

Chapter 5502

After Morgana's special plane touched down at Interlocken Airport, it was ready to jet off to Australia with minimal delay.

According to the flight plan, they were set to make a non-stop hop to Buenos Aires after refueling in Australia, just as they did on their inbound journey.

As Morgana's plane taxied toward the takeoff point on one of Interlocken Airport's runways, another private jet, belonging to Charlie and Maria, touched down on a neighboring runway.

In the airport parking lot, a sleek Mercedes-Benz off-road vehicle awaited them. Without delay, Charlie and Maria made a beeline for it.

Charlie reached into his pocket and deftly turned the key in the left front wheel well. With a click, the car's door unlocked. Charlie gestured for Maria to join him and they swiftly climbed inside, setting their sights on Shiwan Mountain.

Maria, occupying the co-pilot seat, couldn't shake a lingering unease. It was clear to her that Morgana had left Shiwan in haste, implying that the place harbored risks neither she nor Charlie had ever encountered.

Despite her concerns, Maria refrained from dissuading Charlie. She understood that ever since Charlie met his grandparents, he had been consumed by the desire to uncover what his parents had discovered and experienced in their time, the enigma that ultimately led to his possession of the Apocalyptic Book. So, in her own resolve, Maria decided to accompany Charlie without hesitation.

At this moment, Charlie bore a weight of worry himself. However, the connection between his parents and the secrets of immortality, as well as the intricate teachings of the Apocalyptic Book, held the key to his deepest desires. He was itching to unveil every hidden truth and he suspected that the famed 'Eternal' Mountains were the source of it all. Even if danger lurked ahead, he was determined to reach Shiwan and uncover its secrets.

Yesterday, Morgana had driven to Shiwan in her car, only for the vehicle to vanish upon her departure. There was no video evidence of her car leaving the highway, leading Charlie to surmise that she had concealed it at a specific point along the road, departing while leaving the car behind.

Charlie's plan involved driving to the section of highway where Morgana had last been seen to search for any traces she might have left.

As they neared the stretch of highway, Charlie began to emanate his aura, honing his senses on the surroundings, particularly the valley beneath the viaduct.

A two to three ton car couldn't simply vanish into thin air, it had to be stashed somewhere, most likely concealed in a valley.

After passing through a series of tunnels, Charlie abruptly slowed the car, pulling over onto the emergency lane. He pointed across the road and turned to Maria. "Morgana should have descended there."

Curious, Maria inquired, "How does the Young Master know this?"

Charlie nodded. "Her car is down there."

Maria was taken aback. "Did she jump from here?"

Charlie affirmed, "The car was dropped first and then she made her exit."

Maria quickly asked, "Young Master, are you planning to jump from here too?"

Charlie smiled wryly. "No, you can drive to the next exit and wait for me in town. I'll go down."

Maria instinctively grabbed Charlie's hand, her voice trembling with nervousness. "I want to be with you."

Charlie sighed, then opened the central control's map display. He pointed to their current location and Morgana's last appearance in a nearby town. "Right now, all I know is that Morgana descended from here, but her actual destination remains uncertain. If she descended closer to the endpoints, we'll be fine. However, if it's farther away, her path might form a wide angle. The search area will become vast. If you come with me, you might find it too much to bear."

Maria asserted firmly, "I'm going. I might require some extra care, but I want to be with you."

Charlie gave a resigned smile and then considered her. "If Morgana's still there, do you think she'll let us go that easily?"

Maria nodded seriously. "Keagan has reviewed all the airport surveillance footage. They watched Morgana arrive, go through security checks and customs. She appeared agitated throughout, clearly terrified. In our understanding, no one in this world can induce such fear in Morgana except Lord Bazin."

Charlie frowned. "Even if Morgana left under duress, Morvel Bazin wouldn't let her escape so easily, assuming he's still alive."

Maria added, "Furthermore, whether through your lineage or Morvel Bazin's earliest disciple's descendants, his existence can be traced. He was born in 664 AD and supposedly passed away in 1663, after living for 1000 years. If he's alive now, it means he discovered a method to extend his life more than three centuries ago. His power could be unimaginable by now, potentially surpassing anyone. Morgana has been of great help to him and he managed to establish a formidable Warriors Den. It's hard to believe he'd confine himself to the Shiwan Mountains."

With a worried expression, Maria continued, "I can't make sense of it and neither can my family. We're deeply concerned."

She then remembered something and with a nervous gaze on Charlie, stated, "Young Master, think about the Mother of Pu'er. Over three hundred years ago, we watched her fail to transcend. For centuries, we believed she vanished without a trace. Who could've imagined she left a glimmer of hope and after more than three centuries, it would find a way to be reborn?"

Charlie's expression darkened as he asked in astonishment, "Are you suggesting that Morvel Bazin might be seeking a similar opportunity?"

Maria spoke earnestly, "I can't be certain, but I believe, if the Mother of Pu'er achieved it, then Master Bazin might have as well. Please don't underestimate a person's desire to live, especially one who's lived for over a thousand years. Their determination to survive knows no bounds. A person who's endured a millennium possesses an unimaginable will to live. To preserve his life, he'd undertake unimaginable efforts..."

Chapter 5503

Maria's words prompted Charlie to ponder the possibility of Morvel Bazin's existence more seriously than ever before. Initially, this question had seemed somewhat ludicrous.

The 'Apocalyptic Book' offered no accounts of anyone living for over a thousand years, making this a blind spot in Charlie's knowledge. Even the 'Apocalyptic Book' lacked any mention of the Eternal Green Pill.

Maria herself represented another gap in Charlie's understanding, let alone Morvel Bazin. Though direct evidence regarding Morvel Bazin's current status was lacking, Charlie couldn't afford to take this matter lightly. Caution was paramount. He turned

to Maria and said, "I wholeheartedly concur with your perspective. Since we're already here, there's no reason to turn back now. Why not proceed as you suggest and investigate together?"

Maria knew Charlie wouldn't easily give up, and the fact that he was willing to take her along was already a significant concession. She nodded without hesitation. "Agreed! You have my full support."

Charlie nodded in acknowledgment and then sighed softly. "Given our circumstances, descending from this point isn't practical for the two of us. Let's turn back and venture into the mountains in the opposite direction from the town where Morgana appeared."

"Very well," Maria obediently agreed. "I'm at your disposal in all matters."

With a consensus reached, Charlie wasted no time. He swiftly exited at the next ramp after the spot where Morgana had descended, continued forward for dozens of kilometers and disembarked from the highway at the town where Morgana had left.

According to the map, this town had only one rugged mountain road leading to the outside world in addition to the expressway. The beginning of this mountain road was near a mountain named Chiandao Mountain. It extended further to connect with the entrance and exit of the highway. If one didn't access the expressway here, they could continue driving ahead to reach a national road.

Morgana appeared on the road between the starting point of Shiwan Mountain and the midpoint of the town.

Charlie drove to the location where Morgana had last been seen and decided to hike into the mountains from there, following the general direction of Morgana's abandoned car, in hopes of discovering any clues she might have left behind.

Given Morgana's hurried departure, Charlie suspected she hadn't had time to erase her tracks.

After the two disembarked from the car, Charlie equipped himself for mountain hiking, and they began their ascent into the mountains.

Beyond the country road, the landscape transitioned from the rugged virgin forest. Alongside the road were terraced fields cultivated by local farmers, complete with paths for humans, livestock and even motorcycles.

The path's direction coincided with Charlie's intended search direction, so they followed it deeper into the mountains.

They traversed a low mountain covered in terraced fields and continued deeper into the wilderness. There were fewer signs of human activity on both sides and the area had clearly been untouched by development.

Upon descending a second mountain and heading downhill, Charlie noticed that the once lengthy khaki path in the valley ahead had narrowed into a slender Y-shape. Additionally, there was a meandering river, just over a meter wide, flowing down the valley towards lower ground.

The river intersected the Y-shape, with five tiers of stone piers constructed at the junction. These piers had slowed the river's flow, creating a buffer zone of four to five square meters on the left side of the Y-shape. The one-meter-wide stream expanded to nearly three meters in width at this point.

At the foot of the mountain, the path forked, with the right branch leading deeper into the wilderness. The left branch ascended another smaller mountain ahead. Compared to the one Charlie and Maria were ascending, this mountain was shorter. At its peak stood a small cluster of brown-red low-rise buildings, their purpose a mystery.

Shiwan Mountain, located in the warm and humid southwest, maintained its lush, green appearance throughout the year. The slopes, mountaintops and valleys teemed with vibrant foliage, appearing pristine and untouched by modern labels.

Maria followed Charlie, captivated by the scenery. She couldn't help but express her admiration, "The ancients often spoke of secluded, winding paths, but I never imagined that the landscape along such paths, like the legendary Eternal Mountains, could be so serene and beautiful. Living here for a while would surely be comfortable and enjoyable."

Charlie smiled and responded, "Once we no longer have to worry about being disrupted, I'll buy you some land here. You can choose a mountain to build a house and the rest can be used for growing tea trees."

Maria shook her head gently and said, "The climate here isn't suitable for Pu'er tea trees, but it's perfect for cultivating green tea. Young master, while I do appreciate tea, I don't intend to spend my life toiling as a tea farmer. There are already countless tea trees on Erlang Mountain and my knowledge of them is vast. If you buy land here for me to cultivate tea, wouldn't I then be devoted to tea-related work all day long?"

Charlie chuckled, "That wasn't my intention. I just noticed how much you appreciate this place and thought of buying it for you."

Maria blushed and replied softly, "With such a thoughtful gesture, I would be delighted."

As they continued their journey, they encountered a bald woman in a gray robe at the Y-shaped intersection ahead. She had been squatting, washing clothes in a wooden basin, which seemed to contain clothes and a flat wooden stick.

As the terrain was lower on the side of the mountain where the nun was, the girl had reached the Y-shaped intersection ahead of Charlie and Maria. The nun stopped at the intersection, leaned against the road's left side in the Y-shape and proceeded to wash her clothes. She took a wet robe from the wooden basin, scrubbed it and then beat it vigorously with the wooden stick.

The crisp sound of the stick striking the wet clothes resonated softly throughout the valley.

Maria observed and listened, then remarked to Charlie, "I used to wash clothes this way. I can't believe people still employ this method after all these years."

Charlie gazed at the nun from a distance and commented, "She appears to be a nun and the red-walled structure on the left mountain must be a convent."

Maria nodded and sighed, "Being a nun in this environment must be tougher than most."

The two proceeded along the mountain path, drawing closer to the Y-shaped intersection. After a stick of incense had burned, they reached the intersection.

At this point, the nun was still squatting and washing clothes. Since Charlie and Maria had agreed to pretend to be a couple in front of outsiders, Charlie stopped by the stone pier, extended his hand to Maria and said, "I'll carry you across."

Maria nodded shyly and offered her hand to Charlie.

Charlie guided her across the stone pier and was about to continue along the right branch of the Y-shaped intersection.

However, the young nun, who had been squatting and washing clothes, suddenly stood up, clasped her hands together and gave a slight bow to Maria. She spoke, "Amitabha, benefactor, our abbot has been awaiting your arrival for some time. May I ask that you come to the nunnery for a visit."

Chapter 5504

The nun's words landed like a bolt from the blue for both Charlie and Maria. Neither of them had anticipated becoming the focal point of attention right in front of a remote nunnery in the Shivan Mountains, all while avoiding Morgana's detection.

Without allowing Maria a chance to respond, Charlie fixed the nun with a vigilant gaze and inquired, "Who are you? Are you impersonating a nun, washing clothes here just to lay a trap for us?"

The nun pressed her hands together and offered a slight bow to Charlie. She replied, "Kind sir, I am no imposter. I am a bhikshuni of Greenwood Nunnery. I have dedicated myself to the path of enlightenment here. Our abbot knew that you both would pass by today and requested that I wait for your arrival."

She then turned her gaze to Maria and continued with a sense of gravity, "Dear madam, our abbot believes you have a profound connection with Buddhism and wishes to extend an invitation for you to visit the nunnery briefly. It won't take much of your time."

Maria considered the proposition for a moment and nodded gently.

Charlie interjected, "Very well, then I'll accompany her."

The nun gestured to the mountain road behind him and explained, "Sir, from this point onward, the entire mountain path falls within the Greenwood Temple's jurisdiction. It is a place where novice monks and bhikkhunis cultivate their spiritual practice. Men are not permitted entry. I hope you understand."

Charlie's tone turned stern, "This is absurd. Without me, how can I ensure my friend's safety?"

The nun replied respectfully, "A monk practices compassion and would never harm another being. Please rest assured, kind sir."

Charlie was about to protest when Maria gently pulled his arm and whispered, "Honey, wait for me here for a while. I'll be back shortly."

Charlie cautioned her, "Don't act impulsively, be cautious of deception!"

Maria offered a reassuring smile and murmured, "It's alright. With you here, no one would dare harm me. So, just wait for me here."

Maria wasn't privy to the abbot's identity who awaited her at the nunnery, but her instincts assured her of safety. She knew that Morgana and the Warriors Den were

the only threats pursuing her in this world. When she arrived in the southern province with Charlie, Morgana had remained oblivious to their whereabouts. This led her to conclude that the person at Greenwood Temple couldn't be affiliated with Morgana.

Since the individual didn't belong to Morgana, the likelihood of malicious intent dwindled considerably.

Moreover, Charlie was stationed at the base of the mountain. If the individual was aware of their association, they would think twice about making any moves under Charlie's watchful gaze.

Maria's curiosity was further piqued by the desire to uncover the stranger's identity. If this person knew about her, they must possess significant knowledge about her circumstances. Even more intriguing was their ability to calculate her and Charlie's whereabouts. It was nothing short of remarkable, given that they had decided on this route only an hour or two ago. There was no way for anyone to predict it in advance except through meticulous planning.

The only explanation was that the stranger had orchestrated everything and was merely waiting for them.

With these thoughts in mind, Maria eagerly longed to uncover the person's identity.

Observing Maria's resolve, Charlie surmised that she intended to proceed. If he forcibly accompanied her, it might deter the abbot from appearing, and he would be denied the opportunity to uncover the truth.

With reluctance, Charlie nodded and told Maria, "I'll be watching from here. The countdown begins the moment you disappear from my sight. I'll wait for you for twenty minutes. If you don't return by then, I'll come find you!"

Seeing Charlie relent, Maria nodded quickly and assured, "Alright, just twenty minutes!"

With this settled, the young nun once more clasped her hands in respect towards Charlie and said, "Kind sir, please wait."

She then turned to Maria and with equal respect, spoke, "Dear madam, please follow me."

Maria nodded, cast a reassuring smile at Charlie and whispered in his ear, "I'll be fine. Wait for me here."

Charlie nodded in agreement and watched as the two of them ventured farther into the mountain.

As they gradually receded from view, with the young nun leading the way and respectfully opening the nunnery's door for Maria, Charlie's unease grew.

He couldn't shake the feeling that, even if this stranger had no ill intentions, their uncanny ability to predict his and Maria's movements sent a shiver down his spine. Ever since he obtained the Apocalyptic Book, he had never experienced such anxiety and unease.

Meanwhile, Maria had entered Greenwood Temple.

Greenwood Temple was modest in size, occupying a small area, with only a handful of bhikkhunis in residence, including novice monks under the age of twenty. In total, the inhabitants numbered just over a dozen.

The nunnery didn't boast a thriving incense trade. Upon entering, Maria found no pilgrims offering incense and paying homage to Buddha.

Guided by the young nun, she traversed the front courtyard, receiving bows from all the nuns she encountered, which deepened her curiosity.

The young nun led her through the front yard to the back, where the main hall stood.

Though not grand, the main hall exuded a sense of meticulous care. Despite the aged Buddha statues, they retained their vivid colors and were untouched by dust. Clearly, they were regularly maintained and cleaned.

Inside the main hall, an elderly nun with silver hair was attending to the ever-burning lamps in front of the Buddha, carefully replenishing the oil.

The elderly nun appeared to be in her seventies or eighties, yet her physique remained robust. She effortlessly handled a jug of oil, pouring it without a single drop wasted. Her steady hands spoke of her expertise.

The young nun ushered Maria inside and addressed the elderly nun with the utmost respect, "Master, I have brought the benefactor."

The elderly nun turned, regarded Maria and pressed her hands together in a gesture of respect. She spoke with equal reverence, "I apologize for any inconvenience I may have caused, dear benefactor."

Maria returned the gesture and replied, "Master, there is no need for such formality. I am here with my boyfriend on a hiking trip. He is waiting at the foot of the mountain, so I hope we can proceed directly to the matter at hand."

The elderly nun gestured to the young nun, who promptly exited and closed the main hall's doors behind her.

With the young nun gone, the elderly nun let out a sigh and said, "The path ahead is fraught with peril... I implore you, Miss Clark, to persuade Mr. Wade to halt his journey."

Suddenly being addressed by name, Maria felt a surge of surprise, but she maintained a composed demeanor as she met the elderly nun's gaze. She replied calmly, "Master, Mr. Wade is deeply committed to his quest. I am but a mere woman, how can I dissuade him?"

Maria then shifted the conversation, her tone serious. "Unless you, Master, can shed light on the dangers that lie ahead?"

Chapter 5505

Upon hearing Maria's inquiry, the old nun leaned in, her expression grave. "To be perfectly candid with Miss Clark, fifty miles ahead lies the destination of Miss Clark and Mr. Wade. However, it's a place Maria Clark and Morgana Mirren can visit, but Charlie Wade cannot."

"Master is aware of Morgana?" Maria's shock deepened upon hearing Morgana's name mentioned by the old nun.

Maria struggled to comprehend the old nun's identity and why she possessed such formidable power. As far as she knew, only Charlie, herself and Morgana were aware of Morgana's existence.

The fact that this old nun could utter Morgana's name suggested she had knowledge of Morgana's life.

In essence, she might know that Morgana had lived from the Ming Dynasty, over three centuries ago, up to the present day.

Maria looked at the old nun with trepidation, her thoughts racing. "If she knows Morgana's secret, does that mean she also knows mine?"

At this point, the old nun abandoned pretense and spoke earnestly. "The humble nun and Miss Clark have opened the skylight. To be frank, both Morgana and the Warriors Den are adversaries of the humble nun. Morgana is immensely powerful and the Warriors Den has thrived for three centuries, making them nearly unrivaled."

Then, the old nun's tone shifted, becoming profoundly serious. "However, when compared to the individual fifty miles from here, Morgana is but a three-century-old puppet."

The old nun's words sent shivers down Maria's spine. In over three centuries, she had never felt as anxious as she did now. It seemed as though everything she had kept hidden for centuries had been laid bare.

Suppressing her anxiety, Maria inquired calmly, "Is it Morvel Bazin the Master speaks of? Could he truly be alive?"

The old nun sighed ambiguously and responded, "Morgana's hasty comings and goings would be clear to someone as astute as Miss Clark."

Maria grew even more anxious. In desperation, she pressed, "Miss, may I ask how all of this concerns Mr. Wade? Why can Morgana and I proceed while Mr. Wade cannot?"

The old nun brought her hands together in prayer and said, "Amitabha, Miss Clark, it's not that the humble nun wishes to withhold information. It's a matter of fate. Some matters can only be lightly touched upon. Excessive interference can bring uncontrollable consequences. The humble nun's intention was to caution Mr. Wade about the perils ahead. If Mr. Wade proceeds recklessly, reaching there will render everything irreversible."

Maria pursed her lips and sought the old nun's opinion. "What is your view, Miss? Should I attempt to dissuade Mr. Wade? Given his disposition, without a clear explanation, will he agree?"

The old nun spoke gravely, "This is why the humble nun asked her disciple to invite Miss Clark rather than inviting Mr. Wade directly. I believe Mr. Wade holds a unique place in Miss Clark's heart. Miss Clark persuading him is far more likely to succeed than any attempt by the humble nun."

Maria admitted somewhat sheepishly, "Master Wade is deeply invested in this affair. He eagerly anticipates the journey and hopes to find answers to long-standing questions. Advising him to turn back without proper clarification would likely meet resistance."

The old nun nodded, her gaze steady. "Progressing further will expose Mr. Wade and many innocent lives to unforeseen dangers. If Mr. Wade can momentarily set aside his grievances, he can buy valuable time and increase his chances of success."

The old nun locked eyes with Maria, speaking earnestly. "Miss Clark, the humble nun has been forthright with you and the matter at hand carries great significance. It now rests on your shoulders to persuade Mr. Wade to change course."

Maria glanced at her with a few words, her tone pleading. "Dear lady, please clarify further. Mr. Wade saved my life and if he is indeed fated for calamity, I will spare no effort to save him, even if it means sacrificing my own. Please provide more insight and I will find a way to resolve..."

With that, Maria began to kneel.

Observing her actions, the old nun rushed forward, intercepting Maria before she fully knelt and said, "Miss Clark, you have witnessed the ebb and flow of centuries. The humble nun dare not stand in ceremony with someone of your stature. Please, do not make this grand gesture."

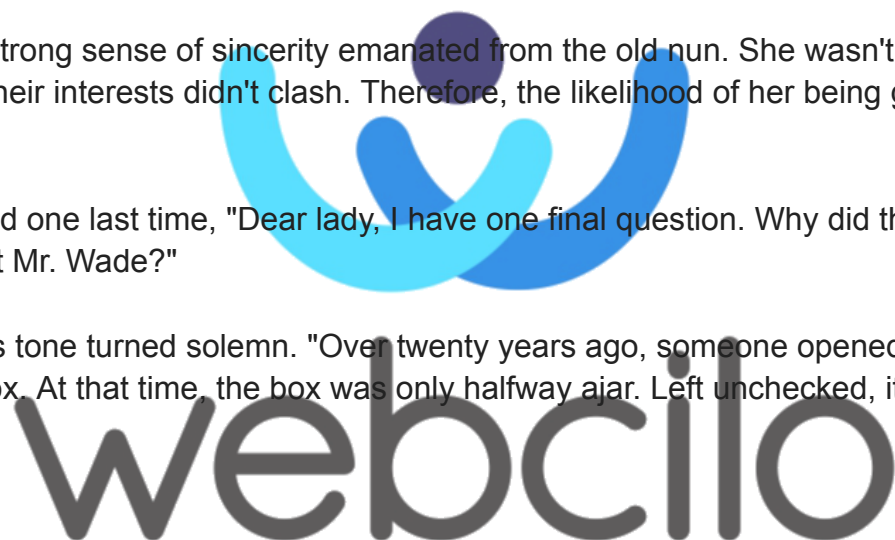
Supporting Maria, she continued, "Miss Clark, you comprehend the intricacies of fate. Even the slightest variations, barely discernible, can yield vastly different outcomes. Excessive information could lead to unintended consequences. If you truly wish to aid Mr. Wade, minimize the variables. The humble nun can confirm that danger lies ahead for Mr. Wade and Miss Clark, by ensuring he turns back, and holds the key to the best possible outcome for all."

Maria looked at her, absorbing her words. She realized the old nun had witnessed centuries of transformation and sensed her prior blunder. The old nun was correct, there were often unforeseeable nuances within the web of fate. Knowing too much wasn't always advantageous. She no longer pressed for more details but weighed the old nun's words in her heart. She began to rule out potential adversaries, first herself and Charlie, then the idea of the old nun competing for relics left by Morvel Bazin.

However, a strong sense of sincerity emanated from the old nun. She wasn't an enemy and their interests didn't clash. Therefore, the likelihood of her being genuine was high.

Maria inquired one last time, "Dear lady, I have one final question. Why did the Master assist Mr. Wade?"

The old nun's tone turned solemn. "Over twenty years ago, someone opened Pandora's box. At that time, the box was only halfway ajar. Left unchecked, it would



inevitably open fully within a few years, leading to unforeseen disasters. But now, can the box be sealed entirely, or must it be fully opened? Mr. Wade is the one who has directly unlocked it!"

Chapter 5506

Maria seemed to have deciphered the old nun's cryptic words. She asked, "Are you suggesting that Marvel Bazin's rebirth depends entirely on Mr. Wade?"

The old nun replied noncommittally, "The humble nun has already alluded to that. Some questions are best contemplated by Miss Clark herself. However, it's imperative that Mr. Wade remains unaware of these matters."

Maria, sensing the old nun's reluctance to reveal more, pressed on. "Is there any other guidance from you?"

"None," the old nun clasped her hands together respectfully. "I've heard Miss Clark's name for a long time. Seeing you today fulfills the humble nun's wish. Mr. Wade is waiting at the mountain's base. Miss Clark should descend soon and persuade him to return to Aurous Hill."

Maria could tell that the old nun intended to bid her farewell, but she was not ready to give up. She hurriedly asked, "Master, what should Master Wade do next? If we can't proceed today, I fear Master Wade will face danger. Please, Master, guide us on our future path!"

The old nun's expression revealed a struggle, and after a long pause, she finally spoke, "Miss Clark, please instruct Mr. Wade to open his Soul Palace as soon as possible. Only by unlocking the Soul Palace can we have a fighting chance against Morgana."

Maria grew increasingly perplexed about the old nun's identity. She couldn't fathom why Charlie was maintaining such a low profile and concealing his true self. The old nun appeared to know him well, even being aware that Charlie had yet to unlock the Soul Palace.

Maria wanted to pose more questions, but the old nun had already opened the main hall's door and called out, "Please escort our guest out."

The young nun who had led Maria to the old nun now emerged from a side chamber. She respectfully addressed Maria, "Miss Clark, please follow me."

With little choice, Maria nodded, gazed at the old nun, and expressed her gratitude. "Thank you, Master, for your guidance."

The old nun nodded in acknowledgment and offered a gentle smile. "Amitabha, may you take care of yourself, Miss Clark."

Maria bid her farewell to the old nun and followed the other out of the Greenwood Nunnery's gate.

The nun informed her, "Miss Clark, you can retrace your path down the mountain. I won't accompany you further."

Maria nodded and said, "Master, please take care."

She bowed to Maria and then slowly closed the door behind her.

Maria, looking at Charlie in the distance at the mountain's base, a mere speck in her vision, waved to him. Seeing Charlie appear to wave back, she hurriedly descended the mountain.

At the mountain's base, Charlie had been waiting patiently.

Spotting Maria's descent, he moved closer and inquired with concern, "Miss Clark, what's that nun up to? What did she advise you to do?"

Maria pursed her lips and replied, "Sir, they cautioned us about forthcoming dangers and urged us to reconsider."

Charlie looked surprised and asked, "Does she know where we're headed?"

Maria nodded gently and clarified, "It seems that the teacher is not malevolent. They anticipate risks on the path ahead..."

She looked at Charlie earnestly and pleaded, "Sir, why don't we turn back to Aurous Hill? I fear you may be in peril if we proceed."

"Return to Aurous Hill?" Charlie frowned and spoke seriously. "We're possibly just a few dozen miles from where Morvel Bazin practiced. My parents might have been here, and from the items I found, like the 'Preface to the Apocalyptic Book,' I might uncover more about their lives by journeying these miles. I can't quit halfway..."

Charlie turned to Maria and suggested, "Miss Clark, why don't you return to town and wait for me? I'll go on alone."

"Absolutely not!" Maria instinctively grasped Charlie's hand and implored, "Sir, since we now know that this is the place where Master passed away, whether it's near or far, we can't afford to give up. You can return to Aurous Hill to make further preparations and come back when you've grown stronger."

Charlie hesitated as Maria continued, "We haven't determined the other party's identity. We can't abandon everything based on just a few words."

Maria added anxiously, "Someone knows we're coming here, calculated our route in advance, and is waiting for us. This indicates that they are well-acquainted with both of us. Whether they have ill intentions or not, we must acknowledge that our identities have been exposed. If we push forward in this situation, regardless of friend or foe, the circumstances will likely turn unfavorable."

Charlie was taken aback, reevaluating the situation.

Maria's words prompted him to reconsider.

As Maria pointed out, whether the nun was a friend or a foe, their exposure was a fact. If one knew, others might too. If he insisted on advancing, not only was he risking danger, but also exposing his identity to potential scrutiny.

Maria added, "Sir, no matter how near or far, Morgana also fears this place. If she's afraid, why should we force the issue?"

Charlie found himself torn.

He understood the wisdom in Maria's words. However, as he drew nearer to uncovering his parents' secrets, he was reluctant to abandon the quest.

Meanwhile, in the main hall of Greenwood Temple.

Sister Carey returned to the main hall and respectfully reported to the old nun, "Lady Turk, Maria has departed."

Without turning, the old nun inquired, "Have they gone back?"

"Not yet," Sister Carey replied. "They seem to be conversing near the intersection at the mountain's foot. It's uncertain whether they'll change their minds."

The woman inside the room smiled, her voice a blend of charm and authority. "There should be no issue."

She added, "Please, promptly organize everyone to prepare for departure. Maria is exceptionally astute, nearly a wily fox. She might have overlooked some details due to excessive worry. I don't believe she'll return anytime soon. Keep us informed and ensure no traces are left behind."

The old nun acknowledged with respect, "Certainly, madam!"

Chapter 5507

At the base of Greenwood Temple, the situation remained uncertain.

Charlie hadn't yet committed to abandoning the journey. The thought of simply walking away left him with an overwhelming sense of dissatisfaction.

Yet, Maria's reasoning couldn't be dismissed.

Sometimes, a person must remind themselves that persisting stubbornly can amount to nothing more than arrogance.

The word 'arrogance' suddenly struck Charlie like a lightning bolt. In the face of the unknown, he had an epiphany about the limits of his current strength.

After some contemplation, Charlie forced a rueful smile and spoke with composure, "Maria, you are right. I can't afford to be conceited. My strength is no match for Morgana's and she seems to have knowledge of our actions and whereabouts. She's far from ordinary."

He turned to Maria, his expression earnest. "You are sharper than I am. Many issues run deeper than I initially thought and you possess a greater clarity of vision. Since you've also advised me to reconsider, I'd better heed that advice. I suggest we have a meal and return to Aurous Hill."

Maria, who had been tense, finally breathed a sigh of relief. She had feared that Charlie would dig in his heels and refuse to budge, no matter what advice was offered.

Now, with Charlie showing signs of yielding, she felt relieved.

In a manner reminiscent of a young bride in ancient times, she focused all her attention on her 'husband', Charlie. If he was happy, even the simplest fare would satisfy her. If he was unhappy, the finest cuisine would taste like wax. Her greatest fear had been that Charlie wouldn't know how to retreat. Seeing that he was at least accepting the counsel of 'the master's wife' was a great relief.

Taking Charlie's arm, Maria turned and retraced their steps.

Charlie walked with his head lowered, while Maria brainstormed ways to lift his spirits. She asked hopefully, "Young Master, do you think the Mother of Pu'er has grown more leaves in the past two days?"

Charlie replied casually, "It should have grown larger and adding three or five more buds shouldn't pose a problem."

With a smile, Maria teased, "When we return, I will pluck those fresh leaves, process them and serve them to the Young Master."

Curious, Charlie asked, "Isn't making Pu'er tea a complex process? Doesn't it require storage and fermentation?"

Maria explained, "In fact, it can be enjoyed after curing without the full fermentation. While it lacks some of the depth of flavor, it retains a fresh and mild taste. Typically, only freshly picked tea leaves can be cured immediately. Freshness and timing are crucial. This is why most people rarely get the chance to taste it."

Charlie inquired with a grin, "Aren't you quite protective of the Mother of Pu'er's leaves? Why so generous now?"

Maria replied with a shy smile, "The Mother of Pu'er is remarkably resilient. Picking a few leaves shouldn't harm her, as the Young Master suggested."

Charlie knew that Maria was trying to make him happy. He was touched by her consideration. However, he also wanted to spare her from unnecessary labor. He chuckled and said, "Let the Mother of Pu'er grow her leaves. Picking too many might keep you up at night."

Maria shook her head resolutely and said, "As long as it pleases the Young Master, there's nothing I can't endure."

Charlie felt a warmth in his heart and nodded approvingly. He recognized Maria's intentions and was moved by them. He thought it might be a bit odd for a grown man to have a seemingly young woman pamper and coax him, but he appreciated her kindness.

Charlie shifted the conversation. "With you here, Morgana is unlikely to trouble China in the near future. The immediate risk is gone. What are your plans now?"

Maria, sensing the change in topic, smiled and shared, "I intend to return to school, but as a day student. Zilian Villa will tend to the Mother of Pu'er daily. Additionally, I may require occasional trips to Erlang Mountain in the southern province to care for the tea garden on weekends."

Charlie remarked, "Sounds quite busy."

Maria nodded solemnly. "I prefer to stay busy. In the past, I was always concerned about Morgana catching up to me, so I dared not venture far. In recent years, I've spent most of my time at home, dabbling in porcelain making, writing, painting and even considering raising a small and adorable cow. Now, with Morgana's threat reduced, I can stay busy and content."

Charlie couldn't help but feel happy for her. He understood that, for a young woman who had lived for more than three centuries, this would be one of the least stressful periods of her life since childhood. Even if she was busy, she would likely find happiness in the busyness.

This realization eased his mood a bit, making him feel that this trip to the southern province had not been in vain.

As they retraced their steps up the mountain, Maria stopped and turned around halfway. She gazed back at Greenwood Temple in the distance, lost in thought.

Seeing her pause and look back with a contemplative expression, Charlie inquired, "What's on your mind, Miss Clark?"

Maria furrowed her brow and whispered, "I'm thinking that the Bhuddist nun discussed Morgana, the Warriors Den, hatred, destiny and even an ancient Greek myth with me. But..."

Charlie asked, "But what?"

Maria bit her lip and continued in a slightly louder voice, sounding somewhat puzzled, "But she didn't mention Buddhism."

Chapter 5508

Maria's words set off a subtle alarm in Charlie's mind. He couldn't resist asking Maria, "Do you suspect there's something off about her identity?"

Maria nodded thoughtfully and asserted, "I have encountered accomplished Buddhist Masters in the past and they all shared a common trait, they strictly adhered to

Buddhist teachings in their lives, quoting scriptures and drawing wisdom from Buddhist principles in their daily conduct and speech. To put it simply, they lived in accordance with Buddhism. However, this Master, except for Amitabha, rarely mentioned Buddhism. This discrepancy makes me wonder if she's a genuine nun."

Charlie's vigilance heightened instantly. He remarked, "If she's not a real nun, then she's concealing herself as a nun, awaiting our arrival. Whether friend or foe, there's certainly an external force behind her besides the Warriors Den."

Maria nodded gravely. "But, Young Master, don't be overly concerned. I believe they're not hostile and there's a good chance they hold some grudge against the Warriors Den. 'The enemy of my enemy is my friend,' as the saying goes. However, they're still cautious around us, or there could be other reasons preventing them from revealing their true identities at the moment."

Charlie fell into contemplation for a moment and inquired, "What Greek mythology did she mention?"

Maria, cautious not to divulge too much, replied, "She spoke of the tale of Achilles, emphasizing that even the strongest could meet their downfall if they're not careful."

Charlie, without delving further into the matter, made a firm decision. "Let's turn back and investigate."

Surprised, Maria asked, "Young Master, do you intend to visit Greenwood Nunnery?"

"Yes." Charlie affirmed, "I want to discover who they are, why they possess such knowledge about us and why they've adopted nun disguises to await us. Initially, they asserted Buddhism's sanctity and denied us entry. It's only right that I respect their wishes. But now, it's evident that they may not truly be Buddhists. It's better to confront them directly."

Maria hesitated momentarily and then consented, "If the Young Master wishes to investigate, I will accompany you. Just exercise caution and avoid inadvertently turning potential allies into adversaries."

Charlie nodded, resolute. "I simply want to know who they are. If there's a chance to become friends due to a shared adversary, we should be open and honest. Keeping secrets would be shameful."

Maria concurred with Charlie's perspective, perturbed by the other party's secrecy despite their knowledge of her and Charlie's backgrounds.

Thus, the two of them retraced their steps and descended the mountain, heading straight for Greenwood Nunnery.

Passing the Y-shaped intersection, Charlie and Maria continued along the path. After a while, Charlie furrowed his brow and remarked, "There's no one left at Greenwood Nunnery."

"Ahh?" Maria exclaimed in surprise. "Did you use your aura to confirm?"

"Yes," Charlie confirmed, "There's no one left, they've probably departed."

"This..." Maria furrowed her brow. "When I left, I looked back several times, but I didn't spot anyone coming down the mountain."

After Charlie conducted a more extensive aura sweep, he concluded, "There's a path behind the mountain."

Regretfully, Maria confessed, "It's my oversight. I should've thought of that."

Charlie offered a small, reassuring smile. "No worries. Since they're gone, let's head up and investigate. Maybe we can find some clues."

Maria proposed, "Shall I ask Keagan to help us gather surveillance information from nearby towns?"

Charlie shrugged, skeptical. "You can try, but I doubt it'll yield much. These individuals are different from Morgana, who's inherently suspicious. This time, she came to Shiwan alone, unaccompanied, making it challenging to cover her tracks. In contrast, these people appear to be working as a team and came well-prepared. I doubt they left any traces behind."

"That's true..." Maria sighed and acknowledged, "They likely anticipated our arrival in advance and made preparations within Greenwood Nunnery."

Maria then had an idea. "We can inquire about Greenwood Nunnery from the locals. Perhaps we can unearth some clues."

Charlie agreed. "Let's proceed and take a look first."

Upon arriving at the main entrance of Greenwood Nunnery, they found the door closed. However, when Charlie gently pushed it, the door creaked open.

Stepping inside, Charlie noticed the thick wooden door bolt and furrowed his brow. "It seems they were aware of our arrival and left the door open intentionally."

Maria wore a worried expression and murmured, "They've calculated every step we've taken."

Charlie self-deprecatingly chuckled and commented, "I thought I was well hidden, but it turns out they know everything. What's baffling is how they calculate it all."

Maria, somewhat disheartened, admitted, "I've never had any cultivation in over three hundred years. My confidence has always been in my intellect. Now it seems I can't match up to them."

Charlie offered a comforting smile. "It's normal. Two fists are no match for four hands, especially if there's a formidable organization backing them. With so many people working together, it's difficult for the two of us to stay ahead."

Maria, although somewhat consoled by Charlie's words, still appeared shaken.

Changing the subject, Charlie said, "Let's go inside and investigate."

"Agreed," Maria replied, following Charlie inside.

Greenwood Nunnery was rather modest in size, comprising two courtyards, one in front and one in the rear. The front yard had side halls on either side and a main hall in the center. A small courtyard behind the main hall featured three tile-roofed houses.

Charlie and Maria first examined the side halls, where they found little beyond a few Buddha statues.

In the main hall, an evergreen lamp continued to burn, with three sticks of sandalwood almost reduced to ashes in the incense burner.

Charlie examined the incense burner, gauged the length of the remaining ash and commented, "These three sticks of sandalwood seem quite long. They've likely been burning for over an hour."

Maria calculated the time. "From the time I left the house, met you, explained everything and we journeyed up the mountain and back down... it has indeed been an hour."

Charlie concurred, "These three sticks of incense were lit when you left. They predicted our arrival."

Closing his eyes, Charlie inhaled the sandalwood's fragrance deeply and sighed, "This sandalwood aroma is extraordinary, better than any I've encountered."

Maria agreed, "I was about to say the same... This sandalwood is truly exceptional. As a connoisseur of tea and fragrances, I've encountered some excellent aged sandalwood, but none have matched this scent. It's rich, deep and subtly sweet."

Charlie couldn't help but marvel, "It seems they've calculated every step, even predicting that you'd notice something was amiss and that we'd turn back. These three sticks of incense were undoubtedly lit for us."

Chapter 5509

Maria sighed, defeated, as she looked at the three nearly spent sticks of sandalwood. With a puzzled expression, she said to Charlie, "You can predict how we can counter them...who are they?"

Charlie shook his head. "I can't quite comprehend it. It's like having a glimpse from God's perspective."

As he spoke, he strolled through the main hall, heading toward the backyard to investigate. Yet, a wooden door at the rear of the main hall caught his attention.

Carefully, he opened the door and discovered a small room about five or six square meters in size.

A swift scan revealed that the room held little aside from a plain wooden chair and a small wooden table measuring less than half a meter in width.

The room emitted a unique, invigorating aroma.

Upon closer inspection, Charlie noticed a string of bracelets on the table, their color closely resembling that of the wooden table itself.

The bracelet was made up of wooden beads about a centimeter in diameter, dark brown in various shades, gleaming and exuding a robust woody fragrance.

Placed at the center of the table, the bracelet appeared deliberately left behind.

Charlie stepped forward and picked up the bracelet, sensing the warm texture of each bead. Given its lightness and distinctive fragrance, Charlie speculated that it was made of agarwood.

At that moment, Maria entered the room, surprised. "Where did the Young Master get this agarwood bracelet?"

Charlie turned to her, smiling. "I found it on this table."

Curious, Maria approached and asked, "Young Master, may I examine it?"

Charlie nodded and handed her the agarwood bracelet.

Maria delicately held the bracelet, examining it with fascination. "This is the best type of agarwood, and it's an antique Hainan. It's an exceptional piece. Unlike anything I've ever seen."

"Exceptional?" Charlie asked, intrigued. "Is this item expensive?"

Maria explained, "The top-grade bracelet available in the market commands an auction price of hundreds of thousands a gram. However, in comparison, this one is of far superior quality. I have never seen such exquisite materials."

Charlie marveled, "From the day you sipped Pu'er Mother's tea until today, you've always had the best of the best. Even back in Northern Europe, when I met you, your blue and white porcelain was top-notch. Is there anything splendid in this world you haven't encountered?"

Maria playfully covered her red lips with her hand and chuckled. "Young Master, you credit me too much. Yes, this world is brimming with hidden gems. Nearly all the widely known things aren't the best. Encountering previously unseen treasures is quite normal."

With a playful smile, she handed the bracelet back to Charlie, saying, "Young Master, this bracelet seems to be a gift from them. Please accept it and keep it safe."

Charlie pondered, "Perhaps it's meant for someone else?"

"No." Maria sweetly replied, "If it were for me, they probably couldn't afford it."

Curious, Charlie asked, "Why do you say that?"

Maria smiled and said, "Young master count the beads, there were exactly twenty-eight. If I recall correctly, the Young Master recently celebrated his twenty-eighth birthday this year and isn't yet twenty-nine, correct? If so, isn't this for you? If it were for me, they would need at least three hundred beads, which would be quite extravagant."

Charlie was taken aback and quickly lowered his head to count the beads on the bracelet. Indeed, there weren't many, twenty-eight exactly.

Most bracelets typically had nineteen beads, representing a Buddha head and eighteen distinct dharmas. However, this bracelet boasted twenty-eight beads in a distinctive style. Due to its abundance, it was more suitable for twisting in the hand than wearing on the wrist.

Charlie couldn't help but ask her, "Do you think this represents my age?"

Maria nodded, "Most likely."

Charlie inquired further, "Perhaps it's a coincidence?"

Maria shook her head, "If it were placed outside, it could be, but here, it's highly unlikely."

Charlie pressed, "Why do you say that?"

Maria stated earnestly, "Young Master, you must understand that everything here is arranged for you. The only reason they included me was because I accompanied you. Had we not, they would have directly approached you."

Charlie suddenly felt a surge of nerves.

Maria's logic made sense to him. However, he couldn't fathom who would pay such meticulous attention to him.

From the moment the young nun initiated conversation with them at the mountain's base, Charlie had been eager to discover the identities of these people. Now, that curiosity only intensified.

At that moment, Maria recalled something and mentioned, "Young Master, when I first entered, I didn't see anyone entering or exiting this room. There were tables, chairs and this bracelet in the room. Someone must have been here at that time."

Charlie nodded, "That person is likely the Mastermind behind all this."

With that, Charlie twisted the bracelet in his hand and remarked, "I don't know why they're being so secretive, but it does feel like you described, definitely not like enemies. As for their background, we'll have to wait until they reveal themselves."

At this point, Charlie looked at Maria and asked, "You think, since they've gone to such lengths to stop me from moving forward, if I leave through this door and continue deeper into the Mountains, will they try to halt me again?"

Maria asked, shocked, "Young Master... are you... serious?"

Charlie reassured her, "For now, we're just considering the feasibility of this plan."

Maria hesitated, "Young Master, in theory, it should work this way. However, I don't recommend that the Young Master try..."

Charlie looked at the bracelet in his hand and smiled, "Don't worry. I casually mentioned it. It's not meant to disrespect."

With that, he tucked the bracelet away. Rising, he said to Maria, "Let's head to the backyard and take a look. If nothing seems amiss, we'll start back to Aurous Hill."

Maria finally breathed a sigh of relief and accompanied Charlie to the backyard of Greenwood Temple. The backyard of the nunnery wasn't expansive. A few tile-roofed houses suggested it was where the nuns resided.

However, it seemed vacant and hadn't been lived in for quite some time.

This further confirmed Maria's suspicion that the two nuns she encountered weren't genuine.

Charlie even speculated that Greenwood Temple had been abandoned for years and they had temporarily reopened it to halt him.

The two found no valuable clues in the backyard. However, they did notice a path descending the mountain from the back door of the backyard. It was likely the route they took to evacuate.

Over an hour had passed and Charlie couldn't find any clues along this path. Out of respect for these people, he had no intention of pursuing them to investigate.

Staring at the winding path, Charlie sighed softly and said to Maria, "Let's head back to Aurous Hill."

Chapter 5510

As Charlie and Maria descended from Greenwood Temple, Charlie held the agarwood bracelet tightly in his hand. He was determined to decipher the meaning

behind the bracelet left for him, but after much contemplation, he remained perplexed.

He decided to consider Maria's interpretation, the twenty-eight beads on the bracelet symbolized his current age. The mysterious sender had deliberately placed these twenty-eight beads within the bracelet, anticipating that Maria would notice the anomaly and return to Greenwood Temple to investigate.

But what message did the sender intend to convey by leaving this bracelet behind?

Puzzled, they descended the mountain only to retrace their steps back up the winding mountain road.

During their uphill journey, they encountered a group of local elderly women. These women walked together, descending the mountain slowly, each carrying a basket woven from vines containing various items, including sesame oil, paper money, and earthen incense.

Observing this, Maria approached the elderly women and inquired politely, "Where are you all headed?"

One of the elderly women replied, "We heard that Greenwood Temple has reopened. We're on our way there to pay our respects to Buddha and offer incense."

Maria asked with curiosity, "Has Greenwood Temple been closed for a long time?"

The woman nodded, "It's been shut for about ten or twenty years. There are fewer and fewer people in the mountains, and the temple lacks incense. All the previous nuns have left. Yesterday, the villagers informed us that a new nun had arrived, so we decided to visit together."

Maria quickly interjected, "You may want to reconsider. The new nun at Greenwood Temple has also departed."

"Left again? Why?" Several elderly women looked disappointed. "Why did she leave just a few days after arriving?"

Maria explained, "Perhaps she felt there wasn't enough incense being offered here."

The elderly women hesitated, torn between continuing or turning back. Eventually, one of them suggested, "The nun may be gone, but the Buddha statue remains. Since we're already here, why not light a few incense sticks?"

The others agreed, and they proceeded to the temple. Maria, seeing their sincere devotion, decided not to dissuade them any further. She cautioned, "Please take care, and we'll be on our way."

After bidding farewell to the elderly women, Maria turned to Charlie and remarked, "It seems like they arrived at Greenwood Temple recently, probably just yesterday."

Charlie nodded in agreement. "It's possible they noticed our arrival or Morgana's intention to come here, prompting them to prepare in advance."

He added, "What's certain now is that they know us and Morgana quite well. They might even be monitoring us in some way at this very moment."

Maria sighed and said, "The mountains hold many secrets. If you ever get the chance to meet the mastermind behind them, you must humbly seek their guidance."

...

Meanwhile, on the highway leading from Shiwan to the outside world, three inconspicuous Buick commercial vehicles smoothly cruised along the road. These vehicles bore license plates from Bloomington, the capital of the southern province, and belonged to a reputable car rental company in the country.

The Buick Business model was one of the most common MPVs in China, blending in seamlessly with the traffic. No one would suspect that the individuals inside these vehicles were connected to great wealth or power.

However, these three Buick Business vehicles had little in common with their commercial counterparts. Undergoing systematic modifications, these vehicles had evolved significantly in terms of power, safety, privacy, and comfort.

In the second Buick Business vehicle, the driver was the young nun who had previously intercepted Charlie and Maria at the mountain's base. Seated beside her was the elderly lady who had acted as the head nun, Joyce Turk.

In the second row, a middle-aged woman referred to as Madam sat, the very person who had left the bracelet for Charlie at Greenwood Temple.

Joyce Turk turned to the lady and inquired respectfully, "Madam, what are our next arrangements?"

Gazing out the window in contemplation, the lady replied, "Let's head to Aurous Hill. We'll stay at a Temple there for now, and both of you will accompany me. Upon reaching Aurous Hill, keep a low profile."

"Understood!" Ms. Turk nodded and added, "I'll inform the abbot."

She then asked, "Madam, whom would you like to meet next among these girls? I'll see if I can arrange it."

The lady raised an eyebrow and smiled. "I'm interested in Nanako Ito. Among these girls, she shows the most potential for Taoism."

Ms. Turk nodded and said, "I'll do my best to arrange it."

The lady remarked, "I heard she's studying martial arts at Elys-Champ?"

"Yes," Ms. Turk confirmed. "She's there, along with Xion and Aurora."

The lady commented, "Their talents can't compare to Nanako Ito's. Unless they encounter a great opportunity, they won't have a chance to enter Taoism."

Ms. Turk voiced her concern. "Madam, Nanako Ito is Japanese. If she joins Taoism, could it pose risks?"

The lady shook her head and replied, "Her nationality doesn't matter. What's crucial is her character and intentions. Whether she's Chinese or not, if her character is flawed and her intentions heretical, it's of no consequence."

She added, "Currently, it seems her character is impeccable, and her heart is no longer in Japan."

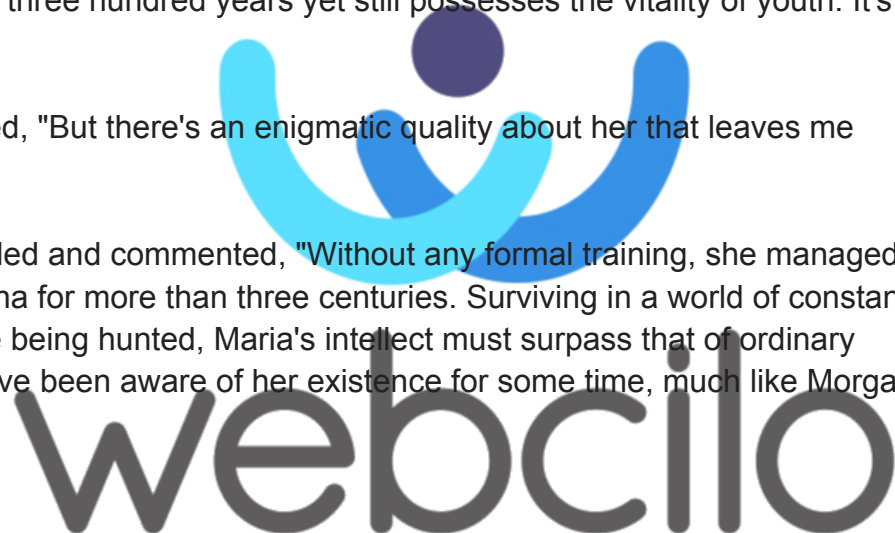
Ms. Turk widened her eyes and agreed, "You're right, Madam. I may have worried needlessly."

The lady asked, "How did you find Maria today?"

Ms. Turk sighed, "Even standing before me, Maria appears untouched by time. She's lived for over three hundred years yet still possesses the vitality of youth. It's truly remarkable."

She continued, "But there's an enigmatic quality about her that leaves me perplexed."

The lady smiled and commented, "Without any formal training, she managed to elude Morgana for more than three centuries. Surviving in a world of constant change while being hunted, Maria's intellect must surpass that of ordinary individuals. I've been aware of her existence for some time, much like Morgana, but



I've never been able to trace her. It was only when she was betrayed by servants in Northern Europe that I managed to catch a glimpse of her. She's far more cunning than we thought."

Ms. Turk inquired cautiously, "Do you think she'll eventually discover your identity?"

The lady replied, "Most likely. Once we establish contact with them, it's only a matter of time."

Ms. Turk asked, "Madam, are we prepared?"

The lady shook her head, "Not yet. So, for now, we'll exercise utmost caution and leave no traces."

Ms. Turk nodded and informed her, "Madam, we'll reach the airport in about forty minutes. The crew is ready at any moment. How should we proceed with the route?"

The lady appeared deep in thought and asked, "Where are they?"

Ms. Turk understood that she was referring to Charlie and Maria. She quickly answered, "Their plane is also in Interlocken, and they're likely heading directly to Aurous Hill."

The lady nodded, took a moment to contemplate, and then suggested, "We should be extra cautious. First, fly to Eastcliff. Upon arrival, switch to another plane to proceed to Aurous Hill. We must not underestimate Maria; contacting her directly this time essentially reveals that we've been observing them secretly all along. They'll only become more cautious in the future."



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