

Chapter 5381

Gideon knew it very well.

In view of the fact that he had disobeyed orders and postponed the time to come to Aurous Hill, So if there is no suitable reason this time, he can no longer disobey orders anyway.

If he doesn't disobey, it means that he will go to Wanliu Villa immediately, and kill the sleeping Evans Family and all those who protect them.

Such a big move will surely shock the whole world.

It is conceivable that Aurous Hill, as the place where the incident occurred, will definitely enter an unprecedented state of martial law.

If that's the case, how can he dig out clues about Zachary and his gang?

Therefore, if you want to delay the time to do it, the best way is to take the initiative to explain the magic weapon.

After all, the magic weapon is not only very precious to himself but also to the Lord.

Gideon wanted to detain the piece of lightning strike wood that could summon thunder from the sky,

And take out the ring, so that the Lord could give him a few days of grace.

Hearing him say the word magic weapon, the Lord stopped for two or three seconds, and then asked coldly, "You got the magic weapon? What magic weapon?!"

Gideon quickly explained, "Back to the Lord, this subordinate accidentally met a dealer who was dumping antiques. They just dug an ancient tomb in Aurous Hill some time ago and sold the antiques. Among them was a jade from the Qing Dynasty, the finger ring, there is a complete array in the finger!"

The Lord immediately asked, "What is the effect? Have you tried the effect of that array?!"

Gideon replied, "The array is a passive acupuncture method. The subordinates speculate that it should be some kind of passive formation."

The Lord was surprised and said, "Is this really true?!"

Gideon said firmly, "My Lord, how dare this subordinate lie to you... If you don't believe me, wait for the subordinates to complete the mission, I will bring this magic weapon back for you to have a look at!"

The Lord paused for a moment, smiled, and said, "Gideon, it seems that you have selfish intentions toward me."

Gideon hurriedly said, "I don't dare! This subordinate originally planned to confirm the authenticity first, and then report to the Lord. Besides, this subordinate also thought that if I could take the opportunity to find a few more magical artifacts and go back to offer them to the Lord, it would be considered a great achievement..."

The Lord sneered, and said, "Since this is the case, you have a heart."

After that, the Lord said again, "Well, I will give you three more days. If you can find more magical artifacts, I will give you great credit when you come back. If you can't find the magical artifacts, you must not delay any longer. After three days, you must destroy Evan's entire family!"

Gideon breathed a sigh of relief as he won. The three-day window period should be enough for him to dig deep into Zachary's gang.

If he can find more and better magic weapons, then he will screen out the poor ones and return to the Lord, if he can't find other magic weapons, then he can only take the jade wrench back to the Lord, just use this jade wrench to exchange for a chance to make a big fortune with a small one.

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In ten minutes.

Russian Far East.

At this time, Zeba was like a song, meditating where she temporarily stayed.

For people like her and Gideon who have mastered spiritual energy, sleeping is no longer a rigid need.

They prefer to spend their sleeping time meditating and breathing. Although there is no spiritual energy in the world for them to absorb and transform, at least they can meditate and breathe. Help them refine the aura in their bodies to be more pure.

At this moment, Zeba's cell phone vibrated suddenly.

Apart from the other two earls, the only person who could make a call to this phone was the Lord, so she immediately opened her eyes and unlocked the phone.

The special software showed that it was the Lord who called her.

Zeba quickly pressed the answer button, and said respectfully, "My lord!"

The lord on the other end of the phone asked softly, "Zeba, where are you now?"

Zeba frowned, she knew that with the mobile phone given to her by the Lord, he could not only contact her 24 hours a day but also know her real-time location, but the Lord deliberately greeted her politely. It seemed that Lord wanted to get close to her.

Thinking of this, Zeba respectfully said, "Back to the Lord, this subordinate is still in the Far East."

The Lord hummed, and asked her, "Is there any clue that Maria has been to the Far East?"

Zeba hurriedly said, "Back to the lord, this subordinate is incompetent, and I haven't found any information related to Maria yet."

The lord smiled and said, "Maria is very cunning, and it's not because you are incompetent if you can't find her."

Then, the lord said seriously, "Zeba, there is something that I need you to set off to do immediately."

Zeba knew that these few polite words from the Lord were the real highlight right now.

So, without thinking, she said, "Please give orders Lord, and the subordinates will go all out!"

The Lord said, "I want you to rush to Aurous Hill as quickly as possible."

Zeba asked in surprise, "My lord, Do you want your subordinate to go to Aurous Hill to assist Gideon?"

"No!" The Lord said coldly, "I want you to secretly monitor Gideon's every move, I doubt he will have a second heart about Warriors Den!"

Zeba was shocked, Hastily said, "My Lord... Gideon has been loyal for so many years, how could he have two minds about Warriors Den?"

The Lord did not hide anything, and said directly, "Gideon said that he got a magic weapon in Aurous Hill."

"A magic weapon?!"

"Gideon said that the tomb robber stole it by accident and was discovered by him." Lord replied.

Zeba exclaimed, "There is such a good thing..."

Lord said, "I just checked the trajectory of Gideon, and he did go to the antique street in Aurous Hill twice, so there is a high probability that what he said is true."

Zeba asked in puzzlement, "Lord, this subordinate is puzzled, since he told you the truth, why do you still say he has two hearts?"

The Lord sneered, "Gideon told me the truth, but he only said Part of it!"

After that, the Lord said again, "He said that what he got was a passive magic weapon that he didn't know the effect of, but I checked his movement track during the day, After he left the antique street for the first time, He went to an inaccessible mountain in the city, and stayed there for dozens of minutes before returning to Antique Street again. I suspect that he should have obtained some offensive magic weapon!"

Zeba was even more puzzled, "Lord, The subordinates dare to say, just because Gideon went to the inaccessible mountain, it may be difficult to prove that he got some offensive magical weapon, right?"

The Lord snorted coldly, and said gloomily, "Of course, it cannot be proved by the movement track alone. However, the Aurous Hill Meteorological Bureau suddenly issued an extreme weather warning today, and the warning was issued 20 minutes after Gideon arrived on the mountain! Also, I just searched Aurous Hill's local internet and short video platforms. Many people were discussing the thunder explosion near Phoenix Mountain in Aurous Hill this afternoon. According to many people's descriptions, the thunder explosion was deafening, and many people have never heard such loud thunder in their lives! Coincidentally, Gideon went to the valley which is not far from these mountains!"

Hearing the Lord's words, Zeba was extremely depressed.

Sure enough, as she guessed, the Lord always has the location information of all earls.

And this is not the most frightening thing, the most frightening thing is that the Lord can analyze everyone's every move in more detail based on the time and place, combined with the information that can be searched on the local Internet.

This also means that it is impossible to get rid of the control of the Lord in this lifetime.

Don't look at these earls who may not go back to report for a long time when they come out to perform missions, but their bodies still have the poison prepared by the Lord.

It's just that those who master the aura have a long enough lifespan, so the time nodes that the Lord left for them are relatively wider than others.

The antidote is taken once a month or half a year, while they take it every three years.

But what about three years? If everyone is like a flying kite in the hand of the Lord, the earls among them would just have a longer kite line, and they still couldn't get rid of the Lord's control.

Frustrated, she also analyzed these key points in her heart that the Lord said.

Gideon went to the mountains from Antique Street, it was really strange, and it was even more unbelievable that the unexpected thunder explosion happened suddenly in the place Gideon had been to.

Combining and analyzing these points, she can guess the general context of the matter.

It is very likely that Gideon got an offensive magic weapon, and even this offensive magic weapon can summon heavenly thunder!

But Gideon just didn't tell the Lord that he got the offensive magic weapon.

No wonder the Lord said that Gideon had two hearts. Gideon thought that he could gain the trust of the Lord by taking out the passive magic weapon, but he didn't expect that the Lord could guess that he was lying even thousands of miles away through various clues.

Thinking of this, Zeba asked the Lord, "My lord, this subordinate is not as strong as Gideon, if he finds out, how should I explain to him?"

The Lord said lightly, "No, I will teach you a formula to hide your aura and cultivation later. There is not much difference in strength between you and Gideon."

"With the help of this formula, as long as you don't let him see you, and don't use aura within his hundreds of meters, he won't be able to find you, Besides, I can see his location all the time, and I will share his location with your mobile phone in real-time. It will definitely not be discovered by him."

Zeba immediately said, "This subordinate understands!"

The Lord said again, "Zeba, you have two missions when you go this time, one is to spy on Gideon and find out what is wrong with him. How many magic weapons has he got; the other is to be ready to help him at the critical moment."

Zeba asked in surprise, "My lord, is there any major threat in Aurous Hill so that you feel that even Gideon can't do it?"

The Lord sighed, "It's unknown at the moment, but too many things have happened recently, and many of them have not been cleared up, which makes me feel uneasy all the time. After an anti-aircraft gun in Cyprus, who knows what kind of danger Aurous Hill will have."

Speaking of this, the Lord added, "But you don't have to worry too much, I'm telling you this just in case, Gideon is in the light and you are in the dark so that nothing will go wrong. It would be best if Gideon is not in danger. If there is, you can help him at the critical moment. Although he has two hearts, but He is still an indispensable soldier of the Warriors Den. The earls of the Warriors Den have lost a meritorious companion, and the others can't make any mistakes!"

Zeba immediately blurted out, "Don't worry, Lord, the subordinate understands!"

The Lord hummed, and said, "In addition, if Gideon encounters greater pressure from China after he has destroyed Evan's family, I will ask him to withdraw from Aurous Hill in time. When the time comes, you will stay in Aurous Hill for the son of Bruce and Lily to show up."

After hanging up the phone, Zeba felt full reluctance in her heart.

Although she is one of the four earls, she has always disliked fighting and killing, let alone being ordered by the Lord to do evil.

What she hopes most is to stay in the Warriors Den all the time, ignoring worldly affairs and concentrating on cultivation.

Even if she had to come out to perform the task of the Lord occasionally, she was more inclined to find a suitable opportunity to work abroad.

For example, the Lord asked her to look for Maria in the Far East this time, and she was indeed looking for her, but she didn't pay much attention, just wandering around, but unexpectedly, with a phone call from the Lord, she was about to leave for Aurous Hill.

Moreover, this time she went to Aurous Hill to monitor Gideon, so she is doomed to be unable to fish in the next few days.

Although she was reluctant, she didn't dare to delay at all, so she hurriedly set off in the middle of the night.

She bought a car from the hotel owner at a high price and traveled from her small town to Yakutsk, a city in the Russian Far East.

At the same time, Zachary was hugging left and right in the largest nightclub in Aurous Hill with a pair of dark circles under his eyes, Carrying another jade ring finger that Tommy wanted back, and a bank card that had received more than one million dollars.

He is here to drink to his heart's content, drink well!

In front of Zachary, there were expensive foreign wines. A random bottle of champagne would cost at least 10,000 to 20,000 yuan or even more than 100,000 yuan.

In addition, several young and beautiful girls are gathering around him at the moment, complimenting him in every possible way.

The appearance fee of these girls tonight is also as high as five figures.

And the reason why Zachary spends money like water here is entirely because this is Charlie's orders.

Charlie specifically told him in the evening that he didn't need to do anything tonight, He just needed to open up to drink and play, and even asked Shangri-La to open the presidential suite for him.

According to Charlie's plan, he knew that the earl of Warriors Den tomorrow morning would definitely go to Antique Street to find Zachary, So he let Zachary drink happily tonight, spend money like water, and not sleep until the sun is three poles tomorrow, and then with the smell of alcohol go to the antique street to set up the stall.

This will not only make Zachary's character look more real but also force the earl to adapt to Zachary's rhythm.

What Charlie thought was to try his best to use antiques and magic tools as bait to manipulate the other party's mentality.

No matter whether he came to Aurous Hill to kill his grandparents or his family, let him learn to wait and be patient

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The next morning.

Zachary is hugging left and right on the luxurious big bed of the Presidential Suite of Shangri-La, sleeping dimly;

Gideon can't wait to leave the hotel at dawn, and go to Antique Street to wait for Zachary's appearance and Zeba drove a night train for several hours and just arrived in Yakutsk, a city in the Russian Far East.

After arriving in Yakutsk, she took the earliest flight in the morning and flew to Harbin in the northeast of China.

When the Sukhoi Super 100 airliner landed at Harbin Airport, Zeba went through customs and transit procedures non-stop and flew from Harbin to Aurous Hill.

Just as she was flying to Aurous Hill, Gideon was already wandering around Antique Street and was about to go berserk.

In order to find Zachary earlier, Gideon came earlier today than all the street vendors.

However, after wandering around here for three or four hours, His legs were slender, and he didn't see Zachary.

Anxious, he paced back and forth in the antique street, from east to west, then from west to east, repeating this cycle, but he never stopped waiting for Zachary who haunted him in his dreams.

But he didn't know that the real-time movement of him turning back and forth in Antique Street had long been captured by the surrounding municipal surveillance, and was clearly seen by Charlie who was in Shangri-La.

At 12:30 noon, Zeba's plane landed at Aurous Hill Airport against the scorching sun.

Along the way, she was constantly practicing the formulas taught to her by the Lord, in order to hide the aura on her body as much as possible.

After getting off the plane, she didn't have any delays. After leaving the airport, she took a taxi directly to Aurous Hill Antique Street.

Although Ladden is still holding up the sign board here, hoping to meet another big grievance like Gideon, but without the jade wrench, he didn't attract Zeba's attention at all and just as Zeba was heading to Antique Street by car, Charlie, who was sitting in Issac's office, ordered Isaac's men next to him, "Go and wake Zachary up, and tell him that Master Wade told him to start work!"

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When Zachary burst into Isaac's office with hair disheveled like a bird's nest, still emanating the scent of wine and perfume, and adorned with numerous bright red lip marks on his face, he

immediately caught Charlie's attention. With an apologetic smile, he approached and asked, "Master Wade, were you looking for me?"

Charlie nodded, curious about Zachary's drinking escapades. "How did last night treat you?"

"Master Wade, last night was a splendid affair! The drinks flowed perfectly!" Zachary replied eagerly.

Charlie smiled, pleased with the response. "Since you had a good time, let's start working in the afternoon."

Zachary straightened up immediately, filled with respect. "Master Wade, if there's anything you need, just say the word!"

Charlie nodded and inquired, "Zachary, let me ask you, where is the other ring?"

Without hesitation, Zachary replied, "I placed it in the room's secure closet myself last night, while I was still wide awake!"

"Very well." Charlie nodded, satisfied. "Now go freshen up, but remember to clean your face and brush your teeth. A quick wash will suffice, no need for a shower. After you're done, bring me the ring and head to the antique street. The elderly gentleman who purchased from you yesterday has been eagerly waiting all morning."

"Hmm..." Zachary, fully reinvigorated, interjected. "Master Wade, that old man went back to the antique street? Could he be seeking a refund?"

Charlie chuckled and replied, "Impossible. He actually wants to purchase more from you. When you meet him later, inform him that your group isn't prepared to display all the items yet. However, if he shows sincerity, you can negotiate on his behalf."

Eager for guidance, Zachary asked promptly, "Master Wade, how much sincerity is required?"

Charlie pondered for a moment before responding, "He must send over at least two hundred thousand dollars upfront. Once that's settled, contact Mr. Cameron's assistant and say this without mincing words: 'Please send some goods.' Leave the rest to me—I'll arrange for another ring to be delivered."

With a mischievous grin, Charlie added, "As for the second ring, you can quote him a price of one million dollars."

Zachary was taken aback. "Master Wade... if I may ask, the old man already paid five hundred thousand dollars for a ring. It was already a hundredfold profit. Now you suggest one million—will he actually buy it?"

"Yes." Charlie smiled confidently. "Just name the price, and he will unquestionably purchase it."

Though slightly perplexed, Zachary nodded eagerly. "Understood, Master Wade!"

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American stunners? To be honest, there's this young Russian lady. She's stunningly beautiful and utterly captivating!"

Gideon waved his hand dismissively. "If you can't help it, let's talk business. Don't toy with my heart."

Momentarily stunned, Zachary asked, "What business, old man?"

Gideon responded, "I came here today specifically to ask you if you can procure some quality items from your old residence."

Zachary put on a serious expression. "Old man, it's your lucky day. I called my family last night to discuss this matter."

Eagerly, Gideon inquired, "And what did your family say?"

Zachary replied, "My family is cautious. They only shipped the goods once. But I assured them of your reliability and generosity. Not only are you a potential buyer, but the introductory fee alone amounts to hundreds of thousands of dollars. Such a valuable customer is hard to come by, so I persuaded them to provide you with additional items."

Gideon pressed, "Did they agree?"

Zachary smiled and continued, "I told you that you're generous. Whether they believe it or not, they insist on asking for an introductory fee of two to three hundred thousand dollars. They also requested half of the fee from each of us. Don't you think they're being a bit unreasonable?"

Initially missing Zachary's words, Gideon quickly caught on and responded, "Zachary, broaching the subject of a referral fee is a breeze. Just have them ship the items to me, and I'll reward you with a handsome commission of two hundred thousand dollars."

Zachary interjected, "Old man, what I'm talking about is US dollars!"

Knowing he was being fleeced, Gideon didn't care. He promptly asserted, "I'm talking about US dollars!"

Familiar with the process by now, Gideon swiftly turned on his phone and transferred two hundred thousand dollars to Zachary. Impatiently, he urged, "Can you arrange the shipment now? Call them and urge them!"

Gideon hastily added, "Make sure it comes from the same source as the previous two items. Don't try to deceive me."

Zachary assumed a serious demeanor. "Don't worry, old man. I've traveled the world. Throughout the years, I've built a reputation for honesty. We will never engage in deceptive practices in this lifetime!"

With an air of mystery, he added, "My family has already contacted me, and they'll be sending something soon. Just wait a moment!"

"Really?!" Gideon exclaimed, brimming with excitement. "Fantastic!"

The two of them waited together for approximately twenty minutes until a courier from City Express burst into the antique street.

From the moment this person entered the street, both Gideon and Zeba followed closely, their attention drawn to the fluctuations in his aura.

Gideon even felt a sense of familiarity with those fluctuations.

In this thrilling moment, Gideon's excitement soared, and he couldn't help but exclaim in his heart, "This is the third enchanted weapon! I've truly stumbled upon a treasure trove of mystical artifacts! If there's one, there will be two; if there are two, there will be three; and if there are three, there will be even more! I already have three—dreaming of four, five, or six is no longer far-fetched!"

At that precise moment, a rider charged straight towards Zachary's booth and inquired, "Are you Zachary?"

Zachary nodded and asked, "What about the goods?"

The rider pulled a jewelry box from his pocket and handed it over.

Once the other party left, Zachary opened the jewelry box and carefully extracted the second jade wrench crafted by Charlie.

Gideon's gaze was fixed on Zachary as he unveiled the box. However, his excitement faded upon scrutinizing its contents, and he couldn't help but sigh in disappointment, "Another finger ring? Why?"

With a smile, Zachary chimed in, "Who knows what that thing was? Perhaps the tomb's owner had a penchant for adorning their fingers. And with two big brothers, one on each side, doesn't it look majestic?"

Gideon felt a bit disheartened.

He wasn't particularly intrigued by passive formation enchanted weapons like this one. In his opinion, compared to the lightning-summoning weapon he acquired the previous day, such items were like night and day.

His heart still yearned for an enchanted weapon that could bolster his attack power.

But now, confronted with yet another finger ring, should he make the purchase or not?

He already had one, and he hadn't even unraveled its effects yet. If he refrained from buying it, he'd be letting a potential enchanted weapon slip through his fingers, wouldn't he?

Feeling despondent, Zachary interjected, "Old man, let me give you a suggestion. You can buy this finger wrench as well. With two rings on your thumbs, it'll be quite the showstopper!"

Gideon contemplated inwardly, "Since I've already informed the Lord about the ring, it would be wise to buy a second one now. One is for the Lord, and I can keep the other for myself."

"If it turns out to be something great, I won't regret my decision, I mustn't let it slip through my fingers." He turned to Zachary and declared, "If I'm destined to become a finger-wielding virtuoso, then I shall claim this one worth half a million dollars."

Zachary quickly responded, "Old man, last time it was fine for five hundred thousand. However, this time it won't go for anything less than one million dollars. The family has decreed that this finger ring is the last one to be sold. No more will be available."

"One million..." Gideon voiced his displeasure, "That's an astronomical starting price, twice the value of prime land!"

Helplessly, Zachary sighed, "Old man, I'm just a middleman here. I have to sell it at whatever price they dictate. It doesn't matter if you find it too high. After all, you already possess one of these items, so it's not particularly necessary for you to buy another."

Gideon swiftly interrupted him with a hand gesture, speaking earnestly, "I absolutely want it, but I can't help feeling that the price isn't fair. I'm not short on money, but it leaves a bitter taste in my mouth."

Zachary nodded, seemingly understanding, and responded sincerely, "I empathize with your sentiments, sir. Allow me to share my sincere thoughts

on the matter. Antiques of this caliber are rare and precious. If you purchase them all, they will undoubtedly become exceptional assets in your possession. Perhaps, if you were to sell them a few years down the line, their value would double yet again."

Gideon secretly sighed in his heart, "Is there a saying that goes 'buy a magic weapon and sell it away'? It's impossible to sell it for 100 million!"

With this thought, he decided not to prolong the argument over the price with Zachary. After all, he still hoped that Zachary would help him find more enchanted weapons!

Thus, he swiftly transferred the money to Zachary for payment. Once the transaction was complete, he curiously inquired, "By the way, Zachary, please ask your superiors when the next batch of valuable goods will be released. If it's possible, I'd like to acquire them all at once. As long as the items are top-notch, I'll take them!"

For Gideon, time was of the essence. He only had three days, and now it was already afternoon, meaning another half-day had passed, leaving him with just two and a half days.

In two and a half days, he would launch an attack on the Evans family in the dead of night. Aurous Hill would soon be engulfed in chaos and panic.

By then, he might not have the opportunity to make any purchases.

Zachary regarded him and relayed Charlie's message, "Old man, it may take about seven to ten days for the goods to be shipped next time."

"What? Seven to ten days?!"

Gideon grew anxious, and Zachary helplessly asked, "Why the urgency?"

He explained, "You see, our merchandise has a dubious origin. The three pieces you acquired today cost over two million US dollars in total. Once we settle the foreign exchange, we need to find a way to distribute the funds across multiple personal accounts in small increments. It takes time to withdraw the cash gradually."

Gideon furrowed his brow and asked, "What do you mean? Why is it so complicated?"

Zachary replied with a hint of resignation, "Sir, do you truly understand? We can't simply collect the money; we have to launder it first! Otherwise, if the money remains in your personal account, it will attract attention, and in the event of any trouble, it could be confiscated."

Gideon grasped the modus operandi of this organization. The profits generated from their illicit activities—excavating and selling antiques—constituted black money. Consequently, not laundering the funds obtained through illegal means carried inherent risks.

Although he understood the necessity, impatience got the better of him, and he blurted out, "Zachary, I can't wait for seven to ten days!"

Zachary shrugged helplessly, "If you can't wait, there's nothing I can do. Frankly, we've already cleared out a lot from that tomb, and I'd love to sell you more. But, unfortunately, I'm just a pawn here. I don't have the authority to decide on such matters."

Refusing to give up, Gideon pleaded, "Zachary, please, help me out. I can arrange a trade at any time within the next two or three days. You don't need to worry about the money; I have plenty! If you can convince your superiors to sell the goods to me as soon as possible and deliver one, I'll give you an extra 10 as a gratuity. But if it's too late, I might have no choice but to leave."

With a touch of embarrassment, Zachary responded, "Um... Two or three days is a bit rushed. It will take at least five to seven days."

Gideon grew even more restless and exclaimed, "I have a lot on my plate, and I simply don't have enough time to stay in Aurous Hill..."

After gritting his teeth, he continued, "Zachary, at the latest, I'll wait for you until nightfall. If you manage to acquire the goods, find me at the Holiday Hotel by the west gate of Antique Street!"

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With only two and a half days left, Gideon knows he must fulfill the duty entrusted to him by the Lord, regardless of any obstacles.

With his strength, even if the Evans Family were heavily guarded by bodyguards, eliminating them would pose no problem for Gideon.

However, he was also well aware that once he attacked the Evans Family, escaping the Chinese government's encirclement and suppression would be a daunting challenge.

In doing so, he would lose any opportunity to discover more magical artifacts from Zachary.

For a moment, Gideon considered whether he should simply find a way to restrain Zachary and force him to reveal information about his gang. Then, by following the trail, he could locate and eliminate the entire gang.

Yet, he hesitated, fearing that such overt actions would result in the news leaking out.

The Evans Family had eyes and ears everywhere.

If they were to catch wind of his plans, it could jeopardize his primary mission.

The news of acquiring a powerful magical weapon was so incredible that he couldn't understand why the Lord wouldn't delay the plan to eliminate the Evans Family.

In desperation, he had to find another avenue by delving into Zachary's involvement.

If money could sway him and his gang, convincing them to swiftly sell all their magical artifacts to Gideon, it would be the ideal outcome.

For Zachary, his role was to provide Gideon with a final timeline—a matter of great significance to Charlie.

After Gideon mentioned that he could only wait until the following day, just before nightfall, Zachary nodded without hesitation and assured him, "Old man, don't worry. I'll do everything I can to assist you. If there's any news, I'll come find you at the hotel as soon as possible."

"Very well!" Gideon nodded in satisfaction, emphasizing once again, "And remember, let them know that money is never an issue as long as I can gain something!"

Zachary made an okay gesture and smiled, saying, "I'll handle it. You can trust me!"

Only then did Gideon feel a sense of relief. He turned to Zachary and said, "Since that's the case, I won't disturb your affairs any longer. If I have any updates, I'll come here the day after tomorrow. If you hear anything, please inform me immediately."

Zachary agreed, watching Gideon depart.

Although Gideon left Zachary's booth, he lingered in Antique Street, never straying too far. Eventually, he settled in a restaurant about 300 meters away, carefully observing Zachary's every move.

Although Gideon had no explicit plan of stealing from Zachary, he aimed at unraveling Zachary's history as a precautionary measure against any potential emergencies that may impede the mission's triumph.

Little did he know that not far away, on the second floor, an old acquaintance was watching him intently—Zeba.

As the clock struck five in the afternoon, Zachary wrapped up his business at the stall and beckoned a Shangri-La concierge to arrange for a luxurious Rolls-Royce for him to journey from the antique market.

He was currently a guest in the Presidential Suite at Shangri-La, enjoying the privilege of having a dedicated Rolls-Royce during his stay.

The luxurious vehicle pulled up by the roadside.

A driver in a suit and white gloves stepped out, opening the rear door for Zachary. With utmost respect, he said, "Mr. Zachary, please get in the car."

Zachary nodded nonchalantly and climbed into the car. As the driver asked, "Mr. Zachary, where would you like to go next?"

Zachary gestured grandly and replied with a smile, "Take me to Ying Huang International!"

Ying Huang International was the grandest and most opulent nightclub around. Zachary had indulged there the previous night, spending hundreds of thousands in a single evening.

Today, following Charlie's instructions, he intended to visit Ying Huang International again, reveling in the joy of spending money like water.

However, once he settled into the car, he didn't forget the task assigned to him by Charlie. Retrieving his mobile phone, he initiated a voice call through WeChat.

When the call connected, Charlie inquired, "Zachary, how are things progressing?"

Zachary hastily responded, "The ring has been sold, and the buyer wants more merchandise."

Charlie instructed, "Make the buyer wait. The police and the banks have been collaborating closely lately. Any large and unknown transfers are susceptible to scrutiny, especially in USD. Therefore, we need to swiftly exhaust the money. Inform the buyer that the goods will be shipped to him within a week."

Zachary quickly interjected, "But the buyer can't wait that long. He mentioned today that he can only wait until the next day before it gets dark. Can we expedite the shipment? After all, once this opportunity is gone, there won't be another."

Charlie's heart trembled upon hearing that the Earl could only wait until the next day before dark. He sensed a high likelihood that the day after tomorrow would be the decisive moment!

If a confrontation between himself and the Earl were inevitable, then that night would mark the battle!

Thus, he responded to Zachary, "I will reconsider this matter. If the police remain inactive over the next two days and the timing is right, we might be able to deliver additional merchandise."

Zachary inquired, "Can you let me know if I should accompany the buyer?"

"No need," Charlie replied indifferently. "For caution's sake, it's better to observe discreetly for now. Avoid being too proactive."

"Understood!"

Zachary smiled and said, "Then what should I do over the next two days?"

Charlie advised, "Continue operating your stall on Antique Street. I will notify you if any special circumstances arise."

"Okay!" Zachary ended the call, deleted the voice call record with Charlie, and switched off his phone. Returning it to his pocket, he began to close his eyes, deep in thought.

He pondered, "I wonder why Master Wade is being so cautious. He specifically instructed me to stick to the script he provided, even inside the Shangri-La car. Doesn't he trust the people here? They are all confidantes carefully nurtured by Mr. Cameron... Besides, why did he insist on using WeChat for communication? Is he worried about someone discovering call records?"

Unaware that the content of his recent conversation with Charlie had been deleted, Zachary remained clueless.

However, Gideon, sitting in a taxi trailing behind, overheard everything clearly.

His intent in secretly tailing Zachary was to have a backup plan. With the deadline for his final action set for the night after tomorrow, he had no other tasks at present. So, why not take advantage of the opportunity to gather information about Zachary and potentially discover his former home?

That's precisely why he listened attentively to every word spoken inside the car, as well as the phone conversation.

Upon hearing it all, he firmly believed every word Zachary had previously spoken.

Soon, Zachary's Rolls-Royce came to a stop at the entrance of Ying Huang International.

The doorman of the nightclub hurriedly rushed to the roadside to welcome him.

As the car halted, he swiftly opened Zachary's door and respectfully greeted him, "Mr. Zachary, welcome!"

Zachary let out a grunt, took out several hundred yuan bills, and proudly handed them to the attendant.

At that moment, a captivating female publicist approached, her waist swaying gracefully as she asked in a seductive and velvety tone, "Mr. Zachary, you've arrived. What are your plans for today? Allow me to arrange everything for you!"

Zachary replied with arrogance, "Prepare the grandest booth, serve the most extravagant set menu, and arrange for two girls to accompany me for the evening. Remember, I want Japanese girls only tonight!"

The female publicist hesitated and said somewhat embarrassedly, "Mr. Zachary, Japanese girls are not as popular here as European and American girls. I only have one Japanese girl at my disposal. Perhaps I can offer you a Korean girl instead. Would that suffice?"

Zachary waved his hand dismissively. "That won't do! I insist on having two Japanese girls tonight! Find a solution for me. If you can't, borrow one from elsewhere. We can negotiate the price! I'll give you 10,000 yuan if you succeed!"

Upon hearing this, the publicist's enthusiasm returned, and she replied with a smile, "Mr. Zachary, you're incredibly generous. Rest assured, I will find a way to get you another Japanese girl today. It's entirely possible. Look, I'll get to work on it right away."

Zachary pinched her slim waist and praised her with a smile, "You truly have a gift for persuasion!"

Chapter 5384

Zachary's string of performances unfolded according to Charlie's master plan. It was like a symphony orchestrated by fate, with each note harmoniously played. Every night, Zachary sang and danced, indulging in a lavish lifestyle fueled by the abundance of money. Charlie had devised this scheme to protect Zachary, fearing that Gideon, the ever-watchful antagonist, would unveil his true identity.

Until Gideon made his next move, Charlie couldn't afford to expose Zachary. The key was to keep him hidden, safeguarding his secrets. As long as Zachary remained discreet, Gideon would remain oblivious, and the impending confrontation would be delayed. It was a strategic move, allowing Zachary to act ahead of schedule.

Meanwhile, Gideon observed Zachary from the shadows, eavesdropping on his conversations with the female publicist. His acute senses allowed him to grasp every word exchanged. The more he witnessed, the more he believed in Zachary's character and the tales he had shared. In Gideon's eyes, Zachary indulged in daytime wealth accumulation and nighttime revelries at nightclubs. He embraced a lifestyle of excess—feasting, drinking, consorting with prostitutes, and gambling—all while residing in the opulent confines of a five-star hotel's presidential suite.

These were the habits of a criminal who had amassed great fortune. Money flowed effortlessly, acquired through questionable means. It was a tempting temptation to revel in such extravagance while it lasted. With his doubts about Zachary quelled, Gideon returned to his hotel, planning to spend the next two days in meditation and practice. He aimed to unlock the full potential of the three newly acquired magical artifacts, hoping to gain greater insight.

Charlie, always a step ahead, had his eyes fixed on Gideon's every move. His team monitored Gideon's hotel twenty-four hours a day, relying on municipal surveillance to track his activities. The moment Gideon left the premises, Charlie would be alerted immediately. Meanwhile, Zeba, the ever-vigilant observer, kept herself hidden from both Gideon and Charlie. She lurked in the shadows of Aurous Hill, meticulously observing Gideon's every action.

That night, Zeba reported everything she had witnessed to their master, leaving him filled with puzzlement when he learned about Gideon's acquisition of three magical artifacts. In this age of dwindling mystical treasures, such discoveries were exceptionally rare. Even the Lord's own collection of magical artifacts was bequeathed by his master. The Lord himself had not mastered the art of crafting these powerful tools. Thus, he found it perplexing that Gideon had stumbled upon three such artifacts upon arriving in Aurous Hill.

In his state of confusion, Gideon decided to share the news of his third magical weapon with the Lord. He hoped that the Lord would momentarily halt the plan to eliminate the Evan family, granting him additional time to delve deeper into Zachary's background and connections. However, the Lord's response shattered his expectations. He casually remarked, "While the magic weapon holds value, it pales in comparison to the importance of eliminating the Evan family. I don't care how many magic weapons you acquire. Before midnight tomorrow night, you must take action against the Evans!"

To the Lord, the priority was the annihilation of the Evan family, even over the search for magical artifacts. Furthermore, the Lord possessed an additional asset in Aurous Hill—Zeba, who had arrived unnoticed. From the Lord's perspective, Gideon's mission was to lure attention and firepower while Zeba exploited the opportunity to uncover the trail of the magic weapons. After all, Zeba had already spotted Zachary in the distance, noting his activities in the antique street. If Gideon couldn't fulfill his role, it was

ideal for Zeba to take his place and establish contact with Zachary. In the Lord's eyes, Zeba proved far more dependable than Gideon.

To Gideon's dismay, even after presenting two magical artifacts, the Lord remained unwavering in his plans. The disappointment weighed heavily on Gideon's shoulders. At this moment, all he could do was hope that Zachary would bring him favorable news the next day.

The following day, Zachary, as was his habit, slept until the sun climbed high into the sky. Surprisingly, Charlie didn't come looking for him. After a sumptuous hotel meal at noon, Zachary strolled leisurely to the Antique Street, ready to set up his stall once again. It didn't take long for Gideon to approach him, unable to contain his curiosity. "Zachary, has your master given you any instructions?" he eagerly inquired.

Zachary, sporting a hangover look, shook his head and stifled a yawn. "Not yet," he replied. "Since last night, they've been exploring various methods to withdraw the cash discreetly. It will take some time, as they must be cautious and not withdraw too much at once."

Gideon grew agitated and expressed his concerns. "Zachary, I might be leaving Aurous Hill tomorrow night. If I depart, our chance to collaborate in the future will be lost."

Regretfully, Zachary responded, "Old man, I understand that the deadline for tomorrow night is quite tight. Perhaps you could stay a few more days. We can wait for an extra day. And if you ever feel bored, you can come and stay with me at Shangri-La. I have a presidential suite there. I only occupy one of the bedrooms, so you can have your pick among the remaining three."

Graciously declining the offer, Gideon replied, "Zachary, I appreciate your kind gesture. But as an old man, I find ostentatious luxury and presidential suites rather insignificant. I never jest with such matters. I can only wait until tomorrow night at most. It would be best if you found a way to

contact your family again. Let them know that if there's no new product tomorrow night, there will be no need for future cooperation."

Zachary nodded and promised, "Okay, I'll inquire, and I'll inform you tomorrow."

Gideon hastened to say, "Then I'll see you here tomorrow."

"Absolutely!" Zachary readily agreed, patting his chest with assurance. "See you tomorrow!"

That night, Zachary made his way to Yinghuang International for the third time, a familiar routine etched into his mind. It had become a daily pilgrimage, repeating the same pattern. Just like the previous two visits, he indulged in luxury, spending money without restraint, surrounded by beautiful women.

Yet, Zachary knew that tonight marked the end of his lavish lifestyle. Once Master Wade no longer required his performances, he would return to Orvel to assume his role as a master. As the head of the family once again, his status would surpass that of the four heavenly kings of Orvel. Daily indulgences in nightclubs would no longer be an option. Hence, he cherished this last night of extravagance, embracing every moment as if it were his last.

Meanwhile, Charlie lay awake in bed, contemplating his next move. He pondered the potential scenarios if Gideon decided to head directly to Wanliu Villa the following night. Should he intercept him along the way, finding a secluded spot to engage in a life-or-death battle? Or should he wait for Gideon's arrival at Wanliu Villa, springing a surprise attack just as he prepared to strike Charlie's grandparents and family?

Initially, Charlie leaned toward the former option. He had no desire to meet his grandparents' family just yet. His reluctance stemmed from their unfavorable treatment of his father, which led Charlie to hold them accountable for their part in his parents' demise. This resentment was the root of his persistent unwillingness to reconcile with his grandparents and great-grandparents.

Therefore, Charlie's initial inclination was to choose a suitable location for a final confrontation with Gideon. If he emerged victorious, he could slip away, concealing his actions and achievements. If he were to lose, it was highly likely that Gideon would be the one to end his life. Either way, Charlie would find solace.

However, Charlie swiftly dismissed this idea upon recalling Maria's warning. There was a high probability of danger that night. If he were to perish, he had to ensure that his grandparents and great-grandparents would know he was still alive, someone they yearned for day and night.

Chapter 5385

The third day arrived in no time.

Gideon arrived early at Antique Street, eagerly awaiting good news from Zachary.

At that moment, Gideon was filled with nervousness and apprehension.

The Lord had commanded an assault on Evan's family before midnight, meaning before eleven in the evening. Additionally, Gideon had made arrangements to reach Willow Estates on time tonight at seven.

Once there, he would discreetly find a secure hideout within Willow Estates and bide his time. When the opportune moment arose, he would strike and eliminate Evan's family without hesitation.

Hence, his utmost desire today was to acquire additional magical weapons from Zachary before seven o'clock in the evening.

He understood that Zachary might not open his stall until noon or perhaps even in the afternoon. Yet, Gideon had arrived early in the morning, anxiously waiting. However, as usual, Zachary didn't show up until the afternoon.

Upon spotting Zachary, Uncle Chang Sheng cast aside any pretense and hurriedly approached him. He asked, "Zachary, how did it go? Have you managed to contact your previous supplier? Can they still deliver today?"

Zachary shook his head, expressing helplessness. "I'm sorry, sir, but the supplier informed me that they cannot ship the goods today."

Seeing Gideon's disappointed expression, Zachary hastily added, "However, they did mention last night that they went to other locations overnight to procure another batch of goods. I now have a substantial inventory and plan to accumulate a shipment over the next two days. If you're interested, wait a couple more days. Perhaps we can release five or eight pieces at once. How about that?"

Gideon asked, surprise evident in his voice, "Another batch of goods?! Where did you get them? What kind of merchandise is it?"

Zachary shook his head and replied, "They didn't disclose the source of the goods to me. My responsibility is solely distribution. But don't worry, I'll handpick the best ones for you in two days."

Regret etched across Gideon's face as he sighed, saying, "Ah, well! Honestly, Zachary, I'm taking a train to Eastcliff tonight. I've already booked a flight from Eastcliff to Argentina tomorrow, and I'll be leaving for China."

Zachary exclaimed in amazement, "Old man, why the rush to leave?"

Gideon's expression turned sour, and he responded with a hint of reproach, "Why do you speak so thoughtlessly? Rushing to leave? I've been away for far too long this time; it's about time I return. My wife and children are still waiting for me."

Zachary blurted out, "Oh! No matter how long it takes, it'll just be two more days. Wait for the good ones to arrive! Rest assured, I'll make sure he brings you the finest selection first!"

Gideon let out a sigh and said, "I'm afraid there's no other option. Why don't you give him a call and urge him to expedite the shipment? We can deal with any payment issues later. Time is of the essence, and we can't afford any further delays. I'm willing to pay double the price."

Zachary nonchalantly remarked, "I've already informed him over the phone. I even offered to drive there and retrieve the goods myself if it's too much trouble for him. However, he stated that the earliest availability would be the day after tomorrow."

Zachary continued, "To be honest, the reason this group has managed to operate without getting caught is that they prioritize safety over money. That's why they've survived all these years. If anyone could sway them from their original plan with a hefty sum, they would have been apprehended by the police long ago."

Upon hearing this, Gideon's heart sank. It seemed that his desire for the magic weapon had been completely extinguished. Disappointed, he nodded lightly and sighed, "Seems like there won't be another chance for us to cooperate."

Zachary shared his regret, saying, "It can't be helped, sir. Perhaps we'll have another opportunity in the future." Then, he added, "By the way, sir, can't you wait until seven o'clock? If I win the fight, I'll come find you at the Holiday Hotel!"

Uncle Chang Sheng had lost hope, but Zachary's words brought him a glimmer of relief. He nodded and replied, "I'll stay at the Holiday Inn until seven o'clock."

"Okay!" Zachary nodded with determination. "I'll be there as soon as I have news!"

Charlie's plan was to test Gideon's limits by tempting him with a substantial amount of merchandise within two days. He needed to find out if tonight's deadline was truly inflexible.

If Gideon couldn't wait in front of the five and eight magical artifacts, it would prove that the British Lord had set this time and there was absolutely no room for negotiation.

After bidding farewell to Zachary, the dejected Gideon left Antique Street. He knew that if Zachary's family still possessed magic weapons, he was out of luck. In the next few hours, he had to make preparations. Tonight, he would go to Willow Estates and eliminate Evan's family.

A few minutes later, Charlie received a message from Zachary. It simply said, "The buyer can't wait until the day after tomorrow."

Reading those words, Charlie knew that Uncle Chang Sheng would undoubtedly take an action against his grandparents' family tonight.

The surveillance showed that Gideon had returned to the hotel and had no immediate plans. However, Charlie couldn't sit still any longer.

He ordered his men to monitor Gideon's every move and then drove back to Thompson First's home.

In the bedroom of the husband and wife, Charlie took out pen and paper, leaving a letter for Claire.

In that letter, Charlie succinctly explained his life story and apologized for deceiving Claire for so long.

In the final paragraph, he told Claire that if she was in danger, she should go to the Mid-level Villa in Elys-Champ Hot Springs Villa, retrieve the elixir he had hidden there, and leave Aurous Hill with her parents.

Additionally, Charlie left his black gold card for Claire.

Charlie thought that if he returned alive, he would destroy the letter completely. But if he didn't make it, Claire would find the letter upon her return from the United States. It would serve as his final testament.

After finishing all this, Charlie left the house before Gideon left the Holiday Hotel. He planned to drive to the Elys-Champ Hot Springs Villa and wait for Gideon's next move.

It was already past five o'clock in the afternoon when Charlie arrived at the mid-level villa in Elys-Champ Hot Springs.

Gideon had not yet left the hotel, so Charlie went to the villa and relaxed his body by soaking in the hot spring for a while.

At 6:30, Charlie changed into a sleek black suit suitable for nighttime activities. He kept the two magical artifacts—the Shocking Thunder Order and the Soul Piercing Blade—and carried three reiki Pills, three Rejuvenating Pills, and three Reshaping Pills close to his body.

The Peiyuan Pills would keep Charlie full of energy, and his opponent had already lost a lot of energy due to the modified Thunderbolt. The odds of winning were greatly in his favor.

The Rejuvenating Pill served as a healing medicine, ensuring Charlie could recover to some extent if he lost the fight. As for the Reshaping Pill, it was a powerful life-saving medicine. Its effect was far more formidable than the Rejuvenating Pill. If faced with a super expert, the Reshaping Pill could save Charlie's life in a critical moment.

With these pills by his side, Charlie believed he could compete with the Marshals who had broken the Quintong Dynasty. Moreover, he was so well-prepared that the danger Maria Clark had imagined was unlikely to materialize.

In addition to the pills, Charlie left the ring given to him by Maria Clark and the phoenix bone vine given to him by Mrs. Treadway in the safe.

After completing all the preparations, Charlie received a message from Isaac Cameron stating that Gideon had left the Holiday Hotel. He had hailed a taxi and was heading towards the Elys-Champ Hot Springs Villa.

Isaac Cameron and Don Albert were no longer practicing with Master Vail today. They were ready to provide support and assistance to Charlie.

Isaac Cameron was in charge of monitoring Gideon, while Don Albert remained on standby, awaiting Charlie's orders.

Upon receiving the news that Gideon had left, a stern look flashed in Charlie's eyes as he said coldly, "You're finally here!"

He immediately picked up his mobile phone and called Don Albert, instructing, "Don Albert, wait for me at the villa gate with the helicopter."

Don Albert, who had been waiting for instructions at the Elys-Champ Hot Springs Villa, respectfully responded, "Okay, Master Wade. I'll be right up!"

A minute later, the sound of a roaring helicopter filled the air. A high-performance civilian helicopter had arrived outside the villa and was slowly descending on the flat ground by the entrance.

Charlie was about to step out when he suddenly remembered something and stopped in his tracks.

After a moment, he strode out of the villa. The helicopter was parked steadily at the door.

Charlie boarded the helicopter, and Don Albert in the cabin respectfully asked, "Master Wade, what are your next instructions?"

Charlie glanced at Don Albert, then at the pilot, and said, "Don Albert, you should get ready. You can disembark first, and the pilot will remain on standby here at all times."

Turning to the pilot, Charlie continued, "From now on, we'll wait here. Keep the helicopter ready to take off at a moment's notice. As soon as I give the order, you must take off at full speed and head to Willow Estates!"

The pilot promptly replied, "Understood, Mr. Wade."

Don Albert hurriedly spoke up, "Master Wade, what important event are you going to Willow Estates for? I'd better accompany you!"

"No need," Charlie said calmly. "You stay here and maintain order."

Don Albert felt a sense of unease and couldn't help but ask, "Master Wade, what's happening? Is something significant going on? I'm willing to accompany you and serve you like a loyal dog or horse!"

Charlie waved his hand and said with seriousness, "Listen, Don Albert. I need you to stay here and fulfill a very important task. Only you can handle it."

Don Albert anxiously responded, "Master Wade, please tell me!"

Charlie spoke slowly, emphasizing each word, "Don Albert, no matter what happens tonight, no matter how chaotic it gets, do not reveal my whereabouts to anyone. Don't let anyone leave this place. If I haven't returned yet, instruct everyone not to search for me. Stay put and act as if you never knew me. Understood?"

Chapter 5386

Charlie's words sent a shiver down Don Albert's spine, his expression contorting into one of pure horror. In a panicked voice, he blurted out, "Master Wade, what are you saying? Is there some kind of danger lurking today?"

Charlie fell into a brief silence, unsure of how to respond. Dangerous? He couldn't fathom being in any real danger. The so-called Earl who toppled the Quintong Dynasty carried those three shoddy magical artifacts he himself had crafted, treasuring them as if they were priceless. It was clear the man had only a shallow understanding of reiki.

Moreover, Charlie possessed two formidable weapons of his own, specialized in offense, along with an array of pills at his disposal. He could rely on both offense and defense, not to mention the advantage of fighting in the shadows while his opponent remained exposed in the light.

Thus, Charlie believed he held the upper hand in every aspect, giving him a better chance of victory than his adversary.

Yet, there was a nagging worry in the back of Charlie's mind, courtesy of Maria Clark's warning. Though it seemed unreliable, his intuition told him that this girl wouldn't deceive him.

This uncertainty made Charlie exercise caution. He had to leave an escape route for those around him, just in case he truly faced danger.

Facing Don Albert's anxious query, Charlie flashed a slight smile and spoke with a serious tone, "I can't say for certain if I'm truly in danger, but it's always better to err on the side of caution."

Don Albert, clearly nervous and concerned, responded, "Master Wade, remember when you single-handedly slew the eight heavenly kings of the Webb family at the foot of Golim Mountain? They were powerful, yet they stood no chance against you. In Aurous Hill, who could possibly threaten your safety?"

Charlie grinned, reassuringly stating, "Don Albert, no need to be so on edge. As you said, I am an invincible figure in this world. For ordinary folks to harm me would be as futile as trying to defy the laws of gravity."

With the topic shifted, Charlie continued, "However, one cannot afford to be excessively arrogant. Modesty and caution increase the odds of success."

Don Albert, still sensing something amiss, spoke up, "Master Wade, Elys-Champ boasts hundreds of warriors. If an enemy were to trouble you, they could easily overwhelm them! If you have any orders, just say the word, and I shall act immediately."

Charlie waved his hand dismissively and calmly replied, "No need for that. Having too many people around isn't necessarily advantageous, so please refrain from meddling."

"Why, Master Wade? Our crowd tactics have always been a well-guarded secret. With this advantage, why not maximize its value?" Don Albert blurted out.

Charlie shook his head, amusement playing on his lips. "Crowd tactics won't work in this situation. It's futile. The discrepancy between the prowess of warriors and monks proficient in aura is immense. No matter how many warriors you have, they won't even come close to the opponent's reach. The enemy's movements and attack speed surpass their ability to react. In fact, the more warriors there are, the less effective it becomes. It might even create chaos and provide greater convenience for the enemy."

Charlie continued, "To eliminate a monk, you either need a stronger monk or resort to modern weaponry. Like a dense network of close-in defense guns, highly powerful and rapid-firing, ejecting shells faster than the speed of sound. Such weapons are effective against monks, capable of wiping out a dozen or even twenty of them in one go."

Turning to Don Albert, Charlie asserted, "Don Albert, you needn't voice your opinion on this matter; everything shall be subject to my command."

Faced with Charlie's resolute stance, Don Albert realized that his input would carry no weight. In resignation, he nodded and replied, "Understood, Master Wade."

At that moment, Charlie retrieved his mobile phone and dialed Jack Lee's number.

Simultaneously, Jack Lee found himself having dinner with Evan's family at Willow Estates, a few kilometers away.

The Evans family had been conducting extensive investigations in Aurous Hill, yet had failed to uncover any clues regarding Charlie's whereabouts.

During the meal, Charlie's uncle, Desmond, was about to ask Jack Lee for help when Jack Lee's phone rang.

He promptly excused himself from the table, saying to Evan's family, "Please excuse me for a moment; I need to take this call."

He made his way to the courtyard, ensuring no one was around, before answering the phone.

With utmost respect, he greeted the caller, "Mr. Wade."

Charlie got straight to the point, "Inspector Lee, are my grandparents and their family currently at Willow Estates?"

"They're all here," Jack Lee replied, curiosity evident in his voice. "What's the matter, Mr. Wade? What's going on?"

Charlie let out a hum, adopting a serious tone. "Someone may pose a threat to my grandparents' family tonight."

Jack Lee paled in shock, blurting out, "Is this for real?!"

"Deadly serious," Charlie replied. "The individual heading their way is likely a super expert from the Warriors Den, far surpassing any member you've encountered thus far."

Jack Lee's horror was palpable as he urgently asked, "Mr. Wade, what should I do? Should I organize an immediate escape for them?"

"It's too late for that," Charlie responded. "Your every move seems to be under the Warriors Den's surveillance. Even if you were to flee in a rush, your whereabouts would be exposed. In this situation, it's better to stay at Willow Estates and remain adaptable to changing circumstances."

Jack Lee, without hesitation, declared, "Then I'll immediately gather the bodyguards and martial arts masters and have them prepare for battle!"

"It won't be of any use," Charlie explained. "None of you will be able to stop him. Furthermore, if you inform your subordinates, they're bound to act strangely, raising suspicions. You should keep this matter to yourself and not divulge it to anyone."

Jack Lee queried, "Master Wade, if this enemy is truly formidable, I fear I won't be able to ensure your grandparents' safety..."

Jack Lee quickly added, "But don't worry, if I face a formidable foe, I'll lay down my life before they come to any harm!"

Charlie assured him, "Don't confront him head-on. Once he attacks you, I won't stand idly by."

Jack Lee inquired, "Mr. Wade, where are you right now?"

Charlie replied nonchalantly, "I'm nearby, just a few minutes away from your location."

Relieved, Jack Lee finally exhaled, "With you here, Mr. Wade, I can have peace of mind!"

Charlie said, "When I take action, I'll come to support you as quickly as possible. However, if he attempts to harm you, my grandparents, or anyone else before I arrive, don't act impulsively. Just say a particular phrase to him. Uttering those words will certainly make him hesitate and buy you more time."

Jack Lee quickly asked, "Mr. Wade, what should I say?"

Charlie promptly disclosed the phrase to Jack Lee and instructed, "If he manages to infiltrate, remain calm. Remember the words I've given you; they'll

undoubtedly buy you some temporary respite."

Jack Lee affirmed resolutely, "Okay, Mr. Wade, I'll remember them!"

Chapter 5387

9 PM, Willow Estates.

At this hour, the Evans family had just finished their dinner, and they summoned Jack Lee to join them in the living room. They were eager to analyze the clues they had gathered over the past few days.

Samuels, the old man, had dutifully guarded the villa without straying for a single moment. His health had remarkably improved, and his memory hadn't deteriorated further. In fact, he had gradually regained the forgotten parts.

Furthermore, as his condition steadily improved, his thinking and logic had sharpened, resurrecting his former style and commanding presence.

During this family gathering, Desmond began by updating them on his collaboration with the Moore Group.

Desmond declared, "Our partnership with the Moore family has officially entered the negotiation phase. Today, the legal teams from both sides commenced discussions to finalize the terms of our cooperation. Due to the Evans family's earnest commitment of twelve percent this time, the atmosphere in the negotiations is exceptionally cordial. Once the terms are settled and the agreement signed, we can start the collaboration immediately."

The old man nodded approvingly and spoke, "Considering the current circumstances, the Moore Group holds great significance for our Evans family. The benefactor deliberately left a clue about the Moore Group, indicating a desire to reveal information about his identity through them and perhaps manipulate their strings as well."

The old man then turned his gaze to his second son, Marcus, and said, "Although Marcus is typically in charge of all the Evans family's external business ventures, this time is an exception. The collaboration with the Moore family is more than just a business project; it serves as a gateway for the Evans family. Desmond will oversee it until the end!"

Samuels had always emphasized harmony and unity within his family, assigning different responsibilities to his children, ensuring clarity and purpose for each one.

This approach aimed to enable the children to support and assist one another when united, while also serving as a means of monitoring and restraining each other when conflicts arose.

Even though he knew that Desmond was responsible for driving the collaboration with the Moore Group, Samuels felt the need to justify his decision to Marcus, despite being aware that Marcus had no objections.

Marcus, understanding his father's intentions, didn't harbor any resentment towards his elder brother taking charge of the project. The Evans siblings had always remained united, thanks to the influence of their eldest sister, Lily. Although they had grown distant due to their individual families, Lily's passing and the near-destruction of the Evans family by the Broken Quintong Society had brought them closer than ever.

At this moment, Marcus cleared his throat and stated, "Dad, over the past few days, I've meticulously combed through Aurous Hill with Yo Yo, exploring every aspect of life here, particularly focusing on the public transportation department, the social welfare department, and the household registration department of that time. Regrettably, I haven't uncovered any information about Charlie."

The old man let out a soft sigh, an outcome he had anticipated.

Mrs. Evans interjected, trying to console him, "Marcus, you mustn't be disheartened. After all, Charlie has been missing for twenty years. It's unrealistic to expect us to find him within a few days. As I mentioned before, the search for Charlie may take another twenty years."

Marcus nodded resolutely and replied, "Mom, don't worry. In my heart, the search for Charlie remains a top priority."

Suddenly, Tece recalled something and exclaimed, "Oh, Mom! I stumbled upon something rather peculiar today. It feels quite abnormal. Could you, Dad, and my brothers help me analyze it?"

The Lady responded, "Of course, tell me about it."

Tece proceeded, "I investigated the Aur

ous Hill orphanage today, hoping to find any information about Charlie among the rescued orphans throughout the years. It struck me as strange. Personnel changes in welfare institutions are not uncommon, but a complete turnover of staff is hardly believable. What are your thoughts?"

Samuels furrowed his brow and commented, "An orphanage, even with its management and executive staff, should have a dozen or even two dozen employees. Even if the entire management was replaced, it's unlikely that all the executive staff would be replaced as well. After all, the orphanage needs to continue its operations. Such a scenario is clearly unreasonable."

Tece nodded and agreed, "I feel the same way. This sudden and drastic change goes against common sense. It appears that the previous staff members must have departed en masse for some special reason."

At that moment, Jack Lee, who had been somewhat absentminded due to his nerves, suddenly brightened up and slapped his thigh in surprise. "Tece's clue is incredibly significant!"

The old man smiled and inquired, "Jack, please provide a detailed analysis."

Jack Lee met the old man's expectant gaze but found himself caught in a moment of struggle and hesitation.

He couldn't help but ponder, "Mr. Wade warned that the Evans family is in danger today. If there is indeed a threat, I believe Mr. Wade won't idly sit by and await destruction. Must we endure an indefinite wait?"

Then, he considered, "Yo Yo has clearly grasped the crucial point this time; she just needs a little help connecting the dots. If I follow her lead and provide a gentle nudge, even if Mr. Wade doesn't appear tonight or continues to conceal his identity, it will be much easier to track him by following the orphanage trail! And I'm merely assisting with a few words based on Yo Yo's insights. Surely, Mr. Wade wouldn't blame me, right?"

Having made up his mind, Jack Lee resolved to offer the Evans family some hints. With a serious tone, he began his analysis, "All of you possess more business management experience than me, and I'm certain you're aware that such a complete overhaul from top to bottom is impossible in any business or organization."

"Even if a team has remarkable cohesion, achieving complete unity among all members, from the top brass to the lowest ranks, is an unattainable ideal. Even in a well-trained army, there will always be deserters and traitors."

"But as Yo Yo mentioned, this team left en masse without a single person remaining last year. Upon deeper reflection, you'll realize that this team possessed exceptional organizational discipline, perhaps even resembling a paramilitary unit. However, such a team couldn't have appeared in an ordinary orphanage without years of intense cultivation. It simply defies logic, doesn't it?"

Upon hearing this revelation, the Evans family exchanged knowing glances, their agreement evident in the subtle nods that followed.

Jack Lee, the astute observer, voiced his thoughts confidently, "It appears to me that there's a hidden puppeteer orchestrating these events. If I'm correct, this team must have been meticulously arranged and subsequently withdrawn as a whole by this powerful individual. Their synchronized movements suggest they are on a significant mission."

The Lady, overcome with excitement, couldn't contain her question, "Arin, are you implying that this orphanage might be connected to Tatsuo?!"

Jack Lee affirmed her suspicion with a nod, "Yes, Auntie, that's precisely the suspicion I have."

Desmond, unable to contain his anticipation, interjected, "It would be ideal if we could determine when these individuals arrived in Aurous Hill. We know they left together, but there's no concrete evidence of them arriving together."

Tece chimed in, brimming with excitement, "That's easy! Let's check the social security files of the previous team. Since the orphanage operates as a social welfare organization with government funding and private donations, their personnel information should be meticulously documented. Especially if they're embarking on a major mission, as Brother Jack suggested."

Impressed by Tece's sharp thinking, Jack Lee praised her, "Yoyo, your thinking is crystal clear. We must find a way to access the previous personnel files of the Aurous Hill orphanage. I believe we'll uncover some valuable clues."

Marcus, filled with enthusiasm, exclaimed, "I'll make arrangements to dig into it immediately!"

He swiftly retrieved his mobile phone and dialed a number.

Having been retired for many years, the old man, Samuels, had seen his contacts fade away with time. But Marcus, as the head of the Evans family's external business, possessed an extensive network and wielded substantial influence within the family.

After a brief conversation over the phone, Marcus addressed the crowd, a spark of excitement in his eyes, "We've already initiated an investigation, and we can expect the results soon."

The crowd erupted with uncontrollable enthusiasm.

Ten minutes passed, and Marcus's phone rang. He answered it promptly, activating the speaker function, and asked, "Ah Zu, what have you found out regarding the matter I assigned you?"

Ah Zu, a middle-aged man, responded respectfully, "Mr. Evan's, I've just completed a review of the personnel files from the Aurous Hill City Welfare Institute, and the previous staff did indeed depart together last year."

The revelation left the group feeling a sense of disappointment, prompting Marcus to inquire further, "Can you provide a summary of their respective entry dates?"

Ah Zu continued, "Mr. Evans, the organization of this orphanage exhibits remarkable stability. There are a total of sixteen staff members, including the director, teachers, caretakers, cooks, and cleaners. Among these sixteen individuals, the one with the shortest tenure has served for almost twenty years, nearing the completion of their service."

"Twenty years?!" The expressions on the faces of the Evans family members revealed their astonishment.

This particular timeframe held significant sensitivity for them.

It was twenty years ago that Lily, Bruce's wife, and Bruce himself had tragically passed away in Aurous Hill. Additionally, their only son, Charlie, had mysteriously disappeared during the same period.

Seemingly on the cusp of a breakthrough, Desmond, the eldest son, couldn't contain his impatience, "Please provide us with the precise dates when these sixteen individuals joined!"

Ah Zu hastened to respond, "Out of the sixteen, fourteen joined in late winter, specifically in February twenty years ago. The previous director, Zhang Youde, joined in November of the

same year. The fifteenth person joined in December of that year and will complete twenty years of service in another three months."

Mrs. Evans looked horrified, tears streaming down her face as she choked out, "Lily and Bruce left Eastcliff in March twenty years ago to come to Aurous Hill. Their tragic accident... happened in late October... Charlie also vanished at the end of October..."

Samuels, the old man, rose from his seat, his voice trembling with excitement and incoherence, "This must be Bruce's doing! He always had a knack for preparing for the worst. Those fourteen people arrived even earlier than him and Lily, indicating that he had already begun laying the groundwork in Aurous Hill before they even moved here!"

His voice quivered even more as he continued, "He must have foreseen that their visit to Aurous Hill would be fatal, so he preemptively placed his people in the orphanage. After his and Lily's accident, they must have used a premeditated method to send Charlie to this orphanage! Over the years, countless individuals have scoured Aurous Hill in search of Charlie, yet none could have imagined that he was living right under the noses of these people, disguised within an ordinary orphanage!"

At that moment, he expressed his emotions with great intensity: "Who would have thought that Charlie, whom everyone tried to find by digging deep into the earth, had been placed in an orphanage where nothing out of the ordinary could be seen on the surface? This scheme not only eluded those who were searching for Charlie, but even Charlie himself, who has likely been hidden for an extensive period!"

Lady Evans, tears of joy and excitement streaming down her face, exclaimed, "So, Charlie has always been in Aurous Hill, and he might still be here!"

However, the old man shook his head, tempering their excitement with a dose of reality, "While I'm certain Charlie has resided in Aurous Hill for a long time, we can't be certain if he's still here. After all, when those people left last year, does that mean Charlie departed Aurous Hill as well?"

Desmond blurted out, filled with determination, "Mom, Dad! Tomorrow, we'll delve into the backgrounds of these sixteen individuals and uncover the truth! If they were indeed the ones who cared for Charlie during his upbringing, I refuse to believe we won't find his whereabouts!"

"Yes! Absolutely!" Desmond's enthusiasm was infectious as the old man, too, shed tears of joy, muttering, "Twenty years... My eldest grandson, finally a clue!"

He raised his head to the sky, releasing a long sigh, "Lily, Bruce, you left a backdoor for Charlie twenty years ago, yet you never informed me. How much did you truly distrust me in your hearts?"

Just as Old Master Samuels basked in this newfound hope, a sudden shout from outside the window shattered the tranquility, "An assassin! Protect Lordship and Madam immediately!"

Before the words could fully sink in, the sound of a sword whistling through the air reverberated around the villa, followed by collective screams and the unmistakable stench of blood, engulfing the premises.

Jack Lee's heart skipped a beat as a chilling realization gripped him, "Mr. Wade was right... The formidable Enemy is truly here!"

Chapter 5388

The villa's courtyard had transformed into a nightmarish battlefield! It was a purgatory, engulfed in chaos and terror.

Gideon tightly gripped a seemingly ordinary wooden sword, barely thirty centimeters in length. However, its invisible blade extended to an impressive two meters! This mystical weapon had been temporarily bestowed upon him by a British Lord.

Though the wooden sword appeared small and unassuming, it possessed a power reminiscent of the lightsabers from Star Wars. Its killing range was extraordinary, surpassing the logical

setup of the cinematic lightsaber. Gideon's wooden sword, infused with an ethereal aura, could manifest its deadly blade, under his precise control.

Several bodyguards attempted to confront Gideon, but his Swift motion of shaking the sword in the air unleashed an invisible force—a sword chi—that pierced through the atmosphere, striking its target with deadly precision. A mere flick of his wrist caused blood and innards to erupt uncontrollably, instantly claiming the life of the unfortunate bodyguard.

The remaining bodyguards were utterly petrified. They had never witnessed such an inexplicable attack before. Gideon's diminutive wooden sword stood at a considerable distance from their comrade, yet it effortlessly pierced his chest and tore open an invisible wound.

This gruesome spectacle sent shivers down their spines, overwhelming them with terror. Though their instinct to survive urged them to retreat, Gideon's presence made escaping an impossible feat.

Despite Gideon's speed being slower than the radar-locked close defense guns and the shells they fired, these ordinary martial artists had no hope of besting him.

If the gun symbolized a hunting rifle, then Gideon was akin to a cheetah, and these hapless martial artists were nothing more than rabbits incapable of even piercing a leopard's skin.

As the bodyguards halted and prepared to flee, Gideon took a step forward, his right foot propelling him like an arrow unleashed from a taut bowstring.

Moments later, a mournful scream resonated through the air.

The slowest bodyguard observed the bleeding wound on his chest and let out an anguished cry. Curiously, despite his severe injury, he sprinted even faster than before. In a bizarre turn of events, he lost control of his movement, hurtling uncontrollably towards another comrade. And all the while, his chest continued to gush blood.

Fear consumed the man as he cried out, "What the... hell is this?"

The two men lost their momentum and the room filled with the cacophony of chaotic sounds. Gideon swiftly advanced, methodically beheading the terrified Evans Family bodyguards one by one.

Though some of the bodyguards brandished their pistols and fired upon him, Gideon's movements were too Swift for their aim and reaction speed. Their bullets failed to inflict the slightest harm.

Unlike the Evans Family's bodyguards, Gideon's lightning-fast agility rendered their attempts at escape futile. These seasoned martial artists were reduced to mere victims, swiftly meeting their demise.

Not far away, halfway up the mountain, Zeba observed Gideon's killing spree at Willow Estates, a frown etching itself onto her face. She had always believed that the old man was solely dedicated to his cultivation. Yet, today she realized the extent of his bloodlust.

Just as she contemplated Gideon's ruthlessness, a low-flying helicopter appeared in the sky, heading towards Willow Estates. The Evans Family's hearts trembled as they listened to the screams outside.

Unbeknownst to them, their family had barely survived a crisis that nearly wiped them out in New York. And now, their pursuers had tracked them down in China with astonishing speed.

Charlie's third uncle, Martel, nervously suggested, "Father, mother, this time it might be fatal. You two should escape through the back door."

Desmond reacted swiftly, echoing his brother's sentiment. "Yes, Dad, you and Mom go first. We'll remain here and keep watch."

The old man, Samuel, snorted coldly. "Go? Where do you think you can go? Whoever is coming, their target is our family. None of us can escape."

Samuel then turned to Jack and spoke with conviction, "Jack, this is the Evans Family's affair. We already dragged you into it once before. This time, we cannot let you become entangled again. You should go first. The adversary is after us, not you."

Jack helplessly smiled, his tone serious as he replied, "Uncle Evans, last time I followed your advice and left first. As a result, I was riddled with bullets like a hornet's nest. In contrast, you and the others in the box were safe. Today, you want me to leave again? It doesn't seem appropriate, does it?"

Samuel exclaimed, "Jack! I'm not joking! The circumstances are different this time. Get out of here before they kill you! Leaving Willow Estates is your safest option."

Jack shook his head, his smile unyielding. "Uncle Evans, you are the fortunate one. It's safest for me to remain by your side."

Growing anxious, Samuel scolded, "Why are you so stubborn? If anything happens to you because of my Evans Family, how can I face your short-lived old man?"

Suddenly, the room's door was kicked open, and a cold voice pierced the air. "Leave? Hmph, none of you will leave here today!"

The occupants turned their gaze towards the intruder—an old man in a flowing robe, exuding an air of slim elegance. They were momentarily taken aback by his presence.

Samuel confronted Gideon, his voice firm with a tinge of suspicion. "Who are you?"

Gideon's lips curled into a cold smile as he surveyed the room arrogantly. "My name is Gideon Alastair, you can address me as Gideon Alastair or Gideon."

Samuel furrowed his brow, questioning Gideon's motives. "If you claim to be a true man and do not practice in a Taoist temple, why have you resorted to indiscriminate killing?"

Gideon's laughter echoed, filled with a sinister edge. "Who says a true man cannot kill? Today, I, Marshal Gideon Alastair, shall unleash a massacre upon this place. None of you shall escape!"

His eyes widened suddenly, as if struck by an electric shock. He exclaimed, "How can there be a faint presence of reiki here...?"

Unbeknownst to the Evans Family and Jack, Charlie's Rejuvenation Pill had quietly set up a hidden formation within the villa. It remained active, infusing the air with a subtle reiki and the medicinal effects of the pill.

Gideon's sudden interest in the aura left the Evans Family members puzzled. They were oblivious to the hidden enchantment. Gideon had unwittingly stumbled upon a new realm, his excitement reaching unprecedented heights.

Previously clueless about formations, he now realized the presence of faint reiki within this reinforced concrete structure. In an era where finding natural reiki was rare, he never expected such a subtle energy within this villa!

If the reiki remained constant, cultivating here would yield incredible results with minimal effort.

Overwhelmed by his discovery, Gideon pointed his wooden sword at the crowd, his voice cold and commanding. "No one dares to answer? Since silence is your response, I shall select a victim and behead them before your very eyes, to serve as an example!"

His gaze fixed upon Tece Evans, dressed in provocative attire. Gideon mockingly inquired, "Is this the Evans Family's second daughter, Tece Evans?"

Tece warily questioned, "What do you want?"

Gideon sneered, "I want to teach your parents and siblings a lesson—a lesson called 'The Consequences of Refusing to Cooperate.'"

With a swift wave of his wooden sword, the invisible blade slashed towards Tece Evans. Tece felt a gust of wind on her face, becoming frozen in place, unable to move a muscle.

Just in the nick of time, Jack abruptly slammed a delicate teacup onto the floor, shattering it into countless shards. His voice reverberated through the room, laced with fury and desperation, "You damned mutt! If you have even the slightest inkling of curiosity about Maria's whereabouts and her precious ring, you better put an end to this charade right now!"

Gideon's pupils dilated in response to Jack's unexpected outburst. His hands froze in midair, and his incredulous gaze fixated on Jack. He couldn't help but blurt out, "What in the world... How do you know Maria's name? And her ring? Speak up! What is your connection to her?"

Jack couldn't believe that the words he had learned from Charlie had actually struck a nerve!

As Gideon came to an abrupt halt, a sense of relief washed over Jack, emboldening him to respond with confidence, "You haven't earned the right to know who I am just yet!"

A storm cloud descended upon Gideon's face as he adopted a grave tone, warning Jack, "I strongly advise you to be wise and disclose all your knowledge regarding Maria and the ring. Otherwise, I can assure you that your life will become a living hell!"

Jack sneered in defiance, "What's this? Threatening me, are you? Let me tell you something, if you dare harm anyone present here today, you will never, for the rest of your miserable existence, discover Maria's whereabouts!"

Though Gideon felt a mixture of anxiety and excitement, he knew he was one step away from fulfilling the mission bestowed upon him by the British Lord. His mastery of the sword chi, a technique capable of decimating the entire Evans Family with a single strike, had him brimming with anticipation.

And the fact that he had stumbled upon a clue related to Maria filled him with a newfound vigor!

Could it be that his journey to Aurous Hill this time would yield an astounding treasure trove?

Fuelled by this thought, he strode purposefully towards Jack, wasting no time in snatching him by the neck with one hand. With astonishing speed, Gideon hoisted Jack into the air, his voice dripping with icy disdain, "You possess no aura, nor are you a martial artist. So prey, tell me, how did the name Maria escape your lips? Who fed you this information?"

Jack struggled helplessly in Gideon's iron grip, his face turning an ugly shade of black and purple. Yet, he mustered every ounce of strength to endure the searing pain, mustering a cold smile as he glanced contemptuously at Gideon. Through gritted teeth, he managed to utter, "Have... the courage to end me!"

Gideon's voice turned frigid as he retorted, "Do you believe I lack the guts?"

Jack sneered defiantly, his teeth clenched in defiance, "Then prove it! Let's see if you dare!"

Gideon's teeth ground together for a moment before his visage transformed into one of pure malice. With venomous determination, he continued, "Let me enlighten you. My mission here today is to exterminate the Evans Family! And now, that mission is on the precipice of success!"

"After annihilating the Evans Family, should I stumble upon Maria, it would undoubtedly be the icing on the cake. But even if I fail to locate her, obliterating the entire Evans Family today will still be a monumental accomplishment! So don't delude yourself into thinking that revealing Maria's whereabouts will earn you any leniency. On the contrary, if you don't disclose her location within the next three seconds, I will be the first to send you to your grave!"

In that very moment, a young man's voice echoed from the doorway, cutting through the tension like a Swift breeze, "You're just an old dog, barking about annihilating the entire Evans Family, Old man, your mouth is far too big for your own good!"

Chapter 5389

No one could have fathomed that amidst the chaos of the Evans family bodyguards lying lifeless, their corpses scattered about, there would still exist audacious individuals who dared to stride through that very door!

Gideon, renowned for his boundless arrogance, was consumed with fury upon hearing the cutting remark. In an instant, he spun around, determined to lay eyes on the contemptuous wretch who dared to dismiss him as nothing more than an old mutt!

Jack and the Evans family instantly recognized the familiar voice, without a sliver of doubt.

Jack had long anticipated the arrival of Charlie, firmly convinced that he would make an appearance. Deep within, he mused, "Charlie, Charlie, you've finally deigned to reveal yourself! If you had arrived a mere few seconds later, your dear Jack Lee would have breathed his last..."

The Evans family, on the other hand, harbored mixed emotions upon recognizing Charlie's voice. For they knew that his arrival marked the coming of their savior!

In that critical moment, the Evans family clung to a single notion, echoing within their hearts, Survival against all odds!

They were well aware of the immense power possessed by their benefactor, and with his arrival, their salvation was imminent!

In addition to their desperation for survival, a new thought took root in the hearts of the Evans family. Would fortune favor them this time, granting them a glimpse of their benefactor's true countenance?

Thus, both the Evans family and Gideon directed their gaze toward the gate, their curiosity piqued, yearning to lay eyes upon the mysterious figure who had arrived.

In the stillness of that moment, the resounding echoes of Charlie's footsteps reverberated through the corridor. Each step he took held an extraordinary composure, neither too hasty nor too sluggish.

The Evans family held their breath in anticipation, while Gideon's heart suddenly tightened, sensing an unforeseen shift in the tides.

However, even though he hadn't yet laid eyes on the approaching figure, an inexplicable sense of tension weighed heavily upon his heart.

Following the rhythmic cadence of footsteps, a figure clothed in black emerged from the far end of the entrance. It was Charlie Wade himself.

Today, Charlie chose not to shroud himself in darkness or conceal his face. Instead, he presented himself in his true form before the astounded gazes of the Evans family and Gideon.

Gasps escaped the lips of onlookers, their eyes widening with sheer horror!

Gideon, his disbelief palpable, uttered in a trembling voice, "Bruce Wade?! You're still alive?!"

The old matriarch of the Evans family couldn't contain her astonishment and blurted out, "Bruce?! Is it truly Bruce?!"

Samuel Evans stood there in a daze, his mind seemingly short-circuited. Without thinking, he murmured, "Our benefactor is actually Bruce? This... how is this possible... he was already..."

No wonder the Evans family failed to recognize Charlie.

On one hand, Charlie bore a striking resemblance to his father, Bruce. For the Evans family, the image they held of Bruce was that of a man in his twenties or early thirties, frozen in their memories. The resemblance between Charlie and his deceased father, be it in stature, appearance, or age, was uncanny.

On the other hand, Charlie had vanished at the tender age of eight, and his appearance at that time only vaguely resembled his present self. They had no inkling of what Charlie would look like if he had lived into adulthood.

Hence, it was only natural for everyone to instinctively perceive him as Bruce, as if lost in a bewildering trance.

At that moment, Charlie stood before them, his posture resolute and his voice reverberating through the air. He proclaimed with unwavering conviction, "I am not Bruce Wade! I am his son, Charlie Wade!"

The words hung in the air, eliciting a collective gasp from the stunned onlookers. Charlie's declaration crashed upon their minds like a thunderstorm that had rocked the city of Aurous Hill merely two days ago.

The old matriarch, overcome with emotions, burst into tears instantaneously. Her gaze locked onto Charlie as she sobbed and cried out, "Charlie? Is it truly you? Are you really Charlie?!"

The old man, unable to contain his overwhelming emotions, found tears streaming down his face. His vision blurred as he looked upon Charlie, his voice trembling as he choked out, "Charlie... is it truly you?"

Even Charlie's three uncles and aunt, caught in a whirlwind of emotions, shed tears of disbelief. Never in their wildest dreams did they imagine that the Charlie they had been searching for over the past two decades would appear before them of his own accord.

And little did they anticipate that the very same Charlie they had been desperately seeking for twenty long years was the benevolent savior who had recently come to their aid, safeguarding the lives of the Evans family.

Witnessing tears cascade down the faces of the Evans family, Charlie's heart was filled with a profound mix of emotions. In his core, he recognized the Evans family as his kin, bound by blood that ran deeper than any other connection. It was this familial bond that compelled him to rescue the Evans family not just once, but thrice over.

However, deep within his heart, the Evans family harbored an irreconcilable grudge, just as the Wade family did.

Charlie held disdain for the Wade family, blaming them for driving his parents away from Eastcliff, which ultimately led to their tragic demise in Aurous Hill. During their forced departure, the Evans family never extended a helping hand.

Yet, Charlie found solace in the Wade family due to Lord Wade's remorseful introspection. When Wesley threatened to desecrate the mausoleum and honor of his parents, Lord Wade displayed unwavering resolve, prepared to defend their dignity even at the cost of his own life.

However, at this moment, Gideon forcefully pushed Jack aside, turning completely to face Charlie. A sinister grin tugged at his lips as he mockingly remarked, "So, he's the son of Bruce, no wonder the resemblance is uncanny. Twenty years ago, I allowed you to escape, but I never anticipated that you would return of your own accord after all these years!"

Charlie's eyes blazed with a fiery rage, and his voice turned cold as he inquired, "Did you kill my parents?!"

Gideon, wearing an air of arrogance, replied nonchalantly, "That's right! Twenty years ago, I was given orders to come to Aurous Hill and eliminate three members of the Wade family. However, that sly old fox, Bruce, foresaw the impending disaster and someone spirited you away, you little bastard!"

With a sneer, Gideon continued, "But fate works in mysterious ways. Today, I've been commanded not only to annihilate the Evans family but also to wait for your arrival so I can personally sever your head. I thought this plan might prove futile, yet here you stand, defying all odds! In that case, let us embark on the journey to the underworld together, joining your grandparents and the rest of your family along the way!"

Charlie's eyes blazed with an intense thirst for vengeance as he stared at Gideon. With a chilling tone, he uttered, "For the past twenty years, I have longed for the day to avenge my parents. And now, after waiting patiently for two decades, I have finally found you! Once you meet your demise, don't rush into the afterlife, for I will seek out your so-called master, shred him into pieces, and send him straight to the Underworld to join you!"

Gideon furrowed his brow, responding with a frigid voice, "Boy! You seem to possess an in-depth understanding of us. Do you really know our true selves?"

Charlie sneered, "You mean your Warriors Den? It seems like quite the grandiose scheme. Let me enlighten you further. I was the one who orchestrated the bombing of your deceased soldiers' camp in Cyprus." With a pause, he continued, "Oh, by the way, if my memory serves me right, you should be one of the Four Great Marshals. However, tonight, the Third Marshal will be demoted to the Second Marshal."

Gideon's countenance turned stern, and he retorted sharply, "Did you kill Jarvis?!"

Charlie smiled cunningly and replied, "As for whether he achieved greatness in death or not, I cannot say. I was occupied with other matters and had no time to personally travel to Cyprus. Instead, I had a few anti-aircraft guns installed, waiting patiently for him to fall into the trap."

His voice filled with amusement, Charlie added, "Let me assure you, his demise was truly gruesome. A mighty marshal, reduced to minced meat by the explosive force of the anti-aircraft guns. The weight of a hundred kilos, pulverized into powder by the shell's blast. Perhaps the largest piece wouldn't even suffice to wedge between your teeth."

Gideon's countenance darkened, and he spoke icily, "So, you've been our adversary all along! In that case, you must have been the one who rescued the Evans family in New York, am I correct?!"

Charlie met his gaze and then glanced at the tearful Evans family, responding calmly, "Indeed, it was me."

Recalling Jack's earlier words, Gideon inquired of Charlie, "Then it was you who saved Maria Clark in Northern Europe?" With a smile, Charlie replied, "Yes, I happened to come across Maria Clark. I imagine your so-called Lord must be quite furious, wouldn't you agree?"

Gritting his teeth, Gideon pressed further, "Boy, where is Maria Clark's ring?!"

Charlie's smile widened as he slowly removed the glove from his right hand, raising his middle finger in a deliberate manner, showcasing the ring that had been given to him by Maria Clark. It adorned his middle finger, a symbol of their bond.

At that moment, Charlie fixed his gaze upon Gideon, his tone filled with curiosity. "Old dog, is this what you were referring to?"

Chapter 5390

Initially, Gideon assumed that Charlie's raised middle finger was a deliberate provocation. However, when his eyes fell upon the ring, his pupils contracted in an instant.

Though he had never laid eyes on this ring before, he had heard the British Lord describe it in vivid detail. The Lord had spoken of a bronze-colored ring, radiating a delicate sheen, devoid of any ornate embellishments. Its width measured about two centimeters, equivalent to approximately 0.66 inches, a size fitting for an average adult male.

All these characteristics aligned perfectly with the ring adorning Charlie's hand.

Moreover, the mention of Maria Clark and her ring by Jack had been entirely voluntary. This led Gideon to conclude that the ring before him was indeed the coveted treasure the British Lord had fervently pursued.

According to the Lord of England, this ring concealed a profound mystery. Unraveling its secrets would not only enhance one's cultivation, but grant eternal life as well.

As for how to unlock this enigma, only the hero of the entire world might possess such knowledge, with even Maria Clark herself potentially unaware.

The British Lord had reiterated countless times that whoever obtained this ring would be hailed as the paramount hero of the Warriors Den. The Lord would generously impart his lifelong wisdom and teachings without reservation, bestowing upon them the opportunity to delve into the mysteries contained within the ring.

Hence, for Gideon, whether it meant eliminating Bruce's son or personally delivering Maria Clark to the Lord, none of these actions held as much significance as reclaiming the ring.

With this in mind, Gideon wasted no time in declaring, "Boy! Hand over the ring, and I can grant you and your ancestors a painless journey on the path of death. This is the greatest act of kindness I can bestow upon you!"

Charlie, however, retorted, "Old dog, if you truthfully reveal the exact details of the Warriors Den, I might consider sparing you. That, my friend, is the greatest kindness I can offer you!"

Gideon's face darkened, and he bellowed, "Boy, you're asking for death!"

In an instant, he summoned a wooden sword, skillfully manipulating it to unleash a swift strike aimed directly at Charlie.

Aware of Gideon's formidable strength, Charlie realized that engaging in a life-or-death battle within the villa would endanger everyone present. The aftermath of a single spell could reduce them all to ashes.

Swiftly stepping back to evade the invisible blade, Charlie addressed Gideon, "If you desire the ring, follow me outside to a secluded location. If you win, you can claim both my life and the ring as your own. However, should you lose, rest assured that your head will no longer remain intact!"

Observing that Charlie's agility made it nearly impossible to strike him with his sword, Gideon temporarily retracted his blade and scoffed, "Boy, do you think we're playing a game of cat and mouse? Let me make one thing clear, if you don't obediently hand over the ring, I will commence by killing your grandparents and their entire lineage!"

Charlie's brow furrowed slightly, caught off guard by Gideon's refusal to be deceived.

Scanning his surroundings, he spoke with an icy edge to his voice, "After my parents' tragic demise, do you know who accompanied me on this grief-stricken journey? Besides the person I despise the most, can you guess which two groups of people followed him?"

Perplexed, Gideon inquired, "Which two groups are you referring to?"

Charlie's tone turned somber as he replied, "One of them belongs to my paternal grandfather's family." Fixing his gaze upon his tearful grandfather, he continued, his voice dripping with coldness, "The other belongs to my maternal grandfather's family. Yes, my grandparents' families!"

Upon hearing this, Mr. Evan's expression grew desolate, his face marred by shame and regret.

At that moment, Gideon disdainfully remarked, "Boy, don't play games with me here. They are your close relatives. How could you harbor hatred towards them?"

Charlie retorted with a frigid tone, "Close relatives, you say? Do you know where I've spent the past twenty years since losing my parents?"

Gideon furrowed his brow and queried, "Where have you been, then?"

At this pivotal moment, the Evans family fixed their gaze upon Charlie, eager to uncover the truth of his past twenty years. What had transpired? Where had he been?

Charlie pointed resolutely at the ground and exclaimed, "For the past twenty years, I have been here, in Aurous Hill! This city has been my home for two decades!"

"How is that even possible?!" Gideon furrowed his brow and questioned, "After your parents' demise, not only were they searching for you, but we were as well. We scoured every corner of Aurous Hill, yet we found no trace of your existence!"

Charlie replied with a knowing smile, "You couldn't find me because my father had already made arrangements for me. After the incident, I was placed in an orphanage, completely isolated from the outside world."

The Evans family, too, was filled with astonishment upon hearing this revelation. Although they had entertained suspicions regarding the orphanage just moments ago, they found it difficult to fathom that Charlie had resided in Aurous Hill all this time without venturing beyond its borders.

Gideon stood there momentarily stunned, unable to contain his sigh. "Bruce Wade, you truly possess the cunning and wisdom of a dragon and a phoenix among men. Even the British Lord never anticipated this turn of events..." He sneered and added, "But let me make it clear to you, no matter what the significance of it may be, I want that ring on your hand. Surrender the ring, and I can grant you a fleeting moment of happiness!"

Charlie paid him no mind, responding with a gentle smile, "Under the protection of kind-hearted people, I have lived a content life in Aurous Hill for twenty years. No matter how arduous or wearisome it became, I never sought solace from either the Wade family or the Evans family. Do you know why?"

Curiosity etched across his face, Gideon asked, "Why?"

Charlie replied with an air of indifference, "It's because I harbor an unyielding hatred toward them! Even now, I cannot forgive them for betraying and abandoning my parents."

Gideon inquired, "If you hate them so much, why do you continue to save them again and again?"

Charlie wore a smile as he spoke, "Saving them was merely a coincidence. That day in New York, you must be aware that it was Stefanie's concert. The entire Evans family attended the event, providing you with the perfect opportunity."

Gideon narrowed his eyes, studying Charlie intently. Though he hadn't been directly involved in the incident, he was well-informed about the details.

It was the informant planted by the Warriors Den within the Evans family who suddenly leaked the news of their collective action. Seizing the moment, the British Lord dispatched his assassins to the concert venue, intent on eliminating them. Yet, no news surfaced regarding the dispatched assassins.

Charlie continued, "Stefanie hails from Eastcliff. Her father, Orrin, was a sworn brother to my father. Hence, a betrothal was arranged between Stefanie and me during our youth. Technically speaking, she is the fiancée my parents had arranged for me before their tragic demise."

"The reason I appeared at the concert that day was to show support for Stefanie. Coincidentally, I happened to be seated next to the Evans family. I didn't disclose my true intention of saving them, but instead posed as one seeking to capture the assassins. After all, if it hadn't been for those assassins, how would I have acquired specific information about the Warriors Den?"

Charlie added, "As for today, to be frank, my primary purpose for coming here is not to save lives, but to end yours."

Gideon's eyes turned icy. "You think you can kill me?"

With a smile playing on his lips, Charlie replied, "Not only will I kill you, but I will also eliminate the remaining two marshals of the Warriors Den. And then, I will reduce that despicable British Lord to nothing but shattered remains! You, my friend, are merely a stepping stone on my path to revenge!"

Gideon sneered maliciously, "If that's the case, I'll wait until after I've dealt with your grandparents' family, and then we can resume our competition."

Charlie sneered back and retorted, "If you dare to come, come now. If you hesitate, I'll be on my way."

With a mischievous smile, Charlie added, "Oh, by the way, I've made a mental note of your appearance today. If you ever wish to find me again, I'm afraid it won't be as simple as you might think! Or perhaps, in the future, I'll be the one to find you! The choice is yours!"

Having said that, Charlie swiftly turned around, soaring away at a tremendous speed without a single glance back. He wasn't relying on whether Gideon would blindly give chase, but rather, he possessed absolute certainty that Gideon would immediately pursue him without a moment's hesitation!

His confidence stemmed from the fact that during their previous encounter, Charlie deliberately showcased his lightning-fast agility while evading Gideon's sword. He believed that Gideon understood that catching up with him would prove to be no easy feat.

If Gideon wasted not even half a second and mustered all his strength, there might still be a 50% chance of catching up. However, even a mere distraction of a single second would render it utterly impossible to close the gap.

Furthermore, Charlie wasn't an easy target to eliminate, for he had many lives to take. Even if the Evans family posed no threat, activating the magical weapon to unleash lightning would

require time. It would take at least ten seconds to activate enough lightning and claim a single life. Thus, Charlie knew he had to choose his targets wisely.

As expected, the outcome unfolded exactly as Charlie had anticipated!

Without a moment's hesitation, Gideon dashed forward, his pursuit unyielding and resolute.

To him, the lives of the Evans family paled in comparison to the allure of that ring. It mattered little what fate awaited the Evans family; he believed they were backed into a corner. With Charlie hunted down, and the ring secured, their escape would be futile.

Furthermore, with no one left to shield them, the Evans family would be at his mercy. Once Charlie met his demise, he could eliminate him once more and eradicate every member of the Evans family.

By doing so, he would not only obtain the coveted ring but also fulfill all three tasks bestowed upon him by the Lord in one fell swoop.

Yet, the thought of letting Charlie slip away presented an unbearable loss. It would not only expose his own identity but also squander an exceptional opportunity to obtain the ring.

There was no need for him to ponder whether to give chase or strategize on diverting the tiger from the mountain. He knew that pursuing Charlie with unwavering determination was his sole choice.

Chapter 5391

This very moment.

Zeba, concealed in the shadows, peered across the mountain at Willow Estates. Suddenly, her eyes widened as she witnessed a dark figure galloping out of the villa, followed closely by Gideon, the formidable leader of the four marshals.

To her astonishment, the mysterious figure was heading straight toward her, with Gideon in hot pursuit, wielding a wooden sword in one hand and his Taoist robe flowing behind him.

Even from a distance, Zeba could hear the resounding bellow of Gideon, "Boy, surrender that ring and reveal Maria Clark's whereabouts! If I'm feeling generous, I may spare you. Otherwise, prepare to face the consequences! Your head shall meet the ground!"

Without looking back, Charlie retorted with disdain, "You old dog, cease your barking! You know not if you can survive your advanced years, yet you dare spout nonsense here! If you desire the ring, catch me if you can!"

Zeba was momentarily stupefied. "Ring? Maria Clark? Could it be that Gideon has discovered Maria Clark's ring? Or does the man in black possess it?"

Just as Zeba's mind raced with questions, a multitude of people suddenly emerged from the villa, giving chase to the fleeing figures.

By the time they reached the scene, the black-clad individual and Gideon had already raced several hundred meters ahead, leaving the pursuers uncertain of their next move.

Gazing at the approaching group, Zeba's surprise deepened. "Is the Evans family still alive? Gideon entered the villa at least a minute before the arrival of the man in black. Why did he not attack the Evans family during that time? With his strength, it would take no more than half a minute to exterminate them..."

In this precise moment, anxiety consumed the members of the Evans family who had pursued them relentlessly. They were not fools, they understood that Charlie's seemingly callous words earlier had been a deliberate ploy to draw the murderous old man away and ensure their safety.

The Lady, her tears still fresh on her sleeves, was in a state of desperation. She clutched onto the hand of the elderly Samuel Evans, her voice trembling as she cried, "Samuel, what if something befalls Charlie?... How could I ever face Lily and Bruce in the days to come?" Samuel Evans, too, was overwhelmed with sorrow, his tears flowing uncontrollably. He spoke with deep remorse, "It is all my fault... it's all my fault... If only I had set aside my pride in the past, Bruce might not have become so estranged from the Evans family. If only I had swallowed my pride and sought out Lily back then. If they had never left the Wade house in Aurous Hill..."

He continued, his voice heavy with regret, "Charlie has kept his distance from us for all these years, understandably unable to forgive our past mistakes... Yet, despite everything, Charlie repeatedly steps forward to save us. As a grandfather, I am filled with shame, deep regret."

Jack's expression turned resolute as he spoke with conviction, "Uncle Evans, Mr. Wade possesses extraordinary abilities. I firmly believe that nothing will befall him! Our immediate priority is to move all of you to a place of safety!"

The old man's face contorted in shock as he exclaimed, "What did you say? Mr. Wade? Jack, you rascals have known each other for quite some time, haven't you? But you never saw fit to inform me!"

Jack, filled with shame, responded, "Uncle Evans, it's a complicated tale. I promise to explain everything to you later, in great detail."

Just as he finished speaking, a deafening whistle pierced through the air once again. Everyone looked up and beheld another helicopter hurtling towards them from the opposite side of the mountain!

This new helicopter was visibly larger than the previous one, descending swiftly and landing with remarkable speed in the open space before the villa. Even before the aircraft came to a complete halt, a middle-aged man flung open the cabin door from within and dashed out, waving desperately.

That middle-aged man was none other than Don Albert.

Ever since Charlie had confided in Jack about his revelations concerning Maria Clark, Don Albert had been meticulously formulating his plan for this very night. He had instructed Isaac Cameron to monitor the public surveillance cameras at Willow Estates, while he himself piloted the helicopter to maintain real-time surveillance over the villa's activities.

With a mere two or three minute's flight time from Elys-Champ Hot Springs to Willow Estates, Don Albert knew he had a narrow window of opportunity. During those precious minutes, the Evans family's bodyguards and nurses could help create some delays, while the rest of the task fell to Jack and the 'life-saving sentence' Charlie had entrusted to him.

He firmly believed that the utterance of that life-saving sentence by Jack would buy them enough time. And in such a scenario, he was certain he would arrive in the nick of time!

Charlie was acutely aware that even if he reached the villa, engaging in a deadly fight was out of the question. Any action he took within those walls would undoubtedly result in the deaths of the Evans family and Jack. Thus, he had to utilize the power of the ring to divert the enemy's attention, providing the Evans and Jack with an opportunity to escape.

Meanwhile, Don Albert's mission was clear, take off and race to Willow Estates to collect the Evans family precisely three minutes after Charlie's departure, without waiting for any news or confirmation.

Now, it seemed that every aspect of the unfolding situation was aligning with Charlie's expectations.

Under the thunderous roar of the helicopter's colossal propellers, the Evans family couldn't discern Don Albert's words, but they understood his urgent gestures, urging them to board the aircraft swiftly.

Just as the Evans family hesitated, Jack, without a second thought, shouted loudly into everyone's ears, "This is all orchestrated by Mr. Wade. Let's go!"

With that, he grasped Desmond and Marcus and Tece ushering the elderly Evans couple onto the helicopter.

In less than a minute, everyone was aboard and the helicopter swiftly ascended, vanishing into the night with a graceful swoop.

In the distance, Gideon heard the distant yet nearing and then receding thunderous roar. He could surmise what had transpired behind him, but he paid it no heed. Ever since he resolved to pursue Charlie, the fate of the Evans family held no significance to him.

To Gideon, their escape was inconsequential. His focus remained fixed solely on the ring adorning Charlie's hand. As long as he acquired it, the well-being of the Evans family and the Wade family held no weight in his eyes. He was the second-in-command of the Warriors Den and that was all that mattered to him!

However, little did he anticipate that Charlie possessed such astounding speed! Despite his utmost efforts to catch up, the distance between them only seemed to widen, leaving Gideon frustrated and cursing behind Charlie, "Boy, if you dare to flee again, I won't hold back!"

With a mischievous smile, Charlie retorted, "Come on, let's see what else you've got, old dog, besides barking and growling!"

Gideon's voice turned icy as he declared, "Boy, you will meet your end today!"

Meanwhile, deep inside, Zeba sighed to herself, realizing that Gideon had fallen into the black-clad man's trap of diverting the tiger from the mountain. It seemed that the man in black not only intended to save the Evans family but also sought to shorten Gideon's life. The thought left her anxious, prompting her to pull out her mobile phone, only to be met with the distressing sight of the words 'No Service' displayed on the screen.

...

Time rewound five minutes earlier.

Before Charlie arrived at Willow Estates, Zeba stood on the mountainside and observed Gideon's entry into the villa without encountering any resistance. In that moment, she believed Gideon would effortlessly eliminate the Evans family, securing a remarkable achievement for the night. Her plan was simple, observe from the shadows and provide an accurate report to the British Lord later.

However, she never fathomed that just as Gideon entered the villa, a thunderous helicopter soared from the other side of the mountain, hurtling at an astonishing speed towards the heart of Willow Estates.

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Just as she was on the verge of deciphering who would arrive at Willow Estates by helicopter, a dark figure leaped directly from the roaring aircraft.

What astonished Zeba was that the helicopter was still in a rapid dive, descending at great speed, with a considerable distance of tens of meters remaining from the ground. Yet, to her disbelief, the individual who jumped managed to stabilize their body and land firmly on the ground without any hint of faltering!

In the blink of an eye, the helicopter exerted all its power to ascend, while the black figure wasted no time, darting into the villa without even a moment's pause!

Observing the fluidity of their jumping action and the unruffled composure upon landing, Zeba swiftly concluded that this person must be a Master well-versed in the ways of aura! Her heart skipped a beat and her initial thought was that Aurous Hill still harbored a formidable adversary, prompting an urgent need to warn Gideon.

Yet, a conflicting realization soon gripped her. She had been tasked by Lord British to secretly monitor Gideon. If she were to sound the alarm now, it would amount to betraying her allegiance to the Lord.

At that moment, she instinctively reached for her mobile phone, intending to report immediately to the British Lord.

However, as she retrieved her phone, she was met with the stark reality of being stranded on an empty mountainside with no signal at all!

Unbeknownst to her, the helicopter, which had ascended to an altitude of one or two kilometers and hovered directly above Willow Estates, had activated its high-power jamming device, cunningly prepared in advance.

As it continued to wreak havoc from its elevated position, the interference extended far beyond Willow Estates. Within a three to five-kilometer radius, the mobile phone signals were subjected to intense disruption, rendering any network connection impossible.

Simultaneously, under Don Albert's meticulous arrangement, his trusted comrade had already severed the communication cables at the foot of the mountain, effectively cutting off the wired telephones and networks throughout Willow Estates.

This precautionary measure was part of Charlie's special arrangement. Unaware of any one-way connection between the Warriors Den's marshal and their Lord, transmitting audio and video posed a potential threat.

However, Charlie never anticipated that this very arrangement would thrust Zeba, hiding in the shadows, into an unwanted predicament. She couldn't take the initiative to report to Gideon, nor could she communicate with the British Lord or seek guidance regarding the Lord's decision. Thus, she suppressed her mounting nervousness and resolved to continue observing discreetly.

In the midst of her dilemma, thousands of miles away, the distant Lord himself scrutinized the transmitted positioning information with unwavering focus.

Displayed on screen was a high-definition satellite map of Willow Estates. Updated just last month, the satellite imagery, acquired during daylight, boasted astonishing clarity. Every tile on the top floor of the villa could be discerned with remarkable precision.

With the aid of this high-definition satellite map, combined with the precise satellite positioning of Gideon and Zeba, two striking coordinate points, a red one and a yellow one were distinctly marked on the map before the Lord's eyes.

Among them, the yellow coordinate point remained stationary on the western mountain side of Willow Estates, while the red coordinate point steadily approached from the outskirts of the villa, under the watchful gaze of the Lord, until it reached the very residence of the Evans family.

These two coordinate points represented the real-time positions of Gideon and Zeba.

Flashing twice per second, each pulse indicated the update of their latest coordinates.

In other words, the monitoring terminal of the Lord received twice-per-second updates of their precise locations.

Moreover, their positioning system employed the most advanced high-precision mapping technology available, boasting centimeter-level accuracy with a margin of error not exceeding ten centimeters.

When the British Lord witnessed the red marker of Gideon pass through the villa's gates, he knew that Gideon had entered.

At that moment, the British Lord held firm belief that within a few minutes, the Evans family would succumb to Gideon as innocent victims.

However, as the Lord eagerly awaited Gideon's triumphant report, the two blinking coordinate points abruptly vanished!

This sudden turn of events startled the British Lord, a profound unease settling in his heart.

The extinguishing of the coordinate points signified a disruption in the transmission of information between him and the other party.

Nevertheless, both of their mobile phones had been specially modified, boasting stability comparable to military-grade equipment.

As long as their phones maintained power, they could simultaneously transmit signals through both the communication network and the satellite network, guaranteeing real-time transmission even if there was no satellite signal indoors or no communication network in the wilderness.

It can be said that as long as one does not venture into a mountain tunnel or an underground bunker devoid of any mobile phone signal, the transmission between the phone and the base remains uninterrupted.

However, the current situation unfolded differently. The moment Gideon entered the villa's gates, the signal abruptly vanished.

Naturally, it could be a simple case of losing the satellite signal upon entering a room, coupled with a temporary loss of mobile phone signal.

Yet, Zeba had remained outdoors the entire time, without budging an inch!

Her signal also ceased simultaneously, which seemed rather suspicious.

Unease settled within Zeba's mind, suspecting that the helicopter soaring above might have tampered with the signal. Unfortunately, she felt utterly powerless against an aircraft soaring at a height of one thousand meters.

She contemplated the idea of swiftly departing from the area, escaping the interference range of the helicopter, and reporting to the British Lord. However, the notion that Gideon might have fallen into a trap made her hesitant. If she were to flee now, the British Lord might perceive it as an act of desertion, an explanation she found difficult to provide.

Hence, she had lingered until this moment.

As she watched Gideon relentlessly pursuing the black-clad man, steadily drawing nearer to her, she couldn't help but ponder, "I cannot contact the Lord at the present moment and I am unaware of the black-clad man's strength. Rushing to aid Gideon seems ill-advised. It appears that my only option is to clandestinely shadow them in the darkness and wait to see how events unfold!"

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In this very moment, Charlie thundered ahead, pushing Gideon to keep up with him towards the looming mountains.

Their speed was extraordinary, even on hills adorned with thick foliage and rolling terrain. They traversed the uneven ground with the same ease as walking on level plains.

Gideon strained every sinew, clenching his teeth and trying to follow Charlie tightly. He had to keep his eyes wide open, fully focused on evading the trees and rocks beneath his feet as they dashed ahead. They covered one or two kilometers, and with each passing moment, Gideon grew increasingly frantic.

Yet, no matter how hard he pushed himself, Charlie maintained a steady and secure distance. It left Gideon dispirited, for he could only chase after Charlie without a chance to strike back.

The wooden sword bestowed by the British Lord, or even the lightning-strike wood he purchased from Zachary, both required a calm mind and the activation of arcane formations. Should Gideon lose concentration, all his previous efforts would be in vain.

Hence, fighting while on the move was feasible, and though fighting while running proved more arduous, it was not impossible.

But if one were to imagine their present situation—bounding through the mountains like agile monkeys, exerting every ounce of strength, all the while focusing on unleashing enchanted artifacts and casting spells—it would be as daunting as scaling the heavens for Gideon.

As Charlie dashed towards the mountains, Gideon realized that Charlie intended to lead him to an isolated location for a final, life-or-death confrontation. Despite knowing this, Gideon had no other choice but to pursue him until the bitter end.

Charlie guided Gideon directly to a secluded valley, situated three or four kilometers away. It was the designated battleground for their ultimate clash. Far removed from urban areas and devoid of inhabitants, it offered no concerns about drawing unwanted attention.

When Charlie reached the valley's heart, he abruptly halted, pivoted around, and locked his gaze onto the approaching figure of Gideon. With an icy tone, he uttered, "Impressive stamina, you old cur."

Gideon stood firm, maintaining a distance of approximately twenty meters from Charlie. He examined Charlie's face, illuminated by the patchy moonlight, and grinned mischievously. "I never expected Bruce's son to thrive in just twenty years. You've mastered the aura! It appears the speculations of the Lord were accurate—your departed parents truly unraveled the secret of longevity!"

Charlie furrowed his brows slightly and inquired, "Do you believe my parents also comprehended the concept of aura?"

Gideon hesitated for a moment, then burst into laughter before speaking, "Seems like your parents departed prematurely, leaving many things untold. They ventured into the Longevity Land and absconded with the secret of eternal life. Thinking they could keep it hidden from the world, but alas, the Lord discovered their secret. Fortunately, I ended their lives early; otherwise, given a few more decades, even the Lord himself might not have been a match for Bruce."

Charlie was dumbfounded. He never fathomed that his parents were connected to reiki.

At that moment, a smirk crept upon Gideon's lips as he declared, "Today truly brings double joy. Since you've mastered reiki, you must have obtained the secret of longevity left behind by your parents. If you wish to avoid a painful demise, surrender Maria Clark's ring and the secret of eternal life!"

Charlie locked his gaze onto Gideon, his eyes piercing like swords. He posed the question, "Old cur, what is this secret of eternal life?"

"Playing dumb, are you? Do you think I'll be fooled by your act?"

Charlie's eyebrows furrowed sharply, his eyes ablaze. He enunciated each word with conviction, "Today, you will meet your demise by my hands! Why should I feign ignorance with someone who is destined to die? Let me tell you, my methods of ending lives are no more merciful than yours! If you divulge everything you know today, perhaps I can grant you a swift end!"

Gideon suddenly recollected the words Charlie had inadvertently let slip earlier, his expression now perplexed. He inquired, "Since you were unaware of your parents' proficiency in reiki, where did your own reiki come from?! Who initiated you?"

"I found my own path!" Charlie retorted defiantly.

Gideon sneered, a look of disdain on his face. "What a joke! I've lived for over a century, and I've never heard of anyone achieving enlightenment on their own."

Charlie's voice carried a lightness as he replied, "Well, you'll witness it today!"

Gritting his teeth, Gideon retorted coldly, "Boy, I'll show you the consequences of disrespecting me!"

Infusing his sword with reiki, Gideon swung it towards Charlie's empty space. He issued a chilling remark, "Don't know how to flee? I'll sever your legs first!" In an instant, an unseen blade shot forth from the wooden sword.

Charlie keenly sensed the immense power contained within that blade—a force akin to a helicopter propeller hurtling through the air at high speed!

Aware of his own limitations and lack of combat experience, Charlie dared not be complacent. Observing the whirling blade carving a path, slicing countless branches and leaves, he seized the opportune moment and bellowed, "Do you think you're the only one who can cut?!"

With those words, a blade of soul-piercing energy shot out swiftly, resembling an invisible giant crossbow. It streaked towards the spinning sword at astonishing speed!

In the blink of an eye, the opposing forces collided, triggering an explosive burst in the air. Within a radius of tens of meters, the trees stood lush and verdant one moment, only to witness a downpour of cascading green leaves the next—a deluge akin to a torrential rain!

The tremendous impact sent Charlie and Gideon staggering backward several steps, struggling to regain their footing.

Gideon's expression morphed into sheer horror.

Even Zeba, who had been covertly observing from a distance, was too astonished to utter a word.

Gideon gawked dumbfoundedly at Charlie, blurting out, "You...you possess a magical weapon?!"

Charlie sneered, spreading his palms to reveal the soul-piercing blade, and disdainfully retorted, "What? Did you think you were the sole worthy owner of a magical weapon?!"

Gideon felt a profound sense of dejection in that moment.

As the saying goes, it is unwise to compare oneself to others, for it leads to one's demise. It is better to compare one's belongings, as they can simply be discarded.

Prior to arriving in Aurous Hill, Gideon had possessed only one magical weapon—a loan from the British Lord for his mission.

Yet, the young man standing before him, not yet in his thirties, had not only mastered reiki in the past two decades but also possessed a magical weapon that rivaled the wooden sword in Gideon's grasp. This realization left him seething with discontent.

Gritting his teeth, he uttered, "Boy, not even your short-lived old man possessed such a potent magical weapon! Where did you acquire it?!"

Charlie's voice turned icy as he retorted, "If I told you I crafted it myself, would you believe me?"

Gideon felt his intelligence being insulted, causing him to clench his teeth and retort, "Even the Lord couldn't do that, let alone a mere petty child like you! Since you refuse to speak the truth, don't blame me for my lack of manners!"

With that, Gideon flicked his wrist, and the two swords darted forth towards Charlie once again. This time, the twin blades curved in an arc, resembling boomerangs as they closed in from both sides, mounting a joint assault on Charlie.

Not waiting for the swords to draw near, Charlie swiftly unleashed the soul-piercing blade. With remarkable speed, he launched three consecutive strikes—left, right, and straight ahead—as he galloped away.

Gideon had anticipated that even if the two swords failed to kill Charlie, they would severely injure him. However, he never expected Charlie's swift counterattacks, meeting his two swords head-on.

Two thunderous clashes resounded, shaking the ground and causing countless fallen leaves to swirl and dance in the sky.

Chapter 5394

In that crucial moment, Gideon sensed an extraordinarily swift and powerful force hurtling straight towards him, realizing that Charlie hadn't unleashed just two strikes, but three!

And this third strike was aimed directly at him!

Panicked, Gideon hastily retreated while channeling aura to his arms, bracing himself to withstand the impending impact. He had assumed that his own strength would suffice to withstand an opponent's attack. However, as he positioned his arms to meet the soul-piercing blade, he realized he had gravely underestimated both Charlie's strength and the might of his magical weapon.

With a resounding bang, the tremendous force crashed into his arms. The sensation resembled being struck by a heavily loaded train hurtling at lightning speed!

The aura amassed on Gideon's arms was almost instantly crushed under this overwhelming force. His arms throbbed with searing pain, as if they were on the verge of breaking. But the ordeal was far from over. The sheer impact sent Gideon stumbling back tens of meters, struggling to regain his balance.

Just as Gideon managed to steady himself, he spewed a mouthful of blood in the very next second. His arms had lost nearly all sensation, and his chest felt as though it had been shattered, inflicted with numerous internal injuries.

Yet, little did Gideon realize that while he barely managed to maintain his stance, Charlie, with astonishing speed, swiftly closed in on him!

Gideon was taken aback, preparing to muster all his strength to resist, but before he could react, he felt Charlie swiftly flick his arm towards him. In a sudden turn of events, a resounding slap landed on his face!

In truth, as Charlie charged towards him, he could have directly targeted Gideon's face with the soul-piercing blade. If he couldn't defend against it, his life might have been severed. Even if he managed to ward it off, he could have suffered severe injuries.

However, Charlie chose to forgo this prime opportunity to harm Gideon.

He did not desire Gideon's life just yet—for one, he still needed to extract vital information from him, and secondly, he did not wish for Gideon to meet such an easy demise.

Unexpectedly, Gideon, in that moment, could never have anticipated that as Charlie closed in on him, he would abruptly change his tactics. Instead of resorting to spells or magical tools, Charlie delivered a resounding slap to his face!

What made it even more impactful was that Charlie employed every ounce of his strength in that slap. It possessed an overwhelming aura, propelling Gideon to be suspended in the air, being slapped thrice before crashing heavily onto the ground!

Gideon emitted a pained cry, forcing himself to shield his face as he struggled to rise. Fury consumed him, an emotion he had rarely experienced in the past century. Being slapped in the face by someone else proved more discomforting to him than if he were to be killed! Gritting his teeth, he pointed at Charlie, coughing up blood, and inquired, "You...cough cough...you're merely in your twenties, how...how could you possess such strength?!"

Gripping the Thunderbolt Wood tightly, Gideon channeled an intense surge of reiki into it, aiming to deliver a fatal blow to Charlie.

In terms of sheer power, the Thunder Strike Wood's ability to summon sky thunder far surpassed the wooden sword bestowed upon him by the hero.

Despite Gideon's repeated attempts to attack Charlie with the wooden sword, he believed that the opponent could likely sense the impending strike. This rendered the attack ineffective in delivering a sudden, devastating blow.

However, the thunder summoned by the Thunderbolt Wood was different. When the thunder struck, it would descend without granting the other party a moment to react. If he managed to strike Charlie with a bolt of thunder, even if it didn't kill him, it would leave him with only half his life remaining.

Charlie had long observed Gideon's subtle tactics. Yet, at this moment, he purposely feigned ignorance and replied sarcastically, "To be honest, despite being twenty-eight years old, I've only had less than two years to practice reiki."

Taken aback, Gideon blurted out, "What?! Less than two years?!"

Charlie smiled and retorted, "That's correct. How many years have you been practicing, I wonder?"

Gritting his teeth, Gideon responded, "I've been practicing martial arts for over a hundred years, young man! You must be harboring a great secret within you. Hand it over obediently, and I may spare you. Otherwise..."

Charlie interrupted, "Otherwise, what? You'll strike me down with lightning?"

Gideon sneered, believing that the formation within the Thunder Strike Wood had been fully activated. He raised his head and bellowed, "Boy! Your guess was right! Lightning— Strike!!!"

Chapter 5395

Gideon bellowed with magnificent force, his voice echoing through the air.

In Gideon's mind, a vivid scene unfolded as he anticipated the arrival of thunder. He imagined the sky darkening with ominous clouds and thunder booming across the heavens. And then, a thunderbolt as thick as a bucket would plummet from above, striking Charlie square on the head!

Gideon firmly believed that even if the thunderbolt didn't outright kill Charlie, it would render him helpless. And in that moment, Gideon would have countless ways to torment him and extract every secret from his lips.

But to his astonishment, after Gideon cried out for thunder, the sky remained clear, devoid of dark clouds. There was no lightning or thunder, unlike before.

The night in Aurous Hill was exceptionally clear, with no light pollution to obstruct the breathtaking view. When one looked up, they would see a crescent moon and a sky adorned with countless twinkling stars.

Perplexed by the absence of thunder and lightning, Gideon gazed at the thunder stick in his hand and muttered, "What's happening? Where is my thunder?"

Even the array he had invoked had ceased to function. The energy he had infused into it dissipated back into his body through the lightning strike wood.

Regrettably, the "Apocalyptic Book" contained no record of formations that consumed spiritual energy out of thin air. If only such knowledge existed, Gideon could attempt it twice, exhausting the reiki within him.

Puzzled by the sudden turn of events, Gideon didn't suspect any foul play regarding the lightning strike wood. Instead, he assumed he had failed to activate the formation correctly.

Inquisitively, Charlie chimed in, "Hey, old dog, where's your thunder? Did your lightning wood run out of charge? Forgot to plug it in before leaving?"

Gideon understood that Charlie was mocking him and retorted coldly, "Boy, you still dare to speak so boldly when you're about to meet your demise! It seems you don't comprehend the concept of death!" He pointed at Charlie and declared loudly, "Watch me do it again, boy!"

As the words left Gideon's lips, the formation completed once more, yet the sky remained devoid of dark clouds.

And then, the thunder stick returned Gideon's aura.

It felt akin to a child's frustration when their video game console abruptly shuts down at a crucial moment. Hastily inserting more coins to continue playing, only to have the machine spit them out from the coin slot.

Gideon panicked, his eyes fixed on the dark lightning strike wood in his grasp as he murmured in disbelief, "What...what's happening? It worked last time! Why isn't it working now?"

Observing Gideon's bewildered expression, Charlie couldn't help but burst into laughter. "Old dog, it seems your Thunderbolt isn't all that useful, is it?"

Gideon furrowed his brow and questioned, "What Thunderbolt?"

Chuckling, Charlie replied, "That's the magical artifact in your hand! It's called the Shocking Thunder Token."

"You know about this artifact?!" Gideon widened his eyes in shock.

Charlie nodded, his face serious. "Not only do I know about it, but I happen to possess one as well."

Gideon gritted his teeth and scoffed, "Nonsense! The chance of encountering someone who has seen this artifact is slim to none."

Charlie smirked and said, "Call it luck or fate, but I happen to be that person, and let me tell you something, mine is far superior to yours."

Disbelieving, Gideon blurted out, "You've got to be joking! This artifact—I find it hard to believe you possess one as well."

Amused, Charlie continued, "If you refuse to believe me, I can show you a demonstration."

Without waiting for Gideon's response, Charlie's expression turned serious, and he shouted, "Lei Lai!"

In an instant, an immense black cloud rose rapidly in the sky, accompanied by flashes of lightning and rolls of thunder—a truly awe-inspiring sight.

Gideon was intimately familiar with this scene. Although the dark cloud wasn't as dense and menacing as when he had used the Lightning Strike Wood, the sensation it evoked was identical!

Charlie had summoned the heavenly thunder, and Gideon was struck with disbelief. Could it be true that his thunderbolt was rendered useless in Charlie's presence?

Realizing this, Gideon hastily retreated, hoping to evade the impending thunder.

However, Charlie had complete control over the heavenly thunder with his mind. Evading it would prove futile.

Charlie fixed his gaze on Gideon's figure, and in an instant, a thunderbolt crashed down, directly hitting the top of Gideon's head!

Charlie had altered the Thunderbolt to be a one-time use, requiring a significant amount of spiritual energy to activate. It possessed immense power, resembling a colossal thunderbolt. In contrast, Charlie's own Thunderbolt was designed to be efficient and adaptable—able to expand or shrink as desired.

Charlie didn't wish to kill Gideon so quickly. Thus, he skillfully controlled the release of spiritual energy, ensuring that the thunderbolt wouldn't inflict severe harm. Nonetheless, Gideon's hair was disheveled, his face blackened, and his Taoist robes tattered. His body convulsed uncontrollably, racked with pain and numbness.

Observing Gideon's pitiful state, Charlie taunted with a grin, "What's the matter? Did I deceive you?"

Meanwhile, Zeba, concealed in the darkness some distance away, paled with terror. Sleep had abandoned her, and she never anticipated that the man in black could wield control over heavenly thunder. More surprising still was witnessing the seemingly invincible Gideon succumb so easily. She couldn't help but ponder what her next move should be.

If she rushed to Gideon's aid, she knew she would be no match for the man in black. Moreover, Gideon had always held the other three marshals in disdain, and she had no personal connection with him. There was no need to recklessly offer help at this juncture.

However, she pondered the consequences of not intervening when British Lord questioned her later. How would she explain her inaction?

After careful consideration, she chose to remain hidden and observe silently for the time being. She possessed the skill of concealing her presence, a technique taught by her hero, so she was confident in evading detection.

If, unfortunately, Gideon perished at the hands of the man in black tonight, she would report the truth to British Lord. Even if British Lord scolded her, it would not be a capital offense. It was a far better outcome than rushing in to meet her demise without a plan!

Chapter 5396

If fate granted Gideon a slim chance of escape, he would exploit the signal disruption as a pretext to search for the signal on his own. Even if the British Lord reprimanded him, the worst that could happen was a punishment for leaving his post without permission, which was relatively harmless!

Yet, as the lightning struck him like a thunderbolt, Gideon couldn't help but be jolted by shock and fear. He had done everything in his power to conceal himself, but in the end, the lightning found him.

This clearly showed the astonishing precision of Charlie's control over Tianlei!

In addition, it was clear to Gideon that his sole long-distance spell involved using the wooden sword's blade, while Charlie possessed a spell that not only conjured an unseen blade resembling that of the wooden sword but also produced a blade that descended straight from the skies.

His Tianlei rendered Gideon's wooden sword useless, and his own Tianlei had nowhere to hide. If this continued, he would undoubtedly be consumed by Charlie. The only option was to engage him in close combat!

With this realization, Gideon clenched his teeth and bellowed in a cold voice, "Boy! Today, either you perish or I do!"

Having spoken his piece, he infused his legs with reiki and swiftly employed the transformative shadow technique taught to him by British Lord. With a peculiar burst of speed, he propelled himself toward Charlie like a spatial leap!

The greatest advantage of this technique lay in its unpredictable trajectory, making it difficult for the opponent to discern a pattern. Not only did it make it challenging for the adversary to harm him, but it also afforded an opportunity to close the distance between them.

Despite being at a disadvantage in terms of magical weaponry, Gideon firmly believed that with a physical body honed over centuries and decades of refined reiki, once he closed in on Charlie, that brat would be utterly incapable of opposing him!

However, just as he launched his attack on Charlie with blistering speed, the young boy suddenly yelled, "Thunder strikes again!"

Then, with a thunderous boom, Gideon, who had just leaped a foot away, was struck by yet another blast of thunder!

The enormous power changed Gideon's messy white hair into a puff of dust, while his ragged Taoist garments vanished, leaving him wearing only a ripped pair of red boxers.

Charlie gazed upon him, a sneer of contempt curling his lips. "You're such a lecherous old man, over a century old and still sporting those bloody red underpants. How shameless can you be?"

Though lightning had brought Gideon to the brink of death, he mustered the strength to hysterically retort, "You... you bastard! P-Poor... poor... This is my humble birth year!"

"Birth year?" Charlie's brows furrowed in momentary confusion, then he smiled and remarked, "You're so ancient, and you still believe in that?"

Gideon gritted his teeth and replied, "Whether I believe it or not is none of your concern!"

As he spoke, Gideon's mind raced.

He hadn't anticipated that even with the transformative shadow technique, he would still be unable to elude Charlie's thunder! And the experience of being struck by lightning was excruciatingly painful.

The injuries and pain took a backseat to the main issue at hand: the overwhelming electric charge coursing through the storm, causing his muscles to spasm involuntarily and his coordination to briefly falter.

At that moment, Gideon comprehended that he was no match for Charlie.

At least not tonight!

Not only did he lag far behind Charlie in terms of magical weaponry, but more critically, his experiment with the Thunder Strike Wood two days prior had depleted

a third of his aura in one fell swoop. Magical techniques devoured reiki at an accelerated rate, and after enduring two lightning strikes, his chances of victory were non-existent!

With this realization, he made up his mind to escape as swiftly as possible!

In his estimation, Charlie had already exposed his identity, as well as his magical weaponry and strength. Yet, with his disadvantage in magical weaponry and inability to engage in close combat, victory tonight was out of reach. After reporting to the hero, all that was left was to await the hero's personal arrival and witness the end of Charlie's life!

And so, following a series of violent convulsions, Gideon suddenly sprang upright with a swift somersault, landing on his feet. He immediately unleashed two sword strikes toward Charlie and took off in retreat!

His plan was to seize the opportunity of Charlie's distraction and flee.

Little did he know that although Charlie hadn't drawn near, he was attentively observing every move. Witnessing Gideon's sword strikes, quick turn, and subsequent flight, Charlie wasted no time in pursuing him!

The sword edges loomed perilously close, but Charlie had no intention of employing the soul-piercing blade to counter them. He let out a resounding shout and channeled reiki around his body.

The reiki encased him, spiraling rapidly and conjuring a fierce gust of wind!

Charlie swept through the surroundings, stirring up a maelstrom of sand, rocks, branches, and leaves. Just as the two sword edges were poised to cleave into him, he clenched his fists and thrust them toward the air on both sides!

In an instant, two deafening explosions resounded as the sword edges disintegrated into dust beneath the force of Charlie's fists!

Meanwhile, Gideon, who was left with nothing but a pair of red underpants, had managed to put some distance between himself and Charlie. Initially, he had fled frantically, his focus solely on escape. However, upon hearing those two explosions, an unexpected glimmer of hope flickered within him!

These explosions were clearly distinct from the clash between the sword edges and the soul-piercing blade moments ago. They resembled the sound produced when the sword edges struck a target's body!

"Could it be... Could it be that Charlie didn't dodge my surprise attack?"

Overwhelmed with joy, Gideon entertained this notion. Subconsciously, he glanced back to ascertain whether Charlie had been wounded by the two swords. If that were the case, Gideon might have an opportunity to seize the momentum and pursue Charlie to claim his victory!

Yet, the moment he turned his head, he made a startling discovery—Charlie's sharp, merciless face was a mere two strides away!

Charlie had caught up!

At that instant, terror seized Gideon's heart, sending him into a panic. He instinctively turned to escape with every ounce of strength he could muster. But from behind, he heard Charlie shout once more, "Thunder is coming!"

In the next second, Gideon felt another bolt of lightning viciously strike the crown of his head!

His legs gave way, causing his body to lose balance in an instant. After staggering a few steps, he toppled helplessly to the ground.

The thunder obliterated his red underpants, reducing them to powder. His hair disintegrated into ash, and his skin bore charred, extensive burn marks!

Gideon dashed backwards about ten feet and somersaulted several times, until he came to a stop. He ended up less than ten feet from Zeba, hidden in the shadows.

Upon witnessing Gideon's disheveled state, Zeba instinctively shut her eyes, unable to bear the sight any longer.

Gideon, now seated on the grass with his naked rear, suddenly felt a surge of bitterness in his throat. He spat out a mouthful of blood with a resounding wretch.

Though his injuries were not immediately fatal, his body teetered on the brink of collapse, akin to a weightlifter drained of all strength. In his current state, he would be unable to muster any significant power for some time.

How could Gideon retain his former vigor now?

His limbs convulsed incessantly due to the electric current coursing through his body. Exposed and debilitated, he resembled a despicable old pervert.

Moreover, his trembling hands released their grip on the wooden sword, which tumbled to the ground.

Observing Gideon's pitiful appearance, Charlie couldn't help but contemplate, "Maria Clark claimed I was in grave danger, yet this old dog is no match for me, could she have made mistake?"

With that thought, he dismissed divination from his mind. Instead, he approached Gideon, gazing down upon him, and uttered coldly, "When you murdered my parents twenty years ago, did you ever anticipate this day?"

Gideon stared at him, his expression vacant.

Charlie stood before him, his unyielding countenance unchanged. He couldn't discern any flicker of emotion, only an overwhelming sense of dread and despair seeping into his heart.

For the first time in his century-long cultivation, Gideon faced the specter of death.

At that moment, an intuition gripped him tightly—he realized his century of practice might very well end at Charlie's hands.

Had the sins he committed twenty years ago, slaying Charlie's father, finally caught up to him, culminating in his own demise?!

Chapter 5397

In the depths of the darkness, Zeba stood concealed, completely astounded!

Little did she expect that the formidable figure standing before her, dressed in black, was none other than Bruce Wade's son!

Meanwhile, Charlie remained oblivious to the presence of a hidden master, expertly masking his aura, only ten feet away in the shadows. His undivided attention focused on Gideon, who appeared before him in a state of panic and desperation, evoking not an ounce of sympathy within Charlie's heart.

Fixing his gaze on Gideon, he shouted once again, "Prepare for thunder!"

A deafening boom resounded as lightning tore through the heavens, hurtling downward in a blazing descent!

The thunderbolt struck with unerring accuracy, reducing Gideon's right hand to charred remains, emitting an aroma reminiscent of a barbecue, a smell that sent chills down his spine.

Gideon reflexively flicked his wrist, only for his charred hand to detach and fall to the ground.

Overwhelmed with shock and terror, Gideon's eyes met Charlie's, as if peering into the eyes of Hades, the ruler of the underworld!

Charlie's eyes blazed like torches as he regarded Gideon's fearful countenance. In a cold, menacing tone, he uttered, "Do not be alarmed. Consider this a mere appetizer. In the past, I dismembered a fool who lacked foresight, tearing him apart piece by piece. Even today, I relish the thought of dealing with those who deserve death in such a manner! So, prepare yourself for an unforgettable experience!"

Gideon, both shocked and terrified, involuntarily tightened his grip on the Thunderbolt with his remaining left hand. He sought to activate its power once again, for he had witnessed its destructive force, surpassing the might of any thunder summoned by Charlie. If he could retaliate and summon a thunderbolt in the final moment, victory might be within his grasp!

Observing Gideon clutching the Thunderbolt, Charlie sneered and declared, "Save yourself the trouble. Truth be told, I specially crafted the Thunderbolt in your hand just for you. While undeniably potent, it possesses one major flaw—it can be used only once."

"What?!" Gideon widened his bloodshot eyes and blurted out, "You crafted the Thunderbolt in my hand?!"

"Yes," Charlie replied with a smile. "I bestowed it upon Zachary after I finished forging it. I instructed Zachary to wait for you at the antique street, and you, my friend, fell right into the trap."

Furthermore, Charlie added, "Oh, and those rings you encountered at the airport earlier? Also my creation. They may not possess any value, but they serve as crude talismans."

Gideon instinctively reached into his pocket, only to realize that his pants were missing, leaving him pocketless.

With a horrified expression, he gazed at Charlie and asked in disbelief, "Are you saying that you dug a trap and lay in wait for me in Aurous Hill?!"

Charlie nodded and proclaimed loudly, "Indeed! I was well aware that there would be four Marshals from the Warriors Den, and with Cyprus eliminated, only three remained. I also knew that my grandparents would visit Aurous Hill, prompting the Warriors Den to dispatch another marshal. Consequently, I devised an intricate scheme, eagerly anticipating your arrival. Little did I expect that the so-called hero would deliver the very murderer who ended my parents' lives twenty years ago to Aurous Hill. I've been waiting this day for two decades!"

As his words trailed off, Charlie bellowed, "Prepare for thunder!"

A resounding crack split the air as a whip-like bolt of lightning descended from the heavens, striking Gideon's left hand!

In an instant, his left hand resembled a charred lump of coal, mirroring the fate of its counterpart.

Gideon, rendered completely helpless without his hands, had long shed his former arrogance and haughtiness. Consumed by terror, he collapsed to his knees, tears streaming down his face, and pleaded, "Charlie... Throughout my hundred and fifty-six years of existence, my life has been plagued by misfortune and hardship. Now, with my right hand crippled and near the brink of becoming a cripple myself, I implore you to have mercy and spare my wretched life..."

Charlie sneered contemptuously, his gaze piercing Gideon's despair-ridden visage. He sharply interrogated him, "Old dog, when you murdered my parents twenty years ago, did you ever anticipate this day would come?"

Gideon's heart was completely engulfed by fear. Having lived for one hundred and fifty-six years, he had logically experienced enough life. Even in death, he should have fared far better than most. However, human greed defined such reasoning. The truth remains that the younger one is, the less fear death instills. There are plenty of audacious youths willing to fight to the death at the tender ages of fifteen or sixteen. Conversely, the older one grows, the more apprehensive they become of death. Even a cultivator like Gideon was not exempt from such worldly fears; on the contrary, he was even more terrified than most.

Witnessing Charlie's merciless resolve, Gideon sobbed and pleaded, "Charlie, I merely followed orders back then. The Lord issued his commands, and I could not refuse! If you seek vengeance for your parents, you ought to confront the Lord of England, not a lowly nobody like me..."

Charlie sneered and retorted, "What? Now you wish to betray your master for your own gain? Very well, if you truthfully disclose everything about your association, I may grant you a swift end, sparing you from an agonizing death. It would, at least, prevent your demise from being an unsightly spectacle!"

Wretchedly smiling, Gideon questioned him, "If I divulge the complete truth, can you swear upon your parents' spirits in heaven that you will spare my life?! If you can, then I am willing to share everything!"

For Gideon, even a single additional day of life held immeasurable value. If he could obtain Charlie's forgiveness for betraying the Lord, he would gain a couple more years before succumbing to his poisonous fate. If Charlie could swear by his parents' spirits in the sky to

spare him, Gideon would reveal everything he knew. In the remaining years, he could retire to a secluded place, awaiting death's arrival in tranquility.

Charlie desired to unearth the inner workings of the Warriors Den, but he refused to allow Gideon to escape unscathed, and he would not employ his parents' spirits as leverage only to backtrack.

Therefore, without a moment's hesitation, he flatly refused, "Whether you speak today or not, I will not spare your life! If you speak, your death will be swift; if you remain silent, you will endure excruciating pain before meeting your demise!"

After his resolute statement, Charlie extended his arms toward the heavens, gazing upward, and bellowed, "Prepare for thunder!"

In an instant, another bolt of lightning crackled into existence.

With precision, it cleaved through the air and struck Gideon's right foot, reducing his ankle to blackened coals!

Agony contorted Gideon's face as he let out a blood-curdling scream!

His entire body convulsed, veins bulging, as he bellowed uncontrollably, "Charlie! Even if you kill me, after my death, you will never unravel the truth behind your parents' demise! You will never comprehend why they fell into such dire straits or realize the behemoth you are up against! I admit, your methods are impressive, but in the face of the British Lord, they are mere tricks!"

Charlie's voice turned cold as he replied, "It matters not if you remain silent. Sooner or later, I will personally slay the British Lord, and on that day, I shall spare no one connected to my parents' death within the Warriors Den!"

Without waiting for a response, Charlie roared once more, "Thunder!"

In an instant, Gideon's left foot was completely obliterated!

He had now become a crippled man, devoid of hands and feet!

From the darkness, Zeba watched this tragic scene unfold, her heart aching at Gideon's suffering. Despite feeling a pang of compassion, she knew that Gideon must meet his end today.

Her own strength paled in comparison to Gideon's, and he possessed magical artifacts while she did not. Even if she were to intervene, it would only result in her own demise!

In that moment, a memory resurfaced in Zeba's mind, recalling something the Lord had said thirty years ago. Her eyes gleamed with realization, and she urgently cried out in her thoughts, "Gideon, hurry! Open your Soul Palace!"

Chapter 5398

The Soul Palace, as described in martial arts practice, is the sacred abode of the Nine Heavens!

Some speculate that the Soul Palace corresponds to the pineal gland in human anatomy. It is said to secrete various hormones and possesses metaphysical effects on the body. However, with age, its functions gradually decline, becoming nothing more than a vestigial organ.

For those who cultivate martial arts, reopening the Soul Palace signifies unlocking an entirely new realm—a realm brimming with untapped potential!

Opening the Soul Palace involves utilizing reiki to access the center of the brain. It is also known as the upper dantian. While it is relatively easier to open the lower dantian and cultivate the eight meridians, only masters of exceptional strength can successfully open the Soul Palace.

To martial artists, the Soul Palace represents the pinnacle of the Mastery, the birthplace of spiritual consciousness.

By unlocking the Soul Palace and following the correct path of cultivation, one not only gains access to potent and mysterious powers but also gains the ability to separate their consciousness from their physical form, granting them unprecedented freedom.

Most of these claims, however, exist only in Taoist texts. Among the seven billion people in the world, finding someone who has genuinely opened their Soul Palace through their own efforts would be a near-impossible task.

Even Charlie himself had no knowledge of how to open the Soul Palace.

According to the "Apocalyptic Book," mastering one's aura is merely an elementary step for martial artists. Only with the opening of the Soul Palace can one be considered a true master.

Yet, within the pages of the "Apocalyptic Book," there is no guidance on how to unlock the Soul Palace.

Gideon and the others, including Zeba, had attempted to open their Soul Palace but failed.

However, thirty years ago, the British Lord utilized his extraordinary powers to forcibly unlock the Soul Palace for the four marshals.

While this act did not assist their cultivation, it bestowed upon them an immensely intricate formation within their Soul Palace. The Lord spent several years and vast amounts of reiki on each individual, granting them this powerful formation.

Additionally, the Lord imparted a specific mental technique. In times of life-threatening danger, they could silently activate the formation within their Soul Palace through mental recitation.

According to the British Lord, if the four marshals found themselves on the brink of death, opening the Soul Palace and activating the formation within would enable their souls to transcend mortality.

By leaving behind a remnant soul in the world, their consciousness could persist. Their enemies would remain oblivious to this remnant, and even if discovered, they would be powerless to harm it.

Moreover, they need not fear their remnant soul wandering as a lonely spirit, as the British Lord vowed to locate their remnants swiftly and transport them away.

The Lord would find suitable bodies for them, allowing their remnant souls to take possession. In this way, they could be reborn, their souls inhabiting new vessels.

Essentially, the formation within their Soul Palace represented the Lord's final gift—a chance for rebirth, a phoenix's resurrection!

Creating this monumental formation required years of effort and copious reiki from the Lord, and the four marshals were immensely grateful. With the formation within their Soul Palace, they possessed two lives.

However, over the course of thirty years, none of the four marshals had truly activated the formation within their Soul Palace.

The absence of life-threatening crises in their lives during this time was the primary reason.

Although Jarvis faced a life-or-death situation in Cyprus, the circumstances were unique.

The three close-range cannons that claimed his life were too swift, too powerful, and the brutality of the attack left him with only seconds from sensing danger to his demise. There was simply not enough time to activate the formation within the Soul Palace that the Lord had bestowed upon them.

Presently, Gideon found himself in a fortuitous position!

His recollection matched Zeba's relief, for she believed that Gideon would not meet his demise today.

Simultaneously, Gideon's heart skipped a beat.

Suddenly, he remembered the Lord's words from the past—the instructions for opening the formation within the Soul Palace. Although this formation could not help them defeat their enemies or preserve their lives, it provided a safeguard for their souls.

The Lord also promised that as long as their remnant souls lingered in the world, their consciousness would endure. And their enemies would remain oblivious to the presence of their remnant souls, helpless in the face of this revelation.

Moreover, they need not fret about their remnant souls becoming lost or wandering aimlessly. The Lord assured them that he would swiftly locate their remnants and guide them away.

When the time came, the Lord would find suitable vessels for their rebirth. Their remnant souls would displace the original occupants, ushering in a fresh beginning.

In essence, the formation within their Soul Palace served as the Lord's final lifeline, a chance to rise anew like a phoenix!

This colossal formation had taken the Lord several years and an abundance of reiki. The four marshals held immense gratitude in their hearts, for with the formation within their Soul Palace, they possessed two lives.

Nonetheless, thirty years had passed, and none of the marshals had truly activated the formation within their Soul Palace.

This was primarily due to the absence of life-threatening crises during these three decades.

While Jarvis faced such a dire situation in Cyprus, the circumstances were exceptional.

The three cannons that ended his life were too swift and powerful, leaving him with mere seconds from sensing danger to meeting his demise. There was insufficient time to activate the formation within the Soul Palace bestowed upon them by the Lord.

However, Gideon found himself in the opportune moment!

With a sorrowful smile, he gazed at Charlie and, while silently operating his mind to unlock the Soul Palace, spoke with a wicked grin, "Charlie Wade! Even if you annihilate my body, what does it matter? In a few short years, I shall return to life, and by then, you may already be ripped to shreds by the Lord! But if luck is on your side and you manage to survive the Lord's clutches, I shall find a new vessel and personally kill you!"

Zeba, hidden in the shadows, breathed a sigh of relief. She felt in her heart, "It seems that Gideon will be spared..."

At that moment, Charlie furrowed his brows and questioned, "Why? Do you plan to seek me out for revenge after your rebirth?"

Gideon chuckled, gritting his teeth as he responded, "Charlie Wade, it appears you have yet to grasp the secrets of longevity. Had you known, you wouldn't be ignorant of the concept of seizing a new body upon rebirth! Hahaha! After today, the Lord will undoubtedly bestow upon me a new divine body. Once my cultivation is restored, I shall exact revenge upon you with my own hands, Gideon Alastair!"

Charlie sensed a drastic change in the man before him.

One second he feared death, begging for mercy, and the next second he exuded an air of indifference, even anticipation of death. It was as if he no longer feared his impending demise, but rather welcomed it!

And Charlie's intuition did not betray him.

Gideon had indeed come to embrace death!

His physical form now lay in ruins, courtesy of Charlie's relentless assault. Even if he were to survive, he would be condemned to a life of bedridden suffering.

However, with the opening of his Soul Palace, his remnant soul would be liberated. Soon, he would be reborn within a young and vigorous vessel, restoring his cultivation level within a few decades!

Thus, at this moment, he had truly embraced death!

Meanwhile, the mental technique within his consciousness completed its circuit. The Soul Palace instantaneously opened, and the dormant formation, silent for thirty years, roared to life like a miniature universe!

Gideon laughed repeatedly, disregarding the blood spewing from his mouth. His gaze locked onto Charlie, and he laughed with a blend of excitement and ferocity, "The Soul Palace is open! The Soul Palace is open, Charlie! Do you remember? Hold on tight, for I, Gideon Alastair, shall exact a thousand-fold, ten thousand-fold revenge upon you in the future!"

Charlie remained unaware of the impending danger, but his instincts told him that he needed to act swiftly.

Without hesitation, he shouted, "Thunder!"

In an instant, a thunderbolt as thick as an arm descended from the sky, directly striking the crown of Gideon's head!

Charlie had previously held back with the Thunderbolt Strike, but this time, he had resolved to kill.

Given Gideon's current condition, this thunderbolt would undoubtedly end his life!

Yet, to Charlie's bewilderment, the astonishingly powerful thunderbolt made no impact on Gideon whatsoever!

Charlie's frown deepened as he suddenly realized that an unimaginable energy was surging within Gideon's body!

This power surpassed his comprehension!

In the darkness, Zeba remained oblivious to these abnormalities. She had merely heard Gideon's words and was relieved that he had opened his Soul Palace.

Though she and Gideon had never been close, she couldn't shake the feeling of their fates being intertwined since Jarvis's demise. Now that Gideon had unlocked the Soul Palace, she could finally hope for her own escape.

At this moment, Gideon's expression transformed into a rapid frenzy.

In just a second or two since the opening of his Soul Palace, an unimaginably scorching blaze ignited within his brain!

That fireball grew and intensified like a supernova, expanding at an alarming speed.

The pressure within his Soul Palace grew exponentially.

It felt as if a mountain had been thrust into his brain!

Agonizing pain tormented him, akin to the tortures of the eighteen levels of purgatory!

Charlie, too, sensed the imminent danger. The violent energy pulsating within Gideon's body was beyond his comprehension.

In a matter of seconds, his heart sank as he realized the gravity of the situation!

He couldn't help but exclaim inwardly, "Oh no! What kind of hidden formation lies within his body? Is it capable of turning him into a living nuclear bomb?!"

With this realization, Charlie's survival instincts kicked in, urging him to flee from the impending danger.

Yet, at that very moment, Gideon writhed in agony, overwhelmed by the surging power within his head. He convulsed and thrashed upon the ground, his screams echoing madly, "My... my head... it's going to explode! Lord... you... you're truly wicked at heart!"

Simultaneously, Zeba detected the anomaly and let out a shocked scream. Springing to her feet, she attempted to retreat.

As Charlie took a step to escape, he caught sight of a woman, hidden mere ten feet away, whom he had remained oblivious to all this time.

Self-reflection overcame him, questioning how he could have been so careless.

But at that moment, an earth-shattering explosion erupted behind him!

Boom!

Gideon's body became akin to an exploding atomic bomb, unleashing a tempestuous shockwave that rapidly propagated in all directions!

In an instant, Charlie experienced an excruciating pain engulfing his entire being, as if his bones were shattering and his organs pulverized.

The impact of the explosion was akin to being struck by a hundred-ton boulder hurtling from the heavens!

Charlie knew his fate was sealed.

In his last moments of consciousness, he lamented, "Parents, I have failed you as a filial son. I hope you both, resting in the heavens, will not hold it against me..." And in the next moment, he plunged into an abyss of eternal darkness, his consciousness obliterated.

Chapter 5399

The thunderous explosion reverberated through the sky, jolting the entire city of Aurous Hill from its slumber. In an instant, the blast spread far and wide, shattering the tranquility of the night.

Within the valley where the explosion occurred, the once lush vegetation was decimated, leaving behind a hollow void that stretched hundreds of meters in radius. It was as if nature itself had been consumed by the destructive force.

Gideon, who stood at the epicenter of the explosion, had been obliterated entirely. Not a trace of his existence remained—no remnants, no residue. The notion of a soul departing from the body and finding a new lease on life was nothing but a ruse, a deceitful ploy to lure them into an honorable death.

In his final moments, Gideon discovered a truth he never could have fathomed. The formation left by the British Lord in their Soul Palace thirty years ago wasn't a sanctuary for the soul, but rather a potent self-destructive array—a weapon of mass annihilation.

What he had perceived as a glimmer of hope for rebirth turned out to be nothing more than a means to perish alongside his enemies.

Just as the explosion shook the earth, Charlie, who stood mere meters away from Gideon, vanished without a trace. All that remained on the ground were tattered shreds of his clothing and minuscule fragments, reduced to the size of fingernails. These fragments were once part of Charlie's Soul Piercing Blade.

Even his Thunderbolt, crafted from lightning-struck wood, had been reduced to a charred mass of black ash by the cataclysmic blast.

Meanwhile, on the outskirts of the scorched circle, a severely injured woman struggled to crawl forward. She was Zeba.

Although Zeba had managed to escape the devastating impact of the explosion, her condition was far from promising. Overwhelmed by the shockwave, she had been sent hurtling through the air, her body battered and broken. Her meridians were severed, bones shattered, and internal organs grievously wounded. While she clung to life, her survival remained uncertain.

Enduring excruciating pain, Zeba crawled onward, panting heavily, her curses flowing uncontrollably in hushed tones. "Damn that Lord... after all these years... deceiving us," she muttered. "After unlocking the Soul Palace, how could... how could there be such a fantastical notion as the death of the body and the rebirth of the soul? It's all a lie... a terrible lie! That despicable scoundrel... he... he turned the four of us... into mere human bombs... to detonate when we face a life-or-death crisis... We were led to believe that in the face of mortal danger, we could leave behind a trace of our souls, seize new bodies, and reclaim our lives... but it was all a sham..."

"The true purpose of that bastard was to ensure that, in dire circumstances, we would open the Soul Palace, sacrificing ourselves alongside our enemies... this scheme is diabolically brilliant... For... the enemy capable of driving us to the brink of destruction would undoubtedly pose an immense threat to that bastard and the entire Warriors Den..."

"And with this manipulation of the Soul Palace, he could ensure that the four of us would perish alongside our enemies without hesitation, utilizing death as the ultimate solution to all hidden perils... It's utterly sinister!"

Her mind filled with these thoughts, Zeba couldn't help but murmur, "For many years, the four of us served you faithfully... yet you never regarded us as human beings. What difference is there?"

Gritting her teeth, she pushed through the agony, determined to crawl farther into the mountain's depths.

...

Let's rewind time by three minutes.

The Elys-Champ Spa Hotel, not far from the explosion site.

The Evans family had been relocated to a mid-level villa by Don Albert as a precautionary measure. Thunder roared in the distance, stirring worry and anxiety among the entire family. Samuel Evans, the elderly patriarch, paced restlessly in the room, unable to find a moment's respite.

Observing his distress, Don Albert stepped forward to offer comfort. "Worry not, old man. Master Wade possesses immeasurable power. The thunder you heard must be his summoned celestial lightning. It's highly likely that the assailant has been reduced to ashes by Master Wade's might!"

Samuel Evans muttered incredulously, "You mean Charlie can summon thunder?!"

"Indeed!" Don Albert nodded enthusiastically, his expression awash with fascination. "I've had the privilege of witnessing Master Wade's celestial lightning a few times. When the thunder descends, the sky becomes cloaked in dark clouds, lightning crackles through the firmament, and the earth trembles beneath the weight of thunderous booms. It's as if a god has descended upon us—a spectacle of unmatched grandeur!"

The Evans family, dumbfounded by this revelation, was left speechless. Samuel Evans, in particular, wore a look of disbelief. "How can this be possible..."

Chuckling knowingly, Don Albert continued, "Ah, old man, your skepticism arises from a lack of understanding. The art of summoning celestial thunder is intricately tied to formations. From my perspective, formations are akin to atomic energy. Imagine telling someone from a bygone era that a small piece of radioactive material could level an entire city with an atomic bomb—they would find it inconceivable."

Samuel Evans struggled to comprehend Don Albert's explanation, but the elderly lady beside him couldn't conceal her worry. Through tear-filled eyes, she pleaded, "I'm concerned for Charlie's safety, Don Albert. Could you arrange a helicopter to rush over there, just in case he requires assistance? We could offer our support..."

Don Albert hastily responded, "Dear lady, Master Wade has explicitly instructed that once you were safely evacuated, no one should interfere. We must wait here patiently for his return."

With that said, he added, "To be honest, there are hundreds of formidable warriors stationed at the hot spring hotel near the mountain's base. Even they wouldn't be able to aid Master Wade, let alone us."

Tears welling in her eyes, she sobbed, "I fear something untoward might befall Charlie once again. These past twenty years have been far too arduous for him. As his grandmother, I can't bear the thought of him in harm's way..."

Samuel Evans gently patted her back, comforting her, "Worry not, my dear. Charlie has become a force to be reckoned with, far surpassing our own capabilities. Even if we wished to help him, we would be of little use. Let us heed Charlie's instructions and wait here patiently!"

As soon as his words trailed off, an earth-shattering explosion shattered the tranquility outside the villa, causing the laminated tempered glass to disintegrate in an instant.

Instinctively, everyone dropped to the ground. In the aftermath of the explosion, the elderly lady felt an excruciating pain in her chest and tearfully inquired, "What just happened? Is Charlie... Is Charlie safe?"

Don Albert's heart skipped a beat, panic seizing him. He had personally witnessed Charlie summon celestial thunder, and he knew that the colossal blast they had just experienced was not the product of celestial lightning.

Without hesitation, he shouted, "I'll go check!"

With those words, he rushed out the door in a frenzy, leaping into the awaiting helicopter parked in the courtyard. Addressing the anxious pilot, he urgently pleaded, "Hurry, take off!"

At that moment, a figure darted toward them. It was Jack, who quickly climbed aboard the helicopter. He blurted out, "Don Albert, I'll accompany you!"

Don Albert, his mind racing, replied, "Inspector Lee, Master Wade instructed me to ensure the safety of you and the Evans family. It's best for you to remain here!"

Jack shook his head resolutely. "Don't forget, Don Albert, I am a police officer. When it comes to investigating a crime scene, no one is more proficient than I am."

After a brief pause, Don Albert relented, saying, "Very well, Inspector Lee. You can join me."

Turning to the pilot, he urged, "Take off!"

The helicopter revved its engines, ascending into the night sky with Don Albert and Jack aboard, hurtling toward Willow Estates.

As they approached the skies above the villa, Don Albert spotted a peculiar circular void in the distance, illuminated by the moon's gentle glow.

Pointing in its direction, he instructed the pilot, "Quickly, fly there!"

The pilot skillfully maneuvered the helicopter toward the enigmatic valley at great speed. As they drew nearer, Don Albert and Jack beheld a desolate sight—a scorched earth stretching out from the circular void, with surrounding vegetation cascading outward.

Drawing from the intensity of the previous explosion, the pair deduced that the circular void resulted from that cataclysmic event, its epicenter lying at the heart of the circle.

An ominous premonition gripped Don Albert's heart as he anxiously commanded the pilot, "Descend!"

Jack interjected, "It might be better to avoid landing directly at the center. We don't want the helicopter's strong gusts of wind to obliterate any potential clues on the ground."

Nodding in agreement, Don Albert signaled the pilot, "Land on the edge instead."

The pilot skillfully maneuvered the helicopter, setting it down on the outskirts of the circular void.

Jack silently prayed that they wouldn't disturb any vital evidence pertaining to the explosion's origin. Unfortunately, fate had a different plan. The spot chosen by Don Albert coincided with the area where Zeba had crawled away from the incident. The helicopter's gusts of wind swiftly erased any traces left by her passage.

Filled with anxiety, Don Albert hastily disembarked from the helicopter before it had even come to a full stop. Jack followed suit, leaping onto the hardened ground beside him.

They swiftly made their way toward the explosion's epicenter, where Don Albert's eyes widened in horror. The ground at the center had been scorched and cracked, a testament to the searing heat unleashed by the blast.

On the ground, a human-shaped silhouette, blackened and imprinted onto the scorched earth, caught Don Albert's attention. Whether it was the residual mark of a body or a consequence of the explosion, he couldn't discern.

In a daze, Don Albert noticed a few glimmering fragments strewn across the ground. Picking them up, he realized they were shell fragments or other remnants. And then it hit him—these fragments bore a striking resemblance to the giant clam Charlie had once acquired through a highly publicized auction in Aurous Hill. It had fetched a staggering sum, generating quite a stir in the city.

An overwhelming sense of despair engulfed Don Albert as he connected the dots. Jack, witnessing the change in his demeanor, anxiously inquired, "What are those?"

In a bewildered state, Don Albert replied, "These... these must belong to Master Wade..."

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Hearing Don Albert's confirmation that the fragment belonged to Charlie, Jack's heart skipped a beat. He whispered, "Charlie's belongings? Does that mean he's not in danger?"

Lowering his head, Jack carefully examined the traces left by the explosion. Following the path of the shockwave, he discovered more fragments of the giant clam on the ground.

His face grew pale, and he murmured, "Charlie's belongings are so close to the center of the explosion... If he was there when it happened, wouldn't he have borne the brunt of it?"

Don Albert burst into tears upon hearing this, unable to believe it. He said to Jack, his voice choked with emotion, "Inspector Lee, Master Wade is as mighty as the heavens. How could an explosion like this harm him?"

Jack squatted on the ground, picked up a piece of blackened soil, and rubbed it between his fingers. He brought it to his nose and sniffed, a worried expression crossing his face. "The temperature at the center of the explosion must have reached at least 3,000 degrees Celsius. If the ground can be burned like this... It suggests an explosive equivalent of one or two tons of TNT. Even a tank next to it would be reduced to shreds. We're dealing with human flesh and blood. Being in such close proximity, I'm afraid luck isn't on his side..."

"F*ck!" Don Albert's legs gave out, and he collapsed to the ground. Ignoring the pain, he pounded the hard black ground with his fist, choking back sobs. "Impossible! Master Wade is blessed, there's no way anything could go wrong!"

Jack fell silent for a moment before stating, "I'll search the area. It's possible that the shockwave traveled outward..."

Don Albert quickly picked himself up, wiping away his tears with his sleeve. He said, "I'm coming too! Let's search together."

Jack advised, "You should gather some help. The explosion's radius spans several hundred meters, and the outer area is vast with poor visibility. We can't do this alone. You mentioned there are many skilled warriors at the Elys-Champ Hot Springs Villa. Find the most reliable among them and bring them along."

Don Albert snapped back to attention, hastily saying, "Alright!"

He reached for his mobile phone to make a call but realized the signal was blocked. He told Jack, "Wait here, I'll be right back!" Jack quickly reminded him, "Remember, don't inform the Evans family yet. It may be too much for them to handle."

"Okay!" Don Albert agreed. "I'll head to the hotel and find help. Not the villa halfway up the mountain."

With that, he rushed back to the helicopter. As soon as he boarded, he instructed the pilot, "Head to the hotel!"

A few minutes later, the helicopter landed in the hotel's square.

Meanwhile, the loud noise from earlier had roused everyone within the Elys-Champ Hot Springs Villa. Unbeknownst to them, the commotion was connected to Charlie.

As Don Albert disembarked, Isaac Cameron hurriedly approached, his voice filled with concern. "Don Albert, why have you been flying around? Is something wrong?"

With tear-filled eyes, Don Albert choked out, "Isaac, something has happened to Master Wade..."

"What?!" Isaac Cameron exclaimed in shock. "What happened to him?"

"I don't know..." Don Albert sobbed, tears streaming down his face. "Master Wade's fate is uncertain now. Hurry and find trustworthy individuals to help search for his whereabouts!"

Isaac Cameron felt a moment of dizziness, but he quickly regained his composure. He blurted out, "I'll find Miss Xion from the Elms family. They've been with the young master the longest and are the most reliable."

Don Albert urged, "Don't spread the news. There are many people at Dragon Temple, and if they hear that something happened to the young master, it could lead to trouble."

"You're right," Isaac Cameron agreed. "Wesley swore loyalty to the young master back in Wade Mountain. But we must remain cautious, considering his past conflicts with the Wade family and the master's vendettas. We can't bring too many people. Don't forget, the young master still has enemies in the Warriors Den. If the news reaches the outside world, his identity may be exposed."

Nodding, Isaac Cameron said, "Then we'll only seek assistance from the Elms family."

At that moment, Xion was deep in meditation in her room. Isaac Cameron knocked on her door, and as she opened it, she saw him holding his phone screen toward her.

Upon reading the words on the screen, tears welled up in Xion's eyes. Without saying a word, she nodded solemnly.

Soon, over a dozen members of the Elms family gathered in a rush, boarded the helicopter, and flew back to the scene of the incident.

When Xion witnessed the horrific scene, it felt as if her heart had been torn from her chest. Yet she wiped away her tears and, together with the Elms family, meticulously searched for clues on the outskirts of the circular explosion area.

As they expanded their search area, combing through a radius of one kilometer from the center of the blast, they found no traces related to Charlie.

From the moment they began their search, not a word was spoken. Yet a prevailing sense of despair settled over their hearts.

...

Let's rewind time to before the clash between Charlie and Gideon.

On the top floor of Zilian Mountain Villa, steam billowed from the hot spring pool in the small courtyard. The water's surface shimmered with floating flower petals, their beauty accentuated by the gentle touch of delicate hands.

Maria Clark, who had confined herself to the courtyard for several days, now immersed herself in the hot spring pool with her eyes closed.

The warm water enveloped her, submerging her collarbone while leaving her slender pink shoulders exposed to the night air.

Initially, she had thought it was the perfect night to indulge in the hot spring before retiring to her room. But little did she know that after just a brief soak, thunderous rumblings echoed in the distance.

Unease stirred within her heart. She murmured anxiously, "Oh no... Could this dense thunder be related to Charlie? Could... could tonight spell his doom?" The thought crossed her mind when suddenly, another deafening explosion reverberated through Zilian Mountain.

Maria Clark's face paled at the sound, her heart feeling weightless as if lifted into the air.

In the next second, she regained her senses and instinctively turned to reach for the bath towel she had left on a smooth boulder near the pool.

Stretching out her tender hand, she attempted to retrieve the towel.

But at that moment, a startling change occurred within the hot spring pool.

Normally, the water level remained slightly above the pool's edge. Fresh hot spring water cascaded from the rockery waterfall, while the excess overflowed along the pool's smooth side, creating a thin stream that maintained the water level in a gentle overflow.

Yet now, the water level surged dramatically!

An abundance of water seemingly materialized from nowhere, rapidly submerging the pool and spilling over its edges.

Maria Clark's breathing and heartbeat quickened as her eyes remained fixed on the water, as if anticipating something.

And then, in the next second, a naked man covered in scars emerged from the water's depths!

As Maria Clark laid eyes on his face, she realized it was Charlie, the man who had saved her from fire and water like a mystical warrior from Northern Europe.