one by one, and ideally, within two or three years, neutralizing the organization's effective forces." He elaborated, sharing with Maria his plan to employ AI models to aid in the investigation.

Upon hearing this, Maria praised Jack's criminal investigation strategy as impressive and wholeheartedly endorsed the approach. "Once this AI model is operational," she added with a smile, "it should be able to dismantle Warriors Den's global power structure systematically."

Charlie expressed his gratitude sincerely, acknowledging, "Your assistance has been invaluable this time. Without your reminder, I wouldn't have thought to obtain an AI model from the Rothschild family. As a modern individual, I feel embarrassed not to be as knowledgeable or as quick as Miss Clark about real-world affairs."

Maria modestly smiled, saying, "Master, over three hundred years of evading pursuit, my primary focus has been gathering information. I began with newspapers, then progressed to radio and television, and eventually turned my attention to the internet decades ago. It's become a habit to stay abreast of emerging technologies worldwide and assess their potential impact on Morgana's plans. That's why I kept tabs on AI."

She added, "Most importantly, the Young Master has gained the trust of the Rothschild family's head. Without that leverage, acquiring such an AI model in today's climate might have proved impossible."

The two exchanged a few more words before Charlie checked the time and informed her, "Ms. Clark, I intend to head to the mountainside villa in Elys-Champ around

noon to meet with my grandmother and aunt. It's almost time. I'll take my leave now and visit you later once I've taken care of everything."

Understandingly, Maria nodded and inquired, "Sir, what should I do with these photocopies?"

Charlie pondered for a moment before responding, "I'll leave it to you, Miss Clark. Handle it as you see fit. You can either store them away or dispose of them by burning."

Maria nodded in agreement, affirming, "Understood, I'll take care of it."

Seeing Charlie off, Maria instructed Larry Cole to arrange for Michelle to drive Charlie to the Champs-Élysées. Once Charlie had departed, Maria returned to the top-floor courtyard alone and began sorting through the photocopies of the "Preface to the Apocalyptic Book."

Initially considering burning the papers directly, Maria paused her actions after a few minutes of cross-legged meditation on the futon. With a decisive demeanor, she retrieved her schoolbag, stashed all the papers inside, slung the bag over her shoulder, and exited the courtyard.

Descending the stone steps, Maria instructed Marius, who was stationed there, "Please arrange for a discreet car for me. I need to go out."

Marius inquired eagerly, "Miss, would you like me to accompany you? Where are you headed?"

Maria waved off his offer firmly, stating, "No need, I'll manage on my own!"

...

Meanwhile, at Lama Temple Mountain Villa.

Sister Turk entered the Zen room where Lily was resting and spoke respectfully, "Madam, the Young Master went to Zilian Mountain Villa after disembarking from the plane, presumably to meet Maria."

Lily nodded in understanding and remarked with a smile, "I see. It appears that in Charlie's estimation, Maria might be the most suitable confidante to share secrets with."

Sister Turk concurred, adding, "Both the Young Master and Maria harbor numerous secrets, each possessing revelations that could astound the world. Once they open up to each other, there will undoubtedly be a plethora of shared interests."

Lily sighed, "The crux of the matter lies in Maria's exceptional intelligence. The more Charlie interacts with her, the lower the likelihood of making errors. It's not like anyone else is around him, someone who has lived for nearly four hundred years to constantly guide him and rectify his missteps."

Sister Turk nodded thoughtfully and inquired further, "Madam, Master Bruce also entrusted a photocopy of the "Preface to the Apocalyptic Book" to Peter Cole, whom the Young Master rescued from New York this time and sent back to China with the Four Treasures. I believe he may have obtained a copy of the "Preface to the Apocalyptic Book." Should we find a way to caution the Young Master against practicing it?"

Lily deliberated, "During our last encounter at Shivan Mountain, our only option was to contact Maria. At that time, it was the final line of defense. If Charlie had proceeded and refused to halt, we would have risked exposing ourselves and potentially faced interference. Presently, we should endeavor to minimize contact with Charlie. I trust in Maria's acumen, she will likely deduce the situation. For now, we need not fret."

Suddenly, Lily's expression shifted to one of concern as she added, "Sister Turk, Maria may come to Lama Temple seeking you. To err on the side of caution, I will depart Aurous Hill later and retreat to Mount Putuo for a few days. You may remain here for another day. If Maria hasn't visited Lama Temple by this time tomorrow, proceed to Putuo Mountain to find me. However, if Maria does come alone, seize the

opportunity to meet her and ascertain whether Charlie has practiced the "The Nine Hidden Soul Paths." Also, inquire about the nature of Charlie's collaboration with the Rothschild family during his recent visit to the United States. I received word this morning that several Silicon Valley companies awaiting Nvidia's graphics card shipments have inexplicably faced bans, resulting in delayed deliveries. I have a lingering suspicion that this matter may be connected to Charlie."

Sister Turk appeared perplexed upon hearing Lily's explanation and asked in bewilderment, "Madam, why do you suddenly suspect that Maria might return to Lama Temple to seek me?"

Lily responded with curiosity, "Last time, when you intercepted Maria at Shiwan Mountain, although she was unaware of our identity, she must have realized that our actions were motivated by concern for Charlie's safety."

"This time, Charlie returned with the 'Apocalyptic Book Preface' and promptly headed to Zilian Villa to meet her. Surely, he would have confided in her. Given her intelligence, she likely discerned that Morvel Bazin's trap was the root of the danger

facing Charlie, and she would also understand the peril posed by the 'Preface to the Apocalyptic Book'."

"Considering our past intervention whenever Charlie was in peril, while the urgency may not be as great this time, the matter remains equally significant. Maria could reasonably surmise that we are covertly monitoring her activities."

"If she believes we are keeping a watchful eye on her and that she herself is not in jeopardy, she will likely convey her desire to meet us through tangible actions."

"The last time you encountered her, you were disguised as a nun. If she seeks out any temple or nun within Aurous Hill in the next 24 hours, it's a clear signal that she wishes to rendezvous with us. Lama Temple holds prominence as Aurous Hill's most renowned temple. If she intends to convey a message to us, she will likely choose this location."

Sister Turk was momentarily taken aback, struggling to keep pace with Lily's swift deductions. While she may not fully comprehend, she harbored no doubts regarding

Lily's judgment. Without hesitation, she affirmed, "Understood, madam. I will await her arrival here throughout the day!"

A young woman disguised as a nun, interjected, "Madam, Ms. Turk, we observed from the surveillance at the foot of Zilian Mountain that the Young Master departed from there ten minutes ago. Exiting through the east gate, his car headed south onto the highway, likely bound for Elys-Champ. Additionally, Maria departed alone two minutes ago, and she has just exited Zilian Mountain."

Lily inquired, "Which direction did Maria take?"

Jingchen replied, "To clarify, Maria proceeded north after leaving through the east gate of Zilian Mountain."

Sister Turk's expression turned apprehensive as she exclaimed, "Maria headed north? Could she be heading towards Lama Temple?"

The young woman responded, "Ms. Turk, it's too early to confirm, but we will track her using traffic surveillance along her route to ascertain her destination."

Lily offered a faint smile and remarked, "Sister Turk, it's likely that Maria is indeed coming to Lama Temple. The journey from Zilian Mountain to here takes at least forty minutes by car. Please make the necessary preparations."

Sister Turk promptly inquired, "Madam, should I receive her as the master's wife, or assume another role?"

Lily suggested, "Given that she likely saw through the identity of our fake teacher long ago, it might be best to await her in the temple's parking lot and engage her in conversation there. Stick to the plan we discussed earlier for your approach."

Chapter 5686 bookmark

At this moment, just as Lily had predicted, Maria drove her car onto the elevated road leading to Lama Temple. Her current thoughts mirrored Lily's speculation.

She reasoned that if the impostor posing as a nun had been keeping tabs on him and even shielding him during critical moments, then it was likely they were still monitoring him discreetly. It occurred to her that they might even be in Aurous Hill now.

Considering this possibility, Maria weighed the potential repercussions. If the impostors were indeed in Aurous Hill, they would be covertly tracking Charlie's movements. Heading to Lama Temple alone at this juncture might signal an intention to meet them.

However, Maria acknowledged the uncertainty of her assumptions. It could all be mere conjecture, and the impostors might not be monitoring her at all. Nonetheless, she decided it was worth investigating. If nothing came of it, she could always turn back.

The midday traffic flowed smoothly as Maria drove for more than half an hour, eventually reaching the entrance to the Mountain. Despite the sprawling expanse of

the Mountain, visitors were required to park their vehicles outside the mountain gate and proceed on foot, opting for the sightseeing bus within the premises. Maria drove directly into the parking lot, intending to park her car and explore Lama Temple on foot.

With few tourists around at noon, the parking lot had plenty of empty spaces. Maria found a spot with no cars nearby and parked there.

As she prepared to get out of the car, the passenger door suddenly swung open, startling her. Expecting to see Morgana's associates, Maria was surprised to find an elderly woman wearing a brown hat sitting in the passenger seat.

Recognizing the woman as the impostor teacher she had encountered at the Temple on Shiwan, Maria composed herself and greeted her warmly, "Hello again, master."

Sister Turk glanced at Maria, who responded with a slight smile and said, "Miss Clark, please refrain from calling me a master. You can just call me Turk. After all, you're senior to me."

Understandingly, Maria nodded and then inquired, "You're aware that I came to Lama Temple to meet you, aren't you?"

With a smile, Sister Turk replied, "Yes, I knew. Mr. Wade returned to Aurous Hill today. I figured you might be worried, so I came to meet you. Perhaps I can help alleviate some of your concerns, Miss Clark."

Maria asked her, "Can I ask a question?"

"Of course," she nodded, "I'll share what I can and what I can't. Please also pay attention, Miss Clark."

Maria nodded slightly and proceeded to ask, "You're aware of Mr. Wade's return, and you've guessed that I'd be worried about him. You must also know that all of this is related to the 'Preface to the Apocalyptic Book,' right?"

"Certainly," Sister Turk replied calmly. "The return of treasures from all over to China indicates that Mr. Wade likely obtained the 'Preface to the Apocalyptic Book.' What I can tell you, Miss Clark, is that this sutra brings countless dangers to Mr. Wade without any benefits. He must never practice it."

Maria reassured her, saying, "I've discussed this matter with Mr. Wade, and we've reached an agreement. He has no knowledge of how to practice the 'Nine Mysteries' or the contents of the Preface."

Relieved, Sister Turk exhaled and said, "That's a relief. As long as Mr. Wade avoids Shiwan Mountain and refrains from touching the 'Preface to the Apocalyptic Book,' you can essentially avert the crisis."

Maria inquired, "The crisis you're referring to involves Morvel Bazin, right?"

"Yes," Sister Turk confirmed with a nod, "It's Morvel Bazin, your master."

Maria pressed further, "Is he truly not deceased?"

After a moment's contemplation, Sister Turk replied, "He's passed away, but not entirely. When the time is ripe, he can be reborn."

Acknowledging this, Maria remarked, "It appears he's truly intent on cultivating a dragon-level body for himself, allowing him to claim it for his own."

"Indeed," Sister Turk agreed, unsurprised by Maria's insight. "Despite living a thousand years, Morvel Bazin's attainment reached its pinnacle. Even with multiple rebirths, he wouldn't surpass a millennium. Aspiring to transcendence, he seeks the Dragon Ascension Style to reshape his destiny. With such a form, he could wield his millennia of experience to challenge the heavens."

Maria sought reassurance, "As long as Charlie avoids Shiwan Mountain and steers clear of the 'Apocalyptic Book Preface,' he's safe, correct?"

Sister Turk shook her head, cautioning, "I can't guarantee that yet, but it's the best course of action for now. It's a prudent approach."

With a nod, Maria turned to Sister Turk, asking, "Who are you? Who do you represent?"

Sister Turk smiled gently, "I'm sorry, Miss Clark, I can't divulge that information."

"Why not?" Maria queried in surprise. "Instead of clandestine assistance, why not engage Charlie directly? Perhaps both parties could find a solution to eradicate the Warriors Den and Morgana swiftly."

Sister Turk explained, "The timing isn't right yet. When it is, we'll meet with Charlie face-to-face."

Adding, "I implore you not to inform Charlie of our meeting. We can better assist him from the shadows. Exposure could jeopardize us both."

Maria, after a brief pause, tentatively asked, "Is Stephen Thompson affiliated with you? Were you once loyal to Charlie's parents?"

Sister Turk replied with a faint smile, "Miss Clark, I can't address those queries. Speculating on our identities would only complicate matters for Charlie."

She emphasized, "Please refrain from informing Charlie of our encounter. He should focus on self-improvement. No need to divert his attention away from his cultivation and how to deal with Morgana."

Maria agreed, "Rest assured, I won't tell Charlie."

Considering Charlie's predicament, she pondered, "If Charlie can't utilize the mental fortitude in the 'Apocalyptic Book Preface,' how can he enhance his strength? He often laments the absence of a complete set of mental techniques, hindering his progress."

Sister Turk sighed, "We lack viable suggestions. Charlie's fate may rely on luck."

Regrettably, she added, "If only Charlie had the Four Treasures of the Study. It would greatly aid his cultivation. The Four Treasures of the Study embodies the wisdom of ancient sages, a rare treasure. Insights gained from it could lead to enlightenment..."

Chapter 5687 bookmark

Originally, Lily believed that if Charlie went to the United States and rescued Peter Cole, he would surely obtain the Four Treasures of the Study. Even if Charlie didn't claim the Four Treasures of the Study for himself, he could at least retain it for some time. However, she never anticipated that after Charlie acquired the Four Treasures of the Study, he promptly instructed Hogan to send it back to China.

In such a short timeframe, there was no opportunity for him to learn anything from it. This was something that Lily deeply regretted. While she didn't wish for Charlie to keep the Four Treasures of the Study for himself, recognizing its rarity and the effort Charlie exerted to retrieve it from New York, she felt he should have retained

possession of it temporarily. After grasping its teachings, he could then consider returning it to China.

Maria smiled faintly and remarked, "The Young Master has his own principles.

Despite bringing the Four Treasures of the Study from New York and then sending it back to China, Mr. Peter Cole bore the greater cost for it. Moreover, the Four Treasures of the Study itself holds significant national importance, being an invaluable asset painstakingly crafted by our ancestors. The Young Master's decision not to keep it in his possession reflects his humility and respect for our nation."

Sister Turk sighed softly, acknowledging Charlie's admirable mindset. However, she expressed concern, "Mr. Wade's mindset is commendable, but by passing up this opportunity, we cannot predict when the next one will arise."

Maria reassured her, "The Young Master has made remarkable progress in Taoism despite his brief tenure. If he missed an opportunity with the Four Treasures of the Study, there will surely be other chances in the future."

Sister Turk nodded in agreement and then turned serious, addressing Maria, "Miss Clark, there are two matters we are particularly concerned about. One is Mr. Wade's potential visit to Shiwan Mountain, and the other is the risk posed by his practice of the 'The Nine Hidden Soul Paths.' Please exercise caution and endeavor to dissuade Mr. Wade from any impulsive decisions or errors in judgment."

Maria readily agreed, affirming, "Rest assured, this was precisely the matter I wished to discuss with you today. With a threat looming over Mr. Wade, I will spare no effort to mitigate it."

Sister Turk nodded and concluded, "In that case, I won't take up any more of your time. Miss Clark, I trust you won't disclose today's meeting to anyone, including Mr. Wade."

After a moment of hesitation, Maria nodded in agreement, "No problem."

Sister Turk then directed her attention to Maria, asking, "Miss Clark, may I inquire about something?"

Considering for a moment, Maria replied, "Feel free to ask. I won't withhold any information if I can provide it."

Sister Turk explained, "We're curious to know the nature of the agreement Mr. Wade reached with the Rothschild family during his trip to the United States."

Clarifying, she added, "Don't read too deeply into it, we're not prying into Mr. Wade's affairs. However, we're concerned about his sudden postponement of graphics card deliveries for numerous companies under commercial contracts with Nvidia. We suspect it may be related to Mr. Wade. Hence, I wished to seek confirmation from you."

Maria thought to herself, "The agreement between Mr. Wade and the Rothschild family primarily involved the exchange of elixirs and AI models. Surprisingly, they're not only monitoring Mr. Wade but also the Rothschild family and Nvidia. The graphics card delay is likely linked to this agreement. While I don't have all the specifics, I believe they'll unearth the truth shortly..."

With this in mind, Maria shared, "In all honesty, Mr. Wade brokered a deal with Howard Rothschild involving elixirs... The Rothschild family will develop an AI model for Mr. Wade. The graphics card delay you mentioned likely stems from this arrangement. Though I'm not privy to all the details."

Sister Turk's eyes widened in realization as she exclaimed, "So, the most potent AI model on the market is under the control of the Rothschild family. Could it be... the AI model Mr. Wade agreed upon with Howard?"

Maria confirmed, "Indeed, that's the case."

Sister Turk grasped the significance and exclaimed excitedly, "Mr. Wade is truly ingenious and courageous! Obtaining an AI model from Howard Rothschild will undoubtedly be a formidable weapon against the Warriors Den and Morgana in the future! This is truly marvelous!"

Maria observed Sister Turk's genuine happiness for Charlie and nodded in agreement, "Despite the Warriors Den's strength, it remains bound by the constraints of contemporary society. This AI model draws data from the entire society, including their presence. This model should aid Mr. Wade in locating them more efficiently!"

Excitedly nodding in agreement, Sister Turk then addressed Maria, "Miss Clark, now that we've reached an understanding, we'll depart from Aurous Hill shortly. If you have further inquiries, you may visit Lama Temple to burn incense as you did today. Within the next 48 hours, I'll be available there to meet with you. Consider this my pledge to you, and I hope you'll reciprocate with honesty."

Maria grasped the underlying implication of Sister Turk's words, signaling a mutual trust while cautioning against potential deceit or traps.

For Maria, despite not fully understanding Sister Turk's background or her associates, she harbored no doubts about their intentions towards Charlie. As long as this trust remained intact, she would honor their agreement. Thus, she affirmed firmly, "Rest assured, I will honor our agreement."

Sister Turk expressed her gratitude, then stepped out of the car. To ease any concerns Sister Turk might have, Maria promptly drove out of the parking lot and toward the city, without waiting for her to depart far from the scene. The departure was executed smoothly and seamlessly.

Maria's swift departure was deliberate, she didn't want to give the impression that she lingered to track Sister Turk's movements after leaving the parking lot. Firstly, Sister Turk might intentionally head in the opposite direction to mislead Maria. Secondly, Maria wished to avoid any appearance of distrust or manipulation.

Therefore, Maria left promptly to demonstrate her sincerity.

Both Sister Turk and Lily, observing the parking lot via surveillance cameras, recognized Maria's intentions and admired her even more.

Originally planning to leave Aurous Hill that day and have Sister Turk wait for 24 hours, Lily postponed her departure, surprised by Maria's prompt arrival.

Upon seeing Maria leave the Mountain, she instructed the young women around her, "Arrange for the technical team to alter the parking lot surveillance footage, extracting every frame and completely erasing Sister Turk's presence. Additionally, ensure that any footage of the passenger door opening and closing is modified. If someone reviews today's surveillance, they should only see Maria's car entering the parking lot, with her briefly staying inside alone before departing."

The young woman nodded promptly, responding, "Understood, madam. I'll make the arrangements immediately."

Lily couldn't help but express, "Having our own mature AI model would be ideal. With sufficient computing power, such tasks could be handled by AI within seconds."

The young woman informed, "Our technical team has already begun developing our AI model based on Google's dit architecture per your specifications. I believe we'll achieve a breakthrough soon."

Lily sighed, acknowledging the challenges, "Besides refining the internal algorithm architecture of current AI, hardware poses a significant obstacle. To avoid attention, I've had to procure NVIDIA chips through several reliable small to medium-sized Silicon Valley companies, enduring lengthy waits for delivery. After saving for so long, I've only managed to accumulate over 3,000 chips. Just as I was about to acquire another 1,000, NVIDIA inexplicably postponed the delivery date. Without the necessary hardware and software, progress is elusive. There's still a long road ahead before our AI model becomes operational."

Reflecting on the capabilities of AI, Lily remarked, "For tasks like image processing, relying on manual methods, even just cutting out a single frame, can be time-consuming. Yet, with AI, provided the computing power is sufficient, it could take mere seconds."

Lily, well-versed in internet technology, envisioned, "With sufficiently powerful AI, it could process front-end image data synchronously with only a two or three-second delay. In that scenario, if Sister Turk was conversing with Maria at 1,00 p.m., by 1,00,02, the AI-processed video would seamlessly cover their interaction. No one could discern any clues upon review."

The young woman, recognizing the potential, exclaimed, "If that's the case, we could make someone vanish entirely at the data level or even have them 'reborn' at the data level. It would appear as though I departed from here to the airport, yet the surveillance data would depict someone else entirely, seamlessly concealing their identity and whereabouts!"

"Indeed," Lily concurred, "With such technology, I wouldn't need to be so cautious about concealing my whereabouts. By erasing all traces at the data level, I wouldn't fear detection by Morgana."

As they conversed, Sister Turk hurriedly returned, breathless from running.

Observing her distress, Lily inquired, "Sister Turk, why are you rushing back? Is there an emergency?"

Still catching her breath, Sister Turk exclaimed excitedly, "Madam! Miss Clark said..."

Lily urged her to sit and offered support, asking, "Don't worry, Sister Turk. What did Maria say?"

After regaining composure, Sister Turk relayed with a smile, "Madam, Miss Clark said... she and the Young Master have deduced Morvel Bazin's intentions. The Young Master has pledged not to visit Shiwan Mountain or practice the 'The Nine Hidden Soul Paths!'"

Lily sighed in relief, exclaiming, "Excellent! With Charlie's current strength, Morgana poses little direct threat. I can finally relax, thanks to these reassurances. Maria is truly astute, deducing the logic was no small feat. Now, I can rest easy!"

Sister Turk eagerly added, "Madam, there's more good news!"