

## Chapter 5341

“Angela Lombardo?!”

Charlie was taken aback when he heard that, and thought to himself, “What a coincidence, there is also a teacher named Angela Lombardo?”

The next second, he thought to himself, “Should it be the same name as the Angela Lombardo I know?”

However, when he thought that he could see Maria again here if the Angela he knew also came to university, it seemed impossible... So

he asked again, “Where is this Angela you are talking about?” People?”

Maria replied truthfully, “She is from Hong Kong, and her father is Gerard Lombardo, a well-known wealthy businessman in Hong Kong.” “

“Hiss...” Charlie gasped.

He thought to himself, “Why did Angela come to Aurous Hill University to be a lecturer?! She is a top rich second generation in Hong Kong, why did she come here to be a lecturer? And she came to Aurous Hill, why didn’t she meet me?”

Thinking of Maria’s surprise, she met Angela, and went to Thompson’s to pick her up, so he asked again, “You said just now, you went to Thompson’s to pick up Angela, and Angela lives in Thompson’s?”

“Yes.” she said, “She bought an apartment in Thompson’s.”

Charlie subconsciously rubbed his temples. He and Angela were friends after all. This woman came to teach at university without saying a word, and he didn’t know what she was planning. ?

The point is, how could she get involved with Maria?

However, Charlie is not too entangled in Angela’s issue right now.

At this moment, he had already believed most of Maria’s answer in his heart.

It can’t be blamed on Charlie’s big heart, it’s mainly because of Maria’s answer, there is no flaw in it.

According to Maria, she came to Aurous Hill because she was related to Larry Cole, and Larry was indeed the biggest benefactor of this university many years ago.

What’s more, Charlie felt that he didn’t leave any information for Maria in Northern Europe. The only message he left was his name, that’s all. With the name as a clue, it is difficult to find him in such a short period of time, after all, his identity is already encrypted;

In addition, Maria’s answer was also very reasonable when the ring jumped twice.

The ring jumped for the first time. Charlie just took Claudia and they were leaving university. At that time, the ring jumped on the road.

Although Charlie saw the car coming from the opposite direction, he didn't pay attention to who was sitting in the car, so looking at it now, Maria was in the car at the time, and she must have come to apply for enrollment like Claudia at that time;

Moreover, when she came to the school that day, there was an episode, when they entered, the security guards were hanging a banner at the door, and the content written on the banner was "Warmly welcome Mr. and Mrs. Cole to our school."

Since the university had put up the banner a long time ago, it proved that before he came to the university to handle the admission procedures for Claudia, Maria had indeed asked Larry to come forward to solve the admission matter for her.

In addition, when he enrolled Claudia at the time, he didn't contact the admissions office of the university himself, but asked Issac to come forward on his behalf,

So, before he arrived at the university, no one knew that he was going to come. It can also be deduced from this that Maria came to university, and she definitely did not show up because he came.

Therefore, it can be judged from this that Maria must have made a plan to study at university long ago, and it was only a coincidence that she met him.

As for the second beating of the ring, it was indeed in the underground garage of Thompson's.

If it was really like what Maria said, she was going to pick Angela to Larry's house for dinner, then it made perfect sense. Did she lie? Just confirm whether Angela lives in Thompson's or not.

Therefore, he carefully reviewed Maria's answer just now, and could not find any flaws.

Thinking of this, he thought again, "It seems that someone should check Maria's entry records to see when she came to Aurous Hill and whether she lied. If she really didn't lie, then all this should be just a coincidence."

At this moment, he suddenly heard footsteps, and then, a familiar voice asked behind him, "Cathy, are you used to the dormitory?"

Charlie immediately recognized that it was Angela's voice!

In order to prevent Angela from discovering that Maria was in an abnormal state, Charlie immediately erased her memory just now, and then, while Maria was still in a daze,

He turned to look at Angela, and asked in surprise, "Miss Angela?! What are you doing here?"

Angela had just finished the teaching mobilization meeting and heard someone talking about the arrival of two super beauties in the Department of Archeology, so she guessed that Maria must be reporting to the school today.

She felt that Maria was Larry's distant granddaughter after all, and she happened to work at the university.

When Maria came to report to the school, she must come to see if there was anything she needed help with, so she checked Maria's dormitory room number and found it directly.

When she first arrived at the door, she saw that Maria seemed to be talking to a man, but she didn't think much of it, so she greeted Maria directly.

But she never dreamed that the man suddenly turned around, and it turned out to be Charlie, the sweetheart she had been thinking about day and night!

Originally, she didn't expect to meet him so soon. She also thought that after the freshman started military training and she was not so busy with work, she would find a chance to surprise him.

But she never dreamed that this surprise turned into a fright at this moment!

What's more, she never expected that her sweetheart would appear in Maria's dormitory!

The horrified Angela looked at Charlie, then at Maria, and asked falteringly, "Wade... Mr. Wade, you... do you know Cathy?"

Charlie waved his hand, "Oh no, I don't know, I brought my younger sister to report for duty just now, and she happened to be in the same dormitory as this lady, but I accidentally left the car key here, so came looking for it."

As he spoke, he glanced at Maria who was still in a trance, and thought to himself, "It seems that I have used a little more energy this time, and Maria hasn't recovered yet."

Just as he was thinking, Maria rubbed her temples vigorously, Then she pretended to see Angela suddenly, and said pleasantly, "Sister Angela! Why are you here?"

Angela subconsciously said, "Oh, I... I came to see you..."

Maria then looked at Charlie again, a little puzzled she asked, "Are you Claudia's brother? Didn't you go for lunch?"

Charlie said casually, "Oh, I came back to find the car keys."

After that, he pretended to look around Claudia's bed, the car key was already quietly in his hand, then he shook it towards the two of them, and said, "I found it."

Then, he came to Angela's side again, and asked in surprise, "Miss Angela, what is going on? Tell me why you are here?"

Angela didn't expect that she would be exposed in front of Charlie suddenly, so she could only bite the bullet and reply, "That... I... I passed the interview at university, and now I am a lecturer here..."

Charlie had just asked about Angela's recent situation from Maria's mouth by chance, but when Angela said it herself, he still pretended to be surprised and asked, "When did you come to work at university?"

Angela could only explain truthfully "Well... university has a youth talent introduction program. I tried to apply for it, and then I was invited to come for an interview, and then I passed the interview..."

Angela's tone was very disturbed, like a child who had done something wrong and was discovered by their parents.

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Charlie knew that she came to Aurous Hill most likely because of him.

However, at this time, he could only pretend to be stupid, so he subconsciously said, "Although this university is not as good as Hong Kong University, it is still very good overall."

Angela nodded slightly, looking at him, and stammeringly said, "...I think it's pretty good too..."

Maria on the side seemed to have just recovered, rubbing her head, and asked in surprise,

"Sister Angela, do you know this gentleman?"

Angela hurriedly said, "I know...we are friends..."

Maria said in surprise, "That's such a coincidence!"

Angela nodded slightly, and said awkwardly, "Yes...it's a coincidence..."

Maria looked at Charlie, and said to him, "Hello, my name is Cathy Clarke, I don't know what to call you?"

Charlie said lightly, "My surname is Wade, and my maiden name is Charlie."

Maria said with a smile, "Hello, brother Charlie."

Charlie smiled slightly, as a return of courtesy, but he couldn't help but slander in his heart, "It seems that Maria probably doesn't remember me."

However, he knew that Angela was here, so he couldn't continue to ask Maria, so he said, "Oh yes, my family is still waiting for me, I will go there first, you can see what time is convenient, and I will treat you to a meal."

Angela was suddenly exposed, shy, and embarrassed, but when Charlie said that he wanted to treat her to dinner, she agreed without thinking, "I can do it in the evening."

"Now, what time do you get off work in the evening?" Charlie asked.

Angela said, "Around six o'clock."

“Okay.” Charlie nodded and said, “Then I will pick you up at six o’clock?”

Although Angela moved, she still nodded and said, “ Okay, then I’ll wait for you at the door, let’s call and meet.”

Charlie knew that Angela was here, and he couldn’t continue to test Maria, so he said, “That’s it, you two talk first, I’m leaving.”

After bidding farewell to Angela, the first thing Charlie did when he left the dormitory was to call Isaac.

Although Issac was still in the Champs-Elysees Hot Spring at this time, worrying about how to realize the internal peep, when he received Charlie’s call,

He immediately retreated from the training ground calmly and went to an empty room before answering. Talking on the phone, he said respectfully, “Master!”

Charlie got straight to the point, and said, “ Mr. Cameron, help me check the entry record of a Malaysian rich man Larry Cole, and after checking, check the information of all the people who entered the country with him. “

Issac immediately said, “Okay young master, just wait a moment, I’ll let someone check it.”

A few minutes later, Isaac sent a form to Charlie.

In it, there is the time when Larry entered the country, as well as the information of all the people who came to Aurous Hill from Malaysia with him and went through the entry formalities.

Among them, there is the name Cathy Clarke.

Moreover, they have been in the country for some time.

It seems that Maria did not lie to him, she indeed came to Aurous Hill with Larry.

Moreover, Larry already had an industry and foundation in Aurous Hill, and the university had indeed received his favor. Maria thought that she would live in seclusion in the city, and Larry arranged for her to go to university, which was completely logical.

This made Charlie feel even more that Maria shouldn’t have lied.

What’s more, when he gave Maria a psychological hint today, he used more aura. He is confident that with such a powerful aura, Maria, who has no aura at all, will never have any chance to escape his psychology hint.

So far, Charlie’s doubts about Maria have basically dispelled eighty or ninety percent out of 100.

However, even though Charlie believed that Maria didn’t know his true identity, he kept frowning.

Although he basically believed that Maria’s appearance in Aurous Hill was just a coincidence, he was still faintly worried.

The last time he saw Maria, the Warriors Den was hunting her down.

Now that she has come to Aurous Hill, if the Warriors Den gets any clues related to her, then they will definitely learn from the experience and lessons from last time, and send the most powerful experts to Aurous Hill to catch her; moreover,

His grandparents have already arrived at Aurous Hill, like Maria, their family is also an important target of the Warriors Den.

If you look at it this way, the two major goals of the Warriors Den are in Aurous Hill, then the probability of the Warriors Den touching Aurous Hill will be greatly increased.

Considering that during the current meeting of the Warriors Den, almost all of them have been silent, and only three earls are still outside, Charlie is worried that some earl of the Warriors Den will come to Aurous Hill next time.

In Cyprus, he could let Wesley ambush the earl with the near-defense guns in advance, but in Aurous Hill, he doesn't have the ability or the opportunity.

If the earls of Warriors Den really came to Aurous Hill, even only for Maria and it was easy to say, if the other party also wanted to harm his grandparents and grandma's family, then it is still unknown whether he can have the strength to keep them safe.

Moreover, what was even worse was that he is in Aurous Hill, and it was difficult to set up an early warning system. If the other party really came to Aurous Hill, it would be difficult for him to know in advance before the other party sold it.

Thinking of this, Charlie's mood also changed and he felt an extra heavy burden.

...

For lunch, Charlie ate nothing.

After dinner, after sending Claudia, Lisa, and Mrs. Lewis home, he drove the car to the riverside, found a parking space and parked the car, and sat by the riverside all afternoon.

Seeing Maria today gave Charlie an unprecedented sense of urgency.

It was a feeling of an imminent enemy.

But he still hasn't found a way to deal with it.

6 pm.

Charlie drove to the university.

Although Angela came to the school by car, she left the car directly at the school. Before leaving school, she put on special make-up.

After the two met, Angela was somewhat cautious because of the sudden exposure today.

Charlie asked her, "Miss Angela, what do you want to eat tonight?"

Angela said, "Just eat something light. After coming to Aurous Hill, eating has always been spicy and salty. I'm not used to it..."

Charlie thought. After thinking about it, he casually said, "If you want something lighter, why not eat Hong Kong style?"

Angela said without thinking, "Okay, I'll listen to you."

So Charlie drove Angela to the entrance of a Japanese grocery store.

When he opened the door and entered, the bell hanging on the door vibrated and made a crisp tinkling sound, which made him stunned on the spot.

Facing the current situation, a solution suddenly appeared in his heart...

#### Chapter 5344

Seeing Charlie standing at the door in a daze, Angela couldn't help asking, "Mr. Wade, what's the matter with you?"

At this time a waiter came over and said, "Please..."

Charlie nodded, and when he followed the waiter into the door, he took a special look at the small bell hanging on the sliding door, and he was inspired.

If the Warriors Den really sent the earl to Aurous Hill in the future, then he has to make a "bell" that could warn him.

After taking a seat with Angela, he took out his mobile phone and sent a message to Zachary, Who was originally selling antiques on Antique Street, asking him to meet him at the mid-level villa in Champs-Élysées Hot Spring at noon tomorrow.

Some time ago, Zachary began to follow Don Albert as a dog-headed military adviser and he did it very well.

He reorganized Don Albert's industries and personnel, and his income and management improved a lot.

Right now, Don Albert spends most of his time in the Champs-Élysées and most of the affairs have been handed over to Zachary.

Charlie needed Zachary to complete his idea just now.

At this time, Angela was still a little embarrassed and cautious in front of Charlie.

After ordering some casual meals, she took the initiative to say to Charlie, "Mr. Wade, I'm really sorry... I should have told you about my coming to Aurous Hill in advance..."

Charlie could see the embarrassment in her expression.

Feeling at a loss, he smiled and said, "Isn't it possible to have such a pleasant surprise?"

Hearing this, Angela couldn't hide her joy and asked, "Really? Do you really think so?"

"Of course." Although what Charlie said was against his will, He also knew very well in his heart that Angela had come so far, and he couldn't be lukewarm. It must be a huge blow to her and it would even make her in the future. Every day in Aurous Hill feels like a year.

And he only needs to show a little bit of surprise,  
Which is enough to soothe the embarrassment and bewilderment in her heart.

Angela was indeed as Charlie expected.

After hearing Charlie's affirmative answer, she immediately pushed through the clouds and mist to see the moonlight.

Not only did she feel much more relaxed, but a happy smile appeared on her face instantly.

She looked at Charlie, and whispered a little bit shyly, "I'm afraid that if I come to Aurous Hill without saying hello, it will cause you trouble..."

"No."

Charlie waved his hand without thinking, "You are my friend, and when I came to Hong Kong, you took good care of me and now you came to Aurous Hill to develop, of course, I am very happy, If there is any need for my help in Aurous Hill in the future, Please don't be polite to me."

Angela was delighted, nodding her head endlessly, "Okay! I got it!"

Charlie smiled slightly, and then deliberately pretended to suddenly think of something and asked, "By the way, what is the relationship between you and Cathy, The girl who I saw in the dormitory at noon? How do you know each other?"

Angela said truthfully, "Cathy is the granddaughter of a good friend of my grandfather, She is an overseas Chinese from Malaysia and she will study at Aurous Hill University this year."

Then, Angela asked again, "By the way, I heard from Cathy that you know her new roommate?"

"Yes." Charlie nodded and said, "One of my younger sisters happened to be studying at Aurous Hill University this year and I didn't expect them to be in the same dormitory and the same major."

"That's such a coincidence Already!"

Angela exclaimed, "I originally wanted to wait for a while to stabilize in Aurous Hill University and then find a chance to tell you that I have come to Aurous Hill but I didn't expect to go to Cathy's dormitory to look for her today and I met you. It's so...so predestined..."

"Really..." Charlie smiled, and asked her, pretending curiously, "By the way, where did you go after I left at noon?"

## Chapter 5345

Angela said, "I originally wanted to call Cathy and go to eat together but she seemed a little uncomfortable, she kept saying that she had a headache and she didn't get better after resting in the dormitory for a long time, So I asked sister Michelle to take her back."

Then, Angela explained, "Sister Michelle is Grandpa Cole's housekeeper in Aurous Hill, Cathy lives in Grandpa Cole's Zilian Villa, and Sister Michelle is taking care of her in daily life."

Charlie was slightly taken aback when he heard this and then suddenly realized that the reason why Maria had a headache was probably that he had injected too much spiritual energy into her brain at noon and he had done too much psychological hinting.

The reason why he gave the medicine was that he felt really weird when he saw her and he was afraid that there was something weird about her.

Thinking about it now, for an eighteen-year-old girl too much aura has been injected into her brain, Which must have caused great damage to her body, and the headache and discomfort will last for a period of time.

Charlie was also a little ashamed for a moment, Feeling that when he saw Maria, he seemed to have overreacted a little and he acted a little harshly for a while.

Fortunately, this situation will not cause any irreversible damage to her.

If the headache is severe, she will be fine after resting for a while.

...

At the same time.

In Zilian Villa.

Maria, who was pale, just opened her eyes.

Sister Michelle, who was watching by the side, hurriedly asked with concern, "Miss Clarke, how are you feeling?"

Maria felt her head spinning, and a strong feeling of vomiting was urging her stomach to churn.

Sister Michelle saw that she was about to vomit, So she quickly picked up the trash can and put it in front of her.

Maria spat out acidic water with a blow.

After she ate at six o'clock in the morning, She hadn't had a drop of water for twelve hours and what she spit out was almost all the acid in her stomach and her burning throat and esophagus were very painful.

Sister Michelle wiped her mouth for her, quickly brought a cup of warm water, Rinsed her mouth, and then helped her drink a little.

After that, Maria felt a bit more comfortable.

She struggled to sit up, her whole brain felt as if it was going to explode in severe pain.

She endured the pain and asked Sister Michelle, "What time is it?"

Sister Michelle hurriedly said, "It's already six forty in the afternoon."

Maria nodded lightly, and asked her, "Didn't you tell anyone else about my discomfort?"

Sister Michelle quickly said, "You told me not to tell, so I didn't tell anyone. After entering the room, you fell into a coma, so I helped you to the bed and stayed with you all the time, Master and Mr. Zhang both came to ask and I followed your wishes and didn't tell them, only that you wanted to take a rest."

"Okay..." Maria nodded weakly, and said, "After getting into the car at noon, I almost lost consciousness, thank you, Miss Michelle."

Sister Michelle said respectfully, "Miss Clarke, you are too polite..."

As she said, she asked Maria, "Miss Clarke, you haven't eaten all day, Would you like me to prepare something for you?"

"Okay..." Maria really felt that her stomach was completely empty.

Heart palpitations and weakness caused by hunger, so she said, "Thank you, sister Michelle, for helping me fill the hot spring pool in the yard and after eating, I want to soak for a while."

"Okay, Miss Clarke."

"Miss Clarke, please rest for a while, and I will prepare dinner and hot spring water for you."

After finishing speaking, Sister Michelle bowed and left, Leaving her leaning on the bedside in a daze, recalling the experience of being repeatedly tempted by Charlie at noon, She couldn't help smiling wryly, and muttered to herself, "Charlie Wade, I don't know if I have passed your temptation today?"

Chapter 5346

The next day.

At noon, Charlie arrived at the mid-level villa in Champs Elysees Hot Spring.

Zachary arrived here an hour early and waited till now.

Seeing Charlie, Zachary said respectfully, "Master Wade, I am here to listen to your orders?"

Charlie smiled slightly and asked him, "Zachary, did you bring the things I asked you to bring?"

Zachary nodded repeatedly, took out a handbag from the car and said to Charlie, "Go back to Master Wade, I have brought everything you want!"

"Okay." Charlie greeted him, "Go in and talk."

When Zachary came to the living room of the villa, he couldn't wait to open the suitcase and took out several pieces of wood of different sizes and thicknesses but they were all as black as charcoal.

While taking these logs out, he introduced to Charlie, "At that time, You said you wanted lightning wood. This is all the reliable lightning wood that I can find from yesterday to now, the lightning wood sold in our market Nine out of ten are artificially made fakes. If you really don't understand where the lightning strikes the trees, the local people will snatch them all when the buyers come to your door, so don't worry. Looking at the lightning strike wood I was looking for, it seems that the quality is not very good and the age is not very old, but I can take out my heads to assure you that they are all real lightning strike wood, and there is absolutely no problem!"

Charlie clicked nodding, he took a rough look at the wood he took out, nodded, and said, "These are indeed lightning strike wood. Although the quality is a bit poor, it is just what I want."

Zachary was confused, and subconsciously asked, "Master Wade, why is the quality almost in line with your liking? I'm afraid that these little things won't catch your eyes..."

Charlie said with a smile, "I can't explain this to you."

With that said, Charlie asked him again, "I asked you to find the old finger puller, did you find it?"

"Found it!" Zachary quickly took out two amulet rings that looked very old from his pocket, Handed them to Charlie, and said, "Master Wade, look, these two amulet rings are all clean."

"The ones from the early generation are real, but the material is not very good, ordinary Hetian jade, the quality is average."

Charlie nodded, took the two amulet rings, roughly looked at them, and said, "Look at this thing. It looks like something from Shukeng and it has been unearthed at least decades ago, right?"

Zachary gave a thumbs up and praised, "Master Wade, you really have sharp eyesight and these two finger rings are indeed from Shukeng. I guess, At least it has been out for thirty or forty years."

Charlie said, "I want something that is buried, the more raw the better, It is best to look like it was just unearthed a month ago, can I get it?"

"This... .." Zachary said awkwardly, "Master Wade, it's a matter of fighting against the law... In recent years, there are not many people in Aurous Hill doing this business and most of the fighting that can be reversed now are broken things, The jade ring finger is really good enough to meet."

As he said, he asked Charlie, "Master Wade, I am so talkative, I dare to ask you, why do you have to ask for something that was born out of the pit?"

Charlie said, "Zachary, you are now Don Albert's person, in other words, you are also my person, So I will not hide it from you. I want to pull the ring finger to deceive people. If you are familiar with the pit, it may be difficult to deceive you."

Zachary listened like a fog, and subconsciously said, "Master Wade, why do you use the real thing that is familiar with the pit to deceive people? To be honest, for tomb robbers these days the investigation is very tight."

"Antique dealers like us don't dare to buy things from the pits for fear of getting into trouble and lawsuits but if they are familiar with the things from the pits, it's a different matter."

"This was dug out ten years ago, even if it was black, it is now washed white."

Charlie waved his hand and said, "Don't ask why, just tell me if there is a way to fix it."

Saying that Charlie pointing to the lightning strike wood again said, "There are these, I want to use them to make something, and it's best to give people a feeling of being unearthed. Do you have any knowledge?"

Zachary thought for a while, and said, "Master Wade, it's easy to talk about this matter. I have a fake background. You know this. What we are best at is to disguise those new things and turn them into the appearance of just unearthing to deceive people."

"Sometimes, the porcelain that has just been fired here can be transformed into an official kiln of the Warriors Den that has just been unearthed. But I can't fool the experts."

As he spoke, Zachary changed the subject and said, "But you are planning to use the real thing from the Warriors Den to pretend to be the real thing from the Warriors Den that you just dug up."

"This is simple. There are too many, to put it bluntly, the small one will deal with the color and paste for you first, then dig some soil in the soil next to the latrine in the countryside, Get some pig offal and pour it in, put this thing in it and bury it together with the pig offal At night, Sprinkle some urine on it at the end, and when it is dug out the next day, it will look like the thing just unearthed!"

Charlie asked him, "Can this method be discovered by others?"

Zachary shook his head "If you say that you use new things to make them look like the old ones, and let others look at them, They will definitely find flaws, but after all, you put real things in them, who can find out, even if an expert holds a carbon-14 instrument here for identification, This thing is going to appear from the Warriors Den. They judge whether this thing is from a pit, mainly by looking at the color and pulp and its smell, whether there is a faint earthy smell, bloody smell or the smell of dead bodies as long as this is done well, they will feel that this thing is newly unearthed."

Charlie nodded, and said with a smile, "Okay, then this matter is up to you."

Zachary was puzzled and asked "Master Wade, why do you want a small one?"

Charlie didn't answer his question, but asked him with great interest, "Zachary, since you followed Don Albert, why do you still do business in this antique city?"

Zachary said hastily, "Master Wade, I am grateful to you and Master Hong for your love and I have the opportunity to follow Master Hong on the saddle, So I don't have the mind to do any antique business. I have long since put it aside and don't care about it."

Charlie said seriously, "The business I asked you to do really requires you to spare some time and go back to manage your antique business skills."

Zachary asked in surprise, "Master Wade... what do you mean by this? I don't understand, please explain."

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Charlie smiled slightly, took two amulet rings and a piece of lightning-strike wood, and said to him, "Wait for me first."

Immediately, Charlie came to the inner room, and in the two amulet rings, he used spiritual energy to lay out a very simple protective formation and in the lightning strike wood, used a slow and laid down a simple thunderbolt formation.

In this way, these two jade wrench fingers have become two simple protective rings, which can protect the wearer from a small disaster and the lightning strike wood has also become a ring that can only be used once and will break and shatter.

After finishing these, he went back to the living room from the room, handed two finger pullers and a thunderbolt to Zachary, and told him, "You take these three things first, and make them as if you just made them the same as the one dug out of the soil."

Zachary immediately said, "Okay, Master Wade, I'll deal with it for you as soon as I get back! Should I bring it back to you after I've dealt with it?"

"No need." Charlie said lightly, "Go to Antique Street, Find two smart street vendors who can afford to eat, give them a ring, and let them wear it on their hands and then one will go to the arrival hall of the airport, and the other will go to the exit of the high-speed rail station."

"Hold the sign and wait to pick up people. As for who to pick up, it doesn't matter, you can just write your own names."

"Uh..." Zachary looked surprised, "Master Wade, who are we going to pick up? Just write your own names casually, I guess Can't pick up anyone?"

Charlie said lightly, "I don't want to pick up people, I want to wait for them!"

After that, Charlie said very seriously, "Zachary, what I'm going to tell you next, you have to wait for someone! Listen carefully! If this matter is done well, I promise you glory and wealth in the future!"

When Zachary heard this, he immediately sat up straight excitedly, and respectfully said, "Master Wade, just give orders! Zachary Must go all out!"

Charlie nodded, and said word by word, "You pay a high price to make the two of them wait from the moment the airport and high-speed rail station opens every day until they close and wait until someone asks the origin of the jade ring in their hands and Let the two of them clearly say that they bought it from you and tell them that if the other party asks them to buy it at a high price, Let them ask for it at 100 times the actual market value, and don't sell anything less."

Although Zachary was confused, he still understood Charlie's orders, and quickly said, "Master Wade, don't worry, I will do it!"

Charlie nodded in satisfaction, and handed the Thunderbolt Talisman to Zachary, Using a bit of aura, he told him with psychological hints, "Keep this thing for yourself, take it back to your antique street, and continue to operate your antique stall, but you must remember, you must put it in the most conspicuous position of your booth, No matter who comes to ask for the price, you will ask for five million yuan, not a penny less."

"If someone asks you where the Thunderbolt Talisman came from, you just tell him a while ago It was just dug out of a living pit, When someone asks you, you must firmly believe in your heart that these three things were all dug out of a living pit, understand?"

Zachary's eyes froze, and he nodded heavily, "Understood!"

Charlie could see that the psychological suggestion had already taken effect on Zachary.

So, he said to Zachary, "If someone buys this lightning strike wood, you tell me immediately; if someone steals it, you tell me immediately."

Zachary immediately said respectfully, "Alright, Master Wade! I'll do it for sure!"

Charlie sent Zachary out of the villa, with a confident smile on the corner of his mouth.

The reason why he wants to do this is to hang a "bell" on each of the two gates of Aurous Hill,

And those two "bells" are the two amulet rings he gave to Zachary.

These two amulet rings do not look very eye-catching, and most people would not be interested in looking at them.

As Zachary said, the material of these two jade wrench fingers is average, and the price itself is not too high. Even people who understand antiques will not take it seriously.

Therefore, when two people are wearing an amulet and waiting for people at the airport and high-speed rail station holding signs,

Only one kind of people will pay attention to the amulet on their fingers, that is, those who can see through the amulet. In the finger, there is a person with a formation!

And those who can see through the formations contained in the amulet must be those who have mastered spiritual energy.

Charlie knew only five people besides himself are capable of this.

One is the Lord of the Warriors Den.

The other four are the four earls of Warriors Den.

However, the Lord would not come to Aurous Hill by himself, and one of the four earls died.

Therefore, Charlie's goal is to only have three people, and that is the three remaining earls of the Warriors Den.

Right now, his grandparents and Maria are all in Aurous Hill, So the chances of the Earl of the Warriors Den appearing in Aurous Hill are greatly increased.

However, after he has done these things, he has great confidence.

The airport and the high-speed rail station are the two gates of Aurous Hill.

It is impossible for the earl to drive here from the surrounding cities, so the most likely way is to take the plane or the high-speed rail to town.

And he asked Zachary to arrange for two people to squat in these two places at all times.

They may squat in these two places for several days in a row, but it doesn't matter, because there is a high probability that they will not send more than one earl to Aurous Hill and even if two earls were sent to Aurous Hill, it was impossible for them to come by plane and high-speed rail at the same time.

Therefore, it is doomed that the Earl Warriors Den can only meet one of these two people and although the earl is powerful, it is impossible to know that there is another person wearing the same jade wrench dozens of kilometers away.

It is even more impossible to know that the person holding the sign has been waiting here for many days.

They will only be pleasantly surprised to find that they have encountered a magic weapon in Aurous Hill!

Although this magic weapon is just a simple amulet, anyone who changes it will want to know if this amulet is used as a clue to find other magic weapons.

In public, the earl of the Warriors Den has an important mission, So he must not dare to be too arrogant in this kind of matter, So he would definitely inquire about the source of the finger ring in a low-key manner.

In this way, the clue will point to Zachary.

When the earl of Warriors Den finds Zachary, he would find that there is a thunderbolt in Zachary's place.

Even if they don't know the thunder talisman, they can definitely see that this magic weapon can have an attack effect!

It is naturally much stronger than the amulet that can defend them.

At that time, they will definitely get a treasure, and they will definitely not hesitate at the price of several million.

However, this Thunderbolt Talisman looks like an ordinary piece of lightning strike wood.

Zachary quotes five million yuan. Even a loser rich man can't spend so much money to buy it, So if he buys it, he must be a person who knows the goods!

In other words, he must be one of the three Earls of the Warriors Den!

At that time, the other party will be very excited when he gets this thunderbolt and he will definitely want to find a place where there is no one to try it out and he probably does not have the "Nine Profound Heavenly Scriptures", So it is impossible to know that his specially refined Thunderbolt can only be used once.

Therefore, once he tries it, the Thunderbolt will be wiped out and at the same time, it will trigger a thunder!

At that time, not only will Charlie know that he has arrived but he will also know his approximate location!

## Chapter 5348

When Charlie started to plan ahead, other Evans Family members including Charlie's second uncle, uncle, and aunt had also arrived at Wanliu Villa one after another.

Since the Evans family started recording daily videos of old man Samuels, they have noticed changes in his memory ever since he arrived in Aurous Hill.

In the past, his memory has been continuously deteriorating.

He must not be able to remember what happened recently, even what happened before going to bed, after waking up.

However, in the past few days since he lived in Wanliu Villa, the old man can remember almost everything he personally experienced.

After comparing it with the content recorded in the video, he found that the old man can actually remember what happened yesterday.

Eight out of ten.

This change made Evan's family ecstatic.

Additionally, every resident of the villa, which is situated in the heart of the city, reported feeling refreshed and at ease after moving in. This has solidified their belief that this location truly possesses a valuable Feng Shui placement.

In the past two days, the Evans Family has begun to spread the scope of investigation in Aurous Hill one after another.

Their efficiency is very high, and they have penetrated into the civil affairs system, Welfare assistance system, and medical records of significant hospitals.

No information related to Charlie was found.

The Evans Family had expected that things would not go too smoothly, so they were not discouraged. Just when Ervin got Charlie's instructions, and started to make the three magical artifacts,

An old couple of the Evans Family called a few children together and called Jack again to have a meeting together.

Because the memories of the past few days are very complete,

The scheming Samuels gradually found the rhythm of the master that he once had.

After analyzing the current situation, he temporarily set the next plan in two directions.

One is that Marcus leads other people to continue to carry out a carpet search in Aurous Hill. Looking for all clues that may be related to Charlie; Collect information about the owner of Rejuvenation Pill.

The Evans Family firmly believes that the possessor of the Rejuvenation Pill is none other than the benevolent individual who rescued them in the US.

Find this benefactor and ask him to help find Charlie's whereabouts.

Without any hesitation, Desmond contacted the Moore Group and promptly identified himself before requesting a visit with Jasmine Moore.

The last time Desmond came to visit Jasmine, the name he reported was a fake identity named Conrad Huo.

Jasmine's assistant was taken aback when the renowned Evans family reached out to the Moore Group expressing their interest in meeting Jasmine in person. The eldest son of the family was particularly keen on the meet-up, which came as quite a surprise.

This feeling is no different from an IT start up company with 30 or 40 people who suddenly received a request from Bill Gates to visit.

The excited assistant ran into the conference room regardless of Jasmine's meeting with the supplier, And excitedly said in Jasmine's ear, "President Moore... American Evans Family wants to make an appointment with you to visit the group in person!" "Evans Family?" Jasmine couldn't help frowning.

If other entrepreneurs in Aurous Hill heard that An's family came to visit, they would be ecstatic, but Jasmine unconsciously became worried.

She had received a reminder from Charlie a long time ago, knowing that the Evans Family was looking for clues about him in Aurous Hill.

Which one of these two will eventually point to Charlie? So, she said to the assistant, "Don't rush to reply to this matter, Let's talk about it after I'm done here."

The assistant didn't know, so she quickly reminded her, "Ms. Moore, that's from the Evans Family..."

"I know." Jasmine nodded her head, she said lightly, "That's when I finish my work."

The assistant had no choice but to respectfully say, "Okay Ms. Moore, then I won't reply to them, and wait for your orders."

Jasmine waved her hand and asked, "You tell them the exact words, Just say that I'm busy now, and let them wait for my reply."

"Uh... okay..." The assistant didn't know why Jasmine, who had always been very low-key, acted like this.

She had no choice but to return the original words to Desmond accordingly.

Desmond visited Jasmine long after the auction for the Rejuvenation Pill had ended, but she didn't reveal any information about it to him during their meeting.

However, in Desmond's view, today is not what it used to be.

Initially, he was fixated on obtaining the Rejuvenation Pill; however, in the end, he failed to acquire it, even going as far as to offend its rightful owner.

Upon rescuing the Evans family in New York, Desmond came to the realization that the enigmatic benefactor and the owner of the Rejuvenation Pill could potentially be the very same person.

This new discovery adds a layer of intrigue to the situation, making it even more fascinating.

This newfound knowledge may result in a shift in Desmond's attitude towards the Evans family, given the events that unfolded in New York. But he didn't expect that his own idea would be a little frustrated by Jasmine's attitude.

## Chapter 5349

As soon as Jasmine instructed her assistant to decline Desmond, she promptly adjourned the meeting, returned to the conference room, and cordially dialed Charlie's number. She politely informed him, "Mr. Wade, your uncle attempted to contact the Moore Group once more. He expressed his interest in scheduling a visit with us."

"Do you think it is necessary for me to meet him?"

Charlie said, "It is not impossible to meet, but if they ask about me,"

"You can tell them that I have left Aurous Hill since the last auction."

"As for where I went, you don't know."

Jasmine hurriedly said, "Master Wade, if you don't want to reveal any clues for the time being, I won't meet your uncle. If there is any expression management that is not done well, he will find out."

Charlie smiled and said, "Jasmine, are you stupid? My uncle is also the young master of the Evans Family. When he sees you this time, he will definitely prepare enough sincerity, Maybe it will bring a new space for the Moore Family to develop, You must not miss this good opportunity."

Jasmine said seriously, "Master Wade, I am afraid of delaying your business, So I still want to keep a certain distance from the Evans Family..."

Charlie smiled and said, "You don't have to think about it. After you meet my uncle, just let him ask all the questions. Even if he knows what you are hiding, he will never dare to force you to tell the truth. Besides, no matter what you do, not to mention, the benefits he has prepared for you will definitely be given to you first."

Charlie reiterated, "The Evans Family hasn't explored commercial opportunities in China in the past, however, now that they're here in Aurous Hill, it's imperative that they establish a significant presence in this country for future prospects." The most important thing, and in their eyes, you are the only next family who can really have a connection to me, They will definitely try their best to show their favor to you If the Moore Family can take the opportunity of the creditor, bind them Together, There will be an excellent opportunity for rapid development in the future, and this kind of good thing is not often encountered regularly in life."

Jasmine knew that Charlie was thinking about her, so she said gratefully, "I understand Master Wade, then I'll make an appointment with your uncle in a while!"

Charlie hummed, and then said, "Oh yes, you can tell him some news at the right time."

Jasmine hurriedly asked, "What news?"

Charlie smiled slightly, and said, "Just say I'll ask you to carry a sentence and tell them that what happened in New York is just a matter of little effort, So they don't have to take it to heart."

Jasmine didn't know what happened in New York back then, but she heard Charlie say so, She didn't have much to ask, and said respectfully, "Okay, Master Wade, when I see your uncle, I will convey this sentence to them in due course."

Charlie reminded, her, "Remember to mention it before he asks the conditions, Preferably before when he asks you about me, tell him by the way, After you say this, no matter what conditions he prepares for you, he will definitely double the price temporarily!"

Charlie knew very well what was his uncle's motivation behind his visit to Moore's.

Desmond was resolute in his mission to unveil the genuine identity of the person responsible for creating the Rejuvenation Pill. His goal was to confirm if this individual was the same person who had heroically saved Evan's family in New York.

Now that he has come to the door, he might as well admit this generously, so that they can be sure that the person who saved them is the owner of the Rejuvenation Pill.

In this way, they can combine the identities of the two mysterious people into one person.

As for his true identity, they will definitely not be able to find out for a while. When the time is right in the future, he will naturally meet them and tell them openly that he is the mysterious person who merged into one.

At that time, these three different identities in the hearts of the Evans Family will be completely merged together.

...

After lunch.

Just when Desmond didn't know how to open the breakthrough of the Moore Group, Jasmine's assistant called him back.

On the phone, Jasmine's assistant said to him, "Mr. Evans, Ms. Moore can spare 20 minutes to meet with you at six o'clock this afternoon."

"Would you like to make an appointment for this time slot?"

No matter which company he visited, he couldn't seem to schedule a meeting where the other party was willing to allocate more than 20 minutes of their time.

This was the first time coming from Jasmine.

However, at this moment, Desmond was not displeased.

Instead, he said happily, "No problem, please make an appointment for me. I must be at the Moore Group before six o'clock!"

At 5:30 in the afternoon, Desmond had already arrived at the Moore Group.

After waiting in the lounge for half an hour, Jasmine's assistant came over and said to him, "Mr. Evans, Miss Moore can see you, please come with me."

Desmond stood up quickly, and said, "Thank you!"

The assistant brought Desmond to Jasmine's office, and said to Jasmine, "Ms. Moore, Mr. Desmond Evans is here."

Jasmine raised her head, looked at Desmond, smiled, and said, "Mr. Evans, we meet again."

## Chapter 5350

As Jasmine entered the room, Desmond's face lit up with a modest smile. "Ah, Miss Moore, we meet again," he greeted warmly.

She graciously replied, "Thank you for taking the time to see me amidst your busy schedule."

Jasmine gestured towards the comfortable sofa area and settled herself opposite him. With curiosity gleaming in her eyes, she inquired, "I'm intrigued, Mr. Evans. What brings you here today?"

Desmond's earnest tone filled the air as he confessed, "I must admit, I acted rashly and disregarded the rules of the Rejuvenation Pill Auction. Ever since that incident, I've carried a heavy burden on my conscience. Summoning the courage, I've come here today to humbly offer my apologies to both you and the esteemed proprietor of the Rejuvenation Pill you oversee. Please accept my sincerest apologies and forgive any trouble I may have caused."

Jasmine's smile remained unwavering as she responded, "Mr. Evans, there's no need for you to make a special trip just to apologize. The auction itself has already passed judgment on your actions. You've paid the price for your behavior back then, so there's no need to burden yourself with an additional apology."

Unbeknownst to Desmond, Jasmine's words caught him off guard. He had expected her to accept his apology humbly, to bow his head in submission. Yet, she denied him that chance.

Deep within, Jasmine held a genuine respect for Desmond.

This respect had nothing to do with his status as Evan's eldest son. It stemmed from the fact that he was Charlie's uncle.

Towards Charlie, Jasmine had always felt an immeasurable debt, which naturally extended to respect for his elders. However, Charlie had yet to acknowledge Evan's family, and so Jasmine dared not show excessive politeness towards Desmond. Desmond, knowing full well that he had come to make amends for the previous auction, would undoubtedly sense any abnormal behavior from her.

If she were too deferential, he would surely suspect something amiss.

In this crucial moment, Desmond suppressed his anger and frustration, masking it with a forced smile as he cautiously addressed Miss Moore, "To be completely honest, I have always held the owner of the Rejuvenation Pill in high regard. During the gathering, my father fell gravely ill and desperately needed a potent remedy to heal him. My impatience got the better of me, leading to my brusque behavior. I beseech Miss Moore to intercede on my behalf and seek his forgiveness."

Jasmine's lips curled into a warm smile as she replied, "Mr. Evans, you're overthinking it. Your transgression at the auction has no bearing on Mr. Evans Sr. It's like the traffic rules set by the authorities—when you accidentally collide with another car, there's no need to report it to the traffic control department. You should apologize and not burden yourself with seeking forgiveness from him."

Desmond felt like a football repeatedly kicked back to the same spot, but he gathered his courage and pressed on, "Miss Moore, I must be direct. I have something to discuss with the Rejuvenation Pill's owner personally. Regardless of the outcome, I implore you to introduce me. The Evans Family will forever hold your kindness in our hearts."

Jasmine's expression turned serious as she pursed her lips and replied, "Mr. Evans, it's not that I don't wish to assist you. The gentleman you seek has departed Aurous Hill since the last auction."

"Left Aurous Hill?" Desmond hurriedly inquired, "May I ask, Miss Moore, if you know the name of this gentleman?"

Jasmine shook her head, her uncertainty evident. "I'm afraid I don't know."

Desmond's suspicions deepened as he questioned, "Miss Moore, this gentleman is in collaboration with your Moore Group. You auctioned his Rejuvenation Pill on his behalf, collecting a substantial sum of money in the process. Given such close cooperation, how can you be unaware of his true identity? If you could offer me any insights, the Evans Family would be forever grateful and willing to repay the favor."

Jasmine responded calmly, her voice tinged with a touch of mystery, "Mr. Evans, a dragon conceals its tail, and my Moore family is fortunate to have been chosen to organize the auction on his behalf. As for the proceeds you mentioned, believe me when I say that the funds remain in the auction's account, untouched by the gentleman. Would you trust my words?"

Desmond fell into an introspective silence, his thoughts entwined with uncertainty and doubt.

He knew that it was up to him to believe or not to believe this kind of thing, And he had nowhere to prove whether he believed it or not.

## Chapter 5351

In a state of utter desperation, he found himself compelled to explain with utmost sincerity, "Miss Moore, I must confess something to you. Some time ago, a dreadful calamity befell my beloved Evans Family. However, a mysterious benefactor emerged from the shadows, extending a helping hand during our darkest hour. This enigmatic figure not only saved a dear friend of mine from the clutches of death but also aided us in ways beyond comprehension. That is why I have come here, to ascertain whether this savior and the gentleman you spoke of are one and the same."

His words hung in the air, laden with a plea that emanated from the depths of his being. "Miss Moore, I implore you, you must possess some means of contacting this gentleman. I do not ask you to divulge his contact information, but I beseech you to assist me in confirming our suspicions."

Jasmine's lips curled into a faint smile as she nodded, her gaze shifting towards Desmond. With an air of nonchalance, she continued, her words flowing effortlessly, "Mr. Evans is referring to the peril that befell the Evans Family and Inspector Jack in New York, where they were providentially rescued midway, correct?"

Desmond's expression contorted into one of horror!

The incident that had befallen the Evans Family remained shrouded in secrecy, unknown to the outside world. To this day, no outsiders possessed knowledge of what transpired. Yet, when he broached the subject moments ago, he had not divulged any concrete details, nor had he mentioned New York or Duncan. Astonishingly, Jasmine not only accurately pinpointed the location as New York but also named Duncan himself.

It was evident that she possessed intimate knowledge of the events that unfolded in New York that fateful day.

Alarmed, he hastily inquired, "Miss Moore, how did you come to know about this?"

Jasmine responded nonchalantly, her voice carrying a hint of indifference, "Because he reached out to me two days ago, stating that if the Evans Family were to seek me out, he had a message to deliver to them."

Desmond's excitement grew palpable as he pressed her for more information, his voice quivering with anticipation, "What did he say?"

"He said, 'Do not burden yourself with thoughts of that act of kindness,'" Jasmine replied.

Desmond's eyes widened, his voice trembling with overwhelming exhilaration, "It's him! It must be him! This is truly remarkable! Incredible!"

With great delight shining in his eyes, he pressed on, unable to contain his curiosity any longer. "Miss Moore, may I inquire about what else your benefactor mentioned?"

Jasmine shook her head, a slight smile playing on her lips. "That's all," she replied. "He knows Mr. Evans wants to verify this matter, so it can be considered a resolution to his doubts. Is Mr. Evans satisfied now?"

Desmond's voice trembled with emotion. "The Evans Family never had any allies, and I even babbled foolishly at the auction. But instead of reprimanding me, he saved the lives of over a dozen members of my family, the Evans, and even rescued my dear friend Duncan. I can never repay such kindness..."

Jasmine spoke earnestly, her eyes filled with sincerity. "Mr. Evans, you needn't worry about it. When you do good deeds, your future is secure. You will be saved because you are worthy of salvation."

Desmond respectfully clasped his hands together. "Miss Moore, if you have the opportunity, please convey Evan's gratitude to our benefactor! Furthermore, there is another matter for which the Evans Family seeks his assistance. I beseech you, Miss Moore, to act as our messenger. If he agrees, the Evans Family is willing to bestow half of our family's fortune!"

Jasmine leaned in, eager to hear his request. "Tell me, Mr. Evans."

Desmond proceeded, his voice filled with urgency. "The Evans family has a nephew who vanished two decades ago. His name is Charlie Wade, twenty-eight years of age, the only child of my sister Lily and her husband Bruce Wade. We have searched for him tirelessly for twenty long years, but he remains elusive. If you can locate Charlie, the Evans Family will gladly relinquish half of our wealth!"

Jasmine was left dumbfounded, her mind reeling with astonishment. She never anticipated that the Evans Family would go to such lengths, even offering half of their entire fortune in their quest to find Charlie.

However, Desmond and the Evans Family had no illusions about the magnitude of such a promise.

A collective decision was made during a solemn family gathering prior to Desmond's arrival. Considering the dire circumstances that loomed over the Evans Family, it was acknowledged that as long as the Warriors Den continued to harbor them, the family would find temporary refuge. But the writing was on the wall for their ultimate fate.

The gulf between the strengths of the two factions was insurmountable, leaving the Evans Family bereft of any hope of triumph.

In the eyes of the Evans Family, the enigmatic savior who had rescued over a dozen members in New York held the key to averting their annihilation.

If only they could ascertain that this mysterious benefactor possessed the legendary Rejuvenation Pill, not only would it provide an ironclad guarantee for the family's survival, but it might also offer a ray of hope for the elderly patriarch's debilitating ailment.

This person, they believed, held the fate of the entire Evans Family in their hands.

Moreover, their benefactor possessed formidable abilities. Should they be willing to assist in locating Charlie, it would be a task within their capabilities.

Hence, if safety, complete healing for the old man, and the discovery of Charlie's whereabouts could all be ensured, the Evans Family saw no issue in surrendering half of their assets. It would be like slaying three birds with a single stone.

After a moment, Jasmine shook off her initial shock and replied, her voice laced with determination, "Well if Mr. Evans says so, I'll do my best to find an opportunity to convey his message."

Desmond rose from his seat, his fists clasped tightly, and spoke with earnestness, "Thank you, Miss Moore! Miss Moore, there's another matter I'd like to ask for your help with!"

Jasmine nodded, her gaze fixed on Desmond. "Go ahead, Mr. Evans. If it's within my power, I'll gladly lend a hand."

With a serious expression, Desmond leaned forward and confided, "I won't conceal it from you, Ms. Moore. The Evans Family has made a firm decision to stay in Aurous Hill for the long haul. As a result, they're currently planning to establish a new business hub right here. In due course, more than half of their operations will be relocated from the United States to Aurous Hill. However, this process will take several years to gradually unfold. The initial step involves acquiring a sizable tract of land in Aurous Hill and constructing an office center no smaller than Apple's headquarters in California."

He paused briefly before continuing, "The total budget for this venture won't be anything less than eight billion US dollars. I've heard that the Moore Group possesses considerable influence in Aurous Hill and boasts expertise in commercial real estate development. If you're open to it, would you kindly consider involving the Moore Group in the implementation of the Evans Family's project?"

"Are you serious? Eight billion dollars?!" Jasmine couldn't contain her astonishment. "Mr. Evans... such an enormous investment is unheard of in Aurous Hill's history. The Moore Group has just completed its most ambitious commercial real estate project to date, featuring a towering skyscraper, several annex buildings, and a large shopping mall, all completed for a bargain price of only 500 million U.S. dollars... To contemplate an 8 billion dollar project is beyond the realm of imagination for the Moore Group..."

## Chapter 5352

In the vast realm of commercial real estate ventures, ones that boast a price tag in the billions are as elusive as a shooting star. Seriously, you'd have better luck finding a unicorn!

Take, for example, the Burj Khalifa in Dubai. This architectural marvel only set them back a mere 1.5 billion US dollars. I mean, it's practically pocket change compared to what Apple spent on its headquarters.

Now, let's talk about the Evans Family. While they may not have the financial might of the Rothschild dynasty or the Saudi royals, their real assets still outshine Apple's by a smidgen.

Imagine this—eight billion US dollars poured into commercial real estate right here in Aurous Hill. That's enough dough to construct a whole dang city!

But for the Evans Family, even if they decided to relocate their entire headquarters, it wouldn't dent their coffers as much. No, sir!

Here's the juicy part: before Desmond showed up, the Evans Family had already reached an agreement. They knew Jasmine had a special connection with the person who owned the Rejuvenation Pill.

To prove their loyalty and commitment, they had to conjure up projects worth two or three billion dollars to collaborate with the Moore family. That was just the starting point, mind you.

Oh, and get this—the Evans Family made a pact ages ago. If Jasmine could confirm that the Pill's owner was the same person who saved their family, they would shower her with even more sincerity. Talk about going all out!

Now, eight billion US dollars may not be chump change for Evans family, but let's be real—it's like a drop in the ocean for them. Totally insignificant.

"After all, we're talking about an investment of eight billion U.S. dollars here, not a mere squandering of money.

With a staggering investment of eight billion U.S. dollars, and that's not even accounting for the cost of land acquisition, we're still left with at least six billion U.S. dollars in play.

If we entrust all the development work to the esteemed Moore Group, their net profit is estimated to soar to approximately one billion U.S. dollars. And mind you, that's an exceptionally impressive profit margin.

For the Moore Group, a profit of one billion U.S. dollars is hardly a runner-up achievement.

What truly matters is the moment news breaks about our collaboration with the renowned Evans Family to construct their monumental eight billion U.S. dollars commercial real estate project. It will undoubtedly catapult the Moore Group into the limelight, and quite possibly send its market value soaring through the roof.

Charlie had reassured Jasmine about the sincerity of Evans' family beforehand. However, she never expected them to offer her such a massive project immediately. Their offer was a pleasant surprise.

Observing Jasmine's incredulous expression, Desmond realized that his sincerity had hit the mark. He leaned in and spoke earnestly, 'Miss Moore, the Moore Group has been a key player in commercial real estate development for a significant duration. I trust you understand that, in this industry, regardless of the size of the investment, the operational process remains largely unchanged.'

"I am fully confident that the Moore Group can handle an \$8 billion project, considering their successful management of projects worth half a billion dollars," stated Mr. Evans, emphasizing the remarkable achievements of the company.

Jasmine, coming back to her senses, couldn't resist asking, "Mr. Evans, let's be honest. Aurous Hill is just a second-tier city in China, or perhaps a newly established first-tier city. There's still a noticeable gap between it and established cities like Suzhou and Hangzhou."

"Investing 8 billion dollars in commercial real estate here seems like quite a risky move, don't you think?" Jasmine raised her concerns.

Desmond grinned and replied, "Although Aurous Hill may be considered a new first-tier city, I hold a great deal of optimism for its future development. Who knows? Perhaps it will become the center of attention worldwide."

Suspiciously, Jasmine inquired, "And why, may I ask, is Mr. Evans so exceedingly optimistic about Aurous Hill?"

Desmond responded with utmost seriousness, "While the Rejuvenation Pill auction by Miss Moore was a one-time event, it revealed the extraordinary potential of this miraculous medicine. Nowadays, every city strives to establish its own unique identity. Take the United States, for example. New York is renowned for finance, San Francisco for technology, and Los Angeles for manufacturing, Houston for aerospace, and Detroit for the specialty of automobile manufacturing.

Confidently, Desmond continued, "Given the support of the Rejuvenation Pill auction, Aurous Hill will undoubtedly attract an increasing number of international elites in the future, thereby transforming itself into a pinnacle of health and top-notch healthcare. Health services will become its core distinguishing feature. And once that happens, Aurous Hill has a high chance of becoming the world's leading healthcare city, providing a substantial boost to its economy. It won't be long before it stands proudly as China's fifth first-tier city. This opportunity is ripe, and Evan should seize it by making plans ahead of time."

Only then did Jasmine realize that Evan's perspective aligned with Charlie's. From the very beginning, Charlie organized the Rejuvenation Pill auction to leverage its immense allure for the super-rich, enticing them to Aurous Hill. His intentions extended beyond their mere participation in the auction, even guiding them toward investing in the city.

## Chapter 5353

Charlie harbored grand ambitions for Aurous Hill, envisioning a remarkable healthcare real estate venture that would allure affluent individuals seeking top-notch medical services. Rumors were that he had devised an innovative plan to lure these sophisticated individuals to Aurous Hill, where they could access top-notch medical care for a portion of the year. Little did Jasmine know, however, that Charlie had previously made a significant decision to suspend the auctions of his coveted Rejuvenation Pill.

Yet, Charlie's suspension of the Rejuvenation Pill auction was merely a temporary measure, kept low-key to mitigate the looming threat of the notorious Warriors Den. Once the danger from that quarter was eradicated, Charlie could unleash a more extravagant Rejuvenation Auction, designed exclusively for a select few through invitation only. The potential for the auction to expand and flourish under Charlie's guidance was immense.

Thus, the future of Aurous Hill held immense promise, destined for Swift development through the power of the Rejuvenation Pill.

Just as the Evans Family entered the market, injecting increased investment into Aurous Hill, the prospects for their future wealth grew exponentially. Jasmine couldn't help but admire the Evans Family's remarkable foresight and visionary approach.

At this very moment, a staggering sum of eight billion U.S. Dollars seemed like an astronomical figure, as if they had granted Jasmine a monumental favor. However, the true beneficiary behind this incident, indeed the primary beneficiary, was none other than the Evans Family itself.

Desmond turned to Jasmine once again, a glimmer of excitement in his eyes. "Miss Moore, if you're interested, we should take our collaboration to the next level," he proposed.

Intrigued, Jasmine inquired, "What exactly does Mr. Evans mean by's cooperation'?"

With a confident smile, Desmond explained, "The two of us could join forces and establish a specialized real estate company focusing on healthcare projects, we can acquire more land in the outskirts of Aurous Hill and gradually develop high-end healthcare facilities."

He continued, his voice filled with enthusiasm, "Once Rejuvenation gains widespread recognition, the popularity of Aurous Hill will skyrocket. Even if people realize that the Rejuvenation Pill may not be meant for them, they will still associate Aurous Hill with health and wellness. The affluent and middle-class will flock to our city, without a doubt."

Desmond leaned closer, his tone becoming more conspiratorial. "Moreover, I recently came across some information about JX Pharmaceutical, a reputable company located in Aurous Hill. Although they may not have a wide range of products, every single one of them is a game-changer with remarkable medicinal properties."

His eyes sparkled with intrigue as he continued, "Having such a pharmaceutical company in Aurous Hill will undoubtedly bolster our reputation in the medical and healthcare fields. Our influence will soar."

Jasmine couldn't help but be taken aback by Desmond's knowledge of JX Pharmaceutical. She looked at him, her curiosity piqued. "Mr. Evans, you're familiar with JX Pharmaceutical too? They supplied the FDA with a batch of drugs for clinical trials, and rumor has it that their remarkable efficacy earned them a spot in the White House's strategic reserves."

Desmond locked eyes with Jasmine and, with a meaningful gaze, shared his thoughts. "Miss Moore, let me be honest with you. I personally speculate that this pharmaceutical company has some connection to our benefactor. Perhaps their formula is a gift from our mysterious benefactor."

Jasmine found herself even more taken aback in that very moment. She was determined to keep any further information about Charlie under wraps, so she cautiously responded, "The situation regarding JX Pharmaceutical isn't exactly crystal clear."

Despite Jasmine's best efforts to maintain a composed expression and avoid any giveaway signs when speaking to Desmond, he managed to detect a trace of unease on her face. He astutely captured her subtle, unnatural behavior, leading him to conclude that JX Pharmaceutical must have some connection to the mysterious benefactor.

Having obtained the answer he sought, Desmond chose not to delve further into the matter of JX Pharmaceutical. Instead, he spoke with a gleaming smile, "Miss Moore, considering the Evans family's reputation, their involvement alone would resolve most of the issues at hand. If the Moore Group were to join forces, we would undoubtedly seize the lead in Aurous Hill's healthcare industry. Not only would the future profits be substantial, but the benefits would extend far and wide."

Desmond paused before speaking, "Healthcare initiatives have flourished in Europe and the United States whereas China has only just started exploring this sphere, Despite the vast market potential, it's still not given the attention it deserves. Many profit-driven companies shy away from long-term endeavors that demand significant investment, substantial responsibility, and prolonged timelines. Such ventures simply don't entice those accustomed to quick gains. However, if we manage this business effectively, monetary gains are just one aspect. It also allows for heightened social recognition and greatly contributes to the enterprise's societal impact—truly a multipurpose endeavor."

Jasmine wholeheartedly agreed with Desmond's judgment.

As the mastermind behind the Rejuvenation Pill Auction, she possessed keen insight into the insatiable desire of the wealthiest individuals for the miraculous pill.

With every passing moment of the ongoing auction, Desmond's predictions and assertions were gradually being confirmed.

Once Aurous Hill claimed its rightful place as the leading global powerhouse in the healthcare industry, the commercial interests at stake would be colossal.

Undoubtedly, a monumental opportunity would arise, and those with the capital to seize it would reap immense rewards.

In that very moment, Desmond interjected once more, his voice filled with excitement. "By the way, the Evans Family has an abundant reserve of capital. We can secure as many parcels of land as possible right from the outset. In the future, when Aurous Hill truly transforms into a first-class city by leveraging its healthcare prowess, the value of these land reserves will skyrocket. Now, regarding our collaboration, if Ms. Moore is willing to join forces with the Evans Family, we will gladly offer 10 shares of this project to the Moore Group as a gesture of goodwill. It's a gift from the Evans Family. Should Ms. Moore desire a larger stake, anything beyond the initial 10 shares can be acquired through standard subscription, and the Evans Family is prepared to sell up to 49 shares to the Moore Group!"

## Chapter 5354

In regular circumstances, even if others hurriedly scrambled to buy shares with their money, it was difficult for them to secure an opportunity. Moreover, not everyone could obtain a share even if some of the Evans family's projects were open for investment.

The Evans family had always been meticulous when selecting partners. If their assets didn't meet the threshold requirements, no matter how much money they possessed, they wouldn't be able to invest.

What's more, investing in the Evans family's projects from the outside world was akin to investing in a wealth management fund. If individuals had the chance to invest alongside the Evans family or a trader, they had to pay a significant percentage as management fees. These fees alone had to amount to at least 25% of the invested sum.

Consider this: if a project cost \$10 billion and the Evans family offered a 40% stake to outsiders, each percentage point was equivalent to \$100 million. It was a substantial sum that could potentially benefit numerous investors. However, to obtain a percentage of it, the outside world had to pay at least \$12.5 billion or even more.

However, Desmond's condition for Jasmine was to give the Moore Group 10 shares for free. And if the Moore Group wished to subscribe to the rest, there would be no management fee.

Witnessing such a high level of collaboration in the Evans family project was exceedingly rare.

Jasmine couldn't help but feel a bit apprehensive. The Evans family's generous offer overwhelmed her, and she didn't dare to accept it outright.

Upon hearing Desmond's requirement after completing the two projects, Jasmine was taken aback. Even though Charlie had advised her to accept any conditions Desmond might give, she hesitated for a moment and said to Desmond, "Mr. Evans, thank you for recognizing the value of the Moore Group. The idea of giving away so many benefits all at once..."

Desmond concerned that Jasmine might hesitate in accepting, reassured her by saying, "Please don't feel pressured, Miss Moore. The Evans family is new to Aurous Hill, so it's completely understandable. If we can collaborate with a local company like Moore's Group, the Evans family can save a lot of time in familiarizing themselves with the local market and establishing local connections."

He continued, "Furthermore, Miss Moore, you don't have to give me an answer right away. What I said today will remain valid for a considerable time."

Desmond understood that Jasmine's benefactor played a significant role. If he were to offer her a substantial gift at this moment, she would likely consult with her benefactor before making any decisions.

Although Jasmine had Charlie's guidance, accepting all these benefits at once made her hesitate. Upon hearing Desmond's words, she felt a sense of relief and said, "In that case, Mr. Evans, allow me some time to think about it."

"No problem!" Desmond replied with a smile. "After I leave, Ms. Moore can carefully consider it. If you find my proposal acceptable, we can arrange another meeting. Alternatively, if it's inconvenient for Ms. Moore, you can designate someone to make an appointment with me, and we can discuss the specifics."

"Okay!" Jasmine nodded gently and said, "I will provide Mr. Evans with an answer after careful consideration."

Desmond smiled and said, "In that case, I won't take up any more of Miss Moore's time. Let's get to work, Miss Moore. I'll take my leave."

Jasmine offered to escort Desmond to the office's door and then instructed her assistant to accompany him downstairs. Once she returned to her office, she dialed Charlie's number.

Over the phone, Jasmine provided a detailed account of her recent conversation with Desmond, causing Charlie to let out a chuckle.

It appeared that her uncle's intentions were indeed genuine.

"If the cooperation between Moore and Evans is realized, the market value of the Moore Group may double or even more in the next year," Charlie remarked.

He continued, "Moreover, my uncle's development ideas align closely with my previous plans. To enhance Aurous Hill's global impact and attract more investments, the optimal strategy is to improve its healthcare services. This move would position Aurous Hill as one of the most desirable first-tier cities in China. I believe my current skills are well-suited for this initiative. With careful implementation, we can achieve remarkable outcomes within a few years, positioning Aurous Hill as a top competitor in the country's healthcare sector."

Charlie let out a soft sigh, acknowledging that the plan might encounter obstacles and rushing into it wouldn't be feasible without addressing certain risks. Nevertheless, he recognized it as an excellent plan.

"This is a fantastic opportunity to enhance our standing," Charlie remarked. "The Evans family's capital operations are of a high level, and their plans are grand. Jasmine, you will reap significant benefits from collaborating with them. Don't let such a remarkable opportunity slip away."

Nervously, Jasmine responded, "Master Wade... the conditions offered by your uncle are exceedingly generous. To put it simply, these two collaboration schemes seem to solely benefit the Moore Group. They not only receive financial assistance but also gain visibility and influence through the association with the influential Evans family. I can't help but feel undeserving..."

Charlie smiled and reassured her, saying, "Jasmine, you don't need to burden yourself with such thoughts. The two conditions that the Evans family presented are not merely giving you money. In order to foster the growth of Aurous Hill and establish it as a prime location for its Asian headquarters, significant construction projects are essential. It's also unrealistic to expect them to bring an entire team from the United States to undertake such massive projects. They need to cooperate with local companies. They provide the funds, and you work hard to earn that money. Isn't that justified? As for the healthcare project, don't burden yourself with guilt. The reason they want to collaborate with the Moore Group is to reach me through you. To put it bluntly, if I don't provide the Rejuvenation Pill, this project will only exist on paper. If this project wants to generate substantial profits, it must have my cooperation. So, it's only natural for them to offer additional benefits."

Jasmine fell silent for a moment, still entangled in her thoughts. Finally, she spoke without hesitation, "Okay, Master Wade, I will convey your message to your uncle."

Charlie's smile remained tranquil and reassuring. "Don't worry about a thing. My uncle is a shrewd man. He intentionally didn't ask for an immediate reply because he knew you would seek my guidance. If you were to respond right away, he would assume that you're available to follow my lead anytime, anywhere. It would give him the impression that we are very close and even suggest that I'm in the same time zone as you. It's better to let him wait for two days before you reply to him."

## Chapter 5355

Jasmine snapped back to reality, her voice quick and determined. "Alright, Master Wade, I've got it!"

During the journey back to Wanliu Villa, Desmond anxiously awaited Jasmine's assistant's call.

He knew he had presented Jasmine with an honest and transparent proposition.

He was confident that she would seek advice from her patron before making a decision. Despite this, he remained hopeful that she would accept his offer.

However, he had no idea where the benefactor was at the moment—whether they were in Aurous Hill or somewhere else in China.

Desmond had a strong intuition that if the benefactor were located in China or even in Aurous Hill, Jasmine would have instantly reached out to him to update him on the situation. He believed that Jasmine would readily agree to the terms he had proposed.

"If I receive a Swift reply, then perhaps the benefactor is in Aurous Hill," he pondered.

Yet, when Desmond reached Wanliu Villa, Jasmine still hadn't responded.

As soon as he arrived home, the Evans family abandoned their tasks and gathered eagerly, craving the latest news.

Anxiously, the elderly woman asked, "Desmond, how did it go? Did you discover anything valuable?"

Desmond nodded and replied, "I have personally confirmed with Ms. Moore that the person who saved our family is the actual owner of the Rejuvenation Pill!"

"What?!" the Evans family exclaimed in astonishment.

The old lady asked, her voice tinged with excitement, "Desmond, can we be absolutely certain? Is the benefactor truly the owner of the Rejuvenation Pill?"

"Yes!" Desmond replied in a serious tone. "I didn't reveal anything to Ms. Moore. She took the initiative to inform me. I merely mentioned that I wanted to get in touch with the owner of the Rejuvenation Pill to confirm his identity. Ms. Moore directly revealed to me that we were attacked in New York. Furthermore, she mentioned that the benefactor instructed her to inform me two days ago."

The old lady uttered in horror, "This means... the benefactor is aware of our arrival in Aurous Hill and knows that once we arrive, he will find a way to prove his identity..."

"Yes," Desmond continued, "The benefactor is well aware of my intentions when visiting the Moore Group this time. He knows I wanted to inquire about his identity. He also understands that we don't expect Ms. Moore to directly reveal his identity to us."

"However, I hoped that Ms. Moore could assist us with a single sentence, so the benefactor had already arranged with her in advance..."

The old lady's excitement grew, and she spoke with trembling hands, "This is fantastic! This is wonderful news! We had no leads on the benefactor before, but now we do."

"What we can confirm now is that if we want to contact the benefactor or convey any information to him, we can do it through Ms. Moore! Though it may not be a direct connection, it's already a significant breakthrough!"

Then, the old lady added, "The fact that the benefactor is holding the Rejuvenation Pill Auction in Aurous Hill instead of any other city in China proves that there's a high chance he is a local of Aurous Hill. Even if he isn't, he undoubtedly has a strong connection to this place. Our visit to Aurous Hill this time is like stepping onto his home turf!"

At that moment, Marcus chimed in, "Brother, I have a question."

"Did you disclose our conditions to Ms. Moore?"

"Yes!" Desmond affirmed. "I increased our investment by 8 billion US dollars and promised to collaborate with the Moore Group on healthcare projects. We even offered the Moore Group a 10% share unconditionally."

Marcus hurriedly asked, "What did Miss Moore say?"

Desmond replied, "Miss Moore didn't provide a definite answer. She said she would consider it. I

believe she must consult with the benefactor and see what he has to say."

Marcus slapped his thigh and exclaimed, "Oh! Brother, you spent over half an hour driving back. Did Miss Moore reply to your message?"

Desmond sighed, "Not yet."

Marcus felt a tinge of disappointment and mumbled, "Then it seems likely that the benefactor is not in Aurous Hill..."

Desmond nodded. "I share the same thought. If the reply takes too long, then I suspect there's a high probability that the benefactor is not in Aurous Hill."

Desmond continued, "Moreover while talking to Ms. Moore, she mentioned that the benefactor has left Aurous Hill and has been staying overseas. I wonder if the benefactor was in New York."

Marcus clicked his tongue and speculated, "It's hard to say. Maybe he hasn't returned yet."

Jack, who had been observing the conversation, noticed the two brothers drifting away from the right track. He cleared his throat and interjected, "Ahem... You two shouldn't base your judgment on whether the person you're seeking is present or not solely on the timing of someone's reply."

"People with even a little bit of criminal knowledge know to manipulate the body's temperature and environment after a murder to disrupt the police and forensic experts in determining the time of death."

"Why do you assume that someone must reply only if they're already in Aurous Hill? Just because they reply late doesn't necessarily mean they aren't here."

Desmond explained, "Old Li, I'm not being overly absolute. I'm merely considering that if Miss Moore knows someone is in Aurous Hill, based on our habits, we tend to think of calling them directly when we need something. However, if we know the person is elsewhere, we consider our own situation first. We contemplate whether our matter is urgent, whether the other person is occupied, and if calling rashly would disrupt them. If the matter isn't time-sensitive, we might choose to contact them in the evening when most people are less busy. If the person is overseas, we have to take time differences into account. Even though it's afternoon here, it might still be nighttime on the other side of the world..."

Jack chuckled, "So your judgment is heavily influenced by these factors. You can only be certain if Miss Moore promptly returns to you, indicating a high likelihood that the benefactor is in Aurous Hill. However, since she hasn't responded quickly, you can't relax and conclude that the person isn't here. Consider that the other party might have factored this in as well, instructing

Miss Moore to delay her reply to disrupt your judgment."

As he spoke, Jack couldn't help but sigh inwardly, "You two brothers, don't be deceived by your cleverness... Although I promised Charlie not to reveal his identity, now that you're in Aurous Hill, don't let this opportunity slip away. Follow this lead, and I'm certain you'll be in for some surprises..."

Upon hearing this, Desmond couldn't resist asking, "Old Li, what are you trying to say?"

Jack replied, "It means that if we want to find this benefactor, there's a chance he might still be in Aurous Hill. Let's not immediately assume he's not here. We should work together, approach the case with a clear mind, and avoid jumping to conclusions. We need to avoid prematurely dismissing possible solutions, as it can hold back our progress. We need to keep our options open and not hinder our search for the truth."

When investigating a missing person case, it's important not to overlook any suspicions we may have, even if it involves people who are close to the missing individual, including their own parents. It's crucial to keep an open mind and follow all leads until we uncover the truth. Until the evidence has been thoroughly examined and proven, we cannot naively deny the possibility that anyone, even those closest to us, may be involved. It's a crucial mindset required for uncovering the truth." Jack stopped and thought for a moment before speaking up. "Considering that we're currently in Aurous Hill, we shouldn't rule out the possibility that Charlie might be here, and potentially, the benefactor as well."

## Chapter 5356

As Jack finished his remarks, the room fell silent for a moment. Then, the old man Samuel, whose condition visibly improved in recent days, spoke up with a newfound seriousness in his voice. "Jack is absolutely right! We used to dismiss things based on mere intuition. That's why I've been unable to find Charlie for all these years!"

Desmond nodded in agreement, adding, "Sometimes, you have to defy your own intuition. After my sister's accident, we searched Aurous Hill for a while. When we couldn't locate Charlie, we intuitively assumed he had left the city. But maybe he never left at all!"

Marcus remained silent for a moment, his brow furrowing in deep thought. Suddenly, he looked up and said, "Now that I think about it, Aurous Hill holds so many mysteries. Moreover, based on the scattered clues we've gathered so far, I suspect that the benefactor might actually be from Aurous Hill!"

Desmond chimed in, confirming Marcus's observations. "Indeed. The benefactor chose to hold the Rejuvenation Pill Auction here, granting the opportunity to the local Moore Group. I've received some news indicating that after the auction, the Moore Group contributed over 10 billion U.S. dollars in taxes to Aurous Hill and donated billions more to charity. It's likely that the auction proceeds accounted for that sum."

He continued, "Moreover, the Moore Group invested over 100 million U.S. dollars in constructing a massive welfare home in Aurous Hill. They claim it's the largest of its kind globally, providing not only the basic needs for thousands of orphans but also top-notch educational resources. One must have a deep affection for Aurous Hill to make such a decision!"

Jack's eyes sparkled with newfound insight. He couldn't help but blurt out, "It seems that our benefactor holds a special place in their heart for orphans! Could it be that they, too, experienced being an orphan and now care so deeply for others in similar circumstances?"

Desmond nodded, acknowledging the possibility. "That's certainly a valid hypothesis, as Old Li suggested."

Charlie's aunt, Tece, couldn't contain her curiosity any longer. "If you investigate the welfare home in Aurous Hill, might you have a chance to uncover the identity of your benefactor?"

Hearing this, Jack's eyes widened with excitement. In his mind, he exclaimed, "Isn't this connecting the dots? If we follow this lead, not only can we discover the benefactor, but we might also uncover that they're actually the grandson of the Evans family!"

However, Desmond raised his hand, signaling for silence. "I think it's best if we refrain from actively seeking out the benefactor's identity. They seem to know our every move. Who knows how they'd react if they became dissatisfied."

Marcus nodded in agreement, stating, "My brother is right. Now that we're in Aurous Hill, we're essentially under the benefactor's watchful eye. It's best to maintain a low profile and avoid any unnecessary actions."

Jack looked at the serious faces of the two brothers, feeling a pang of anxiety. He understood the gravity of the situation but couldn't help but worry. He silently sighed, "You two are truly remarkable individuals. If we miss this lead, finding Charlie again will be an arduous task!"

...

The following day at dawn, in the northern suburbs of Aurous Hill.

Even before the sky had fully brightened, Zachary stood by the decrepit outhouse in a farmyard. With a firm grip on the shovel, he carefully dug up the three enchanted objects that Charlie had entrusted to him. Despite the appalling odor emanating from the pit next to the toilet, he persisted until he finally uncovered the mystical artifacts.

These artifacts had been buried alongside putrid pig innards for two days, resulting in an overwhelming stench. Pinching his nose, Zachary carefully extracted the three items from the soil, brushing away the dirt with a soft brush. He then meticulously wiped them with a dry towel and brought them close to his nose, taking a deep sniff.

By now, the blood and fishy odor had significantly diminished.

Based on Zachary's experiences with handling antiques, this scent closely resembled the fragrance of newly produced jade wares. Objects retrieved from pits, especially those buried near bodies tend to retain a faint odor no matter how meticulously they are cleaned after being unearthed. Even a year later, traces of the scent would linger. Although imperceptible to ordinary people, individuals like Zachary, well-versed in the world of antiques, could discern the difference simply by sniffing.

The two pieces of jade were initially ancient items. However, now, bearing this particular smell, those knowledgeable in the field would almost certainly conclude that they originated from the pit.

Satisfied that everything was in order, Zachary hastily drove back to the city, heading straight to Antique Street.

In the world of Aurous Hill's antique industry, the tradition of working from sunrise to sunset remained unshaken. It was widely believed that conducting business after dark would increase the risk of theft and other untoward incidents.

Consequently, merchants and stall owners in Antique Street commenced their operations at dawn and closed shop before the sun vanished below the horizon.

Since leaving this place after following Don Albert for some time, Zachary had never returned. As he arrived at Antique Street that morning, the lively commotion of the bustling market positively overwhelmed him - it felt almost like stepping into a vibrant vegetable market.

Zachary was no stranger to Antique Street; he was considered an old-timer in these parts. Having previously associated with Don Albert, he had temporarily parted ways but was now making his unexpected reappearance. Many people recognized him, warmly greeting him with enthusiasm. "Zachary, my brother! What brings you back here today? Ah, Zachary, you're practically a celebrity now, working alongside Master Albert. How do you find time to visit us, humble folks?"

## Chapter 5357

As Zachary reminisced, his thoughts swirled within. "Back when I got swindled on Antique Street, none of you looked down on me. Who was the one constantly shouting and gossiping about Zachary? But now, with Master Albert, you suddenly call me Brother."

Amused by these memories, Zachary smirked and addressed the crowd, "To be honest, I'm no longer associated with Master Albert."

"What?" They had just cheerfully called him Zachary Brother.

One man quickly inquired, "Zachary, you were doing well with Master Albert. Why the sudden change of heart?"

"That's right," chimed in another man. "I'm talking about Zachary. Isn't it better for you to enjoy spicy food and drinks with Master Albert instead of dealing with these things in Antique Street?"

A woman selling counterfeit copper coins grinned and asked, "Zachary, did you mess up and get kicked out by Mr. Albert?"

Zachary waved his hand nonchalantly. "Don't mention those things. I'm planning to

come back and set up my stall again." Then, he gazed at the man who had greeted him earlier and said, "Louis, when I left, I let you use my old stall for free."

"Look, I've returned now, and you're still occupying my spot. Give it back to me."

Louis Zhao hastily waved his hand and replied, "Hey, don't say that, Zachary. When you left, you made a promise not to return to Antique Street. So, that stall was relinquished forever. I took it over. This man, he's a person of great influence. You can't go back on your word."

Zachary smiled and said, "Louis, you think I'm a coward, don't you? Well, let me tell you, I got my freedom from Master Albert. Leaving wasn't his decision, it was mine, Zachary's."

"Blow it out your mouth and be gone," Louis retorted with a sneer. "We've known each other for so many years, don't I know you? Do you think I don't know how thrilled you were when you left the stall to follow Master Albert? Now you claim to have left him voluntarily. Why should I believe you?"

Zachary grinned. "I'll tell you the truth, Mr. Zhao. I used to have a close friend who specialized in creating exquisite antiques. Now, he has become the renowned businessman in Hong Kong. He wants me to collaborate with him in creating antiques, targeting those wealthy Albert Kong bosses worth billions. Perhaps we could earn millions from a single order."

"Isn't that better?" The listeners widened their eyes in disbelief.

Louis exchanged glances with the others, stepped forward, and offered an apologetic smile. "Brother Zachary, I dare say you've discovered a new avenue for making money. We can't underestimate the opportunity to work with Master Albert!"

"Hey!" Zachary raised his hand solemnly, pointing his palm at the crowd. "It's not that I, Zachary, underestimate Master Albert."

"The ancients said that good birds choose good trees. I can only say that Mr. Don Albert's towering tree doesn't suit my growth."

"After all, I've been in the antique business for so many years, and it's the craft I excel at the most."

Another man stepped forward, gently tugging at Zachary's arm. "Brother Zachary, since

you've found such a lucrative path, can't you take me along? Look at your brother here, I've been hanging around Antique Street for years, but I haven't landed a big catch. I can barely make ends meet throughout

the year. If you have a good income source, can you lend a hand, please?"

He pulled out a pack of cigarettes from his pocket, extracted one, and courteously extended it to Zachary. "Come on, Brother Zachary, have a smoke!"

Zachary accepted the cigarette, placed it between his lips, and smiled. "Tenner, if you genuinely want to make money with me, it won't be easy. Consider it carefully. But I don't know if you're reliable or if you'll be committed..."

Tenner hastily retrieved his lighter and, while lighting Zachary's cigarette, spoke respectfully, "Zachary, Brother, as long as you're willing to take me with you, I'll work hard without complaints!"

Louis on the side quickly added, "Brother Zachary, take me along too! I might not have any outstanding qualities, but I'm obedient! As long as I'm by your side, I'll follow your lead and fight wherever you point!"

Others also expressed their sincerity towards Zachary at that moment.

Their conviction was evident—Zachary had undoubtedly discovered a lucrative income source, directly linked to antiques.

Not only was Zachary skilled in this field, but everyone was also familiar with it. They all desired a taste of Zachary's success.

At this juncture, Zachary spoke indifferently, "Everyone, I've just returned, and my new business hasn't settled completely. I don't need so many people initially. So, for now, let Louis and Tenner join me. Don't worry if others don't get their turn. Once things stabilize, everyone will have a share!"

Disappointment flickered in the others' eyes, but Louis and Tenner were brimming with excitement.

Excitedly, the two friends pulled Zachary away to a secluded area where they could speak privately. Louis spoke obsequiously, "Brother Zachary, you can use your booth

anytime you want. If it's not enough, you can even use mine."

Zachary took a drag from his cigarette and inquired, "Tell me the truth, how much money do you two make in a month now?"

Louis raised his hand and said, "Brother Zachary, let me go first. You know my situation. I'm not as smooth-tongued as you, and I'm not as skilled in the art of deception. On a good month, I can only earn 10,000 to 20,000. Sometimes, I barely make enough to cover the booth fee..."

Tenner also chimed in, "Yes, yes, Brother Zachary, my situation isn't much better than his. It's the end of August, and this month I've barely made a net profit of 3,000 yuan. The competition in Antique Street is fierce, and those damn scammers sell everything. I used to sell fake five-emperor coins. I could ask for ten or twenty yuan for them. But now, those new idiots sell them for a single yuan. Tell me, the cost price for a string is 80 cents, and they sell it for a fucking yuan. I can't bear this harsh wind blowing from the northwest!"

Zachary smiled and turned to the two of them. "Well, let's not say that Zachary doesn't take care of you. In the next couple of days, my connections will bring several influential Albert Kong businessmen here. You two won't need to set up a stall. One of you will go to the airport, and the other will head to the high-speed rail station. Hold up a sign for me to pick them up!"

"Pick them up?" Louis and Tenner exchanged glances, and the latter asked, "Brother Zachary, isn't picking people up an unskilled job? How much will we get paid for it?"

Zachary smiled mysteriously and replied, "Let me tell you, the people you'll be picking up are wealthy clients who spend a fortune. Sometimes, they're unable to show up in person, so they send representatives. When they see you upon arrival, they'll come forward willingly. Don't underestimate this job—it has its perks. I'll pay each of you 3,000 yuan per day!"

"3,000 yuan per person?!" The two were momentarily speechless but couldn't contain their excitement.

Three thousand yuan a day—this income far surpassed what they earned from their stalls.

Zachary continued, "However, I can't guarantee when the big clients will arrive, so you'll have to be at the airport and high-speed rail station every day, keeping watch. You'll have to go early in the morning and only return home after the flights and trains have ceased for the day. During this time, you mustn't miss a single arrival. If any of you successfully receives a client, I'll reward an extra 10,000 yuan. But if any of you miss a client, I won't forgive you. Understand?"

## Chapter 5358

Despite the harshness of Zachary's request, both of them readily agreed when they considered the substantial income that awaited them.

Zachary was straightforward and wasted no time. He transferred 30,000 yuan directly to each of them on WeChat. He then looked at them and said, "Consider this money as an advance payment for ten days of your labor expenses. If you dare to be lazy or play any tricks during these ten days, don't blame me for being tough on you!"

Louis patted his chest without hesitation and reassured him, "Don't worry, Brother Zachary! I'm so committed to this job that I'm wearing adult diapers. I won't even leave my post if I have to urinate!"

Tenner chimed in immediately, "Zachary, my brother, I won't eat or drink during the day. I won't let you down!"

"Okay," Zachary nodded and pulled something out of his pocket.

He took out two jade rings and handed them to the duo respectively, saying, "Wear these jade rings on your fingers and never take them off. They serve as tokens for important clients to verify your identities."

Without any hesitation, they eagerly accepted the bracelets.

Louis played with the bracelet in his hand for a moment, sniffed it, and whispered, "Damn!, Zachary, this... this bracelet seems like it came from a hidden treasure!"

"Really?" Tenner also sniffed it curiously and asked, "Brother, why does this thing smell like it's come from some extraordinary place?"

Zachary interrupted them and said, "If you want to earn this money, remember, talk less and ask fewer questions."

Louis quickly smiled and agreed, "Zachary is right. We'll only focus on picking up the clients and won't bother you with unnecessary inquiries."

Zachary gave his instructions to the group, "Hey guys, please head back to the printing shop and put up two signs stating 'Welcome Hong Kong Entrepreneur Larson Chen' and 'Greetings to Hong Kong Visitor Brian Shang'. We want to make sure they feel welcomed and appreciated." "You can start working right away, and I'll calculate your wages for today!"

Surprised, Louis asked, "Zachary, are you in such a hurry? I haven't had a chance to settle down yet. Why don't you wait for me? I can ask my brother-in-law to come and watch over..."

Zachary waved his hand dismissively. "I'll keep an eye on your stall. Besides, your merchandise is fake, so I'll try my best to sell it at a high price for you. Once you find someone, bring them to me."

Hearing this, the two nodded without hesitation, their faces filled with excitement, and they happily went to the printing shop together.

Zachary knew very well that it was highly unlikely for these two to find anyone.

After all, he had invented those names on the spot, and it would be a miracle if anyone showed up.

He didn't know why Charlie had asked him to do this, but like any sensible person, he knew that he had a clear purpose. He understood that there were things he shouldn't question or try to uncover.

So, he settled down at Louis's booth, surveying the worn-out setup and placing the lightning-struck wood that Charlie had given him at the center.

Despite not understanding the purpose of the mysterious item, he was instructed by Charlie to ask for a price of five million no matter who approaches him. Having manned the booth for over an hour, several people from the antique street approached Zachary's stall, hoping to find hidden treasures. The shabby crafts were being sold at prices well above four digits.

Closing a few deals, Zachary couldn't help but feel at ease.

Although selling counterfeit antiques for deceitful gains didn't promise a bright future, it gave him a sense of accomplishment.

Observing the hopeful individuals with dreams of striking it rich by uncovering treasures and happily purchasing fake items at inflated prices, Zachary felt genuinely content.

He couldn't help but think to himself, "Perhaps this antique business is not something I should completely let go of. Half of life's joy comes from this place... In the future, when Master Albert isn't too occupied, I can come here for some fun."

Zachary was lost in thought when he heard a familiar voice with a pleasing tone, "Hey Zachary, when did you set up shop?"

Zachary looked up and respectfully replied, "Oh, President Willson! It's been a while since we last saw each other!"

It was Jacob, Charlie's old father-in-law, who spoke.

Although Jacob currently held the position of executive vice president of the Painting and Calligraphy Association, his passion for antiques remained unwavering.

Recently, due to a broken relationship, he had been in low spirits and hadn't visited the antique street for a few days.

However, with his mood gradually improving and the weekend at hand, he decided to revisit the antique street. Little did he expect to encounter someone he knew—Zachary.

## Chapter 5359

With a bright smile, Zachary exclaimed, "President Willson, you truly have eyes and ears everywhere! There's nothing in Aurous Hill City that can escape your notice!"

Jacob, feigning profundity, responded with false modesty, "Oh, Zachary, there's no need for flattery. But it's true, there's hardly anything about Aurous Hill's three-acre land that I can't figure out."

Zachary nodded respectfully and admitted, "President Willson, let me be honest. After spending some time with Master Albert, I realized that it might not be the right path for me. So, I returned to my old job."

Jacob nodded without hesitation and acknowledged, "You were born for the antique industry, Zachary. I must admit, you've been my lucky star in this business. The first big find I made was worth 500,000 yuan. Since you left, I haven't come across any major discoveries."

Then, Jacob added, "Oh, by the way, I've been collecting some small items recently. From my experience, I believe they're all genuine. I'll show them to you, and if your offer is fair, I'll let them go."

As Zachary recalled the painful experience of spending half a million yuan on a fake from Jacob, he couldn't help but chuckle. He quickly replied, "Please don't tempt me, President Willson. I won't be accepting anything for now."

"No more?" Jacob frowned, pointing at the pile of items on his stall. "Where did you get all these? You can't possibly be making them at home, can you?"

Zachary explained, "President Willson, to be honest, I've changed my business direction. In the past, it didn't matter if things were genuine or not; you could sell anything. But once you start dealing with authentic items, there's always a risk of getting cheated."

"I've been cheated before, spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on worthless junk, even on items worth just a few bucks. It's not worth the money, and I lost half a year's income in an instant..."

Nervously glancing at Jacob, Zachary continued, "So, President Willson, I'm changing my approach now."

"When I sell, I only deal in fakes. And when I acquire items, I only accept fakes..."

Jacob furrowed his brows, trying to make sense of Zachary's words.

He laughed and said, "Well, you can interpret it that way..."

Jacob then spoke earnestly, "Zachary, I'm not saying you shouldn't pursue what you love, but professionalism is crucial in this field."

Zachary nodded in agreement, replying, "Don't I deserve to make some money first? Once I've earned enough, I can focus on improving my professional ethics."

Jacob smirked and retorted, "As they say, you've got to get on the bus before you can buy a ticket..."

Shaking his head at the items on Zachary's booth, Jacob remarked, "You're deteriorating, my friend. I can spot each and every fake on your booth."

Zachary courteously replied, "President Willson, you indeed have a discerning eye. Good items can't escape your gaze, and fakes are no different."

Jacob smiled, picked up the lightning-struck wood from the center of the booth, and examined it closely. He commented, "But this lightning-struck wood doesn't seem fake. How much are you asking for it? If the price is right, I'll take it and ward off evil spirits."

Zachary held up five fingers.

Curious, Jacob asked, "Five hundred?"

Zachary

laughed and corrected him, "No..."

Jacob's eyes widened, and he blurted out, "Fifty thousand?!"

Shaking his head, Zachary replied, "It's five million..."

"Damn..." Jacob tossed the item back onto the booth and cursed, "Zachary, are you out of your mind? It's just a piece of crap, and you want five million for it?"

"You think I'm your personal piggy bank?" Zachary responded with a hint of discomfort.

"Chairman Willson, as I mentioned before, my current approach is all about deception and exaggeration. How can I make money without quoting an exorbitant price?"

Jacob angrily responded, "Well, you can't rob people openly...!"

After finishing his sentence, Jacob turned his back and walked away without looking back.

Zachary felt helpless as his respected boss figure walked away, and he pondered to himself, "Master Wade has tasked me with requesting a sum of five million yuan for this remarkable piece of wood damaged by lightning." "If my booth continues like this, I'll probably be cursed at ten or twenty times every day..."

...

Meanwhile, on the outskirts of Eastcliff City, stood Changyun Temple.

As the oldest Taoist temple in the country, Changyun Temple holds a sacred place in the hearts of present-day Taoists. This revered temple is a symbol of the timeless beliefs and practices of Taoism, and its historical and spiritual significance cannot be overstated.

The temple was always filled with incense, and Taoist believers from Eastcliff often visited to make offerings.

Changyun Temple had a supervisor and an abbot. Although both Buddhism and Taoism have an abbot figure, the roles and responsibilities of the abbot differ. While the Buddhist abbot holds the highest position of authority in the temple, overseeing its affairs, the Taoist abbot is mainly responsible for preaching scriptures. They were like the most senior professors in the Taoist temple. However, the supervisor was the one with the highest management role.

Dressed in a Taoist robe, Gideon gazed up at the gate of Changyun Temple for a moment before stepping inside.

The temple was divided into front, middle, and back courtyards, but only the front yard was accessible to believers and pilgrims.

Numerous temples adorned the area, with the Sanqing Temple at the center, housing the sacred Taoist Sanqing Patriarch.

The middle and back courtyards were reserved for the internal areas of Changyun Temple, where the abbot and his disciples resided and studied Taoism.

From Charlie and Gideon to the enigmatic hero and Meng Changsheng depicted in the painting, all of these individuals had a profound knowledge of manipulating spiritual energy and practicing Taoist traditions.

Therefore, as soon as Gideon entered Changyun Temple, he headed straight for the Sanqing Hall. After paying respect to the three highest deities of the Taoist tradition, he respectfully approached a young Taoist priest and requested, "Excuse me, dear fellow Taoist, might I humbly ask for permission to stay here for a few days?"

The young Taoist priest couldn't help but notice Gideon's ethereal presence, a rare quality only found in a select few. He seemed almost otherworldly, like a being from a mystical realm.

Surprised by this divine temperament, the young priest respectfully inquired, "May I ask which Taoist temple you belong? Do you have any credentials?"

Taoist priests were permitted to make short visits to other Taoist temples under the internal protocols; however, they had to make sure of each other's identities to prevent any attempts at deception.

Smiling, Gideon replied, "I've been practicing overseas for many years and haven't been to China in a long time. I don't possess any documents."

"You need to provide proper documentation to prove that you're a Taoist priest; otherwise, it's beyond my authority to decide..."

Gideon remained unruffled, smiling calmly as he asked, "What is the name of your supervisor? And what is your Taoist name?" The young Taoist spoke with deference, "Our leader is known as Qingxu Sanren in the Taoist community."

"Qingxu?" Gideon's lips curved into a small smile. "Could it be the little baby Xuanjizi adopted back then?"

The young Taoist was shocked at the mention of that name!

Qingxu Sanren, over 70 years old now, had a well-known life story within the domestic Taoist community. He was abandoned outside the gates of Changyun Temple as a newborn and later adopted by the prisoner Xuanjizi.

For ten years, he studied Taoism under Xuanjizi and eventually succeeded him as the supervisor. He had dedicated his entire life to Taoism and was now a true master of the Taoist tradition.

The young Taoist was left bewildered when Gideon referred to an esteemed and experienced figure as a tiny infant. The remark seemed quite odd and didn't make much sense since it was highly incongruous with the person being referred to. He couldn't help but ask, "Taoist priest, do you actually know him?" Gideon responded nonchalantly, "Not only do I know him, but I even cradled him in my arms when he was little."

"What?" The young Taoist was momentarily stunned!

He muttered to himself, "Our abbot is over seventy years old. If Gideon held him as a child, he must be at least ninety years old. But he doesn't look older than sixty..."

With a smile, Chang Sheng Bo replied, "It's hard to explain. Please go and inform him. Just say that Master Gideon wishes to see him."

"Master Gideon!" The young Taoist murmured. He had heard that Taoist name before. Seeing Gideon's enigmatic appearance, he didn't dare to take it lightly. He said, "Please follow me to the reception hall, Master Taoist. I will inform our abbot immediately and ask him to report to the Supervisory Court!"

## Chapter 5360

Gideon trailed behind the young Taoist priest as they made their way to the side hall of the middle courtyard in Changyun Temple. The hall functioned as the temple's living room, exclusively used for hosting high-ranking guests such as abbots, supervisors from other Taoist temples, and distinguished pilgrims who had made substantial donations to the temple.

According to Taoist internal protocols, Taoist priests were allowed to pay short visits to other temples, but they had to take precautions to authenticate each other's identities to prevent any deceitful acts. Tourists and worshipers.

As a result, the young Taoist found that in order to communicate any news from inside, he had to maneuver through numerous levels of hierarchy, which proved to be more difficult than he had initially expected.

Twenty minutes later, an old man clad in Taoist robes rushed over, a mix of delight and surprise written on his face. He rushed through the packed room, darting a quick glance at Gideon before coming to an abrupt stop at the threshold, transfixed as if under a magical trance.

This person was the current head of Changyun Temple, known as Qingxu Sanren. Qingxu was the Taoist name bestowed upon him by his master when he adopted him as a child. Ever since his early days, his master had addressed him by this nickname. After assuming the position of supervisor, he added the word "Sanren" to his name.

Gideon looked at him, gently stroking his long beard, and asked with a smile, "Qingxu, do you recognize me?" Two hot tears welled up in Qingxu's eyes, and he choked up as he replied, "Master Mateo... is it really you?!"

With a slight nod, Gideon affirmed, "It's really me." Qingxu Sanren was overcome with excitement, his gaze fixed on Gideon. He muttered, "Master Mateo, you appear younger than Qingxu now... Could it be... Could it be that you have truly discovered the secret to longevity?"

The mention of this possibility sent shockwaves through several older Taoist priests nearby. They were all core members of Changyun Temple who had heard the story of the real Mateo as told by Sanren. Qingxu had recounted to them that the last time he had seen Master Mateo was in the late 1950s. Now, nearly seventy years later, the real Mateo stood before them looking younger than Qingxu himself. They couldn't help but believe that Master Mateo had indeed unraveled the secret to immortality.

Unlike warriors who used martial arts to pursue Taoism, Taoist disciples could enter the path through various means. The Quanzhen Sect, often mentioned in martial arts tales, was one such example. For centuries, the Taoist priests of Changyun Temple had been diligently practicing alchemy in their pursuit of the elusive Tao.

Despite the unwavering commitment of the alchemists in their community, their lack of extensive knowledge and expertise in alchemy have led to a shortage of outstanding talents among their members.

Gideon had become a disciple of Changyun Temple in the late 19th century. He had resided within the temple for over half a century until the 1940s. In his pursuit to become an alchemy master, he had voyaged numerous times to the very edge of the gateway to Hell. However, he had never fully comprehended the fundamental nature of spiritual energy.

Disheartened, he had eventually made the decision to leave Changyun Temple and abandoned the pursuit of Tao through pills, seeking alternative methods instead.

Fate had led him to join the Warriors Den, where, under the guidance and assistance of the Lord, he had gained mastery over aura. Over the years, he had returned to China several times, assuming different identities, but he had never set foot in Changyun Temple. He had intentionally avoided the temple to ensure that its disciples remained unaware of his discovery of the path to longevity. In his view, the arduous journey he had undertaken to reach this stage must remain a secret known only to himself.

However, today, he had come to the temple because he had been unable to locate Maria in recent days. The Lord had been urging him to go to Aurous Hill. He had procrastinated for days, but he knew he couldn't delay any longer. With the Lord's impatience, he would give him an ultimatum in two or three days at most. Thus, he needed to find allies in China who could assist him. "Can you help me locate Maria's current whereabouts within her range?" Gideon asked Qingxu, seeking his aid.

Throughout the years, Gideon had chosen not to exert his authority among the Warriors Den. As a result, he was left without any backing, except for the Taoist priests of Changyun Temple, who were always available to provide help. As Qingxu looked at him with eager anticipation, Gideon flashed a nonchalant smile and advised him, "Qingxu, we can't discuss this here. Is the secret room in the backyard still intact? If so, let's relocate there and delve into the details!"

Qingxu nodded hastily and replied, "Yes, it's still there! Master Mateo, please follow me!" With Qingxu leading the way, Gideon, followed closely by Qingxu's other disciples, made their way to the underground secret room located in the temple's backyard. However, at this crucial moment, Gideon devised a plan. He turned to Qingxu and said, "Qingxu, what we're about to discuss is of utmost importance. To be cautious, let's first have a private conversation!"

## Chapter 5361

With a graceful gesture, Qingxu left the others standing outside the concealed chamber and entered it alongside Gideon.

As Gideon stepped into the hidden sanctuary, his guide, Qingxu, suddenly halted and bowed before him, addressing him as "Master Gideon." It was an unexpected and marvelous sight to behold after all these years. Gideon's presence filled him with delight, recognizing the magnitude of the person before him.

With a warm smile, Gideon extended his hand to help Qingxu rise. "Although you are not my direct student, you were nurtured by my younger colleague and regarded him as your esteemed mentor. In my eyes, you are no different from my personal disciple."

Qingxu was overcome with excitement and respectfully inquired, "Master, where have you been all these years? Why didn't you return to Changyun to pay a visit?"

Gideon countered, "Am I not already back?"

"Yes..." Qingxu nodded eagerly and asked again, "By the way, Master, you..."

"What have you experienced during these years? I wonder if you can share your captivating stories with me!" Gideon interrupted, a playful gleam in his eyes.

Gideon chuckled and remarked, "Can seventy years of life experiences be summarized in just a few words?"

Seeing Qingxu's disappointed expression, he decided to elaborate further. "But don't be disheartened, my friend. The truth is, I have indeed discovered the secret to everlasting life."

In an instant, Qingxu's excitement surged, and he hastily inquired, "Master... have you mastered spiritual energy?"

"Indeed," Gideon replied, his tone sincere. "For our generation, cultivating spiritual energy is a preliminary victory. Without it, we cannot escape the clutches of life's challenges—aging, sickness, and death. Although I possess spiritual energy now, I am not immortal. Yet, my lifespan surpasses that of ordinary individuals."

Tentatively, Qingxu asked, "Master, are you perhaps over one hundred and fifty years old?"

Gideon nodded and sighed, "I am already one hundred and fifty-six years old. I am old indeed. One hundred and fifty-six years..."

Qingxu expressed yearningly, "You don't even look fifty-six years old..."

Gideon casually responded, "That's what happens when one masters spiritual energy." Living into the twenty-second century would be the pinnacle of achievement, having already witnessed the unprecedented advancements of the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries. It would bring me immense satisfaction to reach such a remarkable era, having personally witnessed history unfold and progress in its wake. That day, when it comes, will be the ultimate reward, pleasure, and fulfillment. I long for it."

Stunned, Qingxu knelt down once more, bowing his head heavily, and pleaded, "Master Gideon, please teach me the path to longevity. If you agree, I am willing to devote my life to serving you."

"Without any hesitation, and even in the face of danger!" Qingxu had immersed himself in Daoism for over seventy years, yet he found himself in the same state as when Gideon had left Changyun Temple.

Despite dedicating his days to the practice of Taoism and elixirs, he struggled to uncover the secret to a prolonged existence. He had devoted all his efforts to finding the path's elusive starting point, but it remained an unsolved mystery.

Now, at over seventy years old, he had resigned himself to his fate, never expecting to encounter his old acquaintance again. Yet, this reunion reignited his yearning for longevity.

Gideon gazed at Qingxu and sighed deeply before speaking earnestly, "I returned here after so many years with one purpose—to find you and the disciples of Changyun Temple."

"Together, let us share the knowledge I have gained over the years!" Qingxu's body trembled with excitement as he looked up at Gideon, his voice choked with emotion. "Master, are you truly willing to bestow upon your disciples the knowledge of longevity?"

Gideon nodded, and with a smile, he said, "I have pondered this for years. Changyun Temple has shown me great kindness. Naturally, I hope it will endure forever. And you, Qingxu, were raised by my junior brother. I hope that you can embark on a journey of a long and fulfilling life alongside me. Together, we shall explore the wonders of the future and strive for personal growth. Having a companion who shares my aspirations, keeping me company on this path, would be invaluable."

Overflowing with excitement, Qingxu wasted no time. As he knelt down, he performed three resounding kowtows, enthusiastically proclaiming, "Master, I pledge to be your disciple and promise to overcome any challenge that comes my way!"

Gideon's smile widened as he helped Qingxu up. "On this return, I envisioned a future where I could stay at Changyun Temple. During that time, you will retreat with me for five years, and I promise to teach you the art of harnessing spiritual energy."

Qingxu's joy knew no bounds as he exclaimed, "I am eternally grateful to Master Gideon for your immense kindness!"

Gideon made a composed gesture with his hand. "But you mustn't rush now, for I am unable to do so at the moment. Cast aside all other matters and return to Changyun Temple to meditate. Wait for me there, and once I have completed my task, I shall come back to you."

In a hurry, Qingxu asked, "Master Gideon, may I inquire when you will finish this task?"

After a brief pause, Gideon responded, "It's uncertain when it will happen. It could occur sometime in the next year, or it may take a decade or even more if things don't go according to our plans."

Qingxu was stunned, almost desperate, as he pleaded, "Master, how can this disciple wait for ten years..."

Gideon let out a heavy sigh, feeling utterly helpless. "Ah, Qingxu, I am bound by circumstances. The reason I have mastered spiritual energy is all thanks to a noble individual's assistance. I have been away these years because I have remained in that nobleman's service. Just as you promised to me earlier, I too pledged to him long ago. He imparted his wisdom to me, and now he has tasked me with finding a woman and a token in her possession here in China. If I can succeed, I shall attain my freedom. If I fail, I will continue my search."

With a tinge of regret, Gideon added, "Oh, and I cannot stay in Eastcliff for long. I must depart for the south in a few days. Rest assured, I shall bring you good news in due time."

Qingxu pondered the situation. Waiting could mean decades, perhaps even a lifetime, and he couldn't bear such passivity in the face of death. Urgently, he implored Gideon, "Master, who are you looking for? Tell this disciple, and I will mobilize every connection, even if I have to dig three feet into the ground, to find her!"