

“Please, sister. I’ve had my fair share of experiences so I can see right through you. It’s obvious why you’d be so curious about him. After all, you probably haven’t met such a person even from when you were young! However, I’ll be frank and tell you now that it’s impossible! It’d do you good to rid yourself of all such thoughts before it’s too late. The truth is, no man on this entire planet is a good person! All of them are equally lowly and vicious! The utmost scum!”

Chapter 871

“Hey sis, I know you were hurt by Narc once but take a look at his wife. She’s such a materialistic person!” Yselle said.

Winnie glared at her angrily. “Shut up! How many times did I tell you not to remind me of him! Don’t even get me started with that woman!”

“Y-yes...I know, sis. I know how much you hate that dreaded woman. I swear I won’t repeat this again!” Yselle’s eyes were tearing up as she spoke.

Realizing that she had been too harsh, Winnie caressed Yselle’s head and said, “I’m just trying to look out for you. That Gerald guy reeks of money. He only has what all materialistic people want. Money. He doesn’t deserve to have any ties with our family. We are only here to help him on behalf of our master’s son, to keep our promise with them. We, the Moldells’ unlike the rest of the world, take our promises seriously!”

“So, even if you have the slightest feelings for Gerald, there is no way the both of you could be together. I’ll definitely stand against it!” There was a glimpse of disdain peeking through Winnie’s eyes.

“Oh...I understand!” Yselle lowered her head.

“But, it’s not impossible to let you stay by Gerald’s side. There is a way.” Winnie said.

“Huh? What way?” Yselle asked.

Ten days ago when Gerald first arrived, Yselle found herself developing feelings for the young and lively man.

After getting to know him and listening to the stories of his adventures, Yselle was even more eager to find out more about that young man.

A girl's emotion can be really hard to comprehend sometimes. Falling for someone without rhyme or reason, and then hating the person in the same exact manner.

If asked at that moment whether Gerald was really that great or not, she'd answer 'No', but Yselle liked him regardless of that fact!

Yselle had always felt like that. She grew up behind the walls of Moldell and she never had the chance to fulfill her fantasies.

"That's a pretty simple job. Make him one of your servants and let him follow you around!" Winnie said.

"In fact, he'd live a longer life after becoming one of our servants and this is something that can hardly be bought by money!"

"I don't want him to be my servant, sis. Why, why do you look down on him so much? After all, he is..."

"That's enough! Other than this, there are no other alternatives. Don't blame me for not telling you about it!" Winnie left after she finished.

Dylan was talking to the third master of Moldell and the assistant of the Moldell family at the ball.

“This time, I’ll be counting on all of you then!” Dylan said with a smile.

“You’re most welcome, Master Crawford. We will do our best. We sure hope that the Crawfords and the Moldells would be pleased with the result of our collaboration this time!” Moldell’s third master, Parker Moldell said.

“I suppose it won’t be as pleasing as it seems huh?”

Suddenly, a 60-year-old man entered the hall with a group of people.

“Who are you? How did you come in?” Dylan was stunned when he saw the old man.

“Did you expect those useless brats to stop me?” The man sneered.

“Kort, what do you think you’re doing? Now that we are working with the Crawfords, how dare you disrespect them?” Parker shot up from his seat with a deep frown on his face.

“Collaborating with them? No way!” Kort responded coldly.

Chapter 872

He was a man in his sixties but he looked as if he was only 50. He had a pair of sharp and bright eyes that would create a sense of unease in the person who stood before his gaze.

“Why can’t we collaborate?” Parker asked.

“Master Parker, I understand that your son was rescued by the Yalemans and that you owe them the favor. However, you broke the rules when you made a promise with them to help out the Crawfords!”

“But you must know that Crawford’s eldest heir, Gerald, has offended one of my good friends, the Long family. Hence, I demand an explanation from you folks on behalf of the Long family!”

“Do you think you’ll still be able to help them now?” Kort said.

Even though Kort addressed the 90-year-old Parker as ‘Master’, he was just the third master of the family and Kort was one step above him. Kort, being the Second Master, had a position that was higher than that of Parker in the family.

“Long family?” Gerald started pondering what the Long family had to do with the Moldells.

Jessica and himself had been at odds with the Long family for quite some time now, so what kind of explanation was Kort demanding?

“Nice to meet you, Master Kort. forgive me but, what sort of explanation are you demanding?” Dylan asked with a smile.

“Hah, that’s simple. I demand half of Crawfords’ assets be transferred to the Long family. As long as this is done, I shall not ask for anything more!” Kort sneered.

“How arrogant!”

The Crawfords looked at each other. They were stunned by Kort’s request.

Crawford’s assets? Half was too much, even a millesimal of that amount would be more than enough for the entire Long family. Kort was out of his mind! He was definitely not seeking an explanation but trying to rob the Crawford family!”

Gerald frowned.

“Master Crawford, please consider this offer. If my friends aren’t pleased, I’m not sure what I will be forced to do in order to make the Crawfords pay for their wrongs. I believe you wouldn’t question my powers right?” Kort smiled as he said.

He came in without registering because he wanted to deter the Crawfords.

If only the Crawfords knew that he was coming to exact his revenge, they would have tried to stop him at all cost!

“Master Kort, isn’t demanding half of their assets slightly too much? They’re the Long family we’re talking about. They’re nothing! How dare they demand half of Crawford’s assets?” Yselle stood up.

The Moldell family was actually divided into a few branches and Kort was a leader of one of the branches.

Everyone in the Moldell family knew that Kort was a man of the world. If we looked at the number of women he had around him, he had at least a handful of them at all times. That was why Yselle and Winnie despise Kort.

Including Parker, everyone in the Moldell family knew that Kort was not trying to appease the Long family. No, instead, he was trying to stir up a conflict with the Crawfords, with this as merely his excuse to do so.

Kort has taken over a few family businesses with this method. Even though he would never admit to such acts, rumor has it that the large family that Kort has secretly established came about exactly like that!

“Yselle, is that how you talk to your elders? Master Parker, I believe you would not interfere in this matter, yes? Even if you wish to, you have to think about the consequences. Is it worth exposing the Crawfords to such risks?” Kort hinted at Parker.

Parker was furious but he remained silent nonetheless.

Kort was too powerful for Parker to fend against.

“Master Crawford, I’ll give you thirty minutes to consider my offer. I want an answer half an hour later! No more, and no less!” Kort then left with his people...

Chapter 873

“It’s all my fault, dad. This happened because of me!” Gerald started to apologize when Dylan and the family arrived at the study to discuss their plan.

Dylan was caught off guard by this matter. He totally did not anticipate this to happen.

“No, Gerald. That’s not the crux of the matter. I’ve heard about Kort from your grandfather and I’ve always known that he’s a very greedy man. Your grandfather had business with him and that was why we moved away from Weston to Northbay. We’ve all been trying to stay away from Kort Moldell, but the day has finally come, when we can run from him no longer!” said Dylan.

“Even if it wasn’t for the Long family, he would still come after us, in the name of the Zabel or Letts families!” Dylan continued while frowning.

“Dad, the concerns that you had for the Moldells, was it because of this?”

Gerald remembered that his father had mentioned that if it was not for their current situation, he would never have sought help from the Moldells and he’d never conduct any business with those folks.

Dylan nodded his head with a worried expression.

“Gerald, do you know about the family that was once equally as powerful as us? I probably haven’t told you this before but 40 years ago, there were three extremely wealthy families. One of them was our family and the other family was the Morningstars. But the Morningstars have changed over time into the Moldell family. Do you understand what I’m trying to tell you?” Gerald’s mother said.

Gerald nodded his head.

“Sigh, without the help of the Moldells we wouldn’t have been able to stand up against the League, nor would we have found your uncle Peter. That means nobody would ever know about the secret your uncle Peter is carrying!” Dylan slammed his fist onto the table.

“Dad, I never understood the curse that you keep talking about. Our family is so powerful. How is it possible that we would just perish?”

“Even if Kort is trying to seek his revenge, he can’t do anything to us. How could we end up like the Morningstars and get swallowed up by the Moldells?”

“I don’t believe this!” said Jessica.

Daryl waved his hand and said, “That’s right, even if he was seeking revenge, he can’t destroy us like how he did the Morningstars. But we sure as hell are in for a rough time!”

“I’m not worried about how tough it is going to be. As long as we could find your uncle Peter, we would be much stronger than before and even if we were destroyed, the Crawfords will always be the biggest tycoons. Do you understand what I’m trying to say? If we can’t find him, I’m afraid we might be gone in less than 10 years!”

Dylan shook his head. “That is why we must look for your uncle Peter and we have to ask for help from the Moldells!”

Gerald knew that no matter how hard he tried asking about the curse, his father would never give him an exact answer.

“Dad, are you really going to give him half of your assets? Does he even deserve it?”

Jessica was upset. “I’m going to take him up on the challenge. I don’t believe I can’t defeat Kort with the powers I have in North Africa!”

“Sis, didn’t dad just mentioned that it’s not about challenging Kort but instead, working with the Moldells to come up with a solution? I don’t think there are any alternatives here!” Gerald said.

“But what choice do we have? Do you really think the Moldells would still work with us?” Jessica was worried.

“There must be a way!” Gerald smiled bitterly.

Suddenly, he turned to his parents and sister. He smiled at them and said, “I have an idea!”

“Gerald? What...what do you mean?” Dylan could tell what Gerald was up to, which made him all the more anxious.

“Don’t worry about it, dad. I’ll handle this matter!” Gerald left after saying that.

“Kort, Master Crawford, and the Yalemans are all my friends. Don’t you cross the line!”

Outside, Parker and Kort were having a fight.

“Do you even think that you could take down the wealthiest family, the Crawfords? I don’t want to stick my nose into this matter but have you ever thought about their position globally? If the Crawfords are being threatened, the consequences are far beyond our imagination. The Crawfords aren’t the Morningstars! When news gets out, our grandmaster will surely take matters into his own hands, and by then, do you think you can actually take over half of their assets when it was you who instigated the squabble?” Parker waved his hand and sat down.

Kort frowned slightly. He had never given it that much thought. Kort had always wanted to take over the Crawfords but after a few rounds of exchanging punches, he realized that it was harder than climbing the stairs to heaven.

Chapter 874

Kort only shifted his target to the wealthiest family in Weston after the Crawfords’ move to Northbay but Parker’s words finally knocked some sense into him.

If this matter gets out of hand, Moldells’ grandmaster surely would never forgive him. But he was already on the brink of success. Kort was not ready to give it all up. Even if he wasn’t going to get half of their assets, he must take at least a quarter of it!

Kort was not ready to give up yet! He kept his cool and remained silent.

Meanwhile, Gerald walked out into the hall.

“Gerald, we are good friends, I’ll help you, and I’m sure Master Parker will too!” Yselle walked over and grabbed Gerald’s arm.

“I know, thanks Yselle!”

Gerald looked at Parker and said, “Uncle Parker, if the conflict between me and the Long family is settled, does that mean that you would continue to stay and help us?”

Parker was unsure what Gerald meant by that but he nodded and said, "You don't have to worry about that. Your grandmother has saved my son years ago and as long as it's you folks, I'd be willing to help. The Moldells never went back on their word!"

"That's great!" Gerald smiled and nodded.

Gerald then looked at Kort. "Master Kort, you said you're here to seek revenge on behalf of the Long family and you did admit that their conflict is between just me and their family. If that's so, then don't drag my family into this! If you really want an explanation, just come after me. There's no reason for you to pester the Crawfords!"

Kort sneered. "Hah! You're the heir of the family, so it is only natural that the Crawfords have to pay for your misbehavior!"

"You're wrong, Master Kort. From now on, I'm no longer the heir of Crawfords and you have no business with my family anymore!" Gerald smiled.

"What did you just say?" Kort squinted his eyes and then open them widely.

"Gerald, what the hell are you saying!" Dylan immediately walked out of the room and yelled at him.

Gerald smiled. "I mean what I just said. From now onwards, I'll be leaving the Crawfords and I'll no longer be Young Master Crawford! Master Kort, if you have any issues, please just come after me!"

"Master Parker, you promised you'd stay and help the Crawfords. Now that I am leaving the family, I take it that conflict with the Long family is no longer a problem the Crawfords have to deal with anymore?"

Parker was stunned. He never thought that Gerald would simply give up his title just like that.

He nodded his head. "Of course. Since you're no longer part of the Crawfords, nobody could seek trouble from them any more!" Parker glanced at Kort. He was giving him a warning not to cross the line!

Kort's eyes were red from rage. "Hah, leaving the family? Do you really think your bratty ass can survive without your family backing you up? Even if I don't do anything, your enemies will be coming after you and if the Crawfords decide to intervene, your work would have been in vain! That is because I'll still come after the Crawfords!"

"Don't worry about that. No one is going to help me. Of course, after I leave the house of the Crawfords, you're welcome to look for me!" Gerald said.

"Brother!" Jessica was worried-sick upon hearing Gerald's declaration.

She looked at Dylan. "Dad, say something!"

Dylan frowned slightly and his eyes were filled with tears.

His lips twitched slightly. "Since my son is going to take the responsibility and leave Crawfords for good, I, as your father, guarantee that whoever touches you in Northbay shall be facing the wrath of the entire Crawford family!"

"Bang!"

Dylan smashed a wine glass to pieces.

Kort was shocked.

“What are you talking about, dad?”

“Dylan, are you out of your mind?! That’s our son!”

Jessica and Yulia were panicking!

Chapter 875

Dylan was upset.

If Gerald has stayed, Kort would surely find an excuse to challenge the Crawfords.

Even though the Crawfords had the power to fight Kort’s repeated attacks, it was unavoidable that they’d be injured as well.

If their inheritance process was not stable enough it would be impossible for them to continue their search for the Sun League.

How long can the Crawfords survive if there was no peace?

Gerald’s departure could buy the Crawfords some time and Dylan was perfectly aware of this.

However, by leaving the protection which his family offered him, Gerald’s path would only grow harsher and more difficult to traverse. Both Kort and the Long family would never allow Gerald to slip off so easily.

Dylan held his fist tightly. He was struggling in his heart when he said those words.

“Wow! Never knew that Dylan Crawford would abandon his own son so readily when push comes to

shove!” Kort frowned.

He sneered, “There is more to come! Master Parker, I shall save you some face today. I’ll remember the Crawfords from now on!” He waved his hand and left.

Dylan gave up his own son to protect their family’s assets. If things continued going downhill, he might be forced to do something even more insane.

If the Crawfords were to fight them with all of their power, Kort would never stand a chance.

Hence, it was not a good idea for him to linger around.

Even though Gerald’s farewell gave him no excuse to attack, Kort knew that he would still be the key to swallowing the entire Crawford family and he wasn’t at all fazed.

He left at the right time...

“Master Kort, are we really going to give up the Crawfords like that? They hold the most assets and it could be ten times more than what you have established at Logan Province!” One of Kort’s subordinates said after they left the island.

“Do you think I’m that dumb? It’s just not the right time to take them head-on now. We have too many enemies in our own family now. Even if we really conquered the Crawfords, we’d be left defenseless against the rest of the branches of our family.”

“We have to think of a plan that could kill two birds with one stone and it must be used on Gerald!” Kort squinted.

“Then we will have Gerald in our hands no matter where he is and he won’t be able to run away!” His subordinates smiled and nodded.

That night at the harbor of Hong Kong, Gerald brought along his luggage and walked down from the ship.

Gerald was emotional when he reminisced about the past 6 months. Everything felt like a dream to him. He transformed from a poor, disgusting student who was worth less than a pile of dirt to a rich and wealthy heir.

Now, he was far poorer than before this all even started. He knew that sacrifices would have to be made in order to secure peace for his family in the long term.

Gerald was not afraid of being poor but he was afraid that he might not see the sun of tomorrow.

Even though it was late, there were still many people at the harbor. As Gerald walked further out, he glanced backward. There were at least ten people following him.

'Am I going to die here tonight?'

Gerald held his fist tightly. He was not afraid, but feeling his impending doom, Gerald still felt the urge to keep on fighting. He wanted to live on no matter what.

Gerald hastened his pace.

The people following him were not ordinary men, as they immediately chased after him.

Suddenly, the blinding headlights of a car and the sound of tires skidding filled the air at one of Hong Kong's many harbors.

Chapter 876

Gerald, who had attempted to escape was blocked from all sides.

After that, the car door was opened.

A group of bodyguards dressed in black walked out of the car.

Their leader was none other than Joel.

He was the father of the three young masters of the Long family.

“Hahaha! Why if it isn’t Mr. Crawford? Why the hurry? You going somewhere?”

A vicious look flashed across Joel’s face.

“I heard that you’ve announced your self-imposed exile from the Crawford family today. I couldn’t believe it at first but looking at you right now, Mr. Crawford, it seems like the rumors are true!” Joel said.

“You’ve been waiting for this moment for a very long time now, aren’t you Joel? Instead of blabbering on and on about this, why don’t you take me away, as you’ve always wanted to!”

Gerald replied with a frown.

“Mr. Crawford, if it weren’t for the fact that I had been given strict orders not to take any action against you, I would have started hacking away the moment our eyes met. I would have cut off your flesh piece by piece so that it can serve as a tribute to Yunus!”

Joel roared with a grim expression on his face and his eyes, bloodshot.

“Men, come! Take him away!”

Joel commanded as he waved his hand.

His subordinates approached Gerald immediately.

“Vroom! Vroom! Vroom!”

Out of nowhere came the roaring sound of a mighty engine.

A modified off-road vehicle suddenly rushed towards them from the side of the road.

It was heading straight for Gerald, who had been surrounded.

Krash!

The off-road vehicle crushed all of the cars in its way as it rushed directly towards Gerald. After that, a pair of hands reached out and pulled Gerald into the passenger compartment.

“After them! Don’t let them escape!” Joel roared.

The attack came and went as quick as lightning.

The headlights of the vehicle caught them completely off-guard, blinding Joel’s men as Gerald was rescued.

“Mr. Crawford, are you okay? Sorry, we’re late!”

At this moment, the brothers, Drake and Tyson spoke up.

“I’m fine. Thank God, the both of you came in time!” Gerald nodded.

“By the way, why are you here? Did my elder sister tell you to come here?” Gerald asked.

“Yeah, Miss Crawford knew that somebody would spring an attack on you as soon as you left Northbay. She sent us over to pick you up!”

“Mr. Crawford, what are your plans for the future?” Drake asked.

There were no other alternatives. If it was possible, the two brothers would be more than willing to continue helping Gerald. They were glad to remain by Gerald’s side to protect him.

But there were many eyes keeping tabs on the Crawford family right now.

They could not allow Kort to have anything to use against them.

So, it was okay for them to help Gerald once. But helping him for the rest of his life was not going to happen.

“I am no longer Mr. Crawford. The both of you can just call me Gerald. I don’t know what is going to happen in the future but I’m going to Salford Province. I’d like to look for someone there!” Gerald replied after a brief moment of deliberation.

A specific someone had come up in his memories.

“Okay then, Mr. Crawford! We will escort you to Salford Province!”

Drake and Tyson replied.

“Vroom! Vroom! Vroom!”

Then came the sound of engines roaring.

Several modified off-road vehicles came rushing straight towards Drake and Tyson’s vehicle.

It was evident that these vehicles were being handled by the most skilled drivers around.

“F*ck!”

Drake hurriedly grabbed the steering wheel.

But it was too little too late. Simultaneously, these vehicles slammed into Drake’s vehicle, shaking the passengers up as if they were in a tin can

Chapter 877

“Boom!”

The sound of a violent explosion rocked the city.

There was a cloud of smoke at the scene and there was debris everywhere.

The light from the fire illuminated the night sky.

Several cars exploded simultaneously and started a huge fire within seconds.

“Mr. Crawford, are you okay?”

Drake protected Gerald as they rolled down the small slope.

Drake and Tyson brought Gerald with them as they jumped out of the car during the car crash just now.

Whoever that was after them was bat-sh*t insane.

“I’m fine, I think!”

Gerald shook his head and he felt as though the sky was spinning.

“They’re still hot on our asses!” Tyson yelled out at this time.

Many bodyguards dressed in black were brandished weapons as they rushed down the small slope from the main road.

“There are still sixteen of ‘em left, brother. Let’s deal with eight of them each. Mr. Crawford, start running north of our position! Mr. Lyle is already waiting for you under the hillside in the north. You can leave everything here to us!”

Zack was here too!

Gerald felt moved.

At the same time, he also knew that he would only cause more trouble for Drake and Tyson if he continued sticking with them.

Thus, he didn't waste his time saying needless goodbyes. Instead, he gave them a single nod before running towards the north.

Ever since Finnley taught him some simple breathing techniques and the five fighting moves, Gerald's physique became much greater than before.

Gerald exhausted all of his energy and strength as he desperately ran northwards.

"I am almost there!"

Gerald gritted his teeth as he reminded himself.

However, the more he ran, the darker it was. At one point, everything in front of him became pitch black.

Gerald suddenly missed a step.

He tripped forward and fell flat on his face.

After falling like a heavy sack of potatoes, he was caught up in a mental daze.

Suddenly, a burst of dazzling car lights blinded him.

Several bodyguards dressed in black came over and grabbed Gerald by the neck.

Gerald looked at the license plates of these cars.

These cars belonged to the Long family from Yanken!

“It’s all over! I have nowhere else to go now!”

Gerald closed his eyes, knowing that he had come to the end of his journey.

“Let go of him!”

Desperation was at an all-time high when he suddenly heard a familiar female voice.

Gerald’s eyelids peeled open to confirm his suspicion.

“Xavia?”

Gerald said in surprise.

Xavia marched right up to Gerald with her hands crossed over her chest.

“Hmph! Gerald, you would never have expected to fall right into my hands, right?” Xavia asked coldly.

“No, I did not,” Gerald replied with a wry smile on his face.

“Gerald, oh how amazing you are. To be the Young Master of the Crawford family, have you any idea how much people envied you? One word from you and the entire Long family would be annihilated. What a surprise to see your pathetic little face here!” said Xavia.

“Since I’m here, why don’t you just bring me back to your home, so you can get all the credit for capturing me? There’s no need for you to waste your time, saying all that. Finally, the chance has come for you to exact revenge!” Gerald responded with a bitter laugh.

Slap!

Xavia raised her hand and gave Gerald a slap across his face.

“Are you telling me to shut up? Listen here, I’ll keep talking whenever I feel like talking! I’m the one calling the shots here! Gerald, do you know how long I have been waiting for this moment? I’ve been waiting a long, long time for the day where you would stand before me with your head hung low!”

Slap!

Xavia gave Gerald another slap using the back of her hand.

Chapter 878

“Hahaha! I gave up everything when we were back in Salford Province. I asked for a clean slate with you but how did you respond? Arrogantly, haughtily, up on your high horse, you ignored me completely. You’ve hurt me so many times, but do you remember who was the one who remained by your side when you were still considered a pauper back in university? Who was the girl who held your hand stubbornly when you were walking through the campus, being ridiculed by everyone around you? Who was the only person who did not despise your existence back then!?”

Slap!

Xavia's eyes were red with tears as she said, "It was me! But what about you? How did you treat me as soon as you gained some wealth and glory? You made me live in such a miserable state like a dog who had to go around begging for food! Even though Felicity was a bitch who had always despised you and looked down on you, you chose to help her when she asked for help! What about me? What happened when I needed help!?"

"You were the one who let me down!" Xavia said.

"Everything is simply perfect now. You have already left the Crawford family. Finally, I am no longer afraid to tell you this. Even if you really want to escape, will you really be able to do so? Even if you can really escape from the Long family's clutches, there is still the Moldell family, and the Lynwood family. The entire world's going for your throat! You are just a miserable outcast, the same as you were back then!"

"I have already said so much. So, why don't you say something? Answer me!"

Slap! Slap! Slap!

Xavia was so furious that she slapped Gerald three more times, consecutively.

All this while, Gerald had always been a looming shadow that haunted Xavia's heart.

Being buried deep within her heart for a very long time, it contorted Xavia's perspective on the world negatively.

Since all of her anger and frustrations were released in one single go, Xavia started to get a little hysterical!

“What else can I say? You can insult and humiliate me now and you can even kill me if it eases your soul!” Gerald replied as he shook his head.

“Hahaha! You still are clueless about what kind of girl I am, even after all this time!”

Xavia replied as she shoved Gerald.

After that, Xavia took a deep breath.

“Gerald, to tell you the truth, I do not have the intention of dragging you back with me to gain recognition from my family for capturing you!”

“I can give you a way out. As long as you are willing to bow before me, admit your mistakes apologize for your wrongs, I will let you go!” Xavia replied as she clenched her fists tightly.

The time she spent in the Long family was spent on gaining the loyalty of these men around her.

Over time, they had grown to become obedient and submissive to her.

“You...you will let me go?”

Gerald was surprised when he heard those words.

Indeed, he hated Xavia because of certain things and there was no denying that he hurt her on multiple occasions.

After falling into her hands, Gerald thought it was no better than being captured by Joel and his men.

However, Xavia was proposing to let him go.

As for Xavia, although she absolutely hated Gerald and wanted him to suffer, she did not want to see Gerald lose his life.

She had mixed and complicated feelings. She did not want Gerald to live a good life, but she also could not bear to see Gerald getting hurt.

“Yes. As long as you are willing to apologize to me, and as long as you can touch the depths of my heart, then I will let you go!” Xavia replied.

Gerald started to self-reflect. In comparison to how heartless and cruel he had been towards her back then, it was surprising how Xavia was still actually able to say such things.

Gerald was paralyzed by guilt as realization set in.

“Alright, Xavia. If you really are going to let me go, then I, Gerald Crawford would like to apologize for mistreating you and for all the wrongs I did to you in the past. I will never forget the kindness and benevolence you have shown me today!”

“Hmph! How cheesy! Now get lost!”

Xavia turned her head around to look the other way as she crossed her arms in front of her chest.

Her subordinates began making way for Gerald to leave.

Gerald nodded as he looked at Xavia before he started running away.

“Wait a minute!”

Xavia suddenly yelled out to stop Gerald.

“What’s wrong?” Gerald asked.

“Gerald, I am not sure whether we will meet again in the future, so, I would like to remind you how powerful the Moldell family is. Moreover, it is not the first or second day that the Moldell family has been planning to bring the Crawford family down. They won’t let you slip away that easily. You’ve got to be more careful from now on. The Long family is now reduced to a dog working for the Moldell family. You can run all you want, but they’ll hunt you down eventually. If you manage to escape, I’d advise you to live anonymously. It’d be better if you don’t show up at the Crawford family from now on, no matter what happens!” said Xavia.

“I understand! Thank you, Xavia.”

“And one last thing. Do you know why I am choosing to let you go?” Xavia asked.

“Why?”

“Because after experiencing so many things, I finally realized that you really loved me with all your heart back then. However, it was me who failed to cherish your affection till the very end!”

Xavia said, with misty red eyes.

“Alright. You take good care of yourself, okay? I am leaving now!”

After he was done speaking, Gerald turned around and dashed into the darkness of the night...

Chapter 879

Seven days later.

At a construction site in a typical small county located in Salford Province.

“It is time for the wages to be distributed! You, twenty three dollars! Keep it well!”

“You, fourteen dollars!”

An overweight foreman with a perfectly-round belly was handing out the daily wages to a few men and women who were in their fifties.

Among them stood a young man, who stuck out like a sore thumb.

The others received twenty three dollars as their daily wage.

However, when it came to the young man’s turn, he only received fourteen dollars.

The foreman spat on his fingers as he counted the cash to make sure the amount was right.

“Hold on. Haven’t we already agreed on this matter before coming here? You don’t need to pay me twenty three dollars a day, but didn’t we settle on sixteen dollars a day instead?” The young man asked.

“Damn it! Didja forget the meal you ate earlier this afternoon!? Two dollars is taken off your pay for yer meal!”

“But the lunch we had just now was just two pieces of biscuits, and you’re deducting two dollars from me!?”

“Damn it! I only gave you some work to do because I thought that you looked like an honest and decent young man. I am only going to give you fourteen dollars. It is up to you whether you want to take it or not. Ain’t nuthin’ you can do even if I don’t pay you a single cent!”

It was around this moment.

“Huh? Why does that worker look so familiar?”

A couple holding hands were accompanied by several other people as they walked past this area.

“Familiar? Raquel, is something wrong with your eyes? Would you know a worker like this?”

The man who was richly bedecked asked contemptuously.

“No! No, he really looks very familiar. He’s a good buddy of my bankrupt ex-boyfriend. He used to be really awesome in the past. There’s no mistaking it! It’s him!”

“Are you serious?” The boy asked.

The girl walked over to the worker.

“Gerald, it’s really you!”

The girl recognized who the young man was in an instant.

There were hints of ridicule and mockery on the girl's face.

That's right. This young man was none other than Gerald.

On that night, seven days ago, Xavia decided to let him go. After Zack picked him up, he faced many risks along the way but he finally arrived at Salford Province.

The first thing that Gerald did was to head to the countryside to look for Uncle Quick.

After all, Gerald knew where Uncle Quick's house was.

However, his fellow villagers told him that it had been a few days since Uncle Quick left the village.

Gerald had no other place to go to and he could only wait patiently.

As he was embarrassingly short of money, he had no choice but to come here to take on a part time job.

Gerald had also thought about finding a secure job.

However, when he arrived at Merry City, he was surrounded by his enemies, which was when he lost his identity card and everything else he had on him.

Furthermore, Kort had sent various business tycoons out to sniff out about his whereabouts.

So, Gerald was forced to avoid places that were too formal and proper. Gerald had no other choice but to come to such places to hunker down.

He was given a taste of being a miserable and distressed homeless outcast.

“Raquel?”

Gerald also recognized this girl.

She was Marven’s girlfriend who practiced taekwondo.

A couple days ago, Gerald found out through the internet that following his downfall, Marven’s travel company came crashing down as well.

A perfect demonstration of a rippling effect.

“Hahaha! I really did not expect to bump into you here. Oh, why? I heard that the company that you share with that fatty has already closed down. I heard he’s working as a pathetic little tour guide now. Haha! Look at you! You’re even worse compared to him! To think that you’re working at a construction site owned by my hubby’s family!”

Raquel laughed with her hand over her mouth.

“Oh! Mr. Brown, Miss Raquel, do you know this young man?”

The foreman bowed as he asked respectfully.

“This has nothing to do with you! Move aside!” Raquel replied coldly.

The foreman hurriedly shuffled away.

After that, Raquel crossed her arms in front of her chest and sneered as she looked Gerald up and down.

“Man, I really didn’t expect to see you here. You used to be so cool back then. Too bad you had to end up in such a state. Or perhaps, you’re just putting on an act? Is this your twisted little hobby? To experience life as a penniless nobody?”

Raquel asked with a worried tone.

After all, Gerald had slapped her across the face once.

“If you’ve nothing else to say, I’m leaving.”

Chapter 880

When Gerald saw their employees staring in his direction, he was afraid that his identity would be discovered.

So, he wanted to leave.

“Why are you leaving? Don’t leave! After all, no matter what happened in the past, we’re at least acquaintances!”

Raquel grabbed Gerald by his collar.

More likely than not, Gerald had really turned into a pauper this time.

Hahaha! Raquel felt overjoyed and relieved to see him in such a pathetic state.

“Come! Come! I want all of you to take a good look at him! Let me introduce you to this young man, Mr. Gerald Crawford!”

Raquel said as she waved her hand at the employees working in the project department.

They were all sharply-dressed folks, with all of them sporting creaseless business suits.

They had obviously graduated from university not too long ago.

They covered their mouths as they giggled at Gerald.

“Oh my god! I would kill myself if I was forced to live like this!”

“That’s right! But isn’t he being really self-reliant? To think that he came out to look for a job for himself!”

However, as executives high up the pecking order, all of them obviously despised and looked down on Gerald.

“Don’t you look down on him! Have you any idea who he is? He used to be one of the ultra-rich, Mr. Crawford! He drove a luxury car that none of you will ever be able to afford in your lifetime!” said Raquel as she cackled away.

“Ahhh? Is that true? He was actually a rich man?”

“Tsk, tsk, tsk. How impressive!”

“I wasn’t able to tell though!”

The girls said as they laughed.

“Gerald, we do not have any other intentions but seeing the state you’re in right now, I believe that you do not even have a girlfriend anymore, right? Why don’t I introduce a few girls in our company to you then? Who knows, maybe one of them would be interested in you? What about you girls? What do you think?”

“What do all of you think about Gerald? Anyone who is interested in becoming his girlfriend?”

“Hahaha! Why don’t you go?”

The girls started laughing amongst themselves as they pushed one of the girls forward.

The girl who got singled-out started to sound rather anxious, “Why don’t you girls go instead? God, I hate you people sometimes!”

“Thanks but no thanks. Now, if you’ll excuse me!”

Gerald lowered his head as he turned around.

“Wait a minute! You haven’t resolved the issue about your wage yet, have you? I heard everything just now. You were arguing with Mr. Stone over your wage. I mean, it’s just two dollars anyway! We’re such a huge business, ain’t no way we’re underpaying you. Am I right, Mr. Brown?” Raquel said coquettishly.

“Of course! That is only natural!”

“So, I will settle your daily wage for you! I want you lot to cough up some change right now!”

Raquel spoke as she glanced at the few girls from the project department.

They responded in a blink of an eye.

It didn't take them long to come up with a large bag of five-cent coins.

“Here, sixteen dollars and not a single cent less. This is your wage for today!”

“Oops!”

Just as Raquel was about to hand the money over to Gerald, she dropped it all onto the ground.

The coins poured out of the bag immediately upon hitting the ground.

“So sorry Gerald, guess I wasn't holding the bag properly.”

Raquel said apologetically.

“You know what? Why don't you pick up the coins? You can calculate the amount at the same time! As they say, 'killing two birds with one stone'.”

After that, Raquel took a deep breath before she gulped down the bottled water that she was holding in her hand. She then threw the empty bottle at Gerald before she walked away.

Gerald knelt down before he carefully picked up the coins, one by one.

He placed it all back into the bag before he left the place. His lonesome, desolate figure receded into the distance.

As dusk arrived.

Gerald bought some food to eat.

He walked back to the village.

He kept walking and did not stop until he finally arrived in front of Finnley's house.

Gerald would come here after work every day to see if Finnley was back. But every time, he'd leave disappointed.

However, this time was different.

The door to Finnley's house was open and the lights inside were on.

Chapter 881

Gerald visited Finnley's house once in the past.

It was embarrassing to mention it but back then, Gerald felt that it was a little cumbersome to have Finnley by his side.

He wanted Finnley to be able to settle down at home.

However, Queta felt that it would be pitiful for Finnley to be left at home alone. Not to mention how fond Finnley was of Gerald, as reflected by how eager he was to follow him around all the time.

So, he brought Finnley back to live in the villa with him.

What a twist. The only person he could rely on now was Finnley.

Gerald ran into the house.

He saw a table full of delicacies on the table in the middle of the room.

“Uncle Quick? Are you here?” Gerald asked.

“Who is it?”

At this moment, a middle-aged woman wearing an apron came out from the room next door, holding a steaming-hot dish in her hands.

Gerald was taken aback.

“I...I am looking for Uncle Quick! Finnley Quick!”

The woman looked at Gerald, who reeked of sweat after toiling away the entire day and a look of disgust appeared on her face as she responded, Finnley has already gone up the mountain! He ain't back yet! Why are you looking for him?”

“Well, I have my reasons. I will wait for him to come back first. Since it looks like you’re expecting guests, I’ll be waiting outside the door!”

Gerald suddenly noticed that Finnley had gotten a pretty sweet deal for himself. Looks like he was able to get a wife for himself. If his memory served him right, before he left, Gerald left him a pretty big sum of money as pension.

However, Gerald felt too ashamed and embarrassed to ask about it. He stumbled out of the door and was about to wait by the doorway until Finnley came back.

“Hey, wait a minute! What is your name?”

The woman asked as if she had suddenly thought of something.

“Gerald Crawford!” Gerald replied.

“Oh! So you’re Gerald? We’ve been waiting for you for a few days now! He said that you’d come looking for him, so he asked me to welcome you and get you settled down. Still, why haven’t I seen you even though I come here everyday?”

“Uncle Quick knew that I was coming?”

“That’s right! He’d given me the instructions about a week ago. After that, he headed straight into the mountains! He told me that you are a rich young man! But you sure don’t look like one...hahaha!”

Gerald looked at his own clothes and he could not help but smiled wryly.

‘Was Finnley a psychic or something? How did he predict that I’d be in trouble?’ Gerald pondered.

But this was not the right time to be bothered with this now.

“You came at the right time. Finnley is coming back today. I’ve whipped up a table-full of dishes for him. Now that you’re here, hurry up and take a seat! You can have some tea first!” The woman said enthusiastically.

After chatting with the woman briefly, Gerald finally got the gist of things.

The woman came from the same village as Finnley. She requested for Gerald to refer to her as Aunt Maria. However, things weren’t as Gerald deduced. To be specific, Aunt Maria was not Finnley’s wife.

She was Finnley’s godsister.

Aunt Maria was a chatterbox.

She talked a lot.

As they spoke, he was told that something had really happened between Finnley and Aunt Maria.

This occurred around the time when Finnley first came back to the village.

Aunt Maria was a widow who was down with a severe illness and it was Finnley who saved her and got her ailment sorted out.

She could not understand how Finnley, who used to live such a carefree life suddenly became rich.

Saved by the hero, coupled with the fact that Finnley was actually a pretty decent man with above average qualities, Aunt Maria wanted to start a romantic relationship with him.

However, Finnley simply turned down her advances.

After that, Aunt Maria started treating him as her elder brother.

This was why she came to cook for the man today.

“Maria! Come and help me store these herbs I picked!”

A strong and loud voice came from outside the door.

As soon as Gerald heard the voice, he immediately knew who it was.

He stood up hastily.

“Uncle Quick?”

“My grandson? You are really here! How many days have you been here?”

Finnley was still the same as he had always been.

However, he looked a little neater compared to before.

Gerald assumed that it was Aunt Maria who forced him to dress up.

Chapter 882

Finnley's face looked rosier than compared to when Queta was taking care of him before this.

He was carrying a bag of herbs.

"I just arrived!" Gerald replied.

"Why, grandson? Things sure went tits-up didn't they?" Finnley asked as he chuckled.

"You can say that again!" Gerald replied, "I have nowhere else to go now, so I guess I'll be relying on you from now on!"

"Hahaha! I've already asked Maria to wait for you for a few days now! Judging by how you look, you must have suffered a lot in the past few days. Come, let's go. Maria has already prepared a table full of dishes. She's prepared it for you! Come in and have a little drink with your gramps!"

Finnley said as he patted Gerald on his shoulder.

"So, it turns out that the Moldell family had forced you into a dead end. What is wrong with the Crawford family anyway? Don't they have a lot of money? Did their balls drop off when facing the Moldell family?"

The two men started talking over wine and food.

Finnley was smoking a cigarette as he spoke in a light-hearted manner.

"Uncle Quick, how long have you known about the Moldells?"

The more Gerald interacted with Finnley, the more mysterious the man appeared to him.

No doubt, he knew a lot of things.

Finnley was very straightforward this time and he nodded slightly.

“I know a little about them, but as you young folks say nowadays, I can’t be bothered to know all the details about these second-rate noobs!”

“Second-rate?”

Gerald was startled.

“They’re a family made up exclusively by second-rate people. They are even referring to themselves as a hidden clan? Hmph! Clan my ass! Like hell they’re worthy enough to be considered a hidden clan, judging by how poorly they deal with matters.”

Finnley shook his head silently.

“I have seen how they operated. The Crawford family has a very tight-knitted defense and a long line of outstanding young masters. Which was why I was surprised to learn that Kort Moldell was able to break down the resistance completely while remaining largely unopposed with just a handful of his men!”

“Okay, okay, I get what you mean. Are the masters you mentioned similar to the brothers, Drake and Tyson? Hahaha! Could Drake and Tyson even be considered as masters? You ask them that and take a good look at their reactions!”

Finnley said as he waved his hand helplessly.

Gerald remained silent.

After a moment of deliberation, Gerald raised his head and asked, "Uncle Quick, do know about the Sun League?"

"The Sun League? Why are you asking me about this?"

Finnley was evidently surprised to hear Gerald mention the name.

So, Gerald proceeded to explain the ins and outs of the situation to Finnley again.

"I know a little about them. Listen, it's not like I'm looking down on you, or underestimating the Crawford or Moldell families, but something tells me that you should dispel these ideas and thoughts for now!"

"Why?" Gerald asked.

"At this point in time, the less you know, the better it is for you. Grandson, did you practice the five moves and the breathing technique that I taught you before this?"

Finnley asked with a smile on his face.

"Sure did!"

Finnley nodded and said, "What are your plans in the future then?"

Gerald sighed as he said, "I am penniless now and Kort's men are searching all over for me. There is nowhere that I can go so I'm seeking refuge at your place now!"

"Hahaha! You did the right thing, grandson! To be honest, even if you didn't come looking for me, I would have come searching for you sooner or later. This is our fate. So, you should just stay with me from now on. Sooner or later, you will understand why I said that the Moldells are just second-rate folks!"

Finnley patted Gerald on his head.

"Uncle Quick, I have another question!"

"Fire away!"

"Why did you find me in the first place back then? It could not have been because you felt like it, right?"

Gerald had always wanted to ask him this question.

"As I said, don't ask me such questions for the time being. When the time is right, I will tell you everything! For now, you can just stay at my place with peace of mind and learn from me then!"

"Learn? What is there to learn?" Gerald asked.

"Learn to be skillful! My silly grandson! Haven't you figured out the reason why you ended up in this state? If you had the appropriate skills, would you have allowed Kort to chase you around like a dog? I have already reminded you about this matter when I left back then!"

Finnley replied.

That's right. When Finnley left back then, he already told Gerald that money wasn't going to solve everything. He would have to be capable in other aspects as well.

However, Gerald did not have the time to pick up these "other" skills. He thought it was unnecessary.

It was only when Kort was hunting him down did he realize that aside from money, he had nothing significant that made up his identity in the past...

Chapter 883

"Uncle Quick, what do I need to learn?" Gerald asked.

"You have to learn everything that I know. You can slowly take your time. Gerald, your physique is actually not that bad. For the past seven days, I have been picking specific medicinal herbs for you to take a bath in so that you can recoup your strength and vitality. Besides that, I will also perform acupuncture on you. Don't worry! Under my guidance, it won't be long before you become a master!"

"You've been doing that for me for the past seven days?"

Gerald was really touched when he heard this sentence.

After all, his attitude back when he first met Finnley was not great. To think that the old man was willing to go to such great lengths just to help him. The man was actually concerned about his well being.

Finnley was not his biological grandfather, but Gerald felt that he was much closer to him compared to his own grandfather.

At this moment, there was nothing Gerald wished for more than to live up to Finnley's expectations.

So, Gerald continued staying in the village, learning all sorts of skills from Finnley.

In a blink of an eye, half a year had already passed...

In a secret room in the Crawford family mansion in Northbay.

“How is it? Still nothing about Gerald?”

In the past six months, Dylan seemed to have grown a lot older.

His hair was already turning gray.

Yulia’s face continued to be soaked in tears everyday.

“Master, I escorted the young master all the way to Salford Province back then. However, we came under attack in Salford Province. I stayed behind to cover Mr. Crawford and shield him from our enemies. All that I know is that he had already gone to a village to look for an old man whose last name is Quick. Miss Queta told me the old man’s address. I have already visited the place a few times but the house had already been vacant a long time ago and there were no signs that Gerald had ever been there before!”

Zack had not been idle in the past six months, instead, he had been scouring the continent in search of Gerald while remaining undercover.

Unfortunately, for the past six months, Gerald seemed to have completely vanished from the face of the earth.

“This is all your fault! If you were just a little stronger and more powerful back then, there wouldn’t have been the need for him to leave our family! We don’t even know if Gerald is dead or alive now!” Yulia said anxiously.

Jessica was also crying as she comforted her mother.

“Gerald has lost everything, including his identity card. Not to mention the fact that that bastard, Kort Moldell is searching all over for him! How do you expect him to hide then? Who knows, maybe he had fallen into his hands a long time ago?!”

The more she spoke, the more upset Yulia became.

“No! If Gerald had really fallen into Kort’s hands, then that bastard would have issued a threat already. He had been coming up with all sorts of excuses in the past six months but they’re nothing but excuses, right? Gerald would have become his bargaining chip because he knows that we would compromise and give in for his sake! In other words, it’s unlikely that Gerald has actually been captured yet,” said Jessica.

“Jessica is right. Don’t worry. I believe in our son. He will be fine. Queta, help your aunt back to her room! Let her get some rest,” Dylan said.

Tears were also streaming down Queta’s face. She nodded and said, “Yes, uncle!”

“Alright then. Resume your duties. I’d like to have some time alone!” Dylan said.

After they left, Dylan clasped his hands together and a worried expression surfaced on his face.

“Gerald, my child, where are you hiding? If I knew that this would happen, dad would rather go all out to fight against Kort than allow you to risk your life out there!”

Dylan's original plan was to send the strongest masters from the Crawford family to guard Gerald as long as he was out there. He would deny Kort any chance to strike out against his child.

That would not have been very difficult.

However, he had overestimated the strength and power of the masters that he had cultivated over the years, and he had greatly underestimated the strength and power of Kort's subordinates.

That night, six months ago in Merry City, if it weren't because of his subordinates risking their lives to save Gerald, his child would not have made it out alive.

Dylan clenched both of his fists tightly.

Despite how much money he had, he still found himself powerless against such an elusive foe.

'Why can't there be a way out of this!? Why!?'

"Master!"

At this moment, Dylan's butler, Fynn walked in.

"What's wrong?"

"Jett from the Moldell family is interested in the Mountain Top Villa that the young master bought in Mayberry City. He asks how much would you be willing to sell it for."

Chapter 884

"Kort's third son, Jett?"

Dylan clenched his fists.

“Yes sir, that’s him!”

“Hahaha! For the past 6 months, has there been anything that he did not want? Sell? Could he have been any more disrespectful? Tell him that we are not selling it!”

Dylan slammed his hands heavily on the table.

Although Kort could not come up with a valid justification to stop the Moldell family from assisting the Crawford family to track the Sun League, six months ago, he had asked his third son, Jett to join Parker’s team under the excuse that he should be gaining more experience.

However, upon Jett’s arrival, he had been trying to seize everything that he wanted by force and Dylan had been very tolerant of him all this while.

But this was the final straw.

“But master, Kort Moldell has had his eyes on the Crawford family for a long time now. If Jett is not satisfied and tries to cause trouble for us, it might end up in a disaster for us!”

The butler also replied helplessly.

“Okay, fine! Fine! Give it to them! He can have it if he wants it!”

Dylan waved his hand impatiently.

Something that was worth \$123,000,000.00 was nothing in Dylan's eyes.

Be that as it may, he was still infuriated by Jett's blatant show of disrespect.

But he had no choice, did he?

"How about it? Has Dylan agreed to it?"

A fancy-looking young man with his legs crossed was sipping his tea outside.

"Greetings, Mr. Moldell. The master said that since you're interested in it, he will give Mountain Top Villa to you as a gift. If you don't mind me asking, why did you even ask about buying it in the first place?"

Despite the butler's respectful tone, he felt the urge to eat the bastard alive.

"Okay! Very well! You know, credit where credit is due. Dylan Crawford is a man who understands the reality of things! I've got to give him that!"

"Brothers, let's go! Let's leave this boring place, and go to Mayberry City for a few days!"

Jett said as he walked away in an ostentatious manner in front of his men.

In a restaurant in a small town in Salford Province.

This was a restaurant that was similar to a farmhouse-converted-diner.

This was because it was located right next to a vast mountain.

There was a big river passing through the other side of the mountain.

It was indeed a beautiful mountain with crystal-clear waters.

So, many people from the so-called upper-class would often come here to travel and explore the area.

“No matter what it is, you have got to give me an explanation today! Do you know how expensive my clothes are?”

“That’s right! Ask your boss to come here! Wipe it? Maybe you’re sick and tired of living? Is that it?”

A woman in her thirties with heavy makeup on her face was holding onto a youth’s collar and she refused to let go.

She yelled loudly into his ear.

This was what happened. There were about seven to eight people in their group.

One glance was enough to tell that these weren’t your average law-abiding citizens.

When they came in to eat, a young waiter who was in charge of serving them accidentally splashed some of the vegetable soup on the woman’s body.

And things only went downhill from that point.

The main reason why there was such a huge ruckus was that they thought it would be easy and entertaining to bully the owner of this restaurant.

“I’m terribly sorry, please, let me wipe it off you!”

The youth apologized profusely as he came forward to wipe the soup off her dress.

Slap!

Unexpectedly, the woman slapped the boy across his face. “Damn it! Take your dirty hands off me! How dare you touch me! Berthold, look at how terrible his attitude is!”

The woman said in a rude, provocative tone.

She glanced at a burly man beside her, who had a dragon tattoo and a buzz cut.

Boom!

The burly man slammed his foot into the poor waiter’s stomach. The youth flew backward and smashed into the tables behind him.

There were many patrons at the restaurant, and they were all staring indifferently at the scene before them...

Chapter 885

“Brother!”

Suddenly, a girl with a ponytail ran out of the kitchen while still holding onto some vegetables.

She had seen the young man getting abused by their customers.

So, she hurriedly set aside what she was doing before running over to save her brother.

“Why did you hit my brother?”

The girl lunged over with tear-filled red eyes.

“Why did we hit him? Hmph! Look at this! He dirtied my clothes! What is wrong with your restaurant? How can you hire such a clueless waiter like him? He’s just asking for a beating at this point! Damn it! Tell me, what are you going to do now? If you don’t cough up some money as compensation, prepare to see your restaurant all smashed up!”

The woman said coldly.

“Don’t smash the shop! Please! I beg of you!”

The youth burst into tears as he groveled at their feet.

“Brother, don’t do that!”

The girl said anxiously.

The girl looked like she was just in her early twenties.

She was a hardworking and sensible girl.

That made it all the easier to bully this pathetic little family. The group of thugs got even more aggressive when they realized this.

The men behind Bertold started loosening their joints and cracking their knuckles, as they prepared themselves for a fight.

The people seated around them were also starting to get nervous. It was clear that these poor siblings were not going away without a beating. How pitiful.

“What’s wrong? Why is there a fight?”

At that moment.

A young man wearing a peaked cap arrived outside on an electric tricycle with a woman. They had obviously gone out to buy some supplies for the kitchen.

When the woman saw the fight that was going on inside, she hurriedly jumped off the electric tricycle and stormed into the restaurant.

On the other hand, the young man outside was still relatively calm and composed. He stole a glance at the folks inside the restaurant as he unloaded the supplies with a cigarette dangling between his lips. .

“Mom, they attacked him!”

The girl hurriedly said.

“Mom, they hit me!” said the young man as he continued sobbing away on the floor.

“Hunter, don’t be afraid! Mom’s here!”

“Who gave you the right to hit him?”

The woman felt very anxious at this time.

“Who gave me the right? Your imbecile son soiled my clothes for crying out loud!”

The woman replied with her arms crossed before her chest.

“They’re just clothes! I will compensate you! Tell me how much you want! Do you think you will get away with hitting my son!? Never! Why didn’t you ask around first? I, Maria, maybe a widow, but I’m not someone you’d dare to mess with!” yelled the young man’s mother.

“Fine! Optimistic aren’t you? I’ll tell you what this is! This is a Hermes product. A brand new one at that! I am wearing it for the first time today and it costs fourteen thousand dollars!”

The woman replied.

When Maria heard this, her arrogance faded away.

“How...how much is it? Fourteen thousand dollars? There are clothes that expensive?”

The annual profit for this farmhouse was only about eight or nine thousand dollars. Now they had to cough up fourteen thousand dollars just because somebody’s clothes had some vegetable soup on it?

Preposterous!

“Hahaha! A country bumpkin will always be so ignorant! I doubt that you’d even heard of the brand before!” The woman replied arrogantly.

Maria was left speechless.

After all, these people had a Land Rover G500 and a variety of fancy cars parked outside and they did not seem like any ordinary people.

She was caught between a rock and a hard place.

The onlookers all wore sympathetic expressions when they looked at the restaurant owner.

There was no other way around it. This was just pure bad luck.

As both parties were confronting one another, the young man wearing a peaked cap, who had been unloading goods outside walked into the restaurant.

He walked right up to the woman’s side. She was wearing a long one-piece dress.

He then grabbed the dress where her thigh was and started feeling the material of the fabric.

“Ahhh!”

The woman was so frightened that she screamed out in fright.

“You...what are you doing?”

Bertold was also pissed off. Cracking his neck, it was obvious that he was about to get into a fight.

“It’s a fake!”

The young man with the peaked cap said as he shook his head, “You’ve been cheated, m’lady!”

Chapter 886

The young man took off his peaked cap before placing it aside. After that, he flicked his burning cigarette butt out of the restaurant.

As soon as he took off his cap, everyone inside the restaurant could clearly see that despite his skinny physique, he gave people an intimidating aura, and also how handsome and delicate his face was.

When the woman heard this, she started acting more anxiously.

“You must be blind! This is a genuine product! No way in hell will a person like you be able to distinguish between a genuine and a fake product! Why don’t you admit that you guys aren’t going to compensate me! Looks like I’ll have to teach you a lesson today lest you forget how powerful I am!”

The woman glanced at Bertold as she motioned for him to go ahead.

Bertold and his men started advancing on the young man.

“Alright, that’s enough. I know that all of you are great people. However, it’s really a knock-off! Why would I possibly lie to you?”

As he spoke, the young man grabbed the woman's dress and tore it open.

"Ahhh!"

The woman started screaming out loud again.

"Take a look if you believe me. An authentic Hermes product is made out of raw materials that are treated with special care. But look at your dress. It is clearly made out of industrial cotton. You must have bought a counterfeit good somewhere, right? It costs three hundred and ten dollars at most!"

The young man said.

The woman wanted to scream into his ears.

However, she was stunned when she heard this.

Bertold, who was about to close in on him, was also stunned.

The both of them exchanged glances with one another.

This was because everything that the young man had said was right. This was indeed a counterfeit product that they had bought for three hundred and eight dollars at a discount sale.

"So, we can only compensate you three hundred and ten dollars at most!"

The young man said with a triumphant smile.

“Aunt Maria, bring three hundred and ten dollars here!”

“Aye!”

Maria nodded.

The young man handed the money over to Bertold.

Bertold felt embarrassed for being publicly humiliated by this young man in front of so many pairs of eyes. What ticked him off was the fact that he even took the opportunity to tear apart the dress of his woman.

How dare he point out so loudly that his woman was wearing a cheap knock-off dress!

If he were to leave without doing anything, then he, Bertold, would rather just be dead!

“Okay, young man. You have a good eye, I gotta give you that. However, even if it really was a knock-off, why did you have to tear my woman’s dress apart? I’ll turn you into a darned cripple for doing that!”

Bertold was fuming from the ears.

Without warning, he sent his fist straight into the young man’s face.

Boom!

There was a sound.

The young man grabbed hold of Bertold's fist directly.

And then, he tightened his grip on the fist.

"Ouch! That hurts! Let go of my fist damn it!"

Bertold yelled out in pain.

He was shocked.

He could easily lift this man off the ground but how could he possibly exert so much strength using his fingers alone?

"You want to fight? Then you should have just said so!"

The young man replied with a subtle smile.

After shaking his wrist slightly, Bertold's arms started clicking and bending upwards at a bizarre angle.

After that, the young man gave Bertold a slight kick and he was flipped onto his back effortlessly.

"Ouch! My arm!"

Bertold yelped in pain.

His subordinates were all dumbfounded.

Hearing all the painful cracks when the young man was grappling Bertold's fist made them realize how powerful this seemingly harmless man was.

Seeing how Bertold's body moved, they knew instantly that his arm had become dislocated.

None of them dared to move a muscle.

"It's okay. It will not hurt anymore after a while!"

The young man said as he squatted next to the big guy.

Bertold, who was yelling incessantly, looked at his horribly deformed arm before realizing that he wasn't feeling any pain anymore.

However, the awkward position his arm was bent into looked really frightening.

At the same time, he saw the young man smiling indifferently at him. Chills crept up his spine when he started realizing how creepy the man's smile appeared.

He started sweating profusely as he said, "You...what are you going to do to me?"

The young man smiled as he patted Bertold's shoulder. "Bertold, with so many customers around, there's nothing I can do to you. Weren't you asking for compensation? Come! Why don't we step outside and talk about it?"

Chapter 887

Bertold gulped in fear.

The woman was starting to feel fearful as well.

She was afraid that this young man would also break her arm just like how he did to Bertold's.

She followed behind the young man as they walked into the backyard.

They finally arrived in a shack in their backyard.

Thud!

The young man shut the heavy door behind them loudly.

The both of them shivered in fright.

But they had no other choice. After all, Bertold could not allow his arm to remain the way that it was.

"You better fix my arm for me. Or I'll not let you go. Why don't you go around and ask..."

Bertold wasn't going to lose his pride that easily. So, he continued speaking with a hostile look in his eyes.

"Okay, that's enough. I already told you that I know how powerful both of you are. So, let's talk things over!"

The young man interrupted him before he could finish speaking.

“Heh heh. As long as you fix my man’s arm, we won’t be asking for any compensation!”

The woman said.

Slap!

The young man slapped the woman across her face.

The woman collapsed onto the ground after receiving the slap.

It came so suddenly that it momentarily stunned her. She was in such a disoriented state that she remained on the ground, staring up with a baffled look on her face.

Without waiting for her man to retaliate, the young man proceeded to break Bertold’s other arm.

In the end, both of Bertold’s arms were completely deformed and he could only lay on the ground as he squealed in pain.

He had fear written all over his face at the moment.

“How would you like to talk things over?”

The young man asked with a hint of hostility in his tone.

“No...we are not discussing anything anymore! Just let us go! We do not want to discuss anything anymore!”

Bertold replied out of fear.

“What about the three hundred and ten dollars?” The young man asked.

“I will give it back to you. We...we do not want it anymore!”

There was nothing they could do to intimidate this young man at all!

This was not the first time that Bertold had come looking for trouble but he knew that this time was different. This time, he had actually dug his own grave.

“Alright then. Remember clearly that you are giving it up voluntarily. I did not force the both of you to do so!” The young man said.

“Yes, it is voluntary! We did it voluntarily!”

At this time, the young man pulled out the three hundred and ten dollars that he had given to Bertold just now, from his pocket.

“Besides that, the both of you hit Hunter outside just now. I don't care what you're gonna say, you should at least give us three hundred and ten dollars to cover for his medical expenses, right? We will have to bring him to the hospital to get a scan and so forth. As you can already see, the small clinic in our town is not that well-equipped. We will have to bring him to the county hospital and I'm afraid, it'll cost a lot more than that!” The young man said.

“We will compensate you. Three hundred and ten dollars! Just take it!”

“And also...”

The young man said.

“There is still more?”

Bertold who was struggling for his breath due to the pain asked.

Slap!

The young man slapped him across the face “How dare you interrupt me when I’m speaking.”

“I’m so sorry, please go ahead!”

“And also, when you were beating Hunter up just now, you broke our tables, chairs, benches, pots and pans. You’ll have to pay up a hundred dollars for that, but I’ll make it easier by rounding it up to one hundred and fifty dollars! Now, pay up!”

“We will pay! We will pay! Mate, please help me. I cannot stand it anymore. My arms feel like there are thousands of bugs gnawing at it!”

Bertold’s face was pale from all the pain he was experiencing.

“Alright then. You should have had this kind of attitude from the very beginning and we would not have needed to waste our time like this! Just because you have money doesn’t mean sh*t, alright?”

The young man said.

After that, he held Bertold down as he fixed his arms.

Miraculously, Bertold felt his arms recover and the pain fade away.

“I remember now! Big brother, I will remember that!”

Bertold replied as he broke out in cold sweat.

“We will go out and make up for the balance we owe you. Not a single cent less, I swear on my mother!”

Bertold helped the woman, who had barely regained her senses to get on her feet before they hurriedly got back into the restaurant.

“Bertold, are we really leaving just like that? I am not satisfied at all!”

The woman complained while sobbing.

Her expression was as if she was the aggrieved party here.

Chapter 888

Bertold grabbed hold of the woman’s arm and got her to shut up.

After that, he thought to himself:

‘Am I going to leave like this? Hahaha! He should ask around and see what kind of a person I am. I may leave today but come tomorrow, I’ll be here with more of my men! When night falls, I will raze this place to the ground. After that, I will capture the young brat and I will cut the tendons in his arms and legs!

Like hell I'm gonna let this slide so easily! Being impulsive will bring us nowhere. I can't fight the kid head-on, not right now at least. After all, I don't have enough men with me!"

"Bertold, wait a minute!"

At this time, the young man walked out of the room where they were tortured.

He waved his hand at Bertold.

"Ahh? Big brother, what's wrong?" Bertold said.

"Come back here. I forgot something!" The young man said.

Bertold walked back to him.

"I forgot something just now. I don't think I'll be relieved if I let you just leave like that, would I?"

"Big brother, what are you worried about? I have already gotten a taste of how powerful you are. I will not dare to mess with you, I swear!" Bertold replied.

Although the young man looked like he was around twenty-two years old, Bertold had no choice but to refer to him as his big brother out of respect and fear.

"You might not dare to mess with me now but what if you go back and mobilize more of your men? What should I do if you decide to come back and destroy our shop in the middle of the night? Will you let me go when that happens? Who knows? Maybe you'll end up severing the tendons in my limbs. I will end up being cripple for the rest of my life when that happens!" The young man said.

Bertold's eyes were wide open in disbelief as he stared at the young man with a dumbfounded look on his face.

F*ck! He can read minds now?

Otherwise, how would he be able to repeat the same exact thing that he had been thinking of in his mind?

Bertold felt even more petrified. He looked at the young man as if he was staring at the devil himself!

"Big brother, why would I do that? I would not dare to do so!" Bertold replied nervously.

"I will have to get some insurance, just to be on the safe sides!"

After he was done speaking, the young man grabbed both Bertold and the woman's cheeks before pinching their mouths open.

After that, he placed his index finger right inside their orifices.

"This...what is this? What did you feed the both of us?"

They were terrified.

"Twas a poisonous worm! Try feeling it now. Is there a slight pain in your stomach?"

"Ahhh?"

Their faces had already turned green.

They tried to feel it, as instructed by the young man. As he had said, they really felt a slight pain in their stomach!

“Big brother, please spare our lives! Please spare our lives!”

At this moment, Bertold and the woman began panicking.

“It’s fine. It will not take your life for the time being. On the contrary, it will actually be of great benefit to your body. For example, your kidney issue will return to normal in less than a month!”

The young man patted Bertold on his shoulder before he asked, “Do you feel a warm feeling in your kidneys now?”

Bertold took a moment to feel his kidneys before he started nodding, “Yes! Yes! I can really feel it!”

“Alright then. However, I have to warn you beforehand. Water can float a boat, as much as it can flood a boat. If both of you decide to retaliate, then this thing can also kill you at any time. It can gnaw away at your internal organs, and any type of medical procedure would not be able to save you at all!”

The young man’s face tensed up in seconds.

The both of them were so scared that their legs were already trembling in fear.

“Big brother, I understand now! I understand!”

The both of them nodded in unison.

“Alright then. Let’s go!” The young man said.

After that, the both of them walked to the front desk in panic as they put down eight hundred dollars on the table before they left with their men in a hurry.

“Don’t leave! Didn’t you say how impressive you were? Why leave now!?”

Maria yelled as she stood at the door with her hands on her waist.

She was laughing heartily as she counted the fat wad of bills.

“Gerald, this is all thanks to you! Hahaha! I made an extra eight hundred dollars today! I really have to depend on you when it comes to such unruly folks!”

Maria said with a smile on her face as she looked at the young man.

“Gerald, please tell us how you scared Bertold this time?”

That’s right. This young man was none other than Mr. Crawford from the past...Gerald!

Gerald smiled wryly before he told them the entire story.

“Hahaha! Did you really feed them a poisonous worm?” The girl asked.

“Of course, not. I simply pressed on a few of their meridian points before fooling them!”

Gerald replied in a hushed tone.

“Ahh! There is no other way to deal with people like this! Otherwise, they’d definitely come back at us in the future.

Gerald shook his head with a helpless expression. After that, it seemed as though a new idea had popped into his mind when he told them, “That’s right. I almost forgot something. I’ll be right back with you guys!”

As soon as he was done speaking, Gerald ran out and left on his electric tricycle...

Chapter 889

The girl had a different look in her eyes when she looked at Gerald’s back as he left.

“Ivy, what are you looking at?”

Maria could not help but ask when she noticed how distracted her daughter was.

“Ahhh? I was not looking at anything!”

Ivy pouted as she responded while shaking her head.

Maria was an expert in love and relationship matters when she was young. So, how could she possibly not know what her daughter was thinking about?

That’s right. Gerald was a dashing young man after all.

He had lots of incredible skills, and he treated everyone kindly too.

Indeed, not many girls would be able to resist a man like him.

Therefore, it was inevitable that her daughter would start having feelings for him.

However, Maria sighed as she said, "Ivy, a word of advice. You will never be able to be together with Gerald."

Ivy was initially planning to deny and refute her mother's words.

But when she saw her mother's resolute attitude, she immediately replied, "Why? Gerald does not have a girlfriend anyway!"

"Who said so? It is just that something happened to his girlfriend. I don't really know about the details of what happened exactly. However, Gerald used to be a very powerful man and he loved his girlfriend very much. I am only telling you this because I do not want to see you getting hurt!" Aunt Maria said.

When Ivy heard those words, a gloomy and desolate expression appeared on her face. After that, she turned around and went into the kitchen wordlessly.

Gerald was outside, apparently trying to fetch something.

For the past six months, Gerald had been staying by Finnley's side.

He was constantly soaking in medicinal herbs, practicing and improving his physical fitness all day long. He had also undergone several training regimes under Finnley's instructions.

Gerald had also gone on several missions as specified by his master.

A lot has changed in the six months Gerald spent under Finnley's guidance.

As for their relocation, Finnley wanted to facilitate Gerald's training in the mountains. So, that was the reason why they moved to the small town.

And since Aunt Maria did not have any relatives in the village, she used the pension that Gerald had given to Finnley in the past to open the farmhouse restaurant.

Aunt Maria was the one who usually ran the restaurant.

In the past six months, Gerald's skills and strength had improved significantly. He had thought countless times about going back home to see his friends and family.

It would not be an easy task for Kort to try and kill Gerald now, and it could even be said to be a very difficult task.

However, Gerald was now running solo. He was all alone and he'd be hopelessly outnumbered if he were to go up against the big and powerful Moldell family now.

Therefore, Gerald had been holding back his urges all this while.

The most important thing now was for him to improve his strength.

As for Finnley, aside from giving detailed instructions to Gerald in the first three months, he'd always be away from home. This also meant that Gerald would always be practicing by himself.

Three days ago, Finnley suddenly left without even saying anything after receiving a token.

Gerald was already used to it though.

After getting to know Finnley and spending more time with him, Gerald realized that Finnley was indeed a very mysterious person. The people he knew were all surprisingly influential, and weren't the type of people you'd expect the old man to be so well-acquainted with!

Shriek!

Gerald's bike rolled to a halt before a fellow young man.

"Fatty, where are the items?" Gerald asked.

"Fear not, Gerald! Marven Wadley always gets things done! It is all inside the bag!"

The chubby fellow was none other than Marven.

When Gerald bumped into him earlier, he was being bullied by a ruthless bunch of strangers, so as a friend, he had to step in and save his ass.

It just so happened that whenever Gerald was out to perform his tasks, he would try to fish for some extra profits. And Marven was the exact type of person who you'd look for when it comes to fishing for profits.

Marven patted his bag as he jumped onto the electric tricycle.

“We will have to get it done as soon as possible!” Gerald said.

After that, he headed directly towards the street where they sold antique items.

There was a foreign antique inside the bag. Gerald snatched it from a wealthy foreign businessman’s personal collection.

Of course, the businessman himself was also not a good person.

Gerald’s training largely consisted of such activities, which was to obtain through illegal means, items that were obtained in the same unlawful manner.

Gerald had no other options but to do what he did. He could not contact the Crawford family now, and since he desperately needed money, this was the next best thing he could do.

Chapter 890

The both of them entered the antique shop.

There was a tall girl with a head of long hair standing at the counter.

“Take a look at this. How much is this jade bracelet worth?” The girl asked.

Gerald raised his brows slightly when he heard the girl’s voice.

No way she’s here, right?

Furthermore, the girl’s back was facing the both of them.

Therefore, Gerald remained silent. Instead, he simply sat down at the waiting area next to the wall.

The shopkeeper was an overweight man in his fifties. He had a small beard and also a wretched look permanently etched onto his face.

He held the jade bracelet in his hand as he looked at it for a while.

After that, he shook his head and said, "The jade is actually pretty good. However, this type of jade is very common and its circulation rate on the market is very low. If you really are looking to sell it, then I can offer you five hundred dollars for it." The boss replied.

"What? Only five hundred dollars? But...but I looked it up on the internet and I saw that this kind of jade actually went for more than fifty thousand dollars! This is our family's heirloom that has been passed down from our ancestors!" The girl replied anxiously.

"Hahaha! What are you talking about? Over fifty thousand dollars? Miss, you looked like a reasonable person at first but your claim is downright ridiculous! Five hundred dollars is actually a very good offer already! You can't just believe what you see online!"

"Just take a look at your jade bracelet! See the polished spots? I don't think it's worth that much now that I've mentioned it. If you don't believe me, I happen to have a jade bracelet that is made out of the same exact material as your jade bracelet. I am selling it for one thousand and five hundred dollars but compared to yours, that jade bracelet has a much better color!"

The girl took the jade bracelet and examined it carefully. It was as he said, the material looked identical!

At this time, she said anxiously, "But boss, I need the money urgently. My mother is seriously ill and I am in urgent need of money right now! Can you give me one thousand and two hundred dollars for it at least?"

“Based on your accent, I can tell that you are not from Salford Province. You must be from the south, right? Why? Are you here to beg Master Jenkinson to treat your mother’s illness?”

The girl nodded.

“Sigh. As much as I sympathize with you, if I give you one thousand and two hundred dollars for it, I’d be suffering a huge loss. Why don’t we do this instead? I will give you another three hundred dollars for it. I will pay you eight hundred dollars for the jade bracelet. If that’s not enough, I don’t think how else I can help you!” The boss replied.

The girl thought for a moment. After that, she gritted her teeth and said, “Alright then. If you can give me eight hundred dollars, I’ll take it!”

“Hey!”

At this time, the girl who was feeling very disconcerted and upset suddenly felt someone patting her shoulder.

She turned around to see who it was that called out to her.

When she saw the boy standing behind her, the girl’s eyes lit up in delight.

She was surprised and overjoyed at the same time.

“Gerald?”

“Is it really you...Gerald!?”

The girl started jumping excitedly.

“Naomi! I almost didn’t recognize you!”

Gerald started patting Naomi’s head gently.

This girl was Naomi Milton.

Naomi’s hair was obviously much longer compared to how it was before.

And she seemed to have grown a little taller.

No wonder she sounded so familiar when he first stepped into the shop.

But before seeing her face and confirming his suspicion, Gerald refrained from exposing his identity.

Speaking of it, he had not seen Naomi ever since he left Mayberry City.

Six months flew by in the blink of an eye.

Naomi was his best friend when they were still back in university.

In fact, she was still his best friend now.

“I have not seen you in such a long time!”

Gerald said with a smile.

“That’s right, Gerald. I heard Felicity saying that something happened to you and that your whereabouts are unknown. What a surprise to see you here in Salford Province!”

Naomi said with misty eyes.

She then stepped forward and wrapped her arms around Gerald.

Gerald patted Naomi gently on her shoulder as he said, “I’m doing fine. Look at me, there’s nothing wrong with me, right? By the way, didn’t Felicity and you start a company together? Why are you...”

Gerald asked curiously.

Naomi wiped the tears off her face.

After that, she choked up and said, “Gerald, you might not know this but Felicity, she...something happened to Felicity!”

Chapter 891

“...What? What’s wrong with Felicity? What happened?” asked Gerald hurriedly as soon as he saw Naomi’s expression.

Tears flowing down her cheeks again, Naomi cupped her mouth with a hand as she slowly began explaining what had taken place about half a year ago sometime after Gerald’s disappearance.

While the Crawfords had easily prevented the first flow of news—about Gerald’s disappearance—from getting out to the public, eventually, people still managed to catch on.

From there on out, rumor after rumor began popping up and spreading around like wildfire. Some of the rumors claimed that Gerald was kidnapped. Bolder rumors even stated that he had been murdered!

With the rumors spreading around so quickly, it was only a matter of time before Felicity and a few other acquaintances of Gerald caught wind of it. Felicity and Naomi themselves had particularly been more anxious compared to the others.

Because of that, Felicity wasted no time declaring that she would get to the bottom of the incident. Since she had once fallen for him, it really was no mystery why she was this determined to look for him.

Still, what had truly happened to Gerald? And why did it have to happen to him?

Though the two girls remained in a panicked state for quite a while, in the end, Felicity decided to head to Northbay with Naomi.

They were well aware that they first needed a clearer picture of the whole incident before they could even begin investigating, and who better to ask than Chairman Lyle? After all, they both knew that he had returned to Northbay right after Gerald went missing. Because of that, Mr. Lyle was simply the obvious go-to.

Upon arriving there, the two girls quickly headed over to Zack’s company. To their dismay, however, they found that Chairman Lyle had already left for a business trip by then.

Seeing no other options, Felicity finally decided to make use of her best connections to aid with their investigation.

It took her a while, but she eventually managed to secure some help from a senior executive who

worked for Zack. After agreeing to meet at a hotel's lobby, the two girls headed over and waited for him.

Unfortunately for them, a young man happened to cross paths with them that day. Seeing how beautiful the two girls were, the cunning youth immediately tried hitting on both of them.

When that failed, he ordered his men to forcefully drag them out of the hotel instead! From the lustful gaze in his eyes, it was clear that r*pe was the only thing on his mind!

However, the two girls held their ground. They weren't going down that easily. Felicity eventually got so nervous that she bit down hard on the youth's arm!

The youth was so infuriated by this that he dragged her all the way to the top of the building—with his badly injured arm—before tossing her off from the roof!

The chain of events was so alarming that even the Crawfords were made aware of it, and though Chairman Lyle had rushed back as soon as he heard the news, in the end, he wasn't really able to help with much.

As it turned out, the youth in question held immense power and influence. Because of that, he didn't even receive punishment for his evil deeds!

Though she had selflessly planned to locate Gerald in any way she could, in the end, Felicity ended up in a position arguably as pitiful as Gerald's.

While Felicity's lifeline was stabilized after several nights of doctors tirelessly working to save her, she had simply suffered too many injuries. As a result, though she wasn't in danger of losing her life anymore, she could only exist in a vegetative state now, and she would remain in this state for the rest of her life.

As if things weren't bad enough, Felicity's company was disbanded soon after.

“Who exactly is this person?” asked Gerald, his tone frigid as he raised his head. While he was now filled with anger, he was also filled with grief.

After all, upon becoming Mr. Crawford, Gerald was well aware that he had both ignored and let a lot of people down.

Felicity was definitely one of them.

To his surprise, the two girls had actually been worried about him from the moment they had heard that he had gone missing. What more, the only reason why Felicity was in her current state was because she wanted to help him.

Wiping her tears away, Naomi replied, “I’ve heard others address him as Mr. Jett Moldell... Even when I asked Chairman Lyle why Jett didn’t have to take responsibility for his actions, Mr. Lyle completely ignored the question, telling me to quickly return to Mayberry instead.”

“Jett Moldell?” repeated Gerald as he felt his right eyelid twitch.

When he had previously enquired about it, Gerald learned that Kort had three sons. One of them was Jett.

“So it’s Kort and the Moldells again!” growled Gerald, clenching his fists tight.

Felicity wouldn’t have ended up this way if Gerald hadn’t been forced out of his own home in the first place.

Knowing that filled Gerald with immense resentment.

Chapter 892

However, upon seeing how sad and lonely Naomi looked, he instantly felt sorry for her. As a result, he was able to momentarily suppress his resentment.

“...Well... What about you, Naomi? What kind of illness is your mother suffering from?” asked Gerald.

“Well, after returning to Mayberry under Chairman Lyle’s protection, it didn’t take long for me to realize that my mom had contracted some sort of weird illness. Even after meeting countless doctors, nobody’s been able to cure her. As you can imagine, however, hiring doctors isn’t cheap... As a result, I ended up having to sell all of my family’s properties! It was about a month ago when all my resources finally ran dry. Having no other options, I came to the Salford Province to seek help from an uncle. During my time here, I found out that a famous doctor lives nearby! He goes by Master Jenkinson! However, since I barely have enough money to survive now, I can’t really meet up with him...” explained Naomi in an embarrassed tone.

Sighing, Gerald then replied, “To think that a single incident could cause such a massive ripple effect... Now even people acquainted with me have to share my burden...”

Guilt-ridden, Gerald then added, “It’ll be fine. Speaking of which, don’t pawn off this jade bracelet. After all, this person’s a liar! Such a bracelet is worth at least fifty-four thousand dollars! Regardless, I’m going to help find out what’s wrong with your mother and cure her.”

While Naomi was slightly confused to hear that, she believed that Gerald wouldn’t ever lie to her.

The boss himself seemed to give up after hearing Gerald say that.

“F*cking hell! You do realize you’ve ruined my business, don’t you?” said the boss angrily.

In response, Marvin sneered before whispering something into the boss’s ear. Seconds later, the boss’s face turned pale as he immediately shut up. For the rest of his duration there, he simply stood respectfully in place.

Knowing that Marven would know how to handle the rest, Gerald held Naomi by her hand and led her out of the place.

“Where’s your mother at?” asked Gerald.

“She’s currently staying up north at a hotel at the foot of Yorknorth Mountain... Do you know Master Jenkinson, Gerald?” asked Naomi in return.

“I do!” replied Gerald with a slightly bitter laugh.

“Speaking of which, what exactly happened to you in the past half year? Do you have any idea how worried all of us were for you?” said Naomi.

“Come, get in the car first. Your mother is our top priority now. I’ll tell you about it on the way there...”

Gerald didn’t really have any qualms when dealing with Naomi, so he found no reason not to tell her what truly happened.

Upon arriving up north, Gerald rented an electric tricycle and told Naomi to hop on. With Naomi sitting behind Gerald, both of them then rushed toward Yorknorth Mountain.

Since Gerald was quite close to Naomi, it was impossible for Gerald to just ignore her when he knew that she was in trouble.

Reaching the hotel shortly after, Gerald and Naomi were just about to get off the electric tricycle when they heard, “Hey! Isn’t that Naomi? Haha! She’s riding an electric tricycle!”

Turning to look at who had said that, the duo saw a few young men and women laughing at them as the group stood beside an Audi A6. Since the car’s doors were open, Gerald could only assume that they

were about to leave before they spotted him and Naomi.

“They’re from my uncle’s family, Gerald,” said Naomi as she lowered her voice.

“I see...” replied Gerald while nodding slightly.

Getting off the tricycle, Naomi looked toward the group of people before asking, “Why are all of you here?”

“Why, we’re here to cancel your room of course! We were just about to call you! Dad said that since you don’t even have the money to meet Master Jenkinson, why should we continue paying for your room? I’ll tell you now that this high-ranked hotel only permitted a poor person like you to stay here since they wanted to pay respect to the Legh family! You’ve humiliated our family enough for staying here for far too long! This ends today!” sneered a woman dressed in luxurious clothes.

“Indeed! Look, if you really can’t afford it, just bring your mom home already. As if you don’t already know that only those who are influential and powerful are able to meet Master Jenkinson. With the small amount of money you have left, you won’t even make it halfway up the mountain!” added another man from the group contemptuously.

When Naomi’s family was still considerably rich in Mayberry, her family had contacted the Leghs from the Salford Province quite often.

Because of that, Naomi had gone to them to ask for their help after selling off all her properties. They had taken her in at the time since they didn’t know she was already poor by then. However, it only took a day for them to realize what she had done with her family’s properties.

Fearing that Naomi would only continue burdening them, from that day onward, they began treating her terribly like how they had just done. That was the gist of how things ended up this way.

“Yeah! Besides, my dad was already kind enough to find a family here for you to get married to! However, you ended up refusing it. Sure, the guy’s a bit slow in the head but at least he’s rich!” said yet another woman without filtering her words.

“I know right? Still, it’s no wonder why you refused it back then. So you already have a boyfriend! However, to think that he only rides on electric tricycles to move around!” added another woman.

Listening to all their ridicules, Gerald could only shake his head while laughing bitterly. If this had happened in the past, he would’ve already humiliated them by now. However, he knew better than to succumb to standards as low as theirs.

Chapter 893

“Tanya! Mollie! You’re still here? Your grandma’s heading up the mountain now so come along and help!” said a middle-aged woman as she walked toward the group at that moment.

“Oh? Alright, mom! Let’s head there together then!” said both of the girls.

Seeing the two people who had just arrived, Naomi respectfully greeted, “Uncle, aunt...”

“Humph! So you’re here too?” said the woman in a contemptuous manner while crossing her arms.

At that, Naomi nodded before saying, “Is grandma meeting Master Jenkinson to have her illness diagnosed? Is she feeling alright?”

“Hold it right there!” said her aunt in shock when she heard her question.

“Ignoring grandma for the moment, I’m telling you now that Master Jenkinson charges patients individually! You better not be getting any ideas!”

From what she had said, it was clear that she was afraid that Naomi wanted to bring her mother along.

On the contrary, however, the thought hadn't even crossed Naomi's mind!

"Look, Naomi. Since you won't be able to afford the medical expenses anyway, just bring your mom home. Don't worry, we'll cover the hotel expenses for the previous nights," added the woman, her arms still crossed.

"That's quite enough of that. As for you, Naomi, it's better that you just head up and take care of your mom," said her uncle in a casual tone.

Just as he was about to leave with his children, an extended luxury car slowly came to a halt right in front of the hotel. When the car's door opened, a distinguished and polite-looking middle-aged man stepped out before looking at Jorge and asking, "Good day, sir. Is it right to assume that this is Yorknorth Mountain? The area where Master Jenkinson lives?"

Since Jorge was the president of several furniture factories in the Salford Province, he had seen enough of the world to know that the middle-aged man standing before him was an extraordinary person.

Knowing that, he then respectfully replied, "You would be correct."

"I see. Thank you for your time," said the man as he nodded slightly.

"Well, Mr. Duncan? Is this the place? Why isn't there any parking space here?" asked a young man wearing a blazer as he got out of the car together with a young woman.

The man was so handsome that as he walked over to Mr. Duncan's side, almost all the women present began breathing heavily. What a prince charming!

As for the woman who had stepped out of the car with him, she was both tall and slim. While she was

also extremely beautiful, the slight aloofness she projected on her face was enough to make anyone who looked at her feel slightly tense.

“Yes, this is the place,” replied Mr. Duncan with another slight nod.

As Jorge looked at the youth before nodding with a smile, both Tanya and Mollie—who were still standing beside their father—cast flirtatious gazes at the handsome young man instead. To their disappointment, he didn’t even take a glance at them.

“Whose electric tricycle is this? Move it aside so that we can park here!” said the youth as he loosened his tie while looking around before pointing at the tricycle.

Hearing that, the security guard standing at the hotel’s entrance immediately ran over and pushed the tricycle aside. As a result, the tricycle began moving on its own and finally stopped once one of its wheels hit a large stone.

Upon seeing that, Tania, Mollie, and the others simply snorted.

“You!” said Naomi angrily.

‘What was that supposed to mean?!’

However, Gerald simply pulled her back before shaking his head at her.

“Let’s get grandpa up the mountain already,” said the young woman rather aloofly.

With that, the two youths began supporting an old man out of the car. The old man himself had a sallow complexion as the group slowly began ascending the mountain.

“Come on, let’s head up together with them!” said Jorge to his own family.

As they left Gerald and Naomi behind, Naomi lowered her head with shame before saying in a resentful tone, “I’m so sorry, Gerald... Not only have I burdened you, but you had to suffer through that humiliation with me as well...”

“Hush, there’s no need for that. Now let’s head to your room to get your mother,” replied Gerald.

“...Huh? Where are we taking her?”

Chapter 894

“We’re taking her to Joshua Jenkinson to have him diagnose her illness of course!” said Gerald with a weak smile.

Gerald would’ve preferred treating Naomi’s mother himself if he could. However, he was well aware that it simply wouldn’t do to treat a patient in a hotel. Besides, he didn’t have that many herbs or medicine with him at the moment.

In the end, it would be much better and convenient if Naomi’s mother was treated at Joshua’s place.

“Huh? We’re seeking Master Jenkinson’s help now? But didn’t you say that you were no longer Mr. Crawford, Gerald?” asked Naomi curiously.

Naturally, she hadn’t meant anything else when she asked that question. She simply hadn’t expected that Gerald would still be able to maintain such connections in his current state.

“Haha! Just because I’m no longer Mr. Crawford, that doesn’t mean that all my connections are now useless! Now let’s get your mother up the mountain,” replied Gerald.

With that, the trio then began ascending the mountain.

Since Master Jenkinson was extremely famous, it was no wonder why his clinic was so crowded. Though he was well known for his skill, he was also infamous for rejecting some of his patients.

According to rumors, a large family once wanted to hire Master Jenkinson to be their personal family doctor. Though they even offered him an immensely high salary, Master Jenkinson still ended up turning them down!

“How much longer do I have to wait here? To think that I’ve spent a good seventy-seven thousand dollars just to have to wait in line!” said a rich-looking businessman in an anxious tone before sighing.

“Just be patient. There are people who’ve paid over fifteen thousand dollars just for the registration fee, you know?” replied someone from the line.

Master Jenkinson’s clinic was truly an extraordinary place. For one, the entire building looked like an antique clinic. Even the staff working there wore traditional attire that resembled clothes from the 1900s.

“We’ve spent almost forty-six thousand dollars yet we’re still only forty-fifth in place!” said Mollie as she made her way back to her family with a registration number in hand.

“I see... Well, the amount doesn’t matter...” replied Jorge with a somewhat bitter smile before sighing.

To think that the forty-six thousand dollars was merely for the registration number. They still had to pay a much higher fee for the diagnosis once it was done.

“Why do we need to pay just to line up here? And why are there people paying different amounts for the registration fee? I’ve noticed others paying fifteen thousand dollars, forty-six thousand dollars, and seventy-seven thousand dollars,” asked the cold woman from before.

“Well, it’s a lot like bidding... Essentially, the higher you pay, the faster you get to be diagnosed,” replied Jorge.

“Oh? Then what’s the highest amount one can pay?” asked the cold woman again.

“You can see it over there, beautiful! The top three clients have their names written there alongside their registration fees! Let me just go over and have a look... Holy cr*p! The highest registration fee ever made was two hundred and thirty thousand dollars!” said one of Naomi’s cousins who was obviously trying to please the woman.

“Thank you. Quest, go ahead and pay seven hundred and seventy thousand dollars at the registration area,” said the woman as she nodded slightly at the handsome youth.

“S-seven hundred and seventy-”

Somehow, the room was quiet enough at that moment for almost everyone to hear what the woman said. As a result, a massive uproar followed.

Soon enough, however, the noise died down again though everyone was now looking at her in astonishment.

Quest himself walked over to the registration area and swiped his debit card on the machine prepared there. Once the amount was paid, he returned with the registration number that had cost seven hundred and seventy thousand dollars.

With that, it was obvious that they were going to be first in line now.

“T-they’re so rich!” screamed several people in shock.

As everyone remained flabbergasted, Mollie—who had just so happened to turn around at that moment—suddenly said, “Mom! Look behind us! They’ve actually followed us up here!”

As Naomi’s aunt turned to look at the direction her daughter was pointing at, she anxiously said, “Oh my god! What are you doing, Naomi? Do you even know where you are right now? To think that you would actually follow us up here!”

‘Why on earth does Naomi and her family have to cling on to us like leeches?!’

Just as she was about to further mock Naomi, a staff member appeared before saying, “Our sincerest apologies, ladies and gentlemen, but the master can only diagnose two more patients today. Once that’s over, we’ll be closing for the day. Aside from the first two clients, the rest may leave and come again tomorrow.”

“...What? Did you just ask us to return tomorrow?” said Jorge, stunned.

The rest of the clients were left stupefied as well the moment they heard that.

“We won’t leave! We’ll just wait here till Master Jenkinson is ready to treat the patients again!” announced the people there, one after another.

“Please be considerate, ladies and gentlemen. Do understand that there are simply too many of you making a ruckus in here which isn’t good for our recuperating patients who are currently in the backyard.”

“Then we’ll quiet down... Besides, we’ve all already paid so much for the registration fee,” said a few businessmen there in aggrieved tones.

Naturally, this placed the staff member in a rather difficult position.

“They’re right. Since we had to pay to even be in line, we should all be considered VIP clients! Instead of asking us to leave, you should instead be chasing away those who didn’t pay to register! That should clear the masses quite a bit. We’ll be sure to remain silent as well,” added Naomi’s aunt.

Chapter 895

After saying that, she immediately looked at Naomi. Her action was clear enough for the staff member to instantly catch on to what she was trying to imply.

“Kind ladies and gentleman, could you please present your registration number to me?” asked the staff member as he walked over to Gerald’s group.

“We... We don’t have one...” said Naomi as she shook her head in embarrassment.

“Ah, then do head over there to pay for one,” said the staff member as his gaze grew slightly colder.

“We... Don’t have the money for that...” said Naomi as she bit her lower lip.

“What? Did they actually sneak into this place?”

“Hey now, take a look around you! Why would you even come here if you don’t have any money?”

“That’s right! Such a beautiful girl too... Too bad she behaves this way!”

Several of the businessmen in the lobby were now shaking their heads with disapproving smiles on their faces.

“G-Gerald, Naomi... Why don't we just leave for now?” said Naomi's mother as she tugged on her daughter's sleeve. After all, she was well aware that she was just making things difficult for both Gerald and her daughter.

“There's no need for that, Madam. Just leave it to me,” replied Gerald as he turned to face the staff member before glaring back with his own cold gaze.

“I'm sure you're new here, so I'll let it slide. Ask for Joshua Jenkinson to come out! Tell him that a young man with the surname of Crawford is looking for him!”

“Wha- Y-you... How dare you address the master by his name?! What do you mean by Crawford? You... You rude person, you!” replied the staff member in his shock.

The other businessmen in the room shared the same feeling as well, and they were all looking at Gerald now with dumbfounded expressions on their faces.

“F*ck! Just look at this guy! If Master Jenkinson ends up being infuriated by his rudeness, then nobody is going to be able to meet him today!” said Mollie aloud. She seemed to be enjoying fueling the flames.

Hearing that, the others in the room immediately grew angry.

“She's right! Where did this guy even come from? How utterly rude!”

Even the aloof woman and old man from earlier were now looking at Gerald.

“He truly is asking for it, isn't he!” said Quest as he sneered before walking over to Gerald.

While the old man and the woman clearly knew that Quest was looking for trouble, they didn't stop him. Perhaps they subconsciously felt that the fearless Gerald needed to be put in his place.

“Hey, you’re the b*stard who was riding the electric tricycle, weren’t you? If you’re penniless, then just get lost already! Stop disturbing those who want to meet the master to get diagnosed!” shouted Quest as he pressed his hand down hard on Gerald’s shoulder.

As Gerald looked at the hand on his shoulder, he said, “Move your hand away if you don’t want to regret it.”

Upon saying that, his calm aura was immediately replaced with a frigid coldness.

“Regret? Haha! I’m afraid you don’t know what I do for a living!” sneered Quest as he began intensifying the force of his palm.

To his surprise, he was only able to realize that Gerald had tilted his shoulder slightly before a sickening crack could be heard.

The sound that followed was the anguished cries of pain from Quest.

He immediately retreated from where he once stood as he held on to his pulsing hand while shouting, “M-my hand!”

Quest appeared to be in great pain as cold sweat dripped down his forehead. When he finally took a look at the condition of his hand, he could see that all his veins were bulging so much that they almost looked like earthworms.

“I... I’ll break your limbs!” roared Quest, feeling that he had just been greatly humiliated.

Just as he was about to pounce on Gerald, the ill old man shouted, “Quest! Stop, right this instant!”

Though Quest hadn't realized it, the old man had already caught a glimpse of the back of his pulsing hand. Upon seeing the damage that had been done, the old man was filled with a mighty fear.

After all, he knew how strong Quest was. He was also well aware that Quest was proficient in fighting alone. Even if three specially trained soldiers were to face him, they'd surely be the ones losing terribly.

Despite all that, all it had taken for Gerald was a slight tilt of his shoulder for Quest to get hurt so badly. If that was the only thing Gerald needed to do to inflict so much damage, then the old man didn't even want to imagine how strong Gerald truly was.

"Step down I said!" ordered the old man again.

Even the aloof beauty who had been staring at Gerald for a while now had a slight frown on her face.

"I apologize, sir... My grandson was truly rude earlier..." said the old man.

As soon as his sentence ended, however, he instantly began coughing terribly.

Chapter 896

"Grandpa!" shouted both Quest and the cold beauty nervously.

"I'm fine. Sir, I'm willing to let Master Jenkinson diagnose the ill person from your group first. I can wait," said the old man, much to everyone else's surprise.

"...What? But why, grandpa? Why the hell should we let him go first? Who the hell even is he?!" growled Quest angrily.

"I appreciate it. After all, Joshua probably can't treat a terminally ill patient," said Gerald in a casual tone without any intention of being nice.

“...Y-you!” shouted both Quest and the beauty in rage.

Even the old man bore a rather ugly expression on his face at that moment.

“While I admit that you certainly are very powerful, you should watch your mouth and manners. I don’t really mind since I’m already this old, but if you say such things to others, trouble will definitely come your way,” said the old man, lengthening his words to express his clear dissatisfaction.

With daggers now drawn from both parties, the staff member—who had been watching all this unfold from the very beginning—immediately ran to the backyard.

“It’s fine, Gerald... I don’t need to see the doctor anymore... Please... We can’t afford to offend them...!” said Naomi’s mother who was getting increasingly frightened.

Meanwhile, a middle-aged man—who looked to be almost fifty—rubbed his hands with a towel within a room lit only by an oil burner.

As his patient left the room—that was located in the inner part of the building—after receiving his diagnosis, the staff member from earlier came running in while shouting, “M-master! A fight seems to be imminent in the lobby!”

“What? How dare people create trouble here! Kick all the people involved out!” ordered the man coldly. The man in question, was none other than Joshua.

“Before that, master... I must say that one of the parties involved with the fight is quite noteworthy. Their family name is Westley and they’re quite generous with their money. They paid seven hundred and seventy thousand dollars alone for their registration!”

“Westley?” asked Joshua with a cautious tone. Linking that surname with how lavish they were, Joshua was able to slightly get the gist of the situation.

“...Humph! I guess I’ll have to head out there myself now! Who exactly was foolish enough to offend the Westleys?” asked Joshua as he wiped his face.

“It was a poor, young man, master! Not only did he not pay for the registration fee, but he even talked big and wanted you to meet him in person! He’s strong too so I was hesitant about kicking him out... Regardless, if I remember correctly, his surname was Crawford!”

Upon hearing that, the towel Joshua was holding on to immediately fell to the ground.

“...What did you say his surname was? Crawford? You said he was a young man, right?” asked Joshua, expressions of both shock and fear on his face.

“Y-yes!” replied the staff member, clearly starting to feel frightened.

“...Could it actually be him?” said Joshua in a nervous tone before immediately running toward the lobby somewhat excitedly.

“He’s definitely ruined now! Not only did he offend Master Jenkinson, but he’s also offended such a high-status rich heir! ”Hah! Let’s see how miserable he’ll end up becoming!” sneered Mollie.

“Indeed! We probably won’t be able to meet Naomi in the Salford Province ever again after this!” added Tania smugly.

The moment her sentence ended, several of the clients there began shouting, “Master Jenkinson!”

Joshua had finally made his appearance and his gaze was now locked on the spot where the two parties

were still facing off.

Strangely enough, he looked more excited than anything as he quickly made his way toward Quest.

“God d*mn! I wonder what kind of power they truly have for Master Jenkinson to be this excited!”

“I know right? It’s so strange seeing him like that!”

While the others were surprised by how eager Joshua looked, their jaws truly dropped wide the moment they saw him walking past Quest and his family.

He was now standing before the poor guy! As if that wasn’t shocking enough, Master Jenkinson immediately bowed before Gerald before saying, “Greetings, senior!”

Chapter 897

“...Senior?”

Everyone now had their mouths gaping wide. The mighty master, Joshua Jenkinson... Did he really just call that pauper his senior?!

While even Naomi was slightly surprised, the ones who were left the most stupefied were those from the Legh family.

“Good day. I just came here today to borrow your place for a bit,” said Gerald in resignation. Though he wasn’t sure whether he should’ve let Joshua address him as his senior, it was too late for Joshua to retract the title anyway.

“By all means, please use my facilities as you see fit, senior!” replied Joshua with utmost respect in his voice.

As Gerald, Naomi, and her mother moved on, those from the Westley family could only look at each other in dismay, deeply shocked.

Just as the old man had thought, the youth truly was extremely extraordinary.

About half an hour later, Naomi was anxiously pacing to and fro outside a guest room door. She had been sweating profusely from the moment Gerald and Joshua had entered the room with her mother.

“Humph! I just can’t bring myself to believe that that guy actually knows how to treat illnesses!” growled Quest as he crossed his arms.

Aside from Naomi, the three Westleys were waiting behind her as well.

Quest’s dissatisfaction was clear as day. After all, not only had he been humiliated by Gerald in terms of strength, but as it turned out, Gerald was also proficient in treating others!

Since he was used to being arrogant and ruthless, the embarrassment he suffered today had no doubt left his pride in shambles.

“Shut up!” said Master Westley coldly in response.

Bob had simply assumed that Gerald was being rude when he was earlier told that Master Jenkinson wouldn’t be able to cure his illness.

However, from the moment he heard Master Jenkinson addressing Gerald as his senior, Bob Westley began fearing that what Gerald had claimed was true. That even Master Jenkinson wouldn’t be able to help cure him.

It was due to that fear that Bob had waited respectfully for Gerald outside the guest room.

The moment Gerald stepped out, Naomi immediately rushed over to him before asking in an anxious voice, "How's my mom's condition, Gerald?"

"She should fully recover in three months if she takes her herbal medicine as prescribed," replied Gerald with a smile.

"Thank god... Speaking of which, when did you learn how to treat illnesses?" asked Naomi, feeling both delighted and surprised. After all, the Gerald currently standing before her felt almost foreign compared to the one she used to know.

"It's a long story. I'll explain it to you if there's a chance for me to in the future. For now, go on inside and have a look at your mom," replied Gerald.

As soon as he said that, Joshua himself stepped out of the room with a needle bag in hand. From the looks of it, it was evident that Gerald had been the main doctor this time around. At most, Joshua must have only assisted him throughout the half-hour period.

"Senior, please!" said Joshua respectfully while handing the bag of needles over to Gerald.

Looking back at Joshua, Gerald could only sigh internally.

It was about five months ago when he had first met Joshua. At the time, Finnley was still busy teaching Gerald all his medical and martial art skills.

The old man had even given Gerald a medical book, and Gerald was told to memorize all its contents. Since he was excellent at learning, it wasn't difficult for Gerald to completely grasp the concepts within that book.

In fact, all it took was a month for him to be able to recall the contents of the medical book by heart. However, though his theory was strong, his actual skill in handling medicine was far from perfect at the time.

Joshua first made his appearance around then.

From the way Joshua had begged Finnley to take him in again, it seemed that the old man had once taught medical knowledge to Joshua sometime in the past.

It was clear that he simply wanted to deepen his knowledge and skills, and he was extremely persistent. After kneeling outside Finnley's house for an entire day and night, the old man simply couldn't bear seeing him like that.

As a result, he told Gerald to teach Joshua some of the contents in the medical book. Finnley had hoped that by doing so, Gerald himself would be able to master the basic application skills.

While he allowed Gerald to educate Joshua for about a month, Finnley himself never took Joshua in as his apprentice. Due to that, Joshua habitually addressed Gerald as his senior even though Gerald told him not to.

"Mr. Crawford! Master Jenkinson! Both of you have worked hard!" said Bob respectfully as he approached both men.

"I'm sure you've already heard from my senior earlier but just to clarify, I'm aware of your illness, Master Westley. Even so, I have to admit that I truly am incapable of curing you," replied Joshua rather ashamedly.

Chapter 898

"I did indeed hear that, yes. However, since Mr. Crawford was able to notice my illness with just a simple glance, I'm sure he has a way to cure it!" said Bob, a faint smile on his face.

"I apologize, but I'm no doctor. I don't have the qualifications to treat you," replied Gerald.

Since Gerald was now still susceptible to outside dangers, he was trying his best not to be overly conspicuous. It hadn't crossed his mind that Bob would actually wait for him right outside the guest room.

"Hey, now! Have some self-awareness! Are you even aware that my grandpa's never begged anybody for help? He's even addressing you as Mr. Crawford out of respect! At least try to help him out!" growled Quest coldly.

Hearing that, Gerald turned to look at the youth with a frown on his face.

"Don't be rude, Quest!" scolded Bob.

"I'm terribly sorry Mr. Crawford... If my grandson's rude behavior offended you, I'm willing to apologize for his sake..." said the old man as he slowly began bowing.

Both Quest and the aloof beauty were immediately stunned silent. They had never seen their grandpa behaving this way.

Before Bob could properly bow, however, he was stopped by Gerald.

"I'll let it slide, Master Westley. Since we ended up getting acquainted with each other, I'm sure that fate has a role in all of this. I'll have a look at your illness though I won't promise positive results," replied Gerald.

Gerald had realized by now that since it would be inconvenient for him to look for members of the Crawford family, he may as well use this chance to get to know more distinguished people. After all, it

was near impossible to make any progress without the aid of large families.

With any luck, he would be able to gain enough forces and influence to deal with the Moldell family properly in the future.

“T-thank you so much, Mr. Crawford!” said Bob happily.

“Before you thank me, I need you to agree to two conditions,” replied Gerald.

“Name them. I’ll definitely fulfill them!” declared Bob with a firm tone.

“They honestly shouldn’t be too difficult for you to fulfill. First off, is regarding my identity. I’ll just say that it’s currently inconvenient for my identity to be exposed to the public. I need you to keep it a secret.”

“Of course!”

“As for the second condition, I need to head to Mayberry in a few days. I need a smart, capable, and obedient person to be with me there at all times. Highlight the word, ‘obedient’ since the person you assign to me needs to listen to all my orders.”

“Humph! If it’s just a servant you want, the Westleys have plenty of them... As long as you’re able to cure my grandpa, I’ll personally give you a luxurious house with at least fifty maids and servants who’ll heed your every command!” sneered Quest.

“I don’t require a luxurious residence, nor do I have a need for that many servants. Still, I can see that you’re quite smart and capable yourself, Quest... I wonder...” said Gerald as he smiled faintly while looking at the boy.

“...What? You can’t seriously be telling me to serve you! Are you out of your mind? I’m the young master of the Westley family!” replied Quest, obviously finding Gerald to be more ridiculous than he looked.

“He’s rather reckless, but he’s definitely a smart man. I was honestly having the same idea!” added Bob as he laughed loudly.

“...Wait, what? Grandpa?! Sister...!” said Quest, suddenly sounding much more dispirited than before.

“You’ll be staying by Mr. Crawford’s side from now on, Quest. Be sure to obey his every command, regardless of whether it’s hard work or not,” said Bob.

“But why me...”

“Why, you ask? Are you really daring enough to disobey me now?” replied Bob, a hint of anger in his voice.

Gnashing his teeth, Quest then replied sulkily, “Fine, I’ll do it for you, grandpa...”

After hearing Quest’s involuntary agreement, Gerald nodded and brought Bob into another room.

“Is that young man truly capable of curing my grandpa, Master Jenkinson?” asked the aloof woman as she watched the room’s doors close. She simply felt that Gerald was too young to be this capable.

“Haha! Miss Quinley, you don’t have to worry at all. Since my senior didn’t flat out deny curing him, there’s definitely a possibility of it happening! Besides, both of us share a master. Quite frankly, I used to be a gangster. After meeting my master, however, it only took a month for my master to completely change my ways. During that period, I was exposed to a lot of medical skills and knowledge. Sadly, I only got to learn a little over the basics.”

“Senior, on the other hand, was taught the entire quintessence of our master’s knowledge. He’s practically a professional by now. He stayed with our master for half a year and my master even taught him in person every day, you know?” explained Joshua rather enviously.

“Who exactly is your master?” asked Quinley rather curiously.

“Can’t say anything about that!” replied Joshua, shaking his head.

It was about two hours later when the guest room’s doors finally opened again.

Chapter 899

“Grandpa!” said Quinley as she ran over to him.

“After you, Mr. Crawford,” said Bob, sounding very pleased as Gerald walked out first.

While only two hours had passed, Quinley could tell that there was already a great change in her grandfather’s complexion.

“You don’t have to worry, Quinley. As expected, Mr. Crawford was able to find a way to cure my illness. According to him, I’ll be able to fully recover soon,” explained Bob, his tone even more respectful now.

“I’ll congratulate you in advance then, Master Westley. Speaking of which, since he managed to help you, I wonder if you’d be willing to do him another favor...” said Joshua.

“Oh? Is there anything else I could help you with, Mr. Crawford?”

“Though he didn’t include it in his terms, he’s actually looking for an extremely rare herb in the southern border of the Salford Province. The herb itself is called the Ginseng King, and senior has been searching for it for a long time now. If you manage to locate it, I’m sure it would help him greatly,” added Joshua.

Upon hearing that, Gerald raised an eyebrow slightly.

To think that Joshua had actually beaten him to asking Bob about the Ginseng King. In truth, Gerald had been planning to ask the exact same thing to Master Westley if he had managed to cure him. It was honestly another reason why he had agreed to help Bob in the first place.

After all, though he had previously gone to the southern border of the Salford Province to look for the Ginseng King, he had realized back then that the search wouldn't yield any results if he was the only one looking for it.

Gerald was searching for it since Finnley had told him before that consuming the Ginseng King would greatly increase his body's strength and bloodline in general. Once he ate the herb, he would theoretically be as much of a threat to the Moldells as Finnley currently was.

Even so, based on his current capabilities and strength, it wasn't really a problem for him to defend himself. Gerald was honestly more worried that the Moldells would decide to attack his family living in Northbay instead.

After all, if that were to truly happen, it would only be a sign that he was still far too weak and incapable of protecting the Crawfords. To prevent that, he needed the Ginseng King to ensure that he would be strong enough should the Moldells ever launch an attack on his family.

Regardless, Joshua knew that Gerald was looking for it since he had also been present when Finnley explained about the Ginseng King. It touched Gerald slightly to know that Joshua still remembered that incident.

"So you're looking for the Ginseng King as well, Mr. Crawford. While I had planned on looking for it myself, I gave up about two years ago since I couldn't find it no matter how hard I looked. What more, I heard that should ordinary people consume the herb, it could very easily cause their blood circulatory system and physical strength to plummet," said Bob.

“However, since I’m already cured and you need it, consider it to be less a favor and more of an act of gratitude from the Westley family. Upon returning home, I’ll immediately form and order a group to begin searching for it on your behalf.”

“I greatly appreciate that, Master Westley,” replied Gerald in a grateful tone.

“Now that that’s settled, I’ll be leaving for the southern border of the Salford Province to prepare for the task. As agreed upon earlier, Quest himself will temporarily be staying by your side,” said Bob.

It was a little while later when Naomi was about to check out of the hotel. As she held onto her luggage bag, she turned to look at Gerald before asking, “Could we head back to Mayberry together, Gerald?”

Naomi had asked since she had heard that he was returning there anyway to resolve some issues of his.

“Yeah, of course we’ll head back together,” replied Gerald with a smile.

Mayberry wasn’t the only stop on his mind. He planned to return to Northbay to check on how things were going as well. However, Northbay could wait.

His priority was Mayberry since Jett—the third young master of the Moldell family who had also hurt Felicity so terribly—was last seen in Mayberry from what Naomi had told him.

After suffering so much for him, Gerald knew that he would have endless restless nights if he didn’t avenge Felicity.

“That’s great to hear! We can now look out for each other!” said Naomi happily.

“Speaking of which, just leave your luggage here. Quest can take them down,” said Gerald as he pointed at the youth who was currently standing at the side with both hands in his pockets.

“Wait, why do I have to carry them?” asked Quest in disbelief that he had been ordered to do such a thing.

“What? Are you disobeying me already?” replied Gerald with a stern gaze.

Suppressing his anger, Quest then said, “Fine, I’ll take them! What’s the big deal anyway...”

After saying that, Quest then began carrying the luggage down in between huffs.

Since they were leaving in Quest’s car, he was obviously going to be Gerald’s personal driver for the time being as well.

However, the moment they entered the car, Gerald shouted, “Hold on a minute!”

“What is it this time?” asked Quest rather impatiently as he saw Gerald looking out the car’s window.

Chapter 900

Looking at the same direction Gerald was, Quest saw that a team of similar-looking cars had just parked at the foot of Yorknorth Mountain. Upon squinting his eyes, he realized that Gerald was looking at two women who had just gotten out of one of the cars.

Seeing how stunned Gerald looked, Quest placed a finger under his chin as he said with a hint of interest in his tone, “Humph! You’re a grown-up, aren’t you Mr. Crawford? Are you going to tell me now that you’ve never seen beauties before? Though I have to admit that those two women are particularly stunning.”

“Hush!” replied Gerald, his gaze stern as he continued looking at the two women.

Gerald really hadn't expected to bump into the two girls here of all places. The two beauties were in fact his old acquaintances, Jasmine and Mindy.

He hadn't met the two girls from the time he had bid farewell with them about half a year ago in the Salford Province.

After all, after the incident at the Fenderson family mansion, his father had told him that he was contractually bound to have a marriage with Jasmine. Upon finding out that his grandfather had been the one to sign the contract, Gerald could only feel helpless back then.

However, he understood his grandfather's motive. It was the trend back then to have strong alliances, after all.

Snapping out of it, Gerald then told Quest to stop the engine.

His intent wasn't to continue spying on them, nor was it for him to greet and catch up with them. The truth was, Gerald had noticed two figures seemingly stalking both Jasmine and Mindy from a distance. The stalkers were simply too suspicious for Gerald to ignore.

"Are you done looking at them yet, Mr. Crawford? They're already ascending the mountain," said Quest.

"I'm waiting for them to go a bit higher. Just wait here in the meantime."

After making sure that the two girls had ascended quite a distance, Gerald silently got out of the car and began inching toward the two sneaky people.

"F*cking hell! Is he actually planning to catch up with the two beauties to have a chat with them?" said Quest in resignation.

He then looked at Naomi before saying, "...Wait here, I'll go over there to see what he's up to."

With that, he walked up to Gerald.

Noticing that Quest was coming his way, Gerald waved at him before saying, "You came at the right time. See those two over there? They seem to be proficient in martial arts. I need you to taunt them. Once they start going after you, lead them to that corridor over there."

"What exactly are you hoping to achieve?"

"Just do it! Quickly!" ordered Gerald as he pushed Quest forward.

Seeing that he didn't really have a choice, Quest stood before the two men, shouting all sorts of profanities to get their attention. Gerald himself quickly got into position.

While it was true that he was now meddling in the affairs of both Jasmine and Mindy to a certain degree, Gerald wasn't doing it for the sake of it. He wasn't doing it because of the marriage contract his grandfather had signed either.

Rather, he was only doing this for his aunt and Queta's safety. After all, they too were members of the Fenderson family.

Since those from the Fenderson family could now be considered to be relatives and in-laws to the Crawfords, Gerald doubted that the Schuylers—the Fenderson family's former enemies—would even dare do anything bad to them. Knowing that made him even more curious to find out who the stalkers were working for.

As was expected, Quest was the prime candidate when it came to taunting. It didn't take long for the

two stalkers to begin chasing after him.

Upon running into the corridor, however, one of them immediately sensed that something was wrong and shouted, "Hold it! We're being lured into a trap!"

Just as both men turned around to retreat, a dark figure flashed past them.

Before either of them could even react, the figure launched an extremely fluid motion. It took a second for them to realize the searing sensation on their chests. The pain was so great that it didn't take long for both men to start screaming in agony as they fell to the ground.

"Y-you... Who are you...? Do you even know who you're dealing with...?" warned one of the men as he held onto his chest while trying to get up.

In the end, however, both of them weren't even able to sit upright, let alone stand.

"I have no idea who you are, but know this. If you don't answer my questions honestly, you won't make it out alive," said Gerald coldly as he slipped a hand into his pocket before squatting down to take a closer look at the two stalkers.

Hearing that, both of them felt immense chills running down their spines. Chapter 901

Immediately after saying that, Gerald lifted both of his hands and stuffed something into their mouths!

"W-what did you just feed us?!" sputtered both of them, stupefied by the turn of events.

It didn't take long for the two men to realize that whatever it was, it hurt like hell. The effects were almost instantaneous as both men began holding on to their stomachs and rolling on the ground in pain, agonized expressions etched deeply on their faces.

Quest himself—who had been standing silently at the side this entire time—was left petrified as he watched them squirm in pain.

“Just poisonous worms. Do understand that the worms are probably already devouring your organs as we speak. It won’t be long before the agony ends and you’ll both be dead,” said Gerald with a cold smile on his face.

“P-please spare our lives! P-please...” begged the men.

“Only if you answer all my questions. First off, why were you stalking the Fenderson sisters? Which family do you belong to?”

While both men had sworn never to reveal the answers to those questions regardless of how much they were tortured, what they were experiencing now was already much worse than anything they could have ever imagined. A quick death would be better than what they were currently feeling!

“W-we were... sent here by the Schuyler family! We’re Master Yael’s subordinates...! Please... Please spare our lives...!” said the men as they lay twitching in pain on the ground.

“So it really is the Schuylers. What wicked things are they plotting up this time?” asked Gerald.

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“W-we don’t know...!”

“I see. Well then, let’s just leave now, Quest.”

“N-no! Please wait! We’ll tell you! We’ll tell you everything we know!” shouted the men in panic.

“W-while we don’t know the exact details to what’s truly happening inside the Schuyler family, we’ve heard news that the Schuylers are secretly plotting something big to rebel against the Fendersons! Their end goal is to make the Fenderson family part of their own instead!”

“Oh? Correct me if I’m wrong, but I’m pretty sure that the Schuylers and the other minor families who are currently under the Fendersons wouldn’t have the capability to take on them,” replied Gerald with a frown.

“You’re right... B-but they’ve partnered with the Longs in Yanken! A family called the Moldells is involved as well! From what we could see, almost everyone that the Moldells sent over was exceedingly powerful! We’re pretty sure that the Fendersons are truly done for this time around!” explained the two men, spitting out everything they knew in hopes of getting Gerald’s mercy.

‘So that’s why!’ Gerald thought to himself.

“Tell me what little you know about the ‘big thing’ that the Schuylers are plotting up?”

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“W-well... From what we’ve heard, Lord Fenderson is currently so sick that he’s literally at death’s door... As a result, the Schuylers are going to make their move in the next three days...”

“I’ve properly handled the corpses, Mr. Crawford. What’s the next step?” asked Quest as he clapped the dirt off his hands.

The men were still alive some ten minutes ago. Not anymore.

Quest felt a shiver run down his spine as he recalled the agonized expressions on the two corpses. How equally terrible and frightening.

When they had first met, Quest had simply assumed that Gerald was a simple and honest man. Gerald certainly looked the part. It was the reason why Quest dared to speak so presumptuously to Gerald earlier.

Now, however, he finally understood why his grandfather had treated Gerald so respectfully and politely. Gerald had managed to completely instill fear within Quest's heart at this point.

'His means of gathering information is simply too cruel and vicious!'

"Since my family and the Fendersons are acquainted, I can't just ignore this. Change of plans. We'll be staying here for another three days. While I sneak into the Fenderson family to see what exactly is going on, you'll be responsible for taking care of Naomi and her mother," said Gerald as he looked at Quest.

Things were getting much more heated now with the involvement of the Moldells. It was clear that the Schuylers were now that family's lackeys as well.

There were three major wealthy families now. If the Moldells managed to subdue the Fendersons and acquire them, then the Moldells would essentially have two of the three major families under their control.

Once that happened, it wasn't hard to imagine them targeting the Crawford family's properties in Weston next.

How clever those from the Moldell family were to try acquiring his family by flanking the Crawfords.

Knowing very well what the Moldells were going for made it impossible for Gerald not to get involved in all this. However, now wasn't the time for him to simply barge in with his true identity. He needed a plan...

As he glanced over at Yorknorth Mountain, however, an idea emerged the moment he thought about Joshua.

The very next day, Bryson stood at the entrance of the Fenderson family mansion as he respectfully greeted, "Welcome to the Fenderson family mansion, Master Jenkinson. In case you've forgotten, I'm Bryson Fenderson and the people standing behind me are Fendersons as well. It's a pleasure meeting you again."

The old man—who needed a walking stick to support himself—then watched together with his family as Joshua got out of his car.

Chapter 902

As the old man had implied, Joshua had indeed met up with the Fendersons before a few years ago. In truth, it was the Fendersons who had wanted to hire Joshua as their family's personal doctor back then. Though they had even offered an extremely high salary, in the end, Joshua still refused their offer.

"It's a pleasure indeed," replied Joshua with a faint smile on his face.

It was at that moment when Bryson noticed a new face. Or at least half a new face.

A young man was standing obediently next to Joshua as he carried a medical kit in hand. The odd thing about him, however, was the fact that the youth was wearing half a mask. It covered his upper facial features, and it wasn't unlike a masquerade mask.

"Could I know who this might be?" asked Bryson with a smile.

“A-ah...! Ah!” replied the masked youth as he pointed at his own mouth before waving his hands slightly. He then pointed at Joshua before placing his palm near his heart.

Seeing that, Mindy chuckled before saying, “Sanderson is Master Jenkinson’s apprentice, grandpa! He’s dumb so he can’t talk!”

Since both Mindy and Jasmine had returned to the Fenderson family mansion with Joshua, Mindy had had the opportunity to get to know Sanderson a bit more. That definitely explained her enthusiastic introduction of the youth.

“How could you say that, Mindy?” replied Jasmine as she looked at the straightforward girl with a sigh.

“It’s fine! After all, I’m already quite close to him! We got acquainted atop Yorknorth Mountain the day before. Surprisingly, though that was the first time we had met each other, I instantly found him to be quite familiar! Regardless, though he can’t really talk, I feel that we got to understand each other a lot throughout our time together, aren’t I right, Sanderson?” said Mindy with a smile. The way she said it, it was almost as though she was a close friend of his.

“Ah! Ah!” replied Sanderson as he hurriedly nodded.

“Haha! I apologize for the awkwardness, Master Jenkinson... Though Mindy’s quite the straightforward and reckless girl, do understand that she’s been a loving and kind person her entire life!” said Bryson.

“I can certainly see that... Speaking of which, my apprentice here suffered from face burns when he was very young... It’s the reason why he’s wearing this mask. However, I hope you understand that he’s quite a diligent worker. I bring him everywhere I go now, and in return, he gets to learn more and more medical skills and knowledge from me.”

“Well then! With you being such a great teacher, I’m sure your student will be equally as great!” said Bryson as he held on to Master Jenkinson’s hand while leading him further into the Fenderson family

mansion.

“Hah! Did you hear that, Jasmine? Grandpa said I was kind!” said Mindy as she playfully pouted.

“Sure, let’s go with that...” replied Jasmine as she shook her head slightly with an annoyed smile on her face.

Seeing this, Sanderson himself rolled his eyes at Mindy though he made sure she couldn’t see it.

‘Kindness my foot! You’ve just never met a person who talks through sign language! You’ve only been nice to me since you want to learn sign language as well!’ Sanderson thought to himself.

If it wasn’t already evident enough, Sanderson was none other than Gerald.

While his current persona certainly wasn’t ideal, it was in fact, the most convenient way for him to successfully infiltrate the Fenderson family mansion.

“Allow me to help you carry that medical kit, Sanderson,” said Jasmine as she nodded toward him.

At that, Gerald immediately began gesturing with his hands again before saying, “Ah! Ah!”

Since Jasmine was so much gentler and considerate compared to Mindy, Gerald couldn’t help but take a few more glances at her. His attention, however, soon returned to Lord Fenderson.

Gerald had already fully diagnosed his illness earlier from just a glance.

As long as Lord Fenderson took his prescribed medicine and received acupuncture treatment for a few

days, it was almost certain that he would make a full recovery. It honestly wasn't that difficult a task for Gerald.

The situation was ideal as well, since—as Gerald had previously discussed with Joshua—he had indeed planned to stay with the Fendersons for at least a few days.

During that period, Gerald planned to observe the Fendersons while also investigating for any activity from the Schuylers. Or at least that's what he had initially planned.

As time went on, Mindy continued to look for Gerald any moment she could, and it was honestly starting to annoy him at this point. It was almost as though she had gone mad!

Thinking that he was finally alone when night came, Gerald stood in the backyard as he thought about the 'great scheme' that the Schuylers were plotting.

As for the Moldells, how many people were they actually sending over to help the Schuylers this time around?

Just as the gears in his head were about to grind, he heard a voice saying, "What are you doing, Sanderson?"

Gerald was left speechless as he turned to look at Mindy. The girl had her hands behind her back as she skipped all the way toward him.

"Ah! Ah! Ah!" replied Gerald as he gestured his hands while pointing at the garden and the surrounding area.

"Oh, I see! So you wanted to enjoy the scenery! Haha! Since you probably only focus on studying medicine on Yorknorth Mountain, I'm sure you've never seen this grand a garden, have you?"

“Ah!” said Gerald with a nod.

“Speaking of which, since you’re currently free, could you keep me company for a bit?” said Mindy as she held on to his right hand.

Gerald was so stunned by that that he didn’t even know how to reply.

Chapter 903

With Mindy’s small hand being so smooth and warm, it wasn’t long before Gerald started feeling weird.

Before he could even say anything, however, Mindy began dragging him over to a few small stone stools in the garden where both of them sat.

“You know, Sanderson, I’ve been wondering why I keep finding you to be so familiar... After some thought, I think it’s because of how similar our past experiences are... While it’s true that I’m a rich young lady who’s been living in luxury all my life while you’ve had an extremely difficult past—even having to face such a miserable accident—both of us are similar in the way that neither of us had proper friends our entire lives,” explained Mindy.

Hearing that, Gerald simply nodded slightly.

“I resented that fact a lot when I was younger, you know? You may not know it, but because of a certain family, both Jasmine and I were grounded within the house for the longest time. That’s akin to torture for me since I’m the kind of person who simply can’t stay put in a place for long... I’m sure you’re able to relate to that to a certain degree... Regardless, due to my lack of contact with others, I’ve never been in a relationship before. Before I knew it, almost twenty-three years have passed and till this very day, I don’t think I’ve ever fallen for anyone, at least not in the way that soap operas usually play out,” added Jasmine as she held onto her chin.

In response, Gerald pointed at Mindy before making a few more gestures.

“Hmm? Could you perhaps be saying that I’m pretty so it should be easy for me to get a boyfriend?” asked Mindy with a smile.

After seeing Gerald’s nod, Mindy simply sighed before saying, “While I’m no longer grounded these days, I feel nothing for any of the rich heirs I’ve come across. It’s true that I do want to fall in love, but none of the people I’ve met make my heart flutter at all!”

At that, Gerald nodded again.

“...Well, there was one person... However, I only got to be together with him for a short while... He’s a good guy who I have to admit, is also quite cute...”

Raising an eyebrow, Gerald gestured again.

“Hmm? Why didn’t I confess to him?”

After seeing him nod, Mindy sighed before saying, “Humph! It’s a long story! To simplify, from what I’ve seen, he’s a sc*mbag!”

“...Ah?” replied Gerald, shocked.

“Tell you what, Sanderson. That friend of mine? It’s true that he’s nice to people, but he’s a little too nice to everyone, you know? Especially toward girls. It’s kind of sc*mmy, don’t you think? It’s honestly the thing I hate most about him! That’s the reason why my feelings for him eventually ended,” explained Mindy.

With that, Gerald made another gesture, akin to cheering her on.

“Worry not, I’ll definitely find the love of my life one day...” replied Mindy as she looked at him with a faint smile on her face.

“Speaking of which, Sanderson, do you care a lot about how others view your physical appearance?” asked Mindy.

As he nodded, he pointed at his face before putting on a terrified expression. For now, he knew he had to keep the act up.

“Were you saying that your appearance would scare others away? You’re afraid that no one will befriend you after seeing your burn marks?”

Upon seeing him nod in agreement, Mindy then asked, “Well I’m not afraid... And I won’t give you a cold shoulder, even after seeing what you look like. So Sanderson... Would you please take your mask off for me?”

Hearing that, Gerald quickly shook his head.

“Well, since you’re that reluctant, I won’t force you... Keep in mind, however, that we’re still close friends. No matter what you look like under that mask, I won’t dislike you...” said Mindy firmly.

It truly hadn’t crossed Gerald’s mind that Mindy would say such things. In response, he simply nodded understandingly.

“Ah, here you are, sir!” said a servant out of the blue as she began walking over.

Hearing that, he stood up while tilting his head at the servant.

“See, the young lady’s left shoulder has been aching a lot of late. We’d like you to have a look at her

condition, sir," added the female servant.

Chapter 904

After seeing him nod, Mindy then said, "Go ahead and check on Jasmine first. Since she's trained a lot recently, it's probably the same issue again. I'll wait for you here tomorrow night so that we can chat again!" said Mindy.

Gerald then nodded in agreement as he began following the female servant to Jasmine's room with his medical kit in hand. Once they got there, Gerald was greeted by the sight of Jasmine wearing a sling nightgown.

Her hair hung loosely around her shoulders and her goddess-like appearance made Gerald momentarily stunned.

"Since you were with Master Jenkinson for most of the morning, I felt that it would be rude to bother you then. I'm afraid I can only ask for your help at night," said Jasmine with a faint smile on her face.

"Ah! Ah!" replied Gerald as he gestured his response, an indication that he didn't think much about it.

Seeing that, Jasmine sat down before saying, "I appreciate it... See, my shoulder's been aching occasionally ever since it got hurt sometime in the past. Since my training has intensified recently, the aching has gotten more frequent and also more painful..."

Hearing that, Gerald gestured with his hands as though he was asking her how her shoulder got hurt in the first place.

"Let's just say that a friend of mine accidentally hurt me... It was back during a Taekwondo championship... I had underestimated him, so due to my carelessness, I was flung out of the ring! In the process of breaking the fall, my left shoulder received substantial damage... Ever since that day, the ache never truly went away," explained Jasmine.

Gerald was gently rubbing her left shoulder at the time, and after hearing her full explanation, he felt a shiver run down his spine.

'The one who caused the injury... It was me, wasn't it? To think that she's had this pain on her shoulder this entire time... Now that she's asking me to treat her, I'm not even sure if it's god's will anymore...'

After a brief examination, Gerald gave her a thumbs up before mimicking the action of holding a needle. Essentially, he was saying that after he performed acupuncture on her a few times, she should feel as good as new.

"Is that so? Thank you, sir! While we're at it, could I please request to not address you as sir? For some embarrassing reason, I feel rather uneasy to say it... Could I just call you Sanderson?" asked Jasmine with a subtle smile on her face.

Upon seeing his nod, Jasmine then asked, "You've always been staying by Master Jenkinson's side, right? Don't you ever get bored? When I saw you atop the mountain that morning, it seemed that you didn't have many friends either. After all, aside from the lively Mindy, not many people actually took the time to talk to you, is my deduction correct?"

For some odd reason, Jasmine felt that she could open up a bit more to Sanderson. He simply exuded an aura that made her feel safe to talk about such things. He made her feel assured.

While Jasmine had to admit that she was late in getting involved with society, she still felt that she was quite good at judging people.

At the very least, she was definitely sure that Sanderson didn't make her feel like the other men she had previously met. Unlike the obscene looks those men usually gave her, Sanderson's gazes were soothing.

What more, since Sanderson couldn't speak properly, she could speak her mind without having to worry about Sanderson blabbering out what she had told him. He was essentially the total opposite of Mindy.

All this contributed to Jasmine sincerely wanting to chat more with Gerald.

In response to her previous question, Gerald simply nodded.

“You’ve been living out there this entire time, Sanderson... Do you have any idea what love feels like? I don’t mean anything by that, I’m just curious...”

‘What on earth is wrong with these two sisters tonight...? To think that both of them had the same topic in mind to talk to me about...’ Gerald thought to himself as he shook his head.

“I see... Well that makes the both of us... While I’ve not been in a relationship before, I may have found myself having a crush on somebody... Though I say that, I’m not even sure when I started having feelings for him...” said Jasmine in a soft tone.

As Gerald listened on, she continued, “Maybe... Just maybe... Could these feelings for him have sprouted the moment he tossed me out of that ring? Or perhaps it was when he had saved me... How curious... Ah!”

Nearing the end of her sentence, Jasmine let out a tiny yelp as she felt an acute pain on her shoulder.

Immediately lifting his hands from her shoulder, he lowered his head in apology.

“I’m fine, don’t worry. Just continue, Sanderson,” replied Jasmine with a smile.

Chapter 905

It was no surprise why he had accidentally made that mistake. After all, Gerald was stunned to know that she actually had slight feelings for him.

As far as Gerald remembered, he only ever had brief conversations with Jasmine, though he did admit to manipulating her slightly during some incidents. To think that she would end up falling for him just

because of that...

“Anyway, when the Fendersons went over to the Crawford family some time ago, we learned that he had gone missing. While I’ve sent a lot of people out to search for him, it’s already been a little over half a year by now yet there still isn’t any news about him... I still occasionally wonder whether he left on his own accord...” said Jasmine in a rather sad tone.

“...Regardless, are you done?” asked Jasmine as she turned to look at Sanderson.

At that, Gerald nodded before gesturing for her to get a good rest.

Just as he was about to leave with his medical kit, however, he caught a glimpse of some prayer tools lying around in her room.

With a slight frown, he then pointed at said objects before saying, “Ah, ah?”

He had meant to ask her whether there was something going on the next day, and though he was worried that the question wouldn’t get across, Jasmine seemed to understand him just fine.

With a smile on her face, she nodded before saying, “There’s a church fair tomorrow. My aunts, Mindy, and I will be heading there to pray for blessings together. Haha! You may not know this, but in the past, Mindy and I couldn’t leave the mansion all willy-nilly, Sanderson. We used to sneak out just to go to that fair! We don’t have to sneak out anymore, though, so we can thoroughly enjoy ourselves there without fear of getting caught!”

Upon hearing that, Gerald’s expression saddened.

“...Hmm? Could it be that you wish to go there too? Now that I think about it, you’ve probably never attended a church fair, have you?” asked Jasmine as she looked at his face.

In response, Gerald began gesturing happily.

“Alright then, it’s decided! If you aren’t too busy tomorrow, do keep us company and go out with us!” replied Jasmine with a smile.

Though Jasmine was rarely this friendly to someone she just met, she simply felt comfortable with him.

Perhaps it was his calming gaze and inability to talk properly—which meant that he was also naturally a better listener—that made Jasmine willing to befriend him.

Regardless of whatever the true reason was for her to feel the way that she currently did, she was comfortable with him and that was all that mattered.

As all this was happening, several people were celebrating an extraordinarily lively night in a secret room within the Schuyler family’s mansion. The people involved were all seated at a large table, chatting merrily between sips of wine.

“The situation seems to have changed, dad. To think that that b*stard, Lord Fenderson, would actually hire Joshua to cure his illness! From what my subordinate reported to me, his complexion looks much better now after just a single session of the treatment!” said Yael in a worried tone.

“Master Yael, you worry too much! The Longs and the Schuylers are different now! Not only have both our families agreed to cooperate to ensure the success of this mission, but we’re also getting valuable assistance from a few masters from the Moldell family! Bryson’s no longer a threat!” sneer a middle-aged man who went by the name of Berk Long.

Berk was Master Long’s youngest son, and just like Master Long’s other sons, he had his own set of skills that separated him from the rest.

He was most prominently known for being both strong and powerful, just like how his name suggested.

Not only was he the leader of the Long family's secret forces, but he was also a key player during the attempt to capture Gerald alive in Merry City back then. Though Gerald had managed to escape, the fact that Gerald had only made it out by the skin of his teeth made him worthy enough to be trusted even by the Moldells.

"...I suppose you're right, Berk!" said Yael.

"Humph! But of course he is! You need to learn more from your elders from now on, Yael! Wit isn't everything, you know? Speaking of which, the first phase of the plan starts tomorrow. How goes the preparations?" asked Noah.

"Worry not, everything's already in place. After all, with both Quentin and Trey on our side, phase one is most definitely already in the bag!" said Yael as he looked at the similar-looking brothers from the Moldell family.

"Well I'll rest assured then! Since the Quentin & Trey duo are Master Jett's younger cousins, I have reason to believe that their capabilities are on par with Master Jett's!" added Noah with a flattering tone.

"You've got to be joking! There's no way we could ever compare to our cousin!" said both of the brothers as they shook their heads with bitter smiles on their faces.

"There's no need to be modest! Anyway, a toast to the success of the first phase tomorrow!"

Chapter 906

"Cheers!"

As Jasmine had said the night before, a church fair was held in town the very next morning. With everything looking so grand, it was no wonder why it was so crowded.

“How lively!” said Mindy excitedly as she stood in the middle of the crowd.

“Could you please be a little more reserved, Mindy?” said Jasmine rather helplessly.

“Why should I be? Today’s an exciting day! Can’t you feel it? Seeing all the people here just makes me all giddy!” replied Mindy as Jasmine shook her head.

“It’s fine once in a while, isn’t it Jasmine? Let’s just have a short stroll around before heading to the church to pray for our blessings later,” said their second aunt as she turned to look at the youth who had silently been following them from behind this entire time.

“I apologize that you have to see the childish side of our family,” said the second aunt as she smiled.

In response, Gerald shook his head.

To be honest, even if they had prohibited Gerald from coming along, he would’ve still done so sneakily. After all, how couldn’t he when he was well aware that the Schuylers were actively eyeing the two sisters.

“...Hey, look over there, Jasmine. Aren’t those our classmates?” asked Mindy out of the blue as she pointed toward a few people.

As she said that, their six classmates took notice of them as well.

Since Mandy and Jasmine had both been mysterious girls who had remained cold and aloof toward them for the longest time, nobody in the group—regardless of gender—actually dared to take the

initiative to greet them.

However, since Mindy was now waving at them with a smile, they naturally felt the need to walk over. After all, regardless of how distant they were, the two girls had still been their classmates for years.

“I didn’t expect to see you here!” said a woman—who appeared to be the leader of the group—as she smiled.

“Indeed! It’s high time Jasmine and I came out to have a bit of fun! I was honestly wondering if we would bump into any of our classmates here earlier. Speak of the devil, I guess! How long have you been here? Have you had your fun yet?” asked Mindy with a smile.

“Actually, we just arrived!” said the other women in the group.

“I see! Why not walk around together then? After all, aside from Stella, we’ve never had a proper chance to chat with each other, even though we were classmates for so many years! Right, Jasmine?”

Hearing what Mindy said, Jasmine nodded before smiling.

Jasmine and Mindy were more acquainted with Stella since both she and Gerald had momentarily given a hand to the two girls during the incident half a year ago.

“Also, you may not know this, but though we never talked much in class, we know all about you!” declared Mindy.

“You’re Isabelle, aren’t you? You’re the monitor of the class right next to ours! As for this beauty, your name is Maia, right? We met at the Taekwondo championship back then, remember? If I properly recall, you got transferred to our university some time ago together with that handsome guy, Warren!”

Hearing that, Maia smiled faintly at Mindy before saying, "Yeah, it was quite a while ago since that happened. We got to know Isabelle a bit better after that incident, so in a way, the events of that day had a silver lining."

"Alright, since all of you are young people, why don't all of you go ahead and have some fun together? Your Third aunt and I will just be walking around if you need us," said Second aunt as she looked at the two girls.

Upon agreeing with that, Jasmine and Mindy joined their classmates, leaving Gerald sighing internally as he followed them. And here he had thought that he wouldn't ever have to meet those people again. To think that 'never' turned out to be only half a year later.

Still, it was clear that all of them had changed slightly.

For one, Isabelle wasn't as impetuous as she used to be. Stella herself had gotten a shorter haircut, though she still remained beautiful all the same. As for Maia, she seemed to have grown a bit more mature, and that amplified her beauty even more.

"Ah, speaking of which! These are our classmates, Sanderson! Let's be sure to have fun together, alright?"

Gerald could only nod. It wasn't as though he could refuse the offer.

When Stella, Maia, and Isabelle saw that he was wearing a mask, they felt rather uneasy walking together with him. The fact that he didn't know how to speak didn't help with his situation.

However, since he came with Mindy and Jasmine, the girls kept to themselves, knowing it would be imprudent of them to say anything bad about Gerald.

While none of them said a thing about him, Maia herself took an extra step by deliberately distancing

herself from him.

Chapter 907

She did so since half a year wasn't nearly enough to change her arrogant attitude. As was expected, Maia still preferred only being around people with high statuses in society like Warren, Jasmine, and Mindy.

Nobody could really blame her for that.

Regardless, Gerald was far too busy keeping an eye out on his surroundings to even notice the contemptuous gazes from both Maia and Isabelle.

"Hey Jasmine, look there! See those little candies those kids are holding? I like them a lot! I wonder where they bought those!" said Mindy a little while later as she pointed out the window at a few children who were passing by. The group was currently seated in a small shop while enjoying some coffee.

"Oh, you do? I know where they're selling them! It's a little further up north, but I could bring you there if you'd like!" replied Maia.

"That would be great!" said Mindy excitedly as she turned to look at Gerald.

Mindy then smiled and said, "Come on, Sanderson! Join me! After all, you don't seem like you have anything else to do!"

"He doesn't need to follow. We can just head there ourselves!" stated Maia, a hint of contempt in her voice.

Before Gerald could even take a good look at Maia's expression, Mindy had already grabbed on to his arm before shouting, "Let's go!"

Jasmine herself smiled before adding, "Just go ahead with Mindy, Sanderson... I'll feel much more assured knowing that you're keeping her company as well!"

Hearing that, Gerald could only shake his head in resignation as he followed Mindy and Maia to the candy stall.

Though he had assumed that Mindy would return to the group upon purchasing the candies, to his dismay, there were a lot of interesting things on sale which Mindy hadn't seen before. As a result, it turned into a mini shopping spree as Mindy spent quite some time looking through and buying more and more things.

Eventually, Gerald tapped Mindy's shoulder gently, indicating that they should return to the group.

"We're in no hurry, so just stay and have a look around!" said Mindy with a smile.

"If he wants to return so much, just let him leave first..." added Maia.

"No way! It'll be boring with just the two of us!" replied Mindy as she shook her head.

Just as he was about to persuade Mindy to return again, Gerald felt his ears twitch. A second later, his eyes turned stern as he turned to look behind them.

Though Maia and Mindy were blissfully unaware, Gerald could see ten figures slowly inching toward them!

When Gerald turned to warn Mindy, the figures immediately sped up!

It took less than a few seconds for the men to reach the trio, and the next thing Mindy knew, her arms had already been grabbed by several of the men.

Gerald himself felt a firm hand on his shoulder as the tip of a gun nudged against his back.

“Don’t you dare move, you b*stard! Or I’ll kill you!” growled the person standing behind Gerald viciously.

While it would honestly be quite easy for Gerald to resist them, he didn’t do so. After all, with so many people there, he was afraid that the group of men would get careless and accidentally shoot an innocent bystander.

Besides, it was clear that the group of men was following a very well thought out plan. With that in mind, he didn’t dare to act blindly since he wasn’t sure whether Jasmine and the others were also facing the same thing.

“W-who are you...? What the hell do you want?” asked Mindy—who was also held at gunpoint—in a frightened voice.

“They’re kidnappers of course!” growled Maia who looked like she wasn’t new to the experience. Rather than fear, her expression showed more of a frown.

“Oh? This beauty’s rather calm, isn’t she! I’m afraid that calmness won’t last for long though, haha!” sneered one of the men who was wearing a cap.

“Y-you’re all bold, I’ll give you that. However, do you even know whose territory you’re currently in? Have you any idea who I even am? Just know that my sister’s drinking coffee not too far off!” warned Mindy though her fear was still evident.

Chapter 908

“Hah! As if we wouldn’t know who you are! You’re Mindy, the second young lady of the Fenderson family! Also, Jasmine was indeed having coffee. Past tense of course, since she’s already been captured!

You're the only one left to deal with! Now walk!" ordered the man—who appeared to be the leader of the group—as he shoved Mindy rather harshly.

As soon as he said that, the distant revving of engines could be heard. Moments later, a minibus could be seen speeding through the crowd toward them!

"Get in the car!" commanded the man as soon as the vehicle came to a screeching halt before them. Not having any other choice, the trio simply obeyed.

At that point, Gerald was still considering whether he should make a move now or continue waiting for a bit. After all, even though these people had guns with them, he didn't really think that they were all that big a deal.

At that moment, a static voice could be heard coming from a walkie-talkie, stating, "Are you done?"

"Yes we are! It was a piece of cake!" replied the leader.

As the two continued talking through the walkie-talkie, at some point, Jasmine's voice could clearly be heard from the other end.

'So they weren't lying when they said they've already captured Jasmine and the rest!' Gerald thought to himself.

With that in mind, he decided not to make a move just yet. He would just have to think of something once he reunited with Jasmine and the others later.

Before being allowed to leave the minibus with curtained windows, Gerald and the others had their heads covered with tiny sacks.

“Move forward!”

Eventually, the sacks were removed once they reached their destination. To Gerald, it seemed like they were in a cellar of sorts.

Looking around, he saw that Jasmine, Isabelle, Stella, and Warren were already here, though all four of them had been tied against chairs.

“Mindy! Sanderson! Are both of you alright?” shouted Jasmine in a worried tone.

“I-I’m fine... Who are those people, Jasmine? How could they be so daring?” asked Mindy hurriedly.

“Them? Hah! They’re lackeys of the Schuyler family! Those ungrateful b*stards!” scolded Jasmine in rage.

“Now just stay here quietly! Others will be coming over to accompany you later!” said one of the captors before the group of men walked out of the cellar.

“...Regardless, to think that those people actually built a secret room within their house...” said Maia, breaking the awkward silence.

“Indeed. What more, the guns they’re using are the newest models the country’s produced! These people are definitely quite powerful!” said Warren with a frown.

Hearing that, Gerald remembered that both Warren and Maia had attended the university back then to investigate something. To think that they had remained undercover and active on the case for almost half a year by now.

“Stella, Isabelle, and Maia... I’m so sorry for burdening all of you... Worry not, I’ll definitely not allow the

Schuylers to lay another finger on you!” apologized Jasmine.

“It’s fine, Miss Fenderson. The most important thing now, is to find a way to escape,” said Warren calmly.

Following that, a sigh was heard as Stella began crying out, “It’d be great if Gerald was here... With his capabilities, he’d definitely know what to do in such a situation!”

Unlike Maia, this was the first time Stella and Isabelle had found themselves in such a situation. It was natural for them to feel utterly terrified.

Upon hearing Gerald’s name being mentioned out of the blue, the other women in the room found themselves slightly stunned. This was especially the case for Jasmine though her expression turned somber soon enough.

“...Wishing for him to be here in this situation really won’t help... After all, he’s gone missing!” said Jasmine.

“...Huh? What? Since when? What happened?” asked Jasmine’s classmates in surprise.

“Nobody knows... It’s already been well over half a year, yet we don’t even know if he’s dead or alive!” explained Jasmine.

“How... How could that be...” said Stella in disbelief.

“...No wonder Marven’s company fell into bankruptcy so suddenly! So it had something to do with Gerald going missing!” added Isabelle, her tone downcast.

“Humph! It serves him right! After all, who told him to keep such a high profile? He thought he could do

anything that he wished just because he was rich, but look what ended up happening to him after showing off so much! He's just a man with a bad fortune!" growled Maia angrily as she remembered her past encounters with him.

Chapter 909

Gerald could only look at Maia in disbelief.

To think that he had assumed that she would have a somewhat better impression of him after lending her a hand back then. So it was all just wishful thinking. All he could do was smile bitterly in resignation as he looked at the lost cause of a woman.

"That's enough. There's no use talking about things like that now. What's important is figuring out how we should escape!" said Warren.

As soon as he said that, a shout was heard as the iron door creaked open.

"Get in! All of you!"

Following that, around thirty people—both young and old—were shoved into the place. All of them had sacks over their heads, just like how their group had been brought in earlier.

When the sacks were removed, however, Jasmine was instantly shocked.

"What? It's you? So the rest... Did they actually capture all of you?!" exclaimed Jasmine, stupefied by the turn of events.

"So you've been kidnapped as well, Miss! Those Schuylers truly are b*stards!" said one of the older members from the group.

The group of people all seemed quite close to Jasmine, and it was no wonder why.

After all, they were none other than key personnel from the families who were subservient to the Fendersons. There were over ten major and minor families who relied on the Fendersons for support, and Jasmine could tell that only the most loyal people—to her family—had been captured.

“Whatever you decide to do, please make it quick, miss! From what we can assume, the Schuylers are going to rebel against the Fenderson family very soon!” said another old man.

“Even if you say that, it’s not like I can do anything now... After all, I would’ve never expected them to rebel out of the blue after all these years! I don’t even know how long they’ve been planning for this!” replied Jasmine, clearly getting more and more worried by the second.

Meanwhile, Noah and a few other key members of the families subservient to the Fendersons arrived at the Fenderson family house. Everything was going according to plan.

“I apologize in advance, Mr. Schuyler and the rest of you here, but Lord Fenderson has just turned in for the night after taking his medicine,” said a butler as he watched the group of people enter the mansion.

“Tell him that this is an important affair. We’ll wait here while you inform him about it,” replied Noah.

Hearing that, the butler frowned. What a rude man! However, he couldn’t really do anything about it, so he simply obeyed.

It wasn’t long after before they were brought to Lord Fenderson’s study where he sat waiting.

“So, what’s the big emergency, Noah?” asked Bryson.

“You see, Lord Fenderson, a family member of mine who works in the headquarters was hospitalized due to some work injuries. However, the headquarters hasn’t paid for his medical fees which he should

rightfully receive!” replied Noah.

“...Hmm? Did you really come all the way here just to tell me about that incident?” asked Bryson with a frown on his face.

“Oh, that’s not all! You see, since the headquarters refused to provide the medical fees in time, that family member of mine ended up passing away!” said Noah in a cold tone.

“...What exactly are you saying?” asked Bryson, slowly realizing Noah’s underlying message.

“It’s quite easy, honestly! You just need to punish the person in charge of the incident! Otherwise, my family won’t ever be able to reconcile with his death!”

“And who exactly was in charge?”

“Alas, it was none other than Jasmine!”

Bryson’s first response upon hearing that was to slam his study table with both his hands.

“How dare you, Noah! What’s your ulterior motive?! Actually, since you’ve brought so many people along with you, you couldn’t be thinking about finally rebelling against the Fenderson family, could you?”

“Humph! You’re exaggerating the situation, Lord Fenderson! My family’s always been loyal to yours! We just want to settle this incident once and for all! Since you’re so unwilling to punish her, how about this? As long as you sign your name on this agreement form, I’ll cease to pursue the incident!” declared Noah as he slid an agreement form in front of Bryson.

After reading through it, Bryson’s expression immediately turned hideous.

“What utter bullsh*t is this?! Know that you’re courting death tonight, Noah!” roared the old man as his eyes went bloodshot.

“Guards! Come in right this instant and kick them out!”

“Save your breath, Lord Fenderson. The four b*stards who usually protect you have already been subdued by my men. Nobody is coming to help you. Now that that’s out of the way, I hope that you’ll sign this agreement form for the sake of your granddaughters’, your sons’, and your own safety. Speaking of which, you’ll have to announce this in front of everyone else as well!”

Chapter 910

Immediately after saying that, Noah let out a sneer.

Bryson himself was finally catching on to how cornered he truly was. He would’ve never imagined that the Schuylers were actually this capable.

“You... Have you captured Jasmine and Mindy...?”

“Humph. You have five minutes to consider it, Lord Fenderson. Also, don’t even bother relying on the board of directors. Rest assured that even those loyalest to you will be quick to sign and approve of it,” replied Noah, disregarding Bryson’s question entirely.

“Fine, I’ll sign it! Still, I’d like you to clarify something. Have all of you truly become the Moldell’s lackeys?” asked Bryson with a resentful tone as he signed the agreement form.

“Lackey is an unpleasant term, Lord Fenderson. I’m simply choosing to work with the wiser person! Do note that you were the one who brought this upon yourself! After all, you refused the Moldell family’s proposal to cooperate with them in search of Gerald within the Salford Province!” said Noah.

“As part of our deal with the Moldells, once we’re in power, we’ll be using the Fenderson family’s name to seek Gerald out! Speaking of deals, once we’ve smoked him out, the Fenderson family’s surname will be no more! Instead, you’ll all be adopting the surname of Schuyler! As I said before, this is all your own doing, so don’t blame me!” added Noah.

“Now then, someone please take him back to his room so that he can get his rest. Guard him properly. We can’t delay the major occasion that’ll take place tomorrow.”

Finally done with his monologue, Noah then walked out of the room with his men.

Meanwhile, more and more kidnapped people were being brought to the Schuyler family’s secret room.

As was previously deduced, most, if not all, of the people there were those whom the Fendersons trusted or relied on a lot.

“This simply won’t do... I have a feeling that something bad is going to happen to grandpa... We need to think of a way to escape soon!” said Jasmine.

“We do. I’ve been thinking for a while, and the best we can probably do now is gather those in the room who have great martial art skills and attempt to break out!” replied Warren.

He then added, “From what I can tell and have personally experienced, you should be the most skilled martial artist among all of us here, Miss Jasmine. You seem to be proficient with guns as well. Including Maia and I, the three of us will be taking the vanguard on our way out. Still, that makes only three people...”

“I know martial arts as well! Count me in!”

“Me as well!”

It didn't take long for over ten new faces to step forward. Their courage had stemmed from their indignance about the entire situation, and nobody in the room was willing to bow down to that b*stard Noah without a fight.

"While I know you're itching to escape, do be careful out there, mister! Since you're not from the Fenderson family, I'm sure they won't make things too difficult for you. Even so, things could get nasty should Noah catch you during your escape attempt!" said one of the captured men in the room.

Gerald himself was gesturing his hands wildly, telling them to not act impetuously and simply wait a little longer.

"Humph! The weak should just let the strong take the lead," said Warren as he shook his head in resignation.

After looking at Gerald for a while, Jasmine nodded before adding, "I currently have to agree with Warren's statement. Attempting to break out of this place will be much better than simply resigning to our fates."

In her mind, she was thinking about how she could quickly inform the others about the Schuyler's plan should she make it out safely. If that were to happen, the Schuylers could be dealt with before they could implement whatever they had planned.

"I'm glad to hear that. Speaking of which, I've noticed that the defense system in the house is quite lenient. However, I have a feeling that things will be much stricter outside. Are you familiar with the exterior of the Schuyler family's mansion?" asked Warren.

"I am. Stick close to me on our way out. I'll lead you along the paths that I think should be less guarded. With any luck, we'll be able to break out of this place."

Hearing that, Gerald then said, "Ah! Ah ah!"

It was evident that he was telling them to bring him along.

“I know you’re afraid, Sanderson, but we may not even succeed in breaking out! What more, we don’t know how dangerous it is yet outside there!” replied Jasmine with a hint of concern in her voice.

Maia herself simply rolled her eyes at his suggestion.

“With our family in its current condition, I can’t just stay here doing nothing either, Jasmine! I’m coming along!” declared Mindy as she gritted her teeth.

Upon hearing that, Jasmine turned to look at the rest of the people stuck in there. While many had gained courage earlier when the escape plan had been mentioned, many more were still shivering in fright at the thought of being caught again by the Schuylers.

Since Mindy and Sanderson weren’t part of the group that was afraid, after considering it for a brief moment, Jasmine nodded with a sigh as she looked at Mindy.

“Hold on! I don’t agree with this! As was said before, we don’t know how dangerous it is out there yet! Coming with us when you don’t know any martial arts could very well end with something going terribly wrong, Miss Mindy and Sanderson!” said Maia.

“Let’s not waste our energy arguing about this. For now, let’s just discuss how we’ll escape while we wait till it’s dark,” stated Jasmine, preventing Maia from creating unnecessary tension.

As the group took a brief break to calm themselves, Gerald snuck to a corner of the room. Once he was there, he took out what seemed like a jade pendant from his pocket. Upon closer inspection, however, the ‘pendant’ had a button on it.

Taking in a deep breath, Gerald then pressed the button.

Chapter 911

Night came soon enough and it was now quite late.

However, the silence of the night was broken by the sound of a massive explosion! Present members of the Schuyler family were left stunned as they watched flames erupting from where their warehouse was located.

“What the hell is going on?” shouted Noah who had felt the tremor of the explosion alongside Berk and a few others. All of them had been seated in the Schuyler family’s large conference hall when the explosion took place.

“Master, something’s gone terribly wrong! Our warehouse just exploded in flames!” announced a butler as he burst into the room where the stunned men were in.

“What?!” replied Noah as he felt his lips twitch slightly.

He had reason to be as furious as he currently was. After all, throughout the years, the Schuylers hadn’t used their warehouse to store unimportant things. On the contrary, most of their important information and documents were stored there!

“Who is responsible for this?! Who dares do something like this to the Schuyler family?!” roared Noah in rage.

“I-I’ve already sent people over to investigate!” replied the butler instantaneously.

“That’s good! We must catch the perpetrators if it’s the last thing we do!” growled Noah as he immediately led the group of people out of the conference hall.

As all that was happening, around ten figures could be seen swiftly making their way through the forests located near the Schuyler family's mansion. It didn't take long for them to arrive at a few tents that had been pitched rather deep in the forest.

"Everything is done, Mr. Westley," said the people as they approached the main tent.

"Excellent work. Your mission is now accomplished. From here on out, we'll just have to wait and see what Mr. Crawford will do next," replied Quest as he slid out of the tent before nodding.

"Speaking of Mr. Crawford, send the second team out. Tell them to be ready to provide help should Mr. Crawford or any of the other escapees require it," ordered Quest.

The once arrogant youth was no longer disrespectful toward Gerald after previously witnessing his true capabilities.

In fact, he now respected him greatly. After all, Gerald had tasked him with doing something extremely chaotic, and chaos was something Quest enjoyed creating. Aside from creating trouble, Quest was also responsible for providing aid to Gerald whenever he needed it.

Their plan was currently running quite smoothly since Gerald had given Quest prior instructions from within the hidden room earlier. Even the location of the base camp they were currently in had been selected by Gerald. After all, he had ordered the two Schuyler subordinates—who were now dead—to detail the landscape surrounding the Schuyler family's mansion back then.

After the tents were pitched, Gerald's next order was for Quest to send people into the Schuyler's mansion to start a fire. That wasn't a problem for Quest either. Now that he had sent the second team over to watch over Gerald's escape, all Quest had to do was wait for Gerald's safe return.

"What was that sound, Jasmine? Did you feel that tremor? It's so dark outside too! I can't see anything!" said Mindy.

“I have no idea either though it’s safe to assume that there was an explosion... However, since things sound rather chaotic outside right now, I think that’ll actually work in our favor. I say we attempt our escape now! As far as we know, grandpa could have been the one who arranged for that explosion to take place! Let’s not waste this chance!” replied Jasmine as all those involved with the escape plan nodded in unison.

After making sure that everyone involved was ready, they silently pried open the door—that had earlier been pick locked—before making a dash for the exit following the paths that they had earlier planned out.

Though they crossed paths with a few subordinates down the corridor, they were barely an issue for Jasmine as she swiftly knocked them out.

Since the electricity had gone out as well, they had the element of surprise on their side. The chaos outside had drawn most of the subordinates away from the corridors as well, allowing them to rush out of the building without too much trouble.

With the vanguard now out of sight, the remaining captives—who were peeking at the escape group’s progress this entire time from the hidden room’s entrance—said, “It seems that they’ve made it out just fine!”

Hearing that, Mindy gave a sigh of relief. Contrary to what had initially been planned, Mindy ended up staying in the room, fearing that she would just end up becoming a burden as they made their escape.

“What should we do now, Stella? Isabelle...? It still seems to be rather chaotic out there... Should we use this chance to make our own escape?” asked Mindy anxiously.

At that moment, she felt someone grabbing onto her hand. Turning to look at who was responsible, Mindy’s worries instantly dissolved when she saw that it was Sanderson.

“Sanderson? Didn’t you rush out together with Jasmine and the others earlier?”

Shaking his head, Gerald then gestured for her to tell the others to make a mass escape while things were still going haywire outside.

“Will we be able to make it out safely? We don’t even know if Jasmine and the others have truly made it out yet...” replied Mindy.

In response, Gerald gestured for her not to be worried since he was there for her.

“...Alright, then let’s all rush out together. Everyone! We should use this chance to make a run for the mansion’s back door!” shouted Mindy.

“She’s right! With it being pitch dark outside, they won’t dare to use their guns either! Let’s go!”

With everyone there now in agreement, the group consisting of well over thirty people began getting into position to make their escape as Gerald slowly pushed the door open.

However, before they could even leave the room, a gunshot was heard!

“Where the hell do all of you think you’re going?!” shouted a voice that startled several of the people.

Shadows could be seen sprinting toward the hidden room’s entrance as six bodyguards holding industrial flashlights came running over.

As Gerald stepped away from the door, all of the guards—who were also wielding guns—entered the room, blocking their only escape route.

Glaring viciously at everyone in the room, it was no wonder why a few women instantly began

screaming in fear.

“W-what should we do, Sanderson? They have guns with them...” whispered Mindy in fright as she hid behind him while tugging on to his sleeve.

“If you want to live, then stay far away from the entrance!” growled one of the guards as they began walking toward the group intimidatingly.

Gerald’s next action was so rapid that nobody even saw it happening.

Chapter 912

With pinpoint precision, Gerald swiftly jabbed the weakest points of all six of the guards. It barely took a second before all of them fell to the ground in unison, bleeding profusely from their mouths and noses.

“...H-huh...? So... You were this capable this entire time, Sanderson...?” said Mindy as she watched wide-eyed and in disbelief at what she had just witnessed.

Even Stella and Isabelle—who had met several Taekwondo experts before—knew that those experts couldn’t even come close to comparing to that dumb Sanderson! To think that he was this powerful!

While everyone in the room was undoubtedly astonished by the turn of events, they simultaneously realized that they now had someone they could definitely rely on.

It didn’t take long before Gerald turned to look at the crowd before signaling for them to rush out of the place under his lead.

Following his orders, all of them made a mad dash for the backyard.

The moment they got outside, everyone immediately saw the raging fire that was still engulfing the Schuyler family’s warehouse. Due to their inability to control the flames, the fire was starting to spread

to other parts of the mansion as well.

In other words, the Schuylers were currently in a great mess, and Gerald knew that this was the best chance they could get to escape safely.

Thanks to Jasmine and the others luring the main bodyguards away, the escaping group barely bumped into any trouble aside from a few people guarding the main gates. They, however, were naturally taken out easily by Gerald.

With that, everyone successfully made it out of the mansion! However, it wasn't time to celebrate yet.

Under Gerald's lead, the group ran quite a distance up north before finally stopping when several parked cars beside a forest could be seen.

Gesturing for Mindy to enter one of the cars, Mindy could finally breathe easy. However, her ease was short-lived when she finally noticed something.

"...Hold on... Something's wrong. Where's Stella? Weren't you running with Stella earlier, Isabelle? Why isn't she here?" asked Mindy in a worried tone.

As Isabelle began looking around frantically after hearing that, Gerald came to the conclusion that she must have accidentally strayed away earlier since it was so dark and chaotic.

Where was she?

Closing the door behind Mindy, Gerald then backtracked all the way back into the mansion. To his surprise, Stella never seemed to have left the cellar. When he finally found the girl, she was squatting in a corner of the hidden room, sobbing in silence.

The moment she saw Sanderson, however, she almost yelped in joy.

“Sanderson, I... I tripped earlier and sprained my ankle...” explained Stella as she bit her lower lip.

“Hurry, let me carry you!” replied Gerald as he hoisted her up against his back.

“...W-wait, what? You could talk this entire time, Sanderson?” asked Stella, extremely astonished by the sudden revelation.

“God d*mn it! Have you already forgotten what I sound like?” replied Gerald with a bitter smile on his face as he shook his head.

Upon hearing that, it took her a second to realize it, but when she did, her eyes immediately widened.

“...G-Gerald?! ...Actually that makes a lot of sense! From the moment I met you, I knew that gaze felt familiar! Why didn't I realize earlier that you had the same body shape? But wait, didn't something terrible befall you back then?” asked Stella, filled with questions.

“It's a long story. Let's just talk about that once we're out safely. Also, do keep my identity a secret for now. Nobody should know that I'm in the Salford Province. Do you understand?” said Gerald as he looked at her.

After seeing her firm nod, the duo then began making their escape.

The next two hours passed by almost painfully slowly for Jasmine and the others from the vanguard team.

Since they had bumped into Yael while making their escape earlier, they had dashed south into the mountainous area as Yael ordered his men to chase after them.

Though Yael's subordinates seemed to have lost track of them for now, Jasmine's group still wasn't out of the woods yet, quite literally. After all, they weren't even sure how many mountain paths they had already taken since they were so focused on evading Yael's men earlier.

Momentarily lost, they did eventually manage to come across a road at the foot of the mountain. However, nobody knew where it led to.

"Where are we, Jasmine...? There's not a village in sight! The way things are, we can't even make phone calls since there's no signal all the way out here!" said Maia.

"My guess is as good as yours... However, having a road to follow is better than nothing... I propose we swiftly make our way along it and see where we end up at. Hopefully we'll be able to get to an area with phone signals soon," replied Jasmine.

As the group nodded among themselves, they were just about to sneakily make a dash for it when suddenly, the distant revving of motors could be heard!

It wasn't long before several headlights could be seen driving toward them on the beaten-down road. From what they could guess, there were at least fifty cars in that group.

After completely blocking the road, several men dressed in black stepped out of the cars, seemingly waiting for someone.

"It's all over now!" said Jasmine as everyone from the vanguard team felt their hearts skip a beat.

Soon after, a wealthy-looking person—who seemed to be the leader of the massive group—stepped out of a car and began walking toward Jasmine.

With a smile, he then asked, "Could either of you be Miss Jasmine Fenderson?"

Chapter 913

"...Who are you? Did Yael send you here?" asked Jasmine in a rather doubtful tone.

Though night had come, the headlights from all the cars were bright enough for those within Jasmine's group to see how imposingly solemn the bodyguards looked as they stood behind their leader.

It was clear that these bodyguards had received only the strictest of training, and from what Jasmine knew, only a few large families could afford to hire such powerful bodyguards.

What more, it was already so late yet the men had arrived with such grandeur. How couldn't they be Yael's subordinates? Knowing that only served to amplify Jasmine and the others' anxiety as they stood close to each other in preparation to either attack or run.

"Humph. Yael? Who the hell is that?" sneered the young man of a leader before adding, "I was ordered by my master to transport you away from danger, Miss Fenderson. I hope that you'll cooperate since we really don't have much time to spare. Come with us."

"This master of yours... Who is he?" asked Jasmine with a slightly raised brow.

The youth, however, said nothing and simply returned into his car.

As soon as he did that, two bodyguards walked over to Jasmine's group before saying, "Please enter the car, Miss Fenderson, and the rest of you. We'll be bringing you to someplace safe."

Upon hearing that, Jasmine and the others could only look at each other.

If the men truly had vicious intentions, then they would've definitely attacked Jasmine and her group the moment they stood before them. However, they didn't. There was also the issue with how many

powerful guards were present. Jasmine knew for a fact that none of them could handle that many trained guards at a time.

In the end, Jasmine simply nodded. What other choice did they have but to believe them?

After entering the car, all fifty over cars instantly began speeding down the road. It was a while later when the cars finally stopped again outside a large warehouse located somewhere within the suburbs of the city.

“Yael’s men shouldn’t be able to find this place easily, so you’re safe for now,” said the leader from before as he lit a cigarette while leading the group further into the place. After a brief walk, Jasmine and her group were instantly relieved to see that warm meals had been prepared for them.

“Thank you for saving us, sir... How should we address you?” asked Maia gratefully as she felt her heart flutter. She was weak toward people who had unyielding demeanors such as the leader who had just brought them here.

“Haha! You’re very welcome! Though it’s honestly not me you should be thanking. I’m just following orders from my master. Regardless, eat the food while it’s warm and get some rest. We’ll be sending you back to the Fenderson family mansion tomorrow.”

“...Um... Sir...?”

Just as Jasmine was about to ask him something, the young man turned around and tossed his cigarette to the ground. After stepping on it—to put it out—he walked out of the room before Jasmine could even finish her question.

With his departure, only about a dozen people remained inside the warehouse.

“Say Jasmine... Do you have any idea who saved us...? Since the Fendersons are so powerful and

influential, could the person who helped us be one of your ancestors' friends?" asked Maia.

Hearing that, Jasmine shook her head with a frown before saying, "I really doubt that... After all, anyone reliable from either my or the subservient families under us had already been captured by Noah as seen earlier within the hidden room. As for friends of the family, I don't remember any of them being this mysterious, powerful, or even influential! I really don't have the slightest clue of who could be doing all this..."

"I see... Regardless, due to their lack of hostility this entire time, I truly believe we can let our guard down around them," said Maia.

In response, the others nodded in agreement.

A brief moment later, Jasmine looked at both Maia and Warren before asking, "Both of you seem to have undergone professional training... It's evident through how proficient both of you are with your martial arts. Could it be that neither of you are mere transfer students?"

At that, Maia smiled before replying, "You're sharp. While it's true that being transfer students is merely a guise, I'm afraid we can't reveal our true identities to you... I hope you can understand."

Meanwhile, elsewhere, Gerald was slowly lowering Stella into a car as he ordered the driver to send her home.

She was shocked the moment she heard him say, "Head straight for home and have a good rest. By the time you wake up tomorrow morning, everything will be dealt with."

"Gerald, it's too dangerous out here! Why don't you just come with me and stay the night in my home?" replied Stella, her worry reflected in her tone.

"No can do. I still have some things to settle tonight."

“But thunder can already be heard... It’ll be raining heavily soon... All of us are already saved! What else needs to be done?” said Stella, persistent that he leave with her.

“Just remember our promise. Aside from keeping the fact that you’ve seen me a secret, you don’t have to worry about anything else.”

Chapter 914

After saying that, Gerald patted Stella on her shoulder before nodding toward the driver.

Seeing that, the driver immediately started driving off the moment Gerald closed the car’s door.

When Stella turned to look at Gerald through the car’s rear window, a flash of lightning lit the sky behind him. Though he had barely moved from the spot he was standing in earlier, Stella felt a chill run down her spine as she saw the expression on his face for that split second when the lightning had struck.

It was at that moment when Stella knew that he was no longer the Gerald she once knew. This new Gerald was terrifying.

As he slowly disappeared from her view, roars of thunder could be heard, dark clouds completely covering the night sky. Torrential rains soon followed alongside massive gusts of strong wind.

With the storm already here, Gerald himself began making his next move...

Back at the Schuyler family mansion, several representatives from both the Long and Moldell family were now watching as Noah scolded his son.

“How the hell have all of them managed to escape?! Not only did you fail to catch the culprits involved with the fire, but now we’ve lost our hostages too?!” roared Noah in anger.

“While we were hot on Jasmine and her group’s trail earlier, they somehow managed to slip away when they ran into the forested area! Worry not, however! I’ll definitely catch them sooner or later, dad!” replied Yael as he wiped the cold rain off his face.

“Humph! You’ve messed up big time tonight, Yael! How am I supposed to feel confident letting you inherit such a large property in the future now?!” added Noah in his rage.

Throughout his long life, this was the first time he had ever been humiliated this deeply by someone, so it was no wonder why he was feeling so embarrassed.

“Don’t blame Master Yael anymore, Mr. Schuyler. It’s evident that the Fendersons secretly received help from others this time around. Regardless, Jasmine and the others escaping doesn’t really affect us. After all, we already have full control over Bryson. Let’s just focus on increasing our manpower there. No matter how capable our invisible enemy is, we’re certain that they won’t be able to create any further messes,” said a few members of both the Long and Moldell family as they stepped forward.

Hearing that, Noah calmed down slightly before nodding.

“...You’re right. Since both your families are helping us with this, I trust that things will still go fine. As you said, the captives making their escape doesn’t really affect the plan as a whole. Let’s just let that incident slide for now... Yes... Come! I’m sure all of you haven’t had enough wine earlier! Let’s drink as we chat the night away about our great success to come! Servants! Prepare more wine and dishes right this instant!” ordered Noah.

As one of the servants instantly ran over to fill Noah’s wine glass, he accidentally upset its contents all over Noah’s lap!

What followed was a tight slap to the servant’s face!

“F*cking hell! Do you have a death wish?!” roared Noah who was already in a bad mood.

“I-I’m sorry master! I’m so sorry!”

“This is so f*cking annoying... Where’s my wife anyway? She was here just moments ago, wasn’t she? Go call her over and tell her to make a toast! After all, there are so many distinguished guests here today!” grumbled Noah as he shook his head.

Cupping his swollen cheek, the servant quickly ran out of the room to call Noah’s wife over.

As soon as he was far enough, however, he turned back to face the room before spitting.

“You old b*stard! You’ll definitely die a horrible death one day! Haley, go call for his wife!” shouted the servant as he continued glaring at the door to the conference room.

Though he knew for a fact that Haley—a female servant—was among a few other servants who were posted at this specific corridor, no reply returned. Turning around, he then shouted the order again, though the only reply he got was a tremendously loud rumble of thunder.

The intensity of the thunder made him shiver in place.

“...What on earth...? Where are the other servants? Actually, where is everyone?” said the servant, baffled by how eerily empty the entire place was.

At that moment, the light in the yard flickered once before everything outside went dark.

Seeing this, the servant began walking toward the manor’s entrance in confusion as he said, “D*mn it all... Where the hell are all the bodyguards? Were they all struck by lightning or something?”

Just as he opened the mansion’s front door, a flash of lightning lit the entire yard. It was at that moment when the servant finally realized why the entire mansion was empty.

A scream of pure terror followed shortly after.

Chapter 915

The entire yard was filled with corpses regardless of gender!

As if the horrific scene wasn't enough, the heavy rain had caused the yard to stagnate with a strikingly crimson liquid...

Shaking in utter fear, another flash of lightning notified the servant of the presence of someone else in the yard...

His eyes had already adjusted to the darkness by now, so when the servant turned to look at the person standing in the middle of the yard with an umbrella in hand, he swore on his life that he had just seen a demon in the flesh.

As the demon of a man turned to look at him, the servant became petrified in place, unable to even move his legs even though the demon—who had his other hand in his pocket—was now walking toward him.

In fact, he was so terrified that he couldn't even let out the tiniest whimper.

After what seemed like forever, the servant was surprised to see that the horrifying person had quite a handsome face. However, his surprise turned to fear again the moment he realized how feral the person's eyes were.

The demon's eyes alone reflected his bloodlust, and they were enough to make the servant hold his breath in fear as the man finally stood before him.

Closing his umbrella upon reaching the manor's porch, the demonic man shook it slightly before asking

in a contrastingly kind voice, "Are the rest in here?"

Not knowing whether the dark stains on the umbrella were truly blood or just a trick of his eyes, the servant then replied in a stuttering voice, "Y-yes! They're all inside!"

"Thank you. Do hold on to this for me," said the youth as he handed the umbrella over to the servant.

"...V-very well..." replied the servant, trembling vigorously as he watched the demon walk further into the manor.

"A toast to the partnership among the Longs, Moldells, and Schuylers! Together, nobody in the world will be able to take us down! Haha! While celebrating, let's discuss the progress of tracking Gerald down, shall we?" said Noah as he laughed loudly.

"Honestly, Quentin and Trey, ever since the Longs asked us to help look for Gerald, my dad's been in hot pursuit of him this entire time. If Gerald hadn't had someone protecting him so viciously back then, I'm sure my dad would've already captured him half a year ago. Uncle Berk is well aware of that fact too," added Yael.

Hearing that, Berk nodded in agreement.

"Indeed. We're well aware that the Schuylers have been going all out in their hunt for Gerald this entire time!" said Quentin

Trey then added, "Worry not, we've already informed Jett about your family's contributions. We're certain he'll remember all your help!"

"I'm glad to hear that! I hope that you'll both compliment us more in Jett's presence in the future! But enough of that for now. Let's have another toast!" announced Noah as he raised his wine glass.

As a brief silence ensued while everyone drank from their glasses, slow echoes of footsteps could suddenly be heard coming from a distance in the corridor outside.

“Hmm? Could the lady finally be here?” asked one of the guests.

“Doesn’t sound like high heels so I don’t think so!” replied Noah with a bitter smile.

Eventually, the footsteps came to a halt right outside the door. With a long creak, the slowly opening door finally revealed the face of the demonic youth.

“...Y-you’re!” said Noah aloud as his frown turned to an expression of utter delight.

“Who is that?” asked one of the guests.

“Haha! He’s Gerald!” announced Yael as he immediately stood up in excitement.

“What? That’s him?” said both Quentin and Trey as they looked at the youth standing at the door, stunned.

“That’s him alright. That b*stard ruined my two nephews... How bold of you to take the initiative to come here alone!” roared Berk as even he stood up in a rage.

“Courting death, are we? Capture him!” ordered the Quentin and Trey duo as the other two subordinates of the Moldell family sprang into action!

Chapter 916

Before both of them could even attack, Gerald launched a spinning kick aimed right for their heads the moment they were close enough!

In that brief moment, both of the Moldell subordinates could feel their eyes almost bulging out of their skulls, as they flew to the other end of the room. They were now both unconscious!

“What?!” shouted both Quentin and Trey in unison, their eyes widened in shock.

Those two were students of the Moldell family... Did they truly just go down from a single kick? And from Gerald of all people?!

If they hadn't seen it with their own eyes, they wouldn't have believed it. However, everyone had been present when the scene occurred.

Since when had Gerald become this powerful?

“So there's only four Moldells present today? Well there's only two of you left I guess. Come at me together then!” said Gerald with a faint smile on his face.

“Guards! Get in here, quickly!” ordered Noah as he felt cold sweat dripping down his forehead.

However, nobody came.

When Noah finally turned to look at Gerald again, his face immediately went pale when he saw the smirk on Gerald's face.

“Did... Did you take them all out...? Or did you kill them? Regardless, I hope you're aware that you've messed with the Moldell family! Do you and the other Crawfords have a death wish or something? Our uncle will definitely ruin your family for this!” threatened the Quentin and Trey duo.

Though they appeared calm, the duo were honestly terrified. They honestly wouldn't have brought up Kort's name if the situation wasn't this dire.

"Alas, Kort is definitely going after my family now! That is, if he hears about any of this in the first place. After all, as long as there are no witnesses to speak of, then nobody would ever know that I was the one who killed a nephew or two of his!" replied Gerald, his smile widening.

"You b*stard! Cease all of this at once before I report all of this to my uncle! Do you really want him to unleash all his wrath upon the Crawfords?!" growled Quentin furiously.

At that, Gerald simply shook his head.

"You don't get it, do you? Why are you assuming that any of you inside this room are going to make it out alive tonight?"

Hearing that, Quentin and Trey were engulfed in rage. Even Berk was traumatized by their feral gnashing as they shouted, "You utter b*stard! The Moldells are a highly respectable family with the strongest of all bloodlines! You're just a peasant compared to us! We're bringing your corpse back with us tonight if it's the last thing we do!"

With that said, the duo immediately pounced toward Gerald!

Unlike the previous two Moldells, Quentin and Trey were on a completely different level. After all, they were direct descendants of the family, and having pure Moldell blood within them made them all the more powerful.

However, they were clearly underestimating Gerald. He was now no longer the same person he was half a year ago.

Throughout that period, Gerald had been bathing in herbs that Finnley had provided him.

While the first three months doing that granted him slightly greater strength, it was the latter months that caused Gerald to transform into how he was today. He was honestly surprised at how potent the herb baths were when he finally tested out his true capabilities for the first time.

Knowing exactly how strong he was now was the reason why he wasn't afraid of the Moldells anymore. In fact, it wouldn't be far-fetched to claim that even Kort would find it difficult to personally kill him.

However, Gerald was still refraining from directly confronting Kort. After all, while he was sure that there was definitely a higher chance of surviving against him, Gerald didn't want to catch Kort's attention knowing the fact that his strength wasn't optimal to defeat him yet. He was honestly worried that if he didn't finish off Kort in one go, he wouldn't be strong enough to protect his family when Kort launched his inevitable counterattack.

Regardless, Gerald had also realized something else during his past six months together with Finnley.

While the old man made sure to always fight Gerald at least once a week, Gerald always ended up being one step behind Finnley. Though he had assumed that he would one day be able to defeat the old man—as long as he continued training hard—throughout that period of time, the day never came.

Whenever Gerald grew stronger, Finnley would suddenly seem much stronger as well! It took Gerald a while to finally understand that he couldn't even predict the extent of Finnley's true power. In a way, that humbled him down since he knew he wouldn't ever be as strong as the old man.

However, it wasn't hard for Gerald to estimate both Quentin and Trey's true strength. Even though they were working together, Gerald was well aware that they were still weaker than him.

His assumption proved to be correct when the sound of bones cracking filled the room a few hits later.

As blood flowed out of the two Moldells' gaping eyes and mouths, both of them finally fell to the ground with loud thuds.

Chapter 917

Almost instantly after, the sounds of wine glasses and plates clattering against each other could be heard.

When everyone turned to look at who was causing the racket, they saw that Berk, Noah, and Yael were all holding on to the table as they shivered tremendously in horror!

They had reason to be this terrified. After all, all three of them were aware of how mighty the Moldells were. Yet Gerald had just taken four of them out, right before their very eyes!

As Gerald took a step forward, Berk immediately fell to the ground, shouting, "P-please don't kill me, Gerald! Spare me, please!"

The over two hundred pound, brawny man was currently so terrified that mucous was dripping all the way down to his chin.

"Spare you? It was six months ago when I fled to the Salford Province you know? I had over thirty brothers and now none of them are alive because of your men. They were all my friends from Mayberry! Why didn't you spare them then?" said Gerald terrifyingly calmly as he patted Berk's head.

"I-it was wrong of me to do so! It was all my fault! Gerald, pleas--"

Before his sentence could even end, Gerald smacked him hard on the back of his head. It was as though nothing Berk had said even mattered to Gerald. The next thing everyone knew, Berk's eyes were bleeding as he flopped lifelessly to the ground with one final grunt.

As screams filled the air, all color drained from the Schuyler father and son. Both of them immediately found themselves retreating to a corner of the room. The person before them was no longer human... It was as though they were staring at the devil himself!

His attention now on the two quivering men, Gerald took a seat as he poured himself a glass of wine.

After biting into an abalone, he swallowed before saying, "So, I heard that both of you have been looking for me all over the Salford Province. You spent no small amount to hunt me down as well, as I recall. Well, here I am now. What do you need from me?" asked Gerald as he stared at them in the eye.

"T-there's nothing we need... Really! There's nothing important that we want!" stuttered Noah in fear.

'Nothing? Come now, you already spent all that cash looking for me. And here I was thinking that it must've been something extremely important! That was honestly the only reason why both of you are still alive today!' sneered Gerald in response as he finished the abalone and downed the glass of wine till there was nothing left.

Patting his thighs, Gerald then got up and began walking toward the two Schuylers. With every step that he took, the roars of thunder outside only seemed to grow louder and louder...

Until finally, the clashes stopped and so did the rain.

It was sometime later when bright lights were shone upon the Schuyler family mansion. The lights were so jarring that anyone from the inside could've easily assumed that it was noontime.

Silently, a caped figure grabbed a bag of things before leaving the Schuyler family house, undetected, and disappearing into the night.

When morning finally came, the weather was crisp due to the rain that had fallen the night before.

Inside a large storeroom, over ten mattresses could be seen laid out all over the place, and sleeping on them, were Jasmine and her group from the night before.

Upon hearing slowly fading footsteps, Jasmine's eyelids fluttered. It only took a split second for the girl to jolt awake and sit at attention. Looking around, she saw that Maia and the others were still sleeping comfortably.

Since daylight was already peeking through the windows yet nobody appeared to be outside the storeroom, Jasmine became curious, prompting her to shout, "Hey, wake up! Wake up, everyone!"

"What's the matter, Jasmine...? I'm still sleepy...!" mumbled Maia as she yawned.

"Look around! There's nobody left here but us!" said Jasmine.

Hearing that, everyone soon realized how odd that was.

"Indeed... I wonder where they went off to? There were quite a few others with us here last night but we didn't even hear them leaving!"

Chapter 918

Warren had made that statement as he stood up. Jasmine herself frowned as she scanned through the storeroom.

Her gaze stopped when she saw a few joss sticks placed near a corner of the room.

"Those must've been the reason why we were so sleepy!" said Jasmine as she pointed at her discovery.

"So that's why! Still, who were those people...? Why didn't they just tell us who they were after saving us?" replied Maia.

Before anyone could even reply, one of the group's members—who had already been exploring the place—shouted, "Hey, come over here, I think they left something for us!"

Hearing that, everyone encircled the box with a note on it.

The note itself wrote, 'To: Maia.'

"Guess we know who gets to open it," said yet another member of the team.

Maia herself was now feeling giddy with excitement. As she thought about what could be inside, she caught a glimpse of Warren bearing an extremely ugly expression on his face.

Noticing that she was looking at him, Warren then said with a hint of anger in his voice, "Go on and open it already! If you don't I will!"

"Hey, this is clearly for me! Only I get to open it!" retorted Maia in an annoyed tone.

"Well then open it! Carefully, though! We have no idea what's in it!" grumbled Warren as he looked at Maia, almost as though he wanted to pick a fight.

In all honesty, he was worried that if Maia truly liked the contents of that box, she would end up falling for somebody else.

Before an argument could take place, Jasmine shouted in a hushed tone, "Quit it! Can't you hear that? Someone's coming over!"

Upon saying that, she instantly headed to the storeroom's main door with soundless steps.

The tension rose as everyone prepared themselves to face whatever came next. After all, the people outside could very well be the Schuylers.

After a brief moment of silence, however, a sweet female voice could be heard saying, "Jasmine? Maia? Are you in there...?"

Jasmine recognized that voice anywhere.

"Mindy? Yes! We're here!"

As everyone heard that, the group's tension slowly eased again.

Opening the storeroom's door, Jasmine saw that Mindy had brought along two Fenderson bodyguards with her.

"Jasmine! I'm so relieved that the rest of you are fine!" cried out Mindy.

After the hellish night they had to experience the night before, being able to reunite with each other was definitely the cure that they very much needed and deserved.

"It's great that you're fine, Miss Fenderson! You have no idea how worried Lord Fenderson's been this entire time!" said one of the two bodyguards who were still standing behind Mindy.

"Worry not, I'm unscathed. Honestly, I'm even more surprised that you made it out already. Did everyone else manage to escape? Weren't there any guards impeding you from leaving?" asked Jasmine curiously.

Upon hearing her questions, Mindy began sobbing as she said, "We... We were rescued by Sanderson! He saved us all!"

“What? Sanderson? Actually, hold on, why are you crying? Did something happen to him?” asked Jasmine. Though she was initially shocked when she heard that, worry soon overtook that feeling when she saw Mindy’s tears.

“I... I don’t know... I think he’s still in trouble... After all, once all of us were rescued, we found that Stella was missing! As a result, he ran back into the Schuyler family mansion and that was the last I saw him...” replied Jasmine, her sheer sadness reflected in her eyes.

“Calm yourself, Mindy... Sanderson will have luck on his side, I’m sure of it. Besides, don’t start crying when we haven’t even launched a search party for him! What would he think of that?” said Jasmine with a comforting smile on her face.

“...You’re right... Sanderson’s lived a tough life, even from when he was a child... I’m sure he’s an equally tough person. We’ll definitely find him safe and sound!” declared Mindy with a resolute nod.

While Jasmine was glad that Mindy was feeling positive again, she was curious as to where all that resolution came from. It was almost as though Mindy knew for sure that Sanderson would definitely be fine. However, Jasmine refrained from asking her anything about it for now. After all, their grandfather’s safety was still her priority.

“What about grandpa? Is he safe? Did the Schuylers do anything to him? Also, how did you even know where to find us?”

“Hah! The Schuylers? Don’t even talk about them! They must’ve personally offended a god or something! After all, not only was their entire mansion razed to the ground, all of them have officially been declared missing! To that, I say they got what they f*cking deserved!” grunted the other guard behind Mindy.

“...Wait, what? The Schuylers are... gone?”

“Yeah! There weren’t even any bodies to speak of! Everyone from that family simply vanished into thin air!” replied Mindy as she wiped her tears away.

“Regardless, we should head back first, Miss Fenderson. Lord Fenderson will be hosting a family meeting soon, and it seems that he wants to announce something important!”

Chapter 919

And something important it was. Knowing full well that the Fenderson family had almost been wiped out due to his carelessness, Bryson was going to take responsibility for the incident no matter what.

After things calmed down a bit, Bryson thought about how they were nearly eliminated by a vassal family. If all that could happen under his rule, then he admitted that he was getting old and unreliable. The fact that he couldn't defend himself without help was further proof that it was finally time for change.

It explained why the mood of the Fenderson family meeting this time was so different. Everyone had their heads lowered as they waited for Bryson to speak.

Coughing to break the silence and get everyone's attention, Bryson cleared his throat before saying, “I... have some very important news to announce today... This announcement will also be the very last decision that I'll make as the head of this family!”

Hearing that, everyone lifted their heads as they looked at the old man.

“Listen closely, for the next head of the Fendersons will be Jasmine! I'm far too old now, and though Second and Third are both equally mature and reliable, I'm afraid they're far too complacent. They're both more suited to be supporters than leaders, not that there's anything wrong with that. Regardless, after careful consideration, I truly believe that Jasmine will be the one who will help develop and recover our family's glory!” announced Bryson.

As soon as his declaration ended, the entire meeting hall was abuzz with people discussing their opinions aloud. Jasmine herself hadn't expected the meeting to be about her.

Standing up, she then said, “While I'm honored to have been selected, I simply can't take the position of

head, grandpa! I'm still far too young and there's still a lot for me to learn. I'm certain that I won't be able to handle the position of leader yet. What more, up till this point, there haven't been any female leaders in the Fenderson family!" replied Jasmine who honestly felt she wasn't ready for such responsibility.

In response, Bryson simply raised a single hand, prompting everyone to go silent.

"There's no need to discuss this any further. My decision is final. While I'm sure that you're doubtful about the whole thing, I believe in you, Jasmine. I believe that even if you were to marry the person you love, you'll still end up becoming an excellent family head. As for the rest of you, you should already know by now that I'd never appoint someone to be leader without a valid reason! Speaking of being a leader, I'll be granting you your first long-term task now, Jasmine! I see a lot of potential among those from your uncles' third and fourth generations. From today onward, you're responsible for training up the third and fourth generations to become better leaders!" concluded Bryson.

Upon hearing that, everyone started calming down again.

They were honestly most worried about the fact that the Fenderson would have to change their family surname once Jasmine got married to another person and bore a child. However, with Bryson sounding so sure with his final decision, the crowd was swept with a new determination.

"I... I fully support the decision to let Miss Jasmine be the head of the Fendersons!" shouted one of the family members.

"As do I!"

"You've definitely earned it!"

Bryson found himself smiling as he watched both his own family and the vassal families cheering on for Jasmine.

“There, you heard the people, Jasmine. With them supporting you, there really isn’t a reason for you to turn down the position anymore. With that, I declare that from today onward, you, Jasmine Fenderson, will be the new head of our family!” said Bryson aloud.

Once the meeting ended, Bryson made his way back to his room, his butler supporting him as everyone else went over to congratulate Jasmine.

As Jasmine thanked all of them rather reluctantly, she couldn’t help but notice something at the last minute. Where was Mindy?

The usually noisy girl hadn’t been seen throughout the entire meeting... Once the crowd gave her some space, Jasmine walked over to Mindy’s butler before asking, “Have you seen Mindy?”

She was at least certain that Mindy had been with her when both of them returned to the Fenderson family mansion earlier.

“Oh, Miss Mindy drove off before the meeting started! She said she was going to look for someone!”

“What? Look for someone?” repeated Jasmine, stunned.

It took her a second, but she finally realized what Mindy’s goal was. As the realization set within her, she mumbled, “Could you have gone out searching for Sanderson without me...?”

While Jasmine herself treated Sanderson like a good friend, she knew how much more Mindy treasured him. What more, he was now essentially missing because of their family’s issues!

Shaking her head, Jasmine said, “Get the car ready. It’s currently still too dangerous for her to be wandering outside alone!”

“Right away, Miss Jasmine!” Chapter 920

As the butler got the car ready, Mindy herself was already standing in front of what remained of the Schuyler family’s mansion.

“Excuse me, but have you seen anyone wearing a mask? He’s about this tall and with his mask down, he has serious burn marks around his eyes...” asked a girl to a random passer-by as she lifted her hand over her head to mimic how tall Sanderson was.

“...No I haven’t...?” replied the confused man.

“But how could that be possible? He told us he’d come looking for us yet he didn’t! He wasn’t even at Yorknorth Mountain! Where could he possibly have gone to...? I even tried calling Stella but I can’t reach her either! When I went over to her place, it seemed like she had moved out... Hey, who do you suppose could tell me where Sanderson went...?” asked Mindy.

The passer-by himself was stunned to know that she had directed the question at him. Scanning her from head to toe, he then shook his head before running off. How sad that such a beauty sounded so insane.

“Where could you have gone to, Sanderson...? You... You said you’d come back... That you’d talk to me in the garden every night... You promised... I... I refuse to believe that you lied to me! Please, Sanderson... You’re my best and only friend... You... You can’t just leave like that... Where are you...?” mumbled Mindy to herself.

The only thing on the girl’s mind now was Sanderson. She thought about how simple and gentle he was. How every time she talked to him, he would listen to her attentively, comforting and encouraging her through his gestures.

While it was true that she had first gotten close to him since he looked like he was easily bullied and she

wanted to learn sign language, her intent slowly changed over time.

In just those few days of them being together, she had grown dependent on him. What more, since she knew he had risked his life to rescue her and many others, she was well aware that forgetting him would be near impossible now.

After waiting for quite some time, Mindy eventually leaned against a wall before squatting down.

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“Where are you, Sanderson...?”

When she had earlier gone to Yorknorth Mountain, neither Master Jenkinson nor Sanderson was present. Stella’s place, on the other hand, seemed to have been completely deserted. Since she never picked up any of Mindy’s calls, Mindy wasn’t even sure if the rest of Stella’s family had left together or without her.

In short, Mindy couldn’t even contact the last person who could’ve possibly seen Sanderson.

“Just... Please be safe, Sanderson...!” pleaded Mindy silently.

After a while longer, Mindy got up. She was feeling far too uneasy to be moping around here when she could still be searching for Sanderson.

Opting to search for him by walking around instead of getting in her car, she felt a new determination in

her to search for him. To search for the man who had managed to spark hope in her again after living on this planet for over twenty years.

She had simply lost too much of her childhood. Mindy had no friends, nor did she have any meaningful relationships with anyone outside of her family for the longest time. Sanderson was the embodiment of everything she had ever longed for.

Mindy didn't care if he was ugly, nor did it matter to her that he couldn't even speak properly. None of that was important to her.

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What mattered most was the fact that Sanderson was a person who understood her. A person who was always around whenever she was upset. A person she could feel secure with.

Her focus wavered as she continued thinking about him, not even noticing that she was crossing an open road...

She only returned to her senses when she heard the loud revving of an engine. Turning to look at the source of the sound, she was petrified to see a huge lorry speeding toward her!

The driver himself had been yawning, yet the moment he saw her, it was already far too late. Even though he stepped on the brakes, he knew he was in deep trouble the moment he heard the sound of a sickening collision.

Following that, Mindy's frail body flew quite a distance away before landing heavily on the ground. The phone she was holding on to earlier fell even further away, its screen now completely cracked.

A keychain of what seemed like a tiny man with a mask on could be seen hanging at the end of her phone. It was clear who it resembled...

Chapter 921

As the muffled wailing of ambulance sirens could be heard in the distance, Mindy found herself slowly losing consciousness.

“...San...derson...”

Meanwhile, a young man sitting inside an express train clutched his chest all of a sudden as he shuddered.

“What’s wrong?” asked a girl sitting close to him out of concern.

“...It’s nothing. My heart just felt tight all of a sudden... The feeling’s gone now, though. How odd...” replied the man with a wry smile on his face.

He then turned to look at the girl before saying, “Speaking of which, here, you can have this. Once you settle down in Mayberry and get a job there, together with the money in this card, you should be able to live easy for the rest of your life!”

As he said that, he handed a bank card over to the girl.

“I can’t take this, Gerald! As long as I manage to land a job, my life will already be pretty manageable! You, on the other hand, definitely need the money more than I do!” replied the girl as she immediately returned the card to Gerald.

It was obvious that the girl was none other than Naomi.

“She’s right, Gerald. Not only do you need it more than we do, but we should be the ones giving you money instead! After all, you cured me without even asking for anything in return!” added Naomi’s mother.

“It’s honestly fine. It’s not like I’ll be using much money from now on anyway. I’ve already done too many things... Haha...” replied Gerald with a bitter smile on his face.

“Why would you say such a thing, Gerald...? Actually, you haven’t even told me the full story as to why you no longer have anything to do with the Crawfords!” said Naomi, a hint of worry in her voice.

“Honestly at this point, it’s better for you not to know, Naomi. As they say, ignorance is bliss,” replied Gerald as he gently patted her on the head.

Gerald was now returning to Mayberry since he wanted to visit an old friend. That, however, wasn’t his only goal there. He had something else planned once he got there...

Regarding the bank card, it was honestly more of a burden to him at this point. As he thought about it, he felt that life truly was intriguing.

After all, back before all this had happened, he had also taken a train to Mayberry city. Back then, he had assumed that he would be able to face his university life with a new attitude. That he would no longer need to live with such terrible self-esteem as he had during middle and high school due to him being so poor.

Things, however, hardly changed at all. As it turned out, as long as he was poor, things would never change for him, or at least that was the conclusion his past-self came to. His past-self yearned for riches. As long as he was rich, he would’ve been able to have a decent life, and maybe even flattered by those poorer than him.

However, when he actually inherited the money, the old Gerald found that he didn’t really enjoy showing his wealth off as much as he had thought. Quite the contrary, in fact.

Upon finding out that he already had all the riches in the world, his desire for fame simply vanished. Instead, he wanted to live a plain and simple life. After getting to know Mila, his end goal was to get married to her and maybe have a child or two, preferably a boy and a girl. His ideal life was one that was

carefree, and one where he would be able to relax in Mila's arms every day till they eventually passed on.

A dream that truly was. Now that Mila was still missing, riches meant little to him. He simply lost all desire to have any money anymore.

"...You've changed, you know, Gerald..." said Naomi out of the blue.

"...Hmm? How so?"

"Well, I can't put my finger on it, but from the moment I met you again after so long, I could already tell that you were very different compared to the Gerald I used to know... The one thing that hasn't changed, however, is your kindness toward me. Even after all this time, you still treat me so well!"

"But of course! You're my good friend!"

"Since you still see me as a friend, then please, Gerald... Please share your thoughts with me whenever you feel troubled... I know there's a lot on your mind right now, and I'm also aware that you're no longer the rich heir you used to be... Hell, I feel that once your return to Mayberry this time, big changes are going to happen soon... Regardless of all that, I want you to know that whatever happens, you'll always be my best friend! I won't pry into what you're planning to do any further, but please keep in mind that I'm someone you can share your problems with..." said Naomi.

Upon saying that, she placed the bank card into Gerald's hand once more before adding, "...Which is why I simply can't accept the money. Hold on to it! Who knows, you could make a comeback in Mayberry City! I could be your assistant, you know?"

"Naomi, believe me when I say I truly don't need this money... In all honesty, I don't even know if I'll have the chance to return here in the future once I'm done with what I've set out to do!" replied Gerald with a subtle smile.

“...What? What do you mean by that? What exactly do you plan to do?” asked Naomi in despair.

Hushing her slowly, he then said, “I’m sorry, but I’m afraid that you’ll be terrified after hearing it. You said you weren’t going to pry any further, didn’t you?”

Though she really wanted to ask more, she remained silent in the end, knowing full well that she wouldn’t get any answers.

Chapter 922

It wasn’t long before they arrived at Mayberry Station.

After stealthily slipping the bank card into her pocket, Gerald hailed a cab for her. He wasn’t worried about her not being able to use it since she had already known what the password was, even from back when they were still in university. The password itself was just his birth date.

“Aren’t you coming along with us, Gerald?” asked Naomi as she rolled the cab’s window down.

“I’ll be on my own from here! Farewell, Naomi!” replied Gerald with a wave as the cab began driving off.

Sticking her head out the window, Naomi then shouted, “Gerald, please! I don’t care if we end up having a lot of money or not! Let’s just stick together and get married! We’ll find jobs together in Mayberry city and from there, we’ll be able to support ourselves just fine in the future! I’m sure of it! If Mayberry isn’t to your liking, then... Then let’s just live in the countryside! We’ll get a small place of our own... Settle down, then live the rest of our lives ordinarily and in comfort! Are you hearing any of this?”

“What’s that? I can’t hear you! Regardless, travel safely and remember to live well!” yelled Gerald in return as he waved his hand.

“I said, why don’t both of us get married? Can’t we? I don’t mind it at all! Sir, please stop the car!” yelled Naomi anxiously when she realized that Gerald couldn’t hear what she was saying.

However, no matter how much she pleaded, the driver simply wouldn't stop the car. Taking in a deep breath, the cab driver tapped on the money in his pocket that Gerald had given him before stepping on the accelerator.

Even after the cab was no longer in sight, Gerald found it hard to stop waving.

Of course he had heard her. He had heard every single word she had said extremely clearly.

Though a normal life was honestly what he had always yearned for after getting rich, he knew he wouldn't be able to achieve that. Not until he found Mila again.

As long as she remained missing, he had absolutely no intention of starting a new chapter in his life.

Even though he was well aware of that, why was he feeling so reluctant to part with Naomi this time...?

Thinking about it for a while, he realized that it must've been because he was quite sure that he would never be able to see her ever again...

Shaking his head, he slipped on a mask and cap before hailing another cab.

"Where to?" asked the cab driver to the man wearing the black sweater who had most of his face covered up.

"To the hospital!" replied Gerald immediately.

Arriving shortly after, Gerald looked through the glass window of Felicity's ward. Attached to a ventilator, the girl lying on the bed had an extremely pale complexion.

As he continued looking at her, Gerald recalled how lively the girl used to be. If only she hadn't met him, she would've probably still been living a good life now. After all, she was a natural beauty who could definitely become a world-famous internet celebrity with ease.

Things could've gone so much differently... She could've lived her life happily! Yet here she was in a hospital, a complete vegetable after being tossed off a building. The worst thing was, she was only in such a state because she was trying to locate him.

Gerald could only imagine how she must've felt while looking for him on the day all this happened. How worried both she and Naomi must've looked as they waited at that hotel's lobby.

To think that their glimmer of hope would end up becoming Felicity's greatest misfortune yet.

Jett truly was a ruthless person.

In his devastated state, Gerald could only press his hand hard against the ward's door as he tried to calm himself. He applied so much force that he was sure that even his fingerprints had already been imprinted deeply into the wooden door at this point.

"Hey! You're a weird person, you know that? Are you planning to go in or aren't you? You're blocking the entrance!" said an angry voice at that moment.

Turning around to look at who had said that, Gerald saw a fuming nurse who had a tray in her hands.

Though he was wearing a mask, the nurse could clearly see all the strong emotions that were reflected in his teary eyes. She was so stunned to see that, that she almost dropped her tray as she watched the man wipe his tears away.

“...Here, take this and listen closely. This piece of paper contains very specific acupuncture instructions as well as a herbal prescription. Once you and the doctor fully understand the method, use it to save this girl’s life!” said Gerald as he placed the prescription on the nurse’s tray.

After saying that, he simply slid both his hands into his pockets before walking away.

Chapter 923

Just as he arrived at the hotel’s lobby, a girl who just so happened to be running in his direction seemed to lose balance as she sprained her ankle!

Before she could even hit the ground, however, in one swift swoop, Gerald managed to catch on to her.

“Oh my god! That was such a close call! T-thank you, handsome!” thanked the girl as she immediately straightened her messy hair after being helped up by Gerald.

Looking at him, however, she couldn’t help but feel that the man who had just saved her from a world of pain felt a little strange.

Though he looked mysterious enough with his mask and cap on, his gaze felt oddly familiar yet foreign at the same time.

Furthermore, the young man only replied with a nod instead of saying anything.

As she wondered if she had seen him before, Gerald himself couldn’t help but stare at her for a little while longer. After all, he knew who she was.

“...Could... We perhaps be acquainted?” asked the girl with a smile.

In response, Gerald shook his head.

"I see... Well, regardless, thank you for breaking my fall!" replied the girl with a laugh.

"How did it go, Leila?" asked a rather handsome person wearing a suit at that moment as he walked over to them.

"Oh, the physical exam? I've completed it of course! By the way, get this! I was just about to go looking for you when I nearly tripped over!" said the girl as she locked arms with the man rather intimately.

"If you truly did end up tripping and hurting yourself, how would I even begin explaining things to Uncle Jung?" replied the man with a laugh.

The girl, of course, was none other than Leila.

"Oh, right! This here's the handsome fellow who saved me!" added Leila as she looked at Gerald.

"Why thank you, brother! I'm the doctor in charge of this hospital, so do let me know if there's anything I can ever help you with!" replied Leila's boyfriend as he nodded toward Gerald with a smile.

Hearing that, Gerald simply shook his head before walking away.

However, he couldn't help but recall how Leila used to be before all this happened.

To think that he had used to like her when he was much younger. After all, the poor child he was back then always thought that she was the most beautiful of them all. She always dressed so well back then too.

Though they shared a somewhat ambiguous relationship in later years, after his six-month

disappearance, Gerald could now see that Leila had already moved on. She now had her own life, and she seemed to be doing pretty well. That was all that mattered to him.

“That guy was pretty strange!” muttered the young man as he stared at Gerald’s slowly disappearing back.

“He is! However, he feels awfully familiar as well... I know I’ve definitely met him someplace before but I just can’t put my finger on it!” replied Leila with a frown.

“What are both of you doing, standing here?”

“Ah! You’ve finally come out, Jacelyn?” said Leila as she turned to look at the fashionable girl standing behind them.

“Well I did take a few extra examinations... After all, I’ll be getting married next month! Got to make sure that I’m as fit as a fiddle! Haha!” replied Jacelyn with a happy hum.

However, she couldn’t help but feel startled the moment she looked in the direction Leila had been looking at earlier. She had just managed to catch a glimpse of Gerald’s back before it disappeared completely as a door shut behind him.

“Hmm? Could it be... That you find him familiar too, Jacelyn? Or maybe you’re just attracted to his fit body? Heh! I know you well now after spending so much time with you in Mayberry! You just can’t help yourself whenever you meet handsome guys, can you?” said Leila with a chuckle.

“The former guess was already correct... Regardless, he really does look extremely familiar... Especially his back! I really feel that I’ve seen him somewhere before...” said Jacelyn as she pondered on.

“Well, not that it’s important anyway! Let’s just go ahead and have dinner once my husband gets off work, alright? After that, we can go on a mini shopping spree!” add Jacelyn while laughing.

“Sounds like a plan!”

With that, the group continued chatting and laughing among themselves as they left in the opposite direction.

Gerald, on the other hand, soon found himself standing at the hospital’s entrance. He truly hadn’t expected to run into Leila here. He wasn’t about to let her find out who he truly was either. After all, that would open a whole new set of troubles.

As he walked past a food stall by the roadside, he overheard a conversation.

“Boss... Please spare me something to eat...?”

“Get lost! You’re this young yet you’re already begging for food? Get a job!”

Turning to look, Gerald saw a young man with an extremely haggard appearance. One of his legs seemed to be broken, and he held on to a wooden crutch to support himself as he continued begging for food by the roadside food stall.

Not long after, the boss chased him away as though the man was nothing but a fly. Other pedestrians seeing this soon began pointing at the young beggar while whispering among themselves.

Shaking his head, Gerald was about to walk on before he suddenly came to a halt upon realizing something.

Chapter 924

Squinting his eyes as he scanned the young man—who was slowly inching away—from head to toe, he then yelled, “Hey you! Stop right there!”

Freezing in place, the young beggar was so frightened that he immediately began trembling in fear. He was teary-eyed as he lowered his gaze before pleading, "Y-yes...? Please, sir... Could you spare me some money for food...? I beg of you..."

"...Yoel?" replied Gerald in a soft voice.

Hearing that name, the beggar instantly shuddered immensely as he raised his head. The moment Yoel looked into Gerald's eyes, his lips began quivering like there was no tomorrow.

"G-Gerald?" asked Yoel as he felt his tears rolling down his cheeks.

Taking his mask off in disbelief, Gerald immediately held on to Yoel's shoulder before replying, "Yes! Yes, it's me, Yoel!"

"Brother! So you're still alive!" said Yoel aloud as his crutch fell to the ground.

"I am... Yoel... How did you end up like this...?" asked Gerald in shock.

After all, the Yoel he used to know was always so glamorous and well-off back then. It was near impossible for Gerald not to feel distressed after seeing this miserable version of his brother

It was a little later when Gerald sat opposite of Yoel at the exact same roadside stall from before.

Pouring Yoel a glass of water before patting him gently on the back, Gerald then said, "Eat slowly, the food's not going anywhere!"

Upon hearing that, Yoel nodded though that didn't really stop him from continuing to stuff more food into his mouth.

“I really hadn’t expected so many things to happen in just six months... This is all my fault! All of you were dragged into this because of me!” said Gerald as he began blaming himself.

From what Yoel had told him earlier, though things in Mayberry City mostly remained unchanged throughout the past six months, the same couldn’t be said for those who lived within it.

After the incident that befell Gerald, Jett came to Mayberry City. Since Yoel had assumed that Jett had ended Gerald’s life, he brought a few of his men over to personally take revenge against him.

However, it was obvious at first glance that they weren’t even close to being worthy opponents for Jett.

Due to Yoel’s initial attack, Jett made it a personal goal of his to make everyone that Gerald knew—be it his friends or anyone who used to work for him—suffer.

Naturally, since Yoel had been the one to launch the attack, he ended up suffering the most. Before he was even allowed to leave, they made sure to break one of his legs beyond the point of curing. They wanted him to experience a life worse than death within Mayberry City.

As if that wasn’t enough, Jett also secretly assassinated Uncle Holden’s entire family!

Of course, Jessica was aware of all this, and though she was angry beyond words, there was nothing she could do.

All that led to the events of today.

As for the others, Aiden and his family moved away from Mayberry City to escape the calamity that would soon befall them if they continued staying there any longer. Eventually, Aiden even joined the army.

Even Elena was affected, and from what Yoel had heard, Jett's subordinates forced her family into bankruptcy. The last piece of information he heard about her—before she went off radar—was that she was currently working as a nurse.

Everything had truly changed for the worst... And the Moldells were behind all this suffering.

"Jett Moldell...!" growled Gerald in a primal rage as murderous intent flashed through his eyes for a split second.

"Still, I've really embarrassed you this time around, brother... I'm nothing more than a useless cripple now! Haha!" said Yoel as he finished his meal with a bitter smile on his face.

"Say that again and I'll smack you hard... You're no useless cripple... Worry not, I'll definitely cure your leg one day. As for all the suffering the Holdens had to experience... I'll be doing them justice if it's the last thing I do!" declared Gerald coldly.

Yoel, however, simply shook his head.

"No, brother... You should leave Mayberry City tonight. The city's already changed a whole lot in the past six months. I'll say it now that Yunus isn't even close to being comparable to Jett. Not only is Jett rich, but he's also extremely powerful. It wouldn't be a stretch to say that even if Jett had attacked us during our peak glory in the past, we wouldn't have been able to take on him at all!"

"I hear you, Yoel, but you can rest assured. You needn't worry about me."

"You're still evading the Moldell family's constant pursuit, aren't you brother...? What are your plans for the future?"

“Hahaha! I have none at the moment... I’ll just make decisions as I go along!”

“Then... Could I follow you, brother? Dying would be completely worth it if it was together with you, brother. I just... really don’t want to continue living like this anymore... The way things are now, I’m better off being dead than alive!

Hearing Yoel’s suggestion, Gerald paused for a moment.

What he said was true. Not only did Yoel no longer have a home to return to, but Jett had also tortured him to his current sorry state.

Gerald knew for a fact that he couldn’t just abandon him like that.

“...Very well. You’ll be following me from now onward! Both of us will live and die together! However, I’ll still be sending you off to a place where you’ll get your injuries treated first,” declared Gerald.

“Y-yes! Yes! We’ll live and die together!” shouted Yoel, feeling extremely moved.

With that, Gerald gave Yoel an address and told him to head toward the border of the Salford Province. There, he would seek refuge with the Westley family where Master Jenkinson also currently resided. With his help, Yoel would surely make a full recovery.

“What about you, brother?” asked Yoel.

“Hahaha... Well, let’s just say I have something to settle here first....”

Chapter 925

Quest, on the other hand, was told to remain in the Salford Province together with Master Jenkinson after the entire Schuyler operation. After all, Gerald saw no need for Quest to follow him all the way to Mayberry City.

In addition, with Quest returning home safe and sound, Gerald knew that he had secured a shelter in the Salford Province where he could retreat to should things ever get awry.

It was honestly the only shelter he had left.

If there ever came a time where the Westley family was exposed, Gerald knew for a fact that he wouldn't have anywhere else to seek refuge once the Moldells caught scent of him. After all, he had killed four Moldells back in the Salford Province.

While he was sure that the Moldells weren't going to kill him easily, he couldn't deny that their family was extremely powerful. Gerald was well aware that he shouldn't even consider dealing with the Moldells on his own.

It was the reason why he was now carefully considering every move he was about to take.

After arranging for Yoel's trip to the Salford Province, Gerald immediately headed to Mountain Top Villa.

Climbing atop one of the many high trees nearby, Gerald closed his eyes as he rested against a sturdy branch, high above the ground.

There, he laid in wait till night eventually came. It was then when he finally opened his eyes again.

By then, Mountain Top Villa was already brightly lit.

After checking if anyone was close by, Gerald dropped his haversack to the ground, creating a soft thud. Following that, he got off the tree as well, landing silently as though he was a cat.

Now on the ground, he opened his haversack and pulled out a black, hooded trench coat. After slipping it on, Gerald's face could barely be identifiable.

With that, his infiltration mission began.

"So, what's the situation like? What did the men you sent over to the Salford Province say?" asked a young man who was lying on a sofa in Mountain Top Villa's living room.

Within the room, were several men who were standing at ease, their hands to their backs. Hearing his question, a few other men standing right before him explained, "Since the Schuyler family mansion was completely razed to the ground and everyone from that family has been declared missing, we haven't been able to find any leads on where the Quentin & Trey duo could be! We aren't even sure if they're dead or alive!"

"B*stards! You should be well aware that all members of the Moldell family are of noble blood! No ordinary person could be compared to both Quentin and Trey! They're my right-hand men! If they truly were to meet their end in a place like the Salford Province, that would surely spell the greatest humiliation the Moldell family has had to face! Double your efforts until you find them!"

"Right away, Mr. Moldell!" shouted everyone involved as they hurriedly left.

Closing his eyes, Jett then said with a smirk on his face, "Still, how perfect Mayberry City is... Hahaha... I'll definitely be making this city my base once the Moldells finally get rid of the Crawfords for good!"

Just as his sentence ended, slow and faint footsteps could be heard making their way toward the room.

"Hmm?" said one of Jett's subordinates as he narrowed his eyes before opening the door to the main hall.

"...Huh? Who are you?" asked the startled subordinate.

“Is Jett Moldell here?” asked an old and commanding voice which created a feeling of unnerve to whoever heard it.

Standing at the door, the man wearing the black trench coat only had his eyes exposed. If a person was sharp enough, however, they would certainly be able to see that the person hidden behind the coat had rather fair skin, a clear indicator that—contrary to the old voice—the person was actually a young man.

“Who are you? And why are you looking for me?” asked Jett as he casually stood up and sipped some of his red wine.

He wasn’t about to express his shock to anyone, even if they looked rather extraordinary.

“I’m here because I want Jett Moldell to follow me somewhere! Come along now!” ordered the person in black.

“Hahaha! And who exactly are you? Actually, do you even know who I am? How ballsy of you to order me around!” sneered Jett.

At the same time, several of Jett’s men were already fuming in anger.

As they instantly began pummeling him, they soon retracted their fists in shock. Each impact felt like they were punching a stone wall instead of an actual human!

“What the hell?” said a few of the men as they began trembling while holding on to their now numb fists.

Jett himself felt his eyelids twitch before shouting, “Courting death, are we? End him!”

Hearing Jett's command, fury took over their fear and the men immediately attempted to attack the man in black once more!

Chapter 926

This time, however, the man wasn't going to just stand there anymore.

The moment they got close enough, the man instantly grabbed two of the men in front of him by their necks before gently flexing his wrists.

A second later, both men immediately began spurting out blood as they heard their necks crack. And just like that, their lives were no more, ended as easily as snuffing out a candle.

Following that, he repeated the same process with the rest of his assailants, striking all of them down with extreme precision and efficiency.

"W-who exactly are you..." stuttered Jett.

This person was extremely strong. Furthermore, his methods were equally as skillful as they were brutally terrifying. Aside from Kort, Jett had never seen anyone else with such raw power. It made him think that the man standing before him right now was a master no less powerful than his father.

Knowing that was the reason why he was so shocked as he continued staring at Gerald.

"There's no need to ask. Just follow me!" replied the man.

"...Alright, since you're choosing the persona of an elder, I'll come along as a junior. But before that, elder, could you at least tell me your name? I'd like to mention it to my father in future. While we're at it, allow me to ask this question. Are you a friend or a foe?" asked Jett as he squinted his eyes slightly.

"Don't say I didn't warn you not to ask any further."

It was the only thing Jett managed to register before the man in black immediately walked up to him and held onto his shoulders. A split second was all Gerald needed to apply a bit of pressure and create another sickening crack.

Jett's eyes immediately widened as he roared in pain. His arms had been completely dislocated and destroyed!

However, Gerald wasn't done yet. His next move was to kick Jett directly on the knee, causing his right leg to dislocate as well.

As Jett's eyes turned bloodshot while enduring all the pain, he turned to look at the man in black before asking, "...You... Do you have any idea who my father is...?"

He truly hadn't expected this man to be so cold and ruthless.

"I don't need to," replied the man in black coldly as he lifted Jett like he was carrying a limp dog.

Since one of Jett's subordinates hadn't attacked Gerald earlier, Gerald had left him alone. However, he was now frightened half to death as he quivered in a corner of the room.

Tossing Jett at the subordinate's direction, Gerald pointed at him before ordering, "If you want to live, carry him and follow me! Now let's go!"

Having no other choice, the subordinate simply obeyed.

As all three of them made it out of the villa's front doors without much trouble, by chance, Gerald happened to see something at the corner of his eyes. What he saw caused a smile to slowly form on his face as he led the other two men down the mountain with him, disappearing into the night soon after.

At the exact spot where Gerald had laid his eyes on earlier, was a badly battered man who was clutching tightly onto his chest. He was the first person whom Gerald had beaten up that night, and he had crawled all the way up to the villa from the middle of the mountain. Though his face was bloody, it was also extremely pale, creating a haunting contrast.

Aside from the subordinate whom Gerald had brought along with him, the injured man was the only other person left alive there.

Realizing that Gerald had left the mansion together with Jett, with much difficulty, he eventually managed to get his cell phone out and dial a number.

“T-the third young master’s been kidnapped! The other party is a top master who could also be part of a secret society! From his voice, he sounded like an old man around the age of sixty! Notify the second young master about this immediately and send some men over right this instant!” reported the man through the phone.

“A member of a secret society? And he’s kidnapped the third young master as well?! Find a way to follow him closely! I’ll notify the second master about this immediately!” said the person at the other end of the line before ending the call.

He then rushed to a hidden room to relay what he had just heard.

“What? Jett’s been kidnapped? Who in the right mind would be this bold?!” roared Kort as his eyes widened in anger.

“We don’t know yet, though from the subordinate’s description, he said that the man could very well be over the age of sixty. He also said that our current opponent’s skills are comparable to yours, second master! After all, he didn’t seem to have much trouble taking out the third young master and his subordinates! ”

Just as the subordinate said that, his phone rang again.

“Are there any updates? What? Paradise Province? ...Alright!”

After ending the call, he looked at Kort again before saying, “Based on what the subordinate could tell, all three of them seem to be headed for Paradise Province!”

“Who on earth from that province has beef with us?” growled Kort as he slammed a fist onto his table, splitting it in half in the process!

“Regardless of who that person is, he won’t get away once I find out his true identity!” shouted Kort in his rage.

Gulping, the subordinate then suggested, “Do... You think that it could’ve been someone from the Crawford family who did this, second master?”

“...No. And I have reason to believe that they aren’t involved. After all, Dylan would never have the courage to do any of this. Even if he did, he wouldn’t have the manpower for it! Something is very off about this incident...” explained Kort rather calmly as he analyzed the current situation.

After a brief moment, he raised his head before saying, “Instruct all the forces who are currently suppressing the Crawfords to transfer over to the Paradise Province as soon as possible. Jett must be found no matter what!”

‘You mustn’t falter, Jett... Stay strong!’ Kort thought to himself as he sighed.

Chapter 927

It was the next night in the Crawford family mansion in Northbay when a butler came running while shouting, “Sir! I bring good news, sir!”

At the time, Dylan was reading in his study room. Permitting his butler to enter, Dylan then put his glasses down before rubbing his brows and saying, "Go on..."

"It's regarding Kort Moldell! While both Kort and Jett have been doing everything they could to go against our family in the past six months, we've just received news from a reliable source that Jett has gone missing!"

"What? Jett's missing?" said Dylan as he stood up in surprise.

Jett was Kort's third son who had slowly been building his power in the past six months. He was also constantly being a pain in the ass, intentionally causing trouble for the Crawfords whenever he could.

Though Dylan only saw him as a pest who didn't need to be taken too seriously, it didn't change the fact that Jett was a constant annoyance to their family. So annoying, in fact, that the Crawfords would often feel worn out just having to deal with him over and over again.

To think that the thorn to their family's side had now gone missing!

"Him going missing isn't even the best news, sir! You see, Kort's withdrew most of his men last night and transferred them elsewhere! The Crawford family can finally take a breather now!" said the butler with joy.

Dylan himself nodded as a smile formed on his face.

"However... As I recall, Jett is Kort's favorite son... Now that he's missing, do you suppose that Kort will suspect that our family is involved in the matter?" asked the butler with a frown on his face.

"Of course he won't!" said Dylan as he closed the book he had been reading before placing it to the side.

“Kort’s no fool, after all. He knows very well how skilled Jett is, and he’s also well aware that even the Crawford family’s top guards wouldn’t be able to lay a finger on him! I’m sure that Kort also understands that our family wouldn’t ever dare to do such a thing in the first place! Since you said that he withdrew his men who were keeping an eye on us, that obviously means that they know we aren’t the threat! Better yet, that means that they’re having their own major problem to deal with!” replied Dylan as he heaved a huge sigh of relief.

“You’re absolutely right, sir! It seems I was simply overthinking things!” said the butler with a smile as he watched Dylan take his cell phone out.

“Still, whoever it was that captured Jett, within Mayberry City of all places, must be an extremely skilled master... A master above all masters, even! Fynn!” said Dylan with a sudden serious expression on his face as the call finally connected.

“How may I assist, sir?”

“I’m now giving you a secret task. I want you to investigate Jett’s disappearance and try locating the master who kidnapped him. If we do manage to hire or get him to help our family, then we might finally have a chance to defeat Kort! You’re free to use any means you can think of to search for him!” ordered Dylan as he slammed his free hand against the table.

“Understood! Preparations for the investigation will begin immediately!” replied Fynn as he ended the call.

Just as the butler was about to leave, Dylan called out, “Wait! Tell the eldest lady, madam, Lyra, and the rest of the family that we’re having dinner together tonight!”

“...Yes, sir!” said the butler, beaming with joy. After all, it had been a long time since he saw Dylan looking this happy.

Ever since Gerald’s disappearance about six months ago, the Crawfords hadn’t had a proper family

dinner together. Even Yulia had hardly spent any time around Dylan during that period since he always locked himself up in his study room.

When dinnertime came, Jessica and Lyra were all smiles when they saw Dylan feeling so happy after so long.

“What happened, dad? What’s the occasion? Did you manage to find out where Gerald is?” asked Jessica as soon as she got the chance to.

Shaking his head dejectedly, he then replied, “...No... We still haven’t been able to locate him...”

Upon hearing that, everyone instantly turned slightly gloomy.

“...However! Even if that’s the case, today is still a good day! After all, Jett’s gone missing! A tragedy of sorts occurred at Mountain Top Villa and all but one of Jett’s subordinates there were killed!” announced Dylan.

“What? That b*stard’s missing?” said Jessica as she stood up and laughed.

“Indeed! Some master has kidnapped Jett, and regardless of whether he did it for his own reasons or to help us, it doesn’t matter since his actions still greatly benefited the Crawford family!” replied Dylan with a smile.

“But who could that master have been? Are you aware of any other secret societies or families aside from the Moldells, dad?”

“If there are any, I’m not aware of them. Regardless, under these circumstances, I feel that our family is in dire need of such a powerful master to help deal with the Moldells. If we do indeed find him, I’m willing to offer a third of our family’s assets just as an incentive for the master to aid us!”

In response, Jessica and the others nodded in agreement.

Meanwhile, southwest of the Paradise Region, a bus was slowly making its way toward the Paradise Province.

Chapter 928

The bus was currently traveling up a mountainous road, and aside from the occasional driver, the road was—for the most part—completely empty. No matter which direction one looked, mountains were the only constant sight.

“You know, I heard that lots of robberies happen on this road!” said a fat young man who was clearly finding the entire journey to be quite depressing.

When he saw that others were now looking at him, he then continued, “It was in the news some time ago! A group of robbers had apparently taken over a bus on this very road, and once they were done with their looting, they killed off everyone in the bus!”

“That can’t be true! I’m pretty alert to such news... Why didn’t I see it then?” asked a middle-aged woman rather nervously.

“Well, the news disappeared not too long after it was released to the public! After all, spreading news like this out of the blue could easily propagate panic!” explained the fat man.

“Hah. Even if robbers do attack us, we’ll just beat them to death! After all, there are so many of us in here!” sneered a rather large and muscular man.

“Yes, but we aren’t wielding knives like they are...” mumbled the fat man in response.

Hearing that, everyone fell silent for a while. After all, who wouldn’t be nervous after hearing what he

had to say.

A little while later, the same man took out a packet of biscuits and slowly began munching down on them.

“Pfft! Didn’t you say there were robbers along this road? How are you still in the mood to eat now? You’ll definitely be the first to be robbed since you’re so fat!” said the woman from before in a rather dissatisfied voice.

“Hey, I’m only eating to relieve stress! Here’s a trivia! Humans relax easier when our jaws are constantly moving!” replied the man.

“Is that really true?”

“I’ve no reason to lie. Here, have a pack of biscuits and try it for yourself!” said the fat man as he handed a packet to the woman.

“Oh? I’d like some too!” said another person seated on the bus as he laughed.

“My biscuits are precious to me! Don’t any of you bring along your own snacks for long trips? I’ll sell them to you for three dollars a pack if you truly want some!” replied the fat man as he instantly hugged his luggage bag tightly.

In response, everyone immediately laughed loudly. It was evident that the fat man was a biscuit seller.

However, since a few dollars didn’t mean anything to them, they began handing out money to him to buy some biscuits.

As the fat man happily took the money and began distributing the biscuits around, he turned to look at

the strange man who had been sitting silently in the bus this entire time. The man himself was wearing a cap and mask which covered most of his facial features, making it difficult for the fat man to even guess his age. As if he wasn't odd enough, sitting right behind him were two extremely weak and fragile-looking men.

Walking over to the trio, the fat man then asked, "None of you have said a word throughout this entire journey, sirs! Surely you must be hungry too! Why not have some biscuits so that you can relax a bit more?"

In response, the man in the black trench coat simply shook his head.

"I'm giving each of you a packet on the house! After all, the three of you look tenser than anyone else on the bus! Let's just be friends!" added the man.

Instead of replying, however, the masked man simply turned to look out the window.

'What an odd person...' Thought the fat man to himself as he turned to look at the girl sitting opposite of the odd man.

She wore black leather pants as well as a leather jacket. Quite frankly, the long-haired beauty resembled 'black spider,' a famous fictional movie character.

While she definitely looked pretty, she also bore a cold expression on her face.

"How about you, beauty? Do you want some biscuits?" asked the fat man with a smile.

At that, she only shook her head slightly.

"Come on, while the biscuits can be a little sweet, they're great for helping you relax!" added the man.

Simply wanting him to leave her alone, she then said in an impatient tone, “Just give me a packet then!”

After handing it to her, he continued staring at her with a smile, waiting to collect the money she owed him.

Just as she was about to fish her wallet out, however, she suddenly thought of something.

Turning to look at the man again, she frowned before saying, “I didn’t bring any money out!”

“What? Not even three dollars? That’s a bit far-fetched, I must say!” replied the fat man in surprise.

Chapter 929

“I’m telling the truth!” added the girl as her frown deepened.

“Hey, chubby! Just forget it! She’s a beauty anyway! If you’re really persistent, then here! Take three dollars from me instead!” offered one of the passengers as he laughed.

“You can’t be serious! To think that such a girl exists! Wanting to eat yet not even willing to pay three dollars!” pouted the fat man.

Hearing that, the girl frowned even harder.

Instantly after, however, a brief fierceness flashed in her eyes as she said, “If you really want my money, then get off the bus with me later. If you accept the dare, forget three dollars, I’ll give you three thousand dollars if you want! What do you say?” asked the girl coldly.

“I say why wouldn’t I dare to do so! However, you said it yourself that you’ll hand me three thousand dollars! It’s not too late to take that statement back!” replied the fat man as he snorted.

“Deal!” shouted the girl before taking in a deep breath.

Throughout their conversation, the man in black had constantly been sneaking gazes at the girl. Though one of his brows was raised, he quickly withdrew his gaze before anyone could notice.

It was only when things had settled down a little later when the girl yelled out, “Stop the bus, driver!”

“Here? In the middle of nowhere? Beauty, you’ll be stranded out here alone if I drop you off here!” replied the driver with only kind intent.

“Mind your own business and just stop the vehicle already!”

Hearing her cold yet resolute response, the driver had no choice but to obey.

Once the bus stopped moving, the girl looked at the fat man before carrying her white box and getting off the vehicle.

With his bag of biscuits in hand, the fat man then followed her down before saying, “Humph! Here I am! Where’s the three thousand dollars?”

As the bus driver continued looking at the two of them, he was surprised to see the man in black—along with the two weak-looking men—getting off the bus as well.

His surprise turned to concern when he saw another five burly men carrying their luggage with them off the bus!

“What on earth are all of you doing? We’re only midway there!”

Though he was curious about what was about to take place there, he was old and experienced enough to know that he shouldn't stay to pry. As a result, he simply drove off with the remaining passengers.

Now standing in a completely deserted area, the fat man repeated, "I did my part of the deal, so stick to yours! Where's the three thousand dollars?"

The girl—who had earlier been looking around—turned to face the fat man again before replying, "What, can't you see it? The money you're looking for is right behind you!"

"Beauty, I just want my money, not those five people!"

"You heard that brother? She's waiting for us! Hahaha! We're definitely going to have a wild time with her!" said one of the burly men.

Laughing along, all five of them threw their luggage bags aside before walking up to the girl and surrounding her.

"Could it be that you suddenly felt lonely halfway through the journey, beauty? Worry not, we're here to accompany you!" added another of the five men.

Dumbfounded by the sudden turn of events, the fat man then said, "...B-brothers? Could you guys be robbers?"

"Hah! Just mind your own business if you want to live!" replied another of the burly men as he shoved the fat man aside.

The man in black, on the other hand, simply stood some distance away together with the two frail men, watching as the show slowly unfolded.

“Oh my, accompany you say? How so?” replied the girl with a charming smile.

“Haha! We’ll accompany you however you want us to!”

Upon saying that, the men were about to throw themselves onto her when she suddenly asked, “Does your leader go by the name of Hansel?”

“...Huh? You... How do you know his name?” asked the men as they exchanged glances with each other in astonishment.

“Well of course I’d know his name! After all, he’s going to die by my hands soon! Just like you five nauseating pieces of trash!” sneered the girl.

“What-”

Before they could even say anything else, the beauty swiftly pulled a short blade out of nowhere and began slashing at them!

It only took a second or two for all five of the men to fall to the ground, clutching onto their badly gashed necks as they eventually stopped moving.

“H-huh?!” shouted the fat man as he instantly began shuddering in fear.

Even the man in black couldn’t help but feel his right eye twitch slightly at the sight before him.

Chapter 930

However, he retracted his gaze soon after.

The beauty, on the other hand, simply glanced at the fat man before saying, "If you want to live, then carry my luggage and follow me. Do that properly and I'll hand you a hundred thousand dollars once we're done!"

As she watched the fat man nod silently in fear, the corner of her eye caught a glimpse of the three other men who had gotten off the bus earlier.

Watching them walk off in the opposite direction, she couldn't help but furrow her brows slightly.

'That man in the black trench coat truly is a mystery...' She thought to herself.

Regardless, he wasn't getting in her way so he didn't really matter to her. She had her own things to focus on in the meantime.

She then squatted down and began removing all the communication devices off the five corpses. Once she was done, she gestured for the fat man to follow and the two then walked off silently.

"Elder... Master... Whichever you prefer... Where are you taking me to...? If it's money you want, then my family can give you as much money as you need! Even if it's something else, I believe that the Moldell family can definitely provide it to you! So please free me! I'm beyond hungry and thirsty right now!"

If it wasn't evident enough, the one who had spoken was none other than Jett.

Alongside his subordinate, neither of them had dared to say a word throughout their journey on the bus. After all, they knew better than to make a scene when their captor could easily end their lives with a single hand. Now that they were literally in the middle of nowhere, however, Jett knew he could finally speak again.

“Where we’re going is just right ahead!” replied the man in black.

“Here?” asked Jett in surprise as he looked around the deep valley.

“Indeed. Regardless, I’m sure the rest of the Moldells must be frantically looking for you right now. From what I can guess, Weston must’ve turned upside down the moment they found out that you were missing. They’ll certainly be overwhelmed when they eventually manage to track your location all the way out here,” said the man in black.

“I’m glad you understand that, Elder! With your level of intelligence, I’m sure you know how much my father loves me! By this point, he’s probably going to mobilize all the top masters in the family, to search for me! This really doesn’t have to end with you offending the Moldell family, Elder! Let’s discuss things amicably! Who knows, we could even end up becoming allies!”

“Humph. As you said, your father won’t stop until he finds you!”

“That’s right! So please, Elder! Please just-”

Before Jett could even finish his sentence, Gerald made a swift grab for his silent subordinate’s throat. The subordinate wasn’t even able to react before Gerald moved his fingers slightly and a snapping sound could be heard.

Blood immediately spurting out of the man’s mouth as he fell to the ground, dead.

“...H-huh? Elder? You?!” stuttered Jett, utterly shocked by the sudden turn of events.

“I must say, your subordinate’s pretty clever. After all, he’s been taking notes and leaving clues behind throughout the entire journey!” sneered the man in black.

“Let me ask you this, third young master, Jett. Do you still not know who I truly am?”

“N-no... Who exactly are you, elder...?”

Hearing that, Gerald then removed his cap and voice changer that had been attached to his neck this entire time.

Saving the best for last, Gerald finally took his mask off, revealing his handsome face.

“I-it was you...? Gerald?!” shouted Jett in both shock and utter horror when he finally saw the face of his kidnapper.

To aid the Moldells in hunting down Gerald, Jett had previously read all the information regarding the ex-rich heir. Though he had assumed that he already knew everything that there was to know about Gerald, he now knew how wrong he was.

“Bingo. To think that you and your father had been looking for me so desperately this entire time... Bet you never expected falling right into my hands, did you?” asked Gerald as he smirked.

Terrified beyond words when he saw Gerald’s smile, Jett then said, “Gerald! No, M-Mr. Crawford! I never expected you to be part of our bloodline as well! Please excuse my lack of manners! Everything that’s happened has just been one massive misunderstanding!”

There was no way that Gerald wasn’t a Moldell. After all, his skills and abilities were simply too powerful!

“A misunderstanding you say? You’ve been suppressing the Crawford family unrelentingly for a good six months now. Many, if not all, of my former acquaintances have already suffered in your hands. As if that wasn’t enough, I’ve also been homeless and miserable throughout this entire hunt of yours. You dare say to my face that all of that was simply a ‘misunderstanding’?” growled Gerald before sneering.

"Regardless! Why didn't you kill me on the spot then? Why did you kidnap me instead? What are you planning to do?" asked Jett with a gulp as he took two steps backward.

"Oh, don't get me wrong. I was simply looking for the perfect time and place to kill you," replied Gerald.

"...I get it now. You've been actively trying to divert my father's attention so that you can give the Crawfords a chance to finally relax! However, do you honestly think that you'll be able to escape for long after kidnapping me? You may be strong and powerful now, but don't forget that you'll be dealing with the entire Moldell family once they catch you, including my father!" growled Jett viciously.

He then added, "My father's going to catch up to us extremely quickly, I can feel it! Think about it, Gerald! If you kill me now, then you won't have a bargaining chip left once he finds you!"

At that, Gerald simply nodded before saying, "I'm aware. Which is why I took a particularly long time thinking about how I should dispose of you. After all, if I simply set you on fire, there'd still be traces left behind. Upon careful consideration, I finally came up with this brilliant idea!"

"See, there's a deep valley upfront called the Wild Miasma Valley. It's infamously known as the Poisonous Mosquito Valley as well. Approximately hundreds of millions of highly poisonous mosquitoes live down there, you know? Once I toss you down there, it'll take at most half an hour for all of your skin to be completely devoured! I'm sure your father won't be finding you anytime soon once that happens!"

"You... You bastard! You vicious bastard! My father will definitely chop you up into a million pieces once he gets his hands on you!" yelled Jett in both rage and terror with an utterly hideous expression on his face.

Chapter 931

It was an hour later when Gerald finally walked out of the valley.

Gerald himself made it out alive since the trench coat he was wearing was specifically designed to protect him from the mosquitoes there.

As he quickly donned on some ordinary clothes, he recalled Jett's final miserable moments as he died slowly just minutes ago.

Exactng his revenge had finally allowed Gerald to feel a sense of satisfaction after so long. After all, even if Kort's men were able to track down his son all the way to the mountainous area, Gerald was certain that the Wild Miasma Valley would be the last place they would ever think to search for.

If it all went according to how he envisioned it, Kort would definitely continue searching for Jett for quite a while. During that period, Gerald's family would finally get a chance to temporarily get some rest.

However, since Gerald wouldn't be able to return to Weston for a while, he knew that he needed to quickly find someplace else to retreat to, at least for the time being.

Slipping on his backpack once he was done changing, he looked exactly like a fresh graduate. He bore a simple and unadorned look, just like he used to back then.

Just as he was about to decide which direction to head toward, he suddenly heard the loud revving of motors coming from uphill.

Squinting his eyes, Gerald soon saw an off-road vehicle chasing after two clearly worn-out people who were now running toward him. He instantly recognized both of them.

They were none other than the fat biscuit seller and the beauty wearing the black leather pants from before!

"So it's them..." said Gerald to himself as he quickly put on his cap and lowered its brim slightly.

"H-help! Those people are trying to kill us!" shouted the fat man.

Upon closer inspection, Gerald noticed that the girl had suffered a serious injury and that her leg was bleeding rather profusely. He also noticed that the white box she had earlier been carrying around was now black.

“B-brother, please! Save us! Those people have guns!” cried out the fat man again in his desperation.

Seeing how pale the beauty was and how close the off-road vehicle was already getting, Gerald considered for a moment.

Though the girl had killed off five people earlier, they were all robbers. What more, he honestly couldn't see her being a treacherous person.

Looking at the ones chasing after them next, he saw that the men in the vehicle were all bald. They also seemed to have either dragon or phoenix tattoos all over them.

Finalizing his decision once he saw one of the men stretching his hand out of the car's window, Gerald yelled, “Follow me into the valley!”

Seconds after he led both of them into the valley, gunshots could be heard. Tiny stones and pebbles flew all over the place as well, as the off-road vehicle drove over the rocky road.

Eventually, the car came to a screeching halt.

As five bald men exited the vehicle with guns in hand, their leader grumbled, “D*mn it! They run pretty fast! Not to worry, though! I managed to shoot the girl in the leg so they won't be able to get far! Make sure your guns are loaded, brothers! We're chasing after them!”

“Boss, don't! That valley is called Poisonous Mosquito Valley for a reason! If we get attacked by the

mosquitoes in there, then we'll definitely be wiped out in an instant! Even our skin will be completely vaporized... We definitely shouldn't go in there!" warned one of the bald men.

"Well we can't just leave without that box of money..." replied the leader rather hesitantly.

"...Humph. Well, if the valley is as dangerous as you say it is, I'm sure they'll come running out soon! In the meantime, call more of our men over to surround all the valley's entrances. Be sure to remind them to each have loaded guns with them!" added the leader.

"Right away, boss!"

"F*cking hell! Why are there so many mosquitoes here? What is this place, brother?" asked the fat man nervously as he carried the barely conscious girl deeper into the valley.

"Well of course there would be a lot of mosquitoes. This is the Poisonous Mosquito Valley, after all!"

"The... The Poisonous Mosquito Valley? You couldn't be talking about the one in the Death Forbidden Land, right?" asked the fat man—who was surprisingly knowledgeable—in surprise.

"Bingo!"

Chapter 932

Gerald nodded as he said that.

"...Oh god. It's best that we didn't go in any further, brother! From what I've heard, the mosquitoes don't even leave any traces of their victim's skin left! We might as well just get shot by bullets than have to endure through poisonous mosquito attacks!" said the fat man, terrified.

"You should've thought about that while you were running toward me earlier. Doesn't the fact that you did that already implicate that you didn't mind me dying together with you in the first place?" replied

Gerald as he smiled wryly.

The fat man, however, barely even registered any guilt since he was much too terrified of where he was currently at.

Gerald himself was calculating the chance of him surviving if he tried to go against those men. In the end, he was certain that the men would simply release fire from a distance the moment they saw him. Hiding could still be possible at that point, but he'd still end up getting hurt! There just wasn't any silver linings in confronting the men now.

With that conclusion in mind, Gerald couldn't help but laugh slightly bitterly before saying, "Come on, follow me. There's a cave within this valley which we can hide in for the moment! Since she's already lost too much blood at this point, the girl desperately needs some rest or her life will be in danger soon!"

"S-seriously?" asked the fat man in surprise.

Shaking his head, Gerald continued taking the lead until eventually, all three of them arrived at the cave Gerald had mentioned.

There seemed to be considerably less mosquitoes around this area as well.

"What a miracle! To think there was a spot within this death zone that those mosquitoes wouldn't gather around!" said the fat man as he gently placed the now unconscious girl on the ground.

"See those green plants out there? The mosquitoes are naturally repelled by their scent! With there being so many of that plant right outside the cave, the mosquitoes definitely won't be attacking us any time soon as long as we stay in here!"

With Gerald's immense knowledge of medicinal plants, it was no wonder why he knew the plants'

properties.

As Gerald began checking on the unconscious girl's injuries, he soon heard her ask, "...Who... exactly are you, brother...? How do you know so much...?"

When he turned to look at her face, she was frowning as she asked the question.

"My identity isn't important. Regardless, if these wounds don't get treated soon, you'll be dead within a few hours! What happened to both of you anyway? Why were those men hunting you down?"

Recalling what she had said to the five burly men before murdering them, Gerald remembered her saying that she wanted to assassinate someone. From her current condition, it was clear as day that her mission had failed.

"That's right! If I'd had known that you were going to do such a thing, then I wouldn't have followed you, even if you threatened to beat me to death! You're really got me in deep trouble this time!" said the young man in a bitter tone.

"Haha! Well, since we won't be living for much longer anyway, I guess it wouldn't hurt to tell you guys this! See, my plan was to assassinate a boss at the border of the Salford Province! After all, that b*stard cheated and killed my friends! Since I was able to escape, I've been planning my revenge since then!" explained the girl.

"I see. If I may, it seems that you have the background of a martial artist. Did you receive any special training for fighting and assassination as a child?" asked Gerald as he tore some gauze to bandage up her wound.

Upon hearing his question, she instantly began seeing Gerald in a new light.

As she continued staring at him, the fat man broke the silence by anxiously asking, "Hey, hey! Your

grievances with those men isn't what's important now! You said that we weren't going to be living for much longer right? What exactly did you mean by that?"

"Haha! Well, knowing Hansel's way of doing things, it wouldn't surprise me if his men have already surrounded all the exits to this valley by now. Even if we don't die to the mosquitoes here, the only other option is to starve to death! Still, I guess I needn't be lonely in death since the two of you will be joining me!" replied the girl.

"W-what...? You... You're evil! Pure evil! So we only exist here to cushion your blow?!" said the fat man as his eyes widened in shock and fear.

"To think that you still have the energy to scare him even with that serious injury. Hahaha... Well, since we truly are going to die here together, then we may as well die as romantic ghosts! After all, I'm sure fatty here has never enjoyed the company of a woman before!" said Gerald as he laughed while shaking his head.

"You... Don't you even dare!" growled the girl as she glared at Gerald.

Ignoring her threat, Gerald then turned to look at the fat man before saying, "Say, fatty. Head a little deeper inside and you'll find a small undercurrent creek. Get some water for me there. I'm going to disinfect her wound!"

"R-right!" said the fat man as he nodded slightly before fumbling off with a water bottle in hand.

"Alright, while your arm's only slightly injured, the wound on your thigh is much more serious. That's going to get infected extremely easily so I'll need to suck the contaminated blood out before that happens!" said Gerald as soon as the fat man left.

"How are you going to suck it out?" asked the girl.

“How else? With my mouth of course! So... Please spare me the embarrassment and take your pants off if you want me to help you...” said Gerald as he couldn’t help but blush slightly.

In response, she immediately gave him a slap across his face!

“Y-you asshole! Don’t even think about it!” growled the girl as he face turned as red as a tomato.

Chapter 933

Due to the environment she had grown up in, the girl had always been particularly sensitive whenever it came to having contact with men. Sensitive wasn’t even the right word in this case. Rather, it was more akin to disgust.

As long as she had to deal with matters involving relationships between men and women, she simply couldn’t help but feel utterly sickened. It could sometimes even get so terrible that she felt disgusted simply being in the presence of men.

It was why she barely felt guilty when she said that they should just die together earlier.

Gerald himself had never expected for such a cold and indifferent girl to put up such strong resistance.

“Look, I’m just trying to save your life here. If we don’t treat your wounds now, it’ll definitely come to bite you back when we make our escape later. Do you really need me of all people to tell you what’s going to happen should you fall into their hands?” persuaded Gerald.

“...You...”

Hearing that, the girl was momentarily stunned.

It was obvious that she was having an internal struggle at that moment with how tightly she was clenching her fists.

“...Fine! But close your eyes throughout the process or I won’t hesitate to slice your neck!” said the woman with a frigid tone.

“Lady, you’re making it sound as though I’m that desperate to look at you!”

“Well then turn around already! Close your d*mned eyes as well!” ordered the girl as Gerald obeyed while shaking his head.

Moments later, he heard the familiar rustling of a person undressing behind him.

Though the girl was a little cold, Gerald had to admit that she really was a true beauty. While any other ordinary man would surely be tempted to give a peek, Gerald easily refrained from that temptation. After all, he truly didn’t have any other intentions aside from treating her wound.

“...I’m done!” said the girl as Gerald slowly approached her with a sigh.

“Again, I warn you not to touch anywhere else... I can end your life with a single move, you got that?!”

It was about five minutes later when a familiar voice called out, “Brother! I brought the water over like you asked! ...Actually, hold on. What’s going on here? Why’s your face so red, beauty?” asked the fat man.

Upon closer inspection, he realized how disheveled she looked as well. It took him a second, but his astonishment was soon evident as he asked, “You... Both of you didn’t do anything weird while I was gone, right?”

“If you say another god d*mned word then don’t blame me for slicing your tongue off!” growled the girl as she pulled her short blade out.

In response, the fat man was so terrified that he immediately cupped his hands over his mouth.

Night passed quickly and the next thing the girl and the fat man knew, they were being patted awake on their cheek as Gerald said, "Hey, rise and shine! It's high time we made our leave!"

"But brother... It's still dark outside... Plus those men probably set up tents last night in wait for us... What makes you think they're already gone...?" asked the fat man as he rubbed his eyes.

"I went scouting earlier and from what I found, all the entrances were left unguarded. Either they've left or the poisonous mosquitoes got to them first! Regardless, let's just take this opportunity to hurry up and leave!" said Gerald.

"What? Not a single one of them is there?" asked the fat man in surprise.

The girl was equally as surprised when she heard that.

"I'm certain and I'm serious about leaving immediately. Any later and escape may prove impossible!" replied Gerald as he slipped his backpack on.

Exchanging glances with each other, the fat man and the girl could only start readying themselves. After all, both of them were fully aware that in the end, Gerald was still the most reliable person among them.

True to Gerald's word, once they got to the valley's entrance, the girl was surprised to see that all the tents had been completely deserted. Hansel's men seemed to have simply evaporated into the night!

'This hardly makes any sense! Even if they were attacked by the mosquitoes, I should've definitely been able to hear them screaming at the very least!' Thought the girl to herself.

As she turned to look at Gerald, she was surprised to see that he had already gotten atop one of the off-road vehicles.

“It seems we’ll be parting ways here then! After all, I still have other things to do! Both of you can just use the other vehicles here to make your escape!”

Chapter 934

“You...where are you headed?” asked the girl rather hesitantly as she looked at Gerald.

“Your guess is as good as mine! Once I make my stop at the Salford Province, I’ll probably continue traveling till I reach the end of the world!” replied Gerald with a smile as he revved up the engine of the off-road vehicle he was on.

It was evident that he was the one who had taken out all of Hansel’s men during the night. It was also exactly because of that that he couldn’t afford to stay here for a moment longer.

“Before you leave, tell me your name! Mine is Rainey Levington!” called out Rainey as her beautiful face blushed.

This was honestly the first time in her life that she had ever been this intimate with a guy. To her, Gerald was completely different from all the other men she had previously met. After all, Gerald had told her that he wouldn’t have any dirty thoughts of her, and Rainey could see it in his eyes that he hadn’t lied.

“Ah. Uh... Just call me Sanderson!” replied Gerald.

Upon hearing that, Rainey didn’t even have a chance to even reply before Gerald stepped on the accelerator and drove off while waving a hand.

“...Sanderson? Who the hell would even have such a name?” grumbled Rainey angrily.

She had honestly wanted to continue questioning him, but by now, Gerald was only a tiny speck in a distance.

Gerald himself began making his way through the Salford Province. Following Quest's previous directions, he was now headed for an area near the province's border.

The area in question wasn't part of any country, and there was no single person in charge of it either. Aside from a few large families sharing authority over the area, one could say that the place was as free as the heavens.

Due to that, the area was commonly known as the Heavenly City in the Triangle District.

However, due to the lack of an authoritative figure, lawlessness ran rampant within the Heavenly City's many cities, villages, and towns.

It was simply an area infamously known for housing several major underground forces.

The Westleys themselves were seen as nothing more than wealthy businessmen around these parts. Speaking of the Westleys, Gerald's current plan was to head for their mansion.

Aside from potentially locating the Ginseng King, Gerald had another important reason for coming here.

With him currently unable to return to Weston for the time being, he figured that with all the crooks mixed together with honest folk here, even the Moldells would have a difficult time searching for him here. In other words, this place was Gerald's best bet to remain undetected, and safe, at least for a little while.

Gerald didn't plan to stay for long, however. After all, he had already made up his mind that he wouldn't establish an open relationship with the Westleys. Their family was, after all, the only bargaining chip he had left, and it wasn't even a long-term bargaining chip.

After driving for some time, the car finally ran out of gas. As a result, Gerald simply abandoned it, walking through the mountains instead.

It wasn't really that hard for him since if he was thirsty, he could always just drink spring water. Even hunger wasn't an issue since catching and roasting a wild pheasant or hare barely posed any trouble for him.

Eventually, however, a heavy downpour began. Not wanting to be completely drenched for the rest of his journey, he found a nearby cave and used it as a temporary shelter.

It was evening when the rain finally stopped and Gerald stood before the stream right outside the cave to wash his face.

However, it wasn't long before he heard violent fighting not too far away.

Gerald simply shook his head with a wry smile. It was evident that it was a fight between two forces.

"This truly is the triangle district... I need to be more careful wherever I go now!"

Just as Gerald said that to himself, Gerald could hear the rustling of several footsteps... However, they seemed to be frantically headed toward his direction!

Squinting his eyes, Gerald counted a total of five men, all of them fully dressed in camouflage clothing. They appeared to be desperately trying to escape from something.

"Boss!" shouted one of the men as he watched one of his more injured comrades fall to the ground. The one who had fallen had an extremely pale complexion as the other four men quickly surrounded him.

"I... I can't go on anymore! Just leave me behind and run! Hurry, before they arrive!"

"No! We aren't leaving you behind, boss! We're all brothers, remember! If we die, we die together! Worst come to worst, we'll just fight our way through together until we perish!" said another of the five men.

"You b*stard! What are all of you even saying! Promise me right now that you'll all continue to live well! I'll stay behind to buy you some time, so please, please just hurry up and leave already!" replied their leader as he slapped one of the men who was already crying beside him.

"Beat us to death then, boss! Until you manage to do that, we won't ever leave!"

"Seconded! We aren't leaving no matter what!" shouted another man as all of them wiped the tears off their faces, their decisions resolute.

Chapter 935

"...Hold on, there's a cave over there! Why don't we try hiding there, boss? As we've said, we're not leaving you here to die alone!" said another man as the others nodded in unison.

Knowing full well that the others weren't going to listen to him, he simply allowed them to carry his wounded body over to the cave.

"...Huh? Is it just me, or does it seem like someone lives here...?" said one of the men in surprise when he saw the remains of a campfire.

"It's not just you... Regardless, let's not worry about that first. We should focus on bandaging boss's wounds first."

"Honestly, it'd be better for him to bleed a little more under these circumstances. He'll die even faster if you bandage his wounds now," said a voice out of the blue.

Shocked to hear that comment, everyone immediately raised their guns as they aimed at the young man who had just spoken.

Still standing at the cave's entrance, Gerald simply stared directly at the black muzzles of the guns before casually sitting down by the side of the cave. In his hand, was a hare that he had apparently just roasted.

While the boss of the group glared coldly at the young man who had just appeared, he couldn't help but feel that he was an extraordinary person.

After all, though the boss was seriously injured, he was well aware that he was much more vigilant compared to regular people. Even so, he hadn't been able to notice the young man's presence until he said something! What more, the young man hadn't even batted an eyelid when his men pointed their guns at him! Hell, a commoner wouldn't be roasting hares this far up the mountains!

All these qualities were far from what a normal person would possess!

"Lower your guns!" said the leader with a wave of his hand.

Once his men obeyed, he smiled while looking at Gerald before saying, "Correct me if I'm wrong, but this appears to be your home, young man! Our apologies for simply bursting in on short notice!"

"What, do people live in caves where you come from? I was only taking shelter from the rain here. Since this place isn't mine to begin with, feel free to stay for as long as you want," replied Gerald with a sneer.

"Hah! As if we need his permission, Boss! It's obvious from the way he dresses that he's just a regular backpacker! Also, try not to talk too much, young man. Otherwise, don't blame us for not giving you any face!" replied one of the men angrily before immediately starting to bandage his boss's wounds.

Seeing that the man was using a short blade to cut off a piece of gauze, Gerald immediately came to the conclusion that these men were probably from the same group as Rainey.

After all, her short blade and the man's looked incredibly similar.

Recalling what she had said, Rainey had told Gerald that her friends had been cheated by Hansel, resulting in their death. That was her motive to take revenge on Hansel in the first place.

Seeing the miserable state the five men were in, Gerald had a feeling that Rainey could've been wrong about them dying.

What the men said next, however, confirmed that his theory was true.

"That d*mned Hansel... If we make it out alive of this, I'm definitely going after his head! To think that he actually hired others to get rid of us! We won't be taken out that easily!"

"Indeed! Still, I hope Sixth sister is doing alright now... I fear that she'll end up getting caught in one of Hansel's tricks!" added their boss with a cough.

Gerald himself thought about how Rainey had truly almost lost her life because of Hansel.

"Regardless, what's our next step, boss? Hansel's been extremely wary with us, making sure that we wouldn't even have a place to seek refuge! I can't even think of a place where we can head to at the moment!"

"We'll take things slow. Worst comes to worst, we'll just be vagabonds for a while! However, I still say that all of you should just leave me here. There's no point in losing your lives because of an injured man!" persuaded the boss.

However, no matter how much he persuaded, none of his comrades wavered with their final decisions.

At that moment, several footsteps could be heard running toward the cave. From what Gerald could tell, there were at least a dozen men heading toward them.

“I beg of you! Leave while you can!”

“Negative, boss! We’re fighting till the very end!” growled the men as they gritted their teeth, fully prepared to engage in battle with the other party.

Shortly after, their hunters—who were also donning camouflage clothing—finally appeared at the mouth of the cave. As they pointed their guns at the group of people inside, the person—who seemed to be their leader—took a step forward before saying, “Hah! You guys can really run! To think that you even made us chase you all the way up the mountain for so long! You truly are amazing, Whistler Sankey!”

“Just cut the crap and kill us already if you want to, Leopold!” shouted Whistler in return.

“Bold! How truly bold of you!” sneered Leopold.

“Don Leopold! There seems to be another man in here!” reported one of Leopold’s men.

Chapter 936

“Hmm? A backpacker? Brat, if you know what’s good for you, leave this instance. If you don’t, I’ll only be wasting a bullet on you!” said Leopold as he pointed a gun directly at the side of Gerald’s head.

In response, however, Gerald simply turned to look directly into Leopold’s eyes.

“The hell are you looking at, brat?” growled Leopold angrily.

“You know, though I’ve been wandering around for quite a while now, I must say that nobody’s actually dared to point a gun directly at my forehead before!” replied Gerald with a laugh.

“A death wish? Be my guest!” roared Leopold as his finger moved to pull the trigger.

However, the next thing he knew, a clang of metal echoed throughout the cave.

It took Leopold a second to realize that the gun was no longer in his hand, and it was at that moment when he knew he had f*cked up.

As cold sweat began trickling down Leopold’s forehead, everyone—including Whistler and his men—was so stunned that they didn’t even dare to breathe.

After all, everyone had seen it happen. In that split second before the trigger was pulled, Gerald had flicked a branch so precisely that it jammed the tip of Leopold’s gun!

As if that feat wasn’t amazing enough, the laws of physics didn’t seem to apply to Gerald at all since not only did the branch pierce through the gun, it actually embedded itself at least an inch into the cave’s solid walls!

Leopold felt a faint trickle of blood flow down his cheek as he stared wide-eyed at his gun which was now hanging loosely like an onion ring on a kebab stick.

By god! What kind of strength and speed even was that?!

If Gerald had only aimed the branch at his throat or chest, he would’ve been dead just like that!

"I-incredible!" stuttered Leopold as he gulped down hard.

"Since I'll be staying the night here, please choose how you want this to go. You can either go outside and fight me now, or leave us alone. What's it going to be?" asked Gerald as he bit into his roasted hare.

Narrowing his eyes in utter fear, Leopold immediately shouted, "We'll withdraw!"

"Don Leopold?!"

"Withdraw I said!" roared Leopold as he waved his hand, signaling for his men to evacuate immediately.

"There's over a dozen of us here, Don Leopold! Why are we withdrawing?" asked one of his subordinates immediately after stepping out of the cave.

"Hahaha! I'm assuming you haven't heard of the case that befell Hansel's men! Color me surprised since the news has been circulating heavily around the Heavenly City! Regardless, dozens of his men were killed in a single night when all they were chasing after were three people!" replied Leopold.

"What? Dozens? And none of them made it out alive?"

"You heard me! And that isn't even the most terrifying thing about the incident! Upon investigating, it was found that all of them were killed with the same weapon before they could even pull the triggers to their guns! And guess what, the weapon in question was a tree branch! Do you see where I'm going with this? If dozens of armed men couldn't deal with a single assailant wielding a tree branch, what makes you think our group will make it out alive if we don't retreat?" explained Leopold, his forehead still dripping with cold sweat.

Now understanding where Leopold was coming from, his subordinates immediately began hastening their paces away from the area.

After all, Hansel was an extremely powerful big shot so his men were definitely no small fries. However, to think that all of them were killed by a single person, and with only a single tree branch!

Judging from the strength, skill, and weapon of choice of the young man from earlier, all of them could only wonder if he was the one who was responsible for killing off all of Hansel's men.

Back inside the cave, Whistler stood up after some difficulty before saying, "I really didn't know that such a powerful and talented person could even exist on this planet! I go by Whistler Sankey! Thank you for saving our lives, sir!" said Whistler, his voice filled with respect and gratitude.

Seeing that, his other men began doing the same as well.

"You're all being way too polite. It was just a coincidence that I happened to save your lives. After all, what happened earlier was merely self-defense," replied Gerald as he shook his head.

"I see... Speaking of which, sir. You mentioned earlier that my wound shouldn't be bandaged now. Why was that?" asked Whistler.

Hearing that, Gerald looked at the wounded man.

He had honestly only saved them since he had seen how much those men valued their friendship. If they were merely working as hired individuals who thought little about their brothers and only prioritized taking down the enemy forces, Gerald wouldn't even have bothered interfering with Leopold's attack in the first place.

Shaking his head, Gerald then said, "...Lie down on your side. I'll get that bullet out from you first before we continue talking..."

Chapter 937

“Amazing! Not only are you incredibly skillful and strong, but you’re also proficient with medicine! My admiration for you now knows no bounds!” said Whistler respectfully

In response, Gerald only shook his head in silence.

After exchanging glances with his men for a while, Whistler then added, “I do wonder if there’s anything my men and I could do for you in future, sir? Since you saved our lives, we’re more than willing to follow you around and do whatever we can for you!”

He didn’t just say that to please Gerald either. Their gratitude was genuine. After all, anyone would feel the same way after being saved from such a tight situation. The fact that Gerald was aware of how much Whistler and his men valued their brotherhood only served to make their proposal all the more meaningful.

In addition, it’s not like they had anywhere else to go now. They all knew that by following this powerful young man, a bright future wasn’t completely out of the question anymore.

“Follow me around? Sorry to disappoint, but I’ll be looking for a place to stay in, in the Triangle District myself. After all, I don’t exactly have a place to return to anymore!” replied Gerald with a bitter smile.

“You don’t have anywhere to go to as well, sir? Well that’s perfect then! All of us here are relatively familiar with the Triangle District, so we could help you navigate around the area, sir! Do consider taking us in!” said Whistler.

Hearing that, Gerald thought to himself for a moment.

He was well aware that what he currently lacked most was manpower. If he was to go against Kort, he would eventually need to find help anyway since there was no way he was going to be able to take that b*stard down alone.

From what he had earlier seen, Whistler and his men also had excellent foundations as well as a strong sense of loyalty. If he trained these men like how Finnley had trained him before, then they would no doubt be able to at least be at Quentin and Trey's level in the future.

"You're looking too highly of me if you're asking me to take you in. After all, I'm a vagabond as well. However, since you suggested it, I accept. Thanks for having me," replied Gerald with a smile.

"This is simply too perfect then, sir!" shouted Whistler and his men, overjoyed.

As they laughed merrily, roars of thunder slowly grew louder and more frequent as dark clouds filled the sky again. Soon after, the heavy downpour resumed.

It was honestly a rare opportunity for the men to enjoy such peace of mind as they stared out at the rain from inside the cave.

Eventually, Whistler said, "If we're going to be working together from now on, we simply can't continue living like this, sir! If we want to survive in the Triangle District, then we'll have to build our own industry and power!"

Gerald simply nodded in agreement. After all, it would definitely not be a cakewalk to survive in the Triangle District when a cave was currently their only source of shelter!

"Since you suggested it, do you have any good ideas of where to start?" asked Gerald as he turned to look at Whistler.

"Well, we'll definitely be avoiding Heavenly City, at least for now. While it's the largest city in the Triangle District with a booming economy and their own ways of conducting themselves in society, there are simply too many forces going against each other there. Trying to establish a footing there with our current situation would definitely be extremely complicated and chaotic!"

“However, a small town that goes by the name of Talgo town lies about ten kilometers away from that city. While not as prosperous as Heavenly City, the economy there isn’t too bad for a small town. I suggest building our name there, sir! While I currently only have a little money left, I believe that it’s still enough to start a small business there!” explained Whistler.

Gerald simply waved a hand before saying, “There’s no need to start small. I currently have enough with me to buy a few large industries. Speaking of which, what’s the main industry in Talgo town?”

“If I remember correctly, they’re most well-known for their medicinal herb and material-processing factory! However, the factory itself is rather large, so it’ll definitely cost quite a bit to buy it!” replied Whistler.

“A medicinal factory you say?” said Gerald, his interest clearly piqued.

‘While I’m still in search of the Ginseng King, I’ll still need other medicinal herbs and materials to train myself... By buying the medicinal factory, things will be much more convenient for me!’ Gerald thought to himself.

“Alright, as soon as the rain stops, let’s rush over so that I can borrow the money we need to buy the factory!” announced Gerald.

It was two days later in a small hotel located in Talgo town when Whistler pushed a room’s door open and said, “It’s done, sir!”

Following him, were two men by the name of Stanley and Wyham.

Chapter 938

“So quickly?” asked Gerald.

Coughing before clearing his throat, Whistler then said, “Well, the owner of the factory has constantly been harassed by the local forces here for quite some time... He just couldn’t endure it anymore. He was

actually quite willing to sell the factory for a low price! As a result, we still have a little money with us now. Speaking of which, since he's no longer the company's owner, should we change the company's name?" asked Whistler.

"Hmm... Let's go with Royal Dragon!" said Gerald rather casually.

"Oh? Royal Dragon Inc? Or perhaps, Royal Dragon Group? Regardless, that sounds like an excellent name! It certainly sounds domineering, that's for sure. I'll proceed with the rest of the paperwork immediately! Also, before I leave, my brothers and I have pooled in our money to buy the manor which the previous factory owner used to live in! You can live there in future!" added Whistler with a smile.

"Just to make sure, you didn't coerce him into doing so, right?" asked Gerald, fully aware of how much money Whistler and his group currently had on them. To him, that amount was definitely not enough to purchase an entire manor.

"Of course we didn't! The boss voluntarily agreed to everything!"

Hearing that, Gerald nodded. Before they had gone off to buy the factory earlier, Gerald had made it clear that under no circumstances should any of them threaten or coerce the factory's owner if he refused to sell it. Whistler had kept that rule in mind, which was why he hadn't lost his temper at all during his discussion with the company's ex-owner earlier.

"Alright, I trust you. Also, what do you mean only I can live there? All of you should move in as well! We're companions now, are we not? Now lead me to the manor! I'd like to have a good look at it!"

"R-right away!" stuttered Whistler and the others, overjoyed by Gerald's kind words.

Upon exiting the hotel, Gerald was greeted by two big Mercedes Benz. He honestly had no idea how Whistler even got his hands on those cars.

However, after getting to know the man a bit more in the past two days, Gerald realized that not only was Whistler capable, in a sense, he was very much like Zack, both careful and meticulous with everything that he did.

As Gerald looked out the car's window on their way there, he frowned slightly when he saw a few gang members smashing and destroying several shops.

Sadly, this wasn't an uncommon scene here. As Gerald looked at all the other gangsters who were walking up and down the streets with their dragon tattoos on full display, he recalled how Whistler had told him that Talgo Town was a pretty small town.

When he first arrived two days prior, however, he found that Talgo town was anything but small. In fact, the prosperous town was probably about the size of two Serene Counties!

From what he had seen, the town had several bars, restaurants, and many other facilities. However, just like all the other places within the Triangle District, this place was definitely chaotic.

It wasn't long before they finally arrived at the manor. Upon stepping inside, however, Gerald was immediately greeted by the sound of crying. It seemed to come from the living quarters.

As Whistler pushed the door leading there open, they saw a middle-aged man reprimanding around twenty maids.

"All of you have to be on your best behavior, got that? If all of you aren't smiling by the time the new master arrives and he ends up being unhappy, I'll personally skin each and every one of you alive!"

Fuming, he then turned around before realizing that Gerald and his men were already there!

"O-oh! Mr. Sankey! I didn't notice that you had already arrived! Could this gentleman over here be the new master of the manor? With such a great temperament, I'm certain he's the one! Ah, where are my

manners? I go by the name of Sherman Levine, and I'll be working as your butler from today onward! It's an honor to meet you, new master of the manor!" said Sherman with a rather wicked glint in his eyes as he bowed respectfully before Gerald.

"G-greetings, master!" said all the beautiful maids in unison, some of them already trembling as they looked at Gerald.

"Speaking of which, these here are the maids who used to work for the factory's previous owner! Since they seemed to be pretty good at their job, I decided to keep them!" said Whistler.

"They are indeed! You can rest assured, master, for I was the one who personally trained all of them! They'll follow your every order to a T!" added Sherman with a laugh.

"These girls... Were they abducted?" asked Gerald as he slowly walked toward one of the maids.

Pulling her sleeve up, several bruises and whip marks were instantly noticeable.

"Hahaha! Well, I wouldn't use the term, 'abduct'... I simply bought them off the market! A single one of these maids actually costs less than a packet of my cigarettes! Can you believe that? Also, if you were wondering, all these beauties are unopened packages! I've already driven away anyone who's already been used! I hope you're satisfied with them, master!"

On the contrary, Gerald now had a huge frown on his face as his disgust for Sherman peaked.

Turning to look at the butler, Gerald said in a frigid tone, "I don't need any of them. Ask them for their home addresses and return them safely, right this instance!"

Chapter 939

"I-I beg your pardon...? Send them home...?" asked Sherman in surprise.

“Did sir not make himself clear enough?!” yelled Whistler coldly.

“L-loud and clear! I’ll be sending them home right away then, master!” replied Sherman as he nodded repeatedly in fright.

Hearing that, the maids instantly began bowing gratefully toward Gerald as they took turns saying ‘thank you’ to him.

“Alright, alright, settle down... You’re all free to return to your homes now!” said Gerald as he smiled subtly.

Since Gerald had personally experienced what it felt like to be forced to leave his own home, he wasn’t about to allow these girls to continue going through the same sadness and grief that he had. To him, they had already suffered enough after going through the humiliation of being bought as servants. Besides, he wasn’t really a domineering person in the first place.

Soon after, most of the maids left together with Sherman. However, two of them remained standing there, sobbing silently.

“Aren’t both of you going to leave?” asked Gerald.

“O-our parents have already been slaughtered by the gangsters here... We’re homeless, master!” said one of the girls as the other nodded between tears.

“Please allow us to stay here, master! We’ll definitely serve you well! We only ask that you provide food and shelter for us, master!” said the other girl.

“Very well, then. You’re free to stay if you wish. Rest assured, however, that nobody here is going to bully either of you from now on!” replied Gerald with a smile.

Upon getting his approval, both of them immediately shouted in gratitude, “We, Yukie and Lucy thank you sincerely with all our hearts, master!”

Yukie, in particular, seemed particularly grateful as she felt her heart rate rise after taking a peek at him.

After all, not only was he extremely handsome, but unlike the many vicious others who had only ever seen her as an insignificant person, her new master seemed to also have a very kind heart.

Now that that was settled, Gerald finally began settling down in his new mansion.

With the remaining money, Whistler then personally sought out and recruited over a hundred young men who were all physically capable and loyal.

They would serve as the bodyguards of the Royal Dragon Group.

Their training routine began with Whistler teaching them for the first two weeks before transferring over to Gerald once they were ready for more advanced techniques.

As a result of all that training, the men under Gerald showed a clear spike in both strength and general quality within less than a month. Though they had previously only been ordinary men, Gerald could safely say that they were now comparable to the bodyguards who worked for his family.

It was sometime after that when Yukie and Lucy could be seen in their room.

While Yukie appeared to be carefully separating quality white fungus from the regular ones from a small pile on her table, Lucy herself was simply rolling on the bed.

Smiling bitterly, Lucy said, "You've already been grouping the white fungus for so long, Yukie! Aren't you tired at all?"

Though it had barely even been a month since Gerald became their new master, both of them already had much better complexions.

This was especially so for Yukie who had grown to become so sweet and beautiful that anyone who saw her instantly felt the need to treat her compassionately.

"Not at all! If anyone should be tired, it's sir! After all, he's been training those bodyguards for days now! He has to manage the company as well! Since he probably hasn't had the time to take care of himself, I'll be preparing a bowl of white fungus soup for him later!" replied Yukie with a sweet smile.

"Yeah, sir truly is a very kind man... However, you're even kinder than him, Yukie! After all, all you ever think about is his well being! Almost everything I've seen you done is for him! Haha!" said Lucy with a laugh.

What she had said was true. Throughout their time working for Gerald, Yukie had always stuck close to him.

In fact, she had made it her personal duty to take care of everything regarding her master, from the food that he ate to the clothes he wore. Yukie made sure to plan and prepare everything perfectly for Gerald.

As both of them reminisced about their short time working under Gerald, Lucy suddenly said, "Speaking of which, Yukie... Back when sir freed us from being slaves, why didn't you choose to return to your country and hometown? Sir was even willing to provide the cash for the plane tickets! After all, though uncle and aunt have passed away, you still have other relatives living there, right?"

Chapter 940

"Could it be that... you like our master?" added Lucy as she cupped her mouth while laughing.

“Quit spouting nonsense, Lucy... I... I don’t have any other relatives to speak of! However, I will admit that I felt a sense of security the first time I laid eyes on master... It was the reason why I chose to stay. Also, regarding the liking part, how could someone like me ever be qualified to fall for someone like master?!” replied Yukie as she blushed.

“Speaking of which, Lucy... I distinctly remembered that you wanted to return to your hometown even more than I did! Why didn’t you leave back then?” added Yukie.

“Well, I simply felt that master was a good person who wouldn’t abuse us like our previous ones... Adding that to the fact that he respected us so much, I just felt obligated to stay and work for him! I do have a second reason for staying, however... Remember Tyson? He told me that he would come pick me up in a little under a month back then! I didn’t want him to have to hunt around for me so I simply stayed put here! That way, he would be able to pick me up easily when the time came! However, since he isn’t here yet, I’m assuming that he’s still undergoing his mission to save his brother. Once he’s done that, he told me that he’d take me away before finally marrying me!” explained Lucy with a smile on her face.

“I see... Still, do you truly believe everything that he said? I mean yes, Tyson did save us before... However, I’ll be frank and say that I don’t think he’ll actually come over to take you away! Have you prepared yourself for that possibility...?” said Yukie as she attempted to lower Lucy’s expectations so that she wouldn’t end up getting too hurt if Tyson never came.

“Don’t worry, I get where you’re coming from... However, I’ve chosen to have faith in Tyson. He’ll definitely come looking for me once he saves his brother! After all, we’ve already gotten engaged! Be it within this month, a year, or a lifetime, I’ll still be waiting patiently for him!” declared Lucy as she cupped her blushing cheeks.

“Alright then! Still, it’s pretty rare to see you being this devoted! Also, I’m already done with the mushrooms so come along and let’s make some soup for sir!”

With that, both of the girls exited their room, chatting and laughing happily as they left for the kitchen.

A little while later, a group of men could be seen making their way through the jungle atop a huge

mountain located north of the Royal Dragon Group.

The group itself consisted of over a hundred men who had been divided into five teams. Whistler and his four brothers were each given a team to be in charge of.

While the men trained on, Yukie and Lucy made their own way toward their master who was sitting on a lounge chair as he drank his tea while two bodyguards wearing sunglasses stood attentively on either side of his chair. One of the guards had his arms behind his back while the other held on to an umbrella, keeping Gerald constantly under the shade.

“We’ve made some bird’s nest for you, sir! Do try some!” said Yukie as she handed him the thermos which she had been carrying along with her.

“You didn’t have to go through all that trouble! Thank you!” said Gerald with a smile as he lowered his tea and took the thermos.

Yukie herself couldn’t help but smile sweetly in response.

As she continued looking at him, she couldn’t help but feel that Gerald’s body and physique seemed to change constantly!

After all, she distinctly remembered that the muscles on Gerald’s body weren’t that huge sometime ago... However, they seemed to have suddenly gained a lot of mass out of the blue in the past few days!

This was the second time Yukie was witnessing such a scenario...

Before she could wonder any further about his physicality, rapid footsteps could be heard approaching them.

Turning around, all of them then saw Whistler running toward Gerald together with his team. From what they could see, a few of his men at the back were carrying a man's body.

"Sir! We found this unconscious man while we were up in the mountains earlier! He has serious injuries all over his body and he seems to have fainted for at least a few days by now! He's slowly dying as we speak! What should we do, sir?" announced Whistler as his subordinates slowly lowered the injured man to the ground.

Frowning, Gerald turned to look at the injured man... However, the moment he saw the man's face, his heart instantly began beating rapidly.

Lucy, on the other hand, was now quivering so much that the tray she was holding onto soon clattered on the floor.

"Tyson?!" shouted both of them in unison.

While Gerald immediately stood up from his shock, Lucy was already crying as she crouched beside the injured man.

The dying man wasn't just any other Tyson. He was the Tyson from the Drake & Tyson duo.

Shaking his shock off, Gerald found himself running over to Tyson's side as well.

Chapter 941

"Tyson!" cried out Lucy again as Whistler turned to look at Gerald.

"Are you acquainted with him, sir?" asked Whistler.

In response, Gerald immediately replied, "But of course I am! He may not be my biological brother, but I treat him as one!"

“...Huh? T-then, please save him, sir! Since you’re proficient with medicine, you have to save him!” wailed Lucy between sobs.

When he heard her request, Gerald recalled Lucy mentioning someone by the name of Tyson to him sometime back. To think that the Tyson she was waiting for turned out to be the exact same person he cared greatly for as well!

If Gerald had been aware that this was the case, he would’ve sent some of his people out to look for him ages ago. If only that had happened, then this turn of events could’ve very easily been avoided.

“Please give them some space, Lucy... Didn’t you hear that master treats Tyson like his real brother?” persuaded Yukie as she pulled Lucy aside.

Gerald himself immediately began checking Tyson’s wounds. As was expected, the man was severely injured. Should Tyson have been found a few hours later, even Finnley wouldn’t have been able to save him. Regardless, treatment couldn’t be delayed any longer.

“Quick! Carry him back to the manor!” ordered Gerald.

It was two hours later when one of Tyson’s fingers finally twitched. Following that, his eyelids fluttered slightly as the man slowly opened his eyes.

The first thing he saw was Lucy, the girl clutching onto his hand tightly.

“...Lu...cy...? Could I... be dreaming? Or am I already dead...?” said Tyson weakly.

“T-Tyson! You’re awake! N-no, this isn’t a dream! Master! Master cured you!” cried out Lucy, happy to see him awake again.

Hearing that, Tyson was slightly baffled.

“Master? Lucy, I’m well aware of the extent of injuries I sustained... As far as I’m aware, not even Master Jenkinson from the Salford Province would have been able to cure me. That was the reason why I chose to run all the way here just to meet you for one final time... Are you really sure that I’ll make a full recovery...?”

“Extremely sure, Tyson... After all, master is highly capable! Speaking of master... I was so excited upon seeing you awake that I almost forgot to inform master about it...” replied Lucy, tears of joy in her eyes.

After heading out to call the ‘master’, it was moments later when Tyson heard an extremely familiar voice asking, “Are you awake, Tyson?”

Tyson recognized that voice anywhere, and he instantly began trembling in shock as he turned to look at the owner of the voice.

“M-Mr. Crawford...?”

Tyson’s lips were twitching with both happiness and surprise as he immediately attempted to sit up.

“Don’t move too much. I just closed those wounds,” replied Gerald as he walked over to balance the weakened man.

Grabbing hold of Gerald’s hands tightly, Tyson then said, “T-there were so many rumors of you being dead... Yet... I’m so glad that you’re not... To think that I would be able to meet you again all the way out here, Mr. Crawford! How wonderful!”

As Tyson got teary-eyed from his excitement, Gerald simply smiled before saying, “I’m alive and well!”

They aren't going to kill me that easily!"

Never had Gerald expected to bump into Tyson again, especially not in such foreign lands.

"He's the master I was talking about, Tyson! He saved you!" said Lucy as she watched the two happy men.

"...What? Mr. Crawford? You were the one who healed me? When did you acquire such high medical proficiency?" asked Tyson, astonished by what he heard.

"It all happened over half a year ago... I'll tell you all about what happened in the future... For now, let me do the asking. What exactly happened for you to end up in such a state? If we had found you any later, you'd be dead by now, you know? Also, where's Drake?" questioned Gerald in return.

Hearing his brother's name, Tyson's face scrunched up slightly. He then began detailing everything that had happened to him and his brother throughout Gerald's absence.

It all began on the night they had risked their lives to send Gerald away.

After achieving that, they returned to the Crawford family.

Chapter 942

However, by then, the Crawfords had begun fearing that the incident—of the Drake & Tyson duo rescuing Gerald—would be exposed sooner or later. As a result, they provided both the brothers some money and told them to leave the Crawford family.

The Drake & Tyson duo didn't really have any issues with that, and while they had first planned to return to the mercenary base abroad, on their way there, they caught wind of the incident that had befallen both Gerald and Zack in Merry City that night.

Upon finding out that Gerald had gone missing, they immediately rushed over to the Salford Province to secretly investigate the incident. However, even after three months had passed, neither of them had been able to find any new leads.

As if that wasn't enough, even the Schuyler family had begun noticing their activity. Knowing that, both of them knew that they didn't have much of a choice but to halt their investigations for the time being. After some planning, they decided to leave the Salford Province and head to the Triangle District in Heavenly City.

Their plan was to build a base there, and with the remaining money the Crawfords had given them, they intended to form a few forces. Once they were prepared enough to return to the Salford Province, together with their forces, they would take revenge on the Schuyler family.

That was their plan anyway. Little did they know that they had severely underestimated those living in the Heavenly City.

In one of their many attempts to acquire more powerful and influential forces there through battle, the two brothers ended up getting defeated by a man called Sven Westmore, a great and powerful overlord in the Heavenly City.

While they managed to capture Drake, Tyson was able to make it out by the skin of his teeth.

From then onward, Tyson had to live in the shadows, making sure that he switched hiding spots every once in a while.

During that period, he came across a butler—by the name of Evan—flogging over ten girls. Disgusted and enraged by that, Tyson ended up killing Evan on the spot.

It was then when he got to know Lucy. During their few days together, the duo found themselves falling for each other to a point where Tyson even promised her that they would get married once he successfully rescued his brother.

Sadly, the mission was an absolute failure. Sven had easily defeated him, and just like the first time, Tyson barely managed to escape with his life intact. However, unlike back then, he was severely injured this time.

After being on the run for some time, he eventually made it to the mountains where he promptly fainted. All that led to the events of today.

“Sven?” asked Gerald with a frown.

Hearing that name, Whistler and his men shivered slightly before explaining, “Sven is indeed a powerful overlord in Heavenly City, sir. He’s well aware of his power and influence, so much so, in fact, that he even considers himself to be a villain! What more, he’s physically strong as well! It wouldn’t be a stretch to say that an already powerful man who’s trained for over ten years still wouldn’t be unable to defeat Sven. While it’s evident that Tyson and his brother are proficient with martial arts, it isn’t much of a surprise to us that both of them lost to him...”

“Is he really that powerful...?” replied Gerald.

Gerald’s doubt was understandable since he was well aware of the Drake & Tyson duo’s capabilities. Still, he had to admit that the fact that the strong and talented brothers were able to be cornered so badly was definitely a rare occurrence.

What more, Whistler—who was honestly not much weaker than the two brothers at this point—clearly appeared frightened of Sven.

“He is, sir! However, our lives belong to you! We aren’t afraid of death, so if you order us to fight him, we’ll do so willingly!” declared Whistler with resolution in his voice.

“He speaks for all of us, sir!” added the other men in unison.

Hearing that, Gerald simply raised a hand before stating, "If he's as powerful as Whistler says he is, then we need to plan things out carefully first. Try gathering every bit of information about Sven's current power and influence, Whistler. Your task begins immediately!"

While Gerald himself wasn't afraid of Sven, he didn't want his subordinates to die meaninglessly if Sven truly was as ruthless and powerful as they described him to be.

Regardless, the operation would still commence sooner or later. After all, Gerald had an unbreakable bond with the Drake and Tyson duo.

Since Drake was in trouble, Gerald didn't mind risking his life to save him.

It was evening when the still weak Tyson slowly inched toward the yard. Once he was there, he turned to look at Gerald who was standing in the middle of the area, his arms behind his back.

"Mr. Crawford... Do bring me along when you head to Heavenly City..."

"Why did you get off the bed, Tyson...? Besides, I told you that I no longer go by Mr. Crawford," replied Gerald with a smile.

"Understood, Mr. Crawford- ...Well, while we're at it, since my brother and I have left the Crawford family, then we shouldn't be called the Drake & Tyson duo anymore either. After all, it was the young lady who gave us that name. Instead, you can call me by my real name now, Tyson Jay," replied Tyson with a slightly bitter smile.

Hearing that, Gerald nodded and patted him on the shoulder before saying, "I'll be making a move in a few days. Worry not, for I'll definitely get Tyson back safely. In the meantime, do get some rest. You need it."

“But Mr. Crawford-”

“There’s no need to persuade me. You’re not coming along, and that’s my final decision,” interrupted Gerald as he raised a hand before Tyson could even say anything.

As soon as his sentence ended, both of them saw Whistler jogging toward them.

“Sir! You’ve just received an invitation to attend a gathering tonight! The gathering itself was hosted by the five most powerful groups in Talgo Town! The person who sent the invitation card even stated that your attendance was a must!” sneered Whistler.

“A gathering that I must attend? Is that a threat? I do wonder if the dinner is just a cover to hide their malicious intent...” replied Gerald with a cold smile on his face.

“Humph! I’m well aware of what those five groups are thinking! They just want to assert their dominance since they know that we just made our base here! Once they achieve that, they’ll definitely start telling us to pay them some sort of insurance fee. They’re barely worth your time, sir! Just say the word and I’ll reject them immediately!”

“Oh, there’s no need to reject them. Since we’ll be heading to Heavenly City tomorrow, I’d rather not have to worry about them getting offended if I decline their invitation. They’ve already made so many preparations anyway so it would be rather disrespectful if I didn’t go. Tell the person who sent the invitation that we’ll be going tonight.”

Chapter 943

“I still don’t think that the shirt I got for you is suitable for the occasion, sir... Why don’t we stop the car and get you a new and better shirt? How about it?” asked Yukie with a smile.

She was currently sitting beside Gerald as their team of cars headed toward the gathering.

“I think it’s fine...” replied Gerald as he looked down at his shirt with a slightly bitter smile.

As the cars approached a commercial building, Gerald looked out the window. To his surprise, the first person he saw was a rather familiar-looking youth.

“Is there anything wrong, sir?” asked Yukie.

“If my eyes do not deceive me, that seems like an old classmate of mine... Or at least a person that resembles him a lot. Regardless, stop the cars here. I’m heading into that building,” ordered Gerald.

Hearing his command, all the cars under him immediately halted in the middle of the road.

Though this essentially blocked most of the main road, nobody dared to say anything about it. After all, whenever the people of Talgo Town saw a team of cars acting like they owned the place, they knew that a big shot—whom they most likely couldn’t afford to offend—was present.

As a result, the other drivers on the road simply opted to take detours.

Meanwhile, Gerald and Yukie entered the commercial building together.

The youth from before was choosing from an array of suits when he suddenly felt a firm pat on his shoulder. Shocked, he immediately turned to look at who had done the deed.

His shock, however, quickly turned from surprise to joy.

“F*ck! Is that really you, Gerald?”

“So it really is you, Harper!” said Gerald with a smile on his face.

“I had no idea you were still in one piece! After all, the last time I heard, you had gone missing! So you were in Heavenly City this entire time! No wonder I couldn’t get any information on your whereabouts regardless of how much I asked around!” replied Harper excitedly.

“Regardless, how wonderful to be able to meet you here again after so long!” added Harper as he patted Gerald’s shoulder in return.

“It is indeed! Speaking of which, why did you come here, Harper?” asked Gerald with slight confusion once they were done exchanging pleasantries.

After all, this place was infamously known for being chaotic. Aside from the locals, ordinary people from the outside would never come here for any development projects.

“Well, since I’m now working for a large company in Weston that solicits business deals, I’m here on a business trip. Still, this place truly is as chaotic as they describe. Looking at the people walking down the streets, it wouldn’t be a stretch to say that nine out of every ten people here have guns on them at all times!” replied Harper with a sigh.

Upon hearing that, Gerald simply smiled.

“But that’s enough about me. What about you? I haven’t heard from you in so long! Have you truly been staying here this entire time? Are any of your limbs prosthetic?” joked Harper with a laugh.

Being such close friends, it was natural for them to mock each other playfully.

“All my limbs are the real deal! Also, no, I only arrived here not long ago. Regarding the missing aspect... Let’s just say I lost contact with all of you due to some ‘issues,’” replied Gerald.

Hearing that, Harper sighed before saying, "I see... While I did hear about the incident of you separating from your family as well, it's really no big deal to me, Gerald. After all, you've already enjoyed what you could a year ago. With or without a family, your life is still very much worth it."

After saying that, he patted Gerald on the shoulder again.

It was evident that both of them still had a lot to say to each other. Because of that, Gerald then replied, "Regardless, here's my contact number, Harper. Let's meet up again in about two days! I'm a bit busy till then, sadly!"

"Speaking of which, who's that? Is she your girlfriend?" asked Harper as he looked at Yukie with a smile after noting down Gerald's contact number.

Hearing that, Yukie's cute face immediately became as red as a tomato.

"I'll explain the entire situation once I get a chance to in future..." replied Gerald as he smiled rather bitterly.

"Fine, fine... For now, I'll leave you to your business. I need to buy a new suit too since I'm meeting an important client tomorrow."

With that, both of them hugged each other. Just as Gerald was ready to leave, a female voice could be heard saying, "Hmm? Is that you, Mr. Sullivan? What a coincidence!"

Turning to look at who had called him, Harper found himself smiling as he replied, "Chairman Quelch! Chairman Brown! What a coincidence!"

Chapter 944

Realizing that Harper's clients were here, Gerald nudged his head toward the two new faces as he looked at Harper, clearly signaling him to deal with his work first.

As Gerald turned to leave, however, he was shocked when he realized who the man and woman were. As it turned out, they were none other than Raquel and her boyfriend, Jefferson!

Back when he was still in a pitiful state over half a year ago, he remembered how Raquel had humiliated him when he was still working in the construction zone.

“D*mn! Is that really you, Gerald?” exclaimed Raquel as she crossed her arms before flashing a cold smile at him.

“Oh? Are you familiar with Chairman Quelch and Chairman Brown, Gerald? Haha! Chairman Brown’s in charge of a large company here! I’m currently negotiating a project with them!” explained Harper.

“We’re acquainted, yes,” replied Gerald with a subtle nod.

“Humph! Pretending that we barely know each other, Gerald? As if you’d ever be able to forget about me! After all, I was the one who paid you your salary back when you were part-timing at that construction zone!” sneered Raquel.

Hearing that, Gerald only took a brief glance at her.

From what Marven had told him before, she wasn’t always like this. However, her personality changed rapidly for the worse as she got older.

“I do wonder if there’s been some sort of misunderstanding between both of you, Chairman Quelch. After all, he’s a good friend of mine and I know for a fact that he’s a good person,” defended Harper when he saw how ruthlessly Raquel was mocking Gerald.

“Oh? He’s your friend you say? Well then, I’m sorry to announce that whatever you’ve negotiated with

my husband's uncle will now officially be terminated, Mr. Sullivan! I'm sure you agree with the project's cancellation too, don't you dear?" stated Raquel as she clung onto her boyfriend's arm.

"But of course!"

"Chairman Quelch, you..."

Though he wanted to say something, Harper was left completely speechless. To think that all the effort he had spent there throughout the week was now gone, just like that.

At that moment, a staff member entered the building and started shouting rather unceremoniously.

"Whoever owns the car with the registration number of ***Province, drive it away, right this instant! If nobody moves it soon, then I'm calling someone over to tow it away!"

As the staff member continued shouting for the owner of the car, it was instantly made clear to everyone foreign to the city that the people living here didn't have the same sort of courtesy one would expect to see from someone living elsewhere within the country.

The way things worked here, if an argument took place, having fights was only the natural response.

"The hell? I made sure to park my car well! What's the big idea?" shouted Jefferson coldly in reply.

"What do you mean what's wrong? It's blocked the road! Get out there and move it immediately else I'll have it towed!" retorted the staff member rudely.

Not wanting to be humiliated in front of Raquel and especially not in front of Gerald and Harper, Jefferson replied, "Hey now, my uncle is Graham Worton! His nickname is Boss Gram, you know?!"

"I don't know who the fck Boss Gram or Grey or whatever his name is! Just drive the dmned car away already!" scolded the staff member impatiently.

The staff member's response momentarily stunned Raquel's boyfriend. After a brief moment of awkward silence, he then said, "Fine! I'd like to see who I'm blocking as well!"

Not wanting to be outdone, he then held on to Raquel's hand as both of them left the premise.

Even though they were no longer in the shop, Jefferson could still be heard shouting, "Just so you know, I'll be calling my uncle immediately as well! How absolutely baffling that people who don't want to pay him any respect exist!"

Meanwhile, Yukie ran over to Gerald before saying, "Here, I've bought a shirt for you, sir!"

Nodding toward her, Gerald then turned to look at Harper before saying, "Not to worry, Harper. I'll contact you in a few days, so just wait for my call."

After saying that, Gerald then left together with Yuki.

Chapter 945

By then, both Raquel and Jefferson had arrived at the commercial building's entrance.

In truth, Jefferson had indeed parked his car appropriately by the side of the road. However, a team of cars seemed to have parked right in the middle of the road!

Since Jefferson's car had been parked in the only lane that the team of cars didn't block, in a way, his car truly was blocking the road!

“Hey! We’re clearly not the one at fault here! After all, it’s that team of cars that are blocking most of the road! Why should we be the only ones ordered to move our car?” shouted Raquel, unable to reconcile with the staff member’s logic.

“Hah! Just look at your car’s brand then compare it to that of the team of cars! Though I guess you’re from out of town since you don’t seem to know how things work here. Listen, just move your car immediately. Don’t blame me if something happens, because I’m pretty sure your Boss Gram or whatever his name is won’t be able to take responsibility if things go south!” sneered the staff member.

“...Well, I have heard that only people with great influence and power in Talgo Town are able to own and go around with this many cars...” muttered Jefferson.

“I’m glad that you understand that,” said the staff member before finally leaving.

“Let’s just move our car somewhere else while we can... My uncle will probably suffer terribly if we end up offending the local influential people...”

“Alright!” replied Raquel with a sigh before sticking her tongue out at the staff member’s back.

As they walked toward their car, she looked at the team of luxurious cars and couldn’t help but feel slightly jealous.

She wasn’t the only one who felt that way either. It was evident that all the pedestrians who were walking past the cars were feeling the same jealousy she was. After all, who wouldn’t want to be well-regarded and do as they pleased on the road? To have the power to park right in the middle of the road without anyone making a fuss about it?

Raquel certainly did. How domineering the person who owned all the cars must be!

At that moment, all the cars’ doors were opened and out stepped several bodyguards donning black

suits. They all looked equally imposing and their extraordinarily solemn expressions suggested that they were waiting for someone no less important than a respectful king.

“Could they be working for some influential group in Talgo Town?”

“I wonder myself... I’ve honestly never seen such imposing subordinates belonging to any of the influential groups from both Talgo Town and even Heavenly City!”

“Maybe they’re working for a new influential group that’s quickly rising up the ranks!”

“Beats me, but regardless, all of them look utterly powerful!”

Everyone was now gossiping as they continued sneaking glances at the bodyguards, stunned by their intimidating demeanors.

Shortly after, what seemed to be the leaders of the bodyguards began guiding their men over to where Raquel and her boyfriend were standing. As a result, both of them were so terrified that they were paralyzed in place. Their fear was so great that they didn’t even consider driving away, even though they were standing right next to their car!

However, the group of bodyguards ended up ignoring them, choosing instead to stare at the direction of the commercial store.

Just as Raquel and Jefferson gulped in relief, the leaders of the guards began walking forward.

Turning around to see where they were headed to, the leaders stopped right before a youth before shouting in unison, “The car is this way, sir! Please, follow us!”

Hearing that, another subordinate—who was stationed in front of one of the cars—immediately opened

the car's door.

"Did you hear that? They called him sir! To think that we'd get to see a big boss today!"

"Yeah! Look over there! He's so young!"

As the crowd whispered to each other in astonishment, Raquel found herself dumbfounded as well.

After all, never would she have imagined that Gerald was the one the bodyguards were all waiting for.

"Alright, then! Let's head off!" replied Gerald with a nod.

As the group walked past Raquel and Jefferson, Gerald made sure to glance casually at Raquel.

Seeing that, Raquel's astonishment and shock seemed to amplify. Even her boyfriend slowly loosed his grip on Raquel's hand. After all, Raquel had targeted Gerald on multiple occasions.

To think that he was such a powerful person with so many trained subordinates...

Gerald, however, simply looked away from her after a short while. He didn't need to bother himself with such a weak woman.

After getting into his car, the revving of engines could be heard as the group of cars immediately sped off, leaving Raquel behind with a cocktail of complicated emotions.

Fear was one of them as she continued staring off into the distance, not even sure how to process everything she had just witnessed.

Chapter 946

Meanwhile, the gathering was already taking place in the largest hotel manor in Talgo Town.

Since the leaders of the five top influential groups in Talgo Town had brought along their subordinates, the manor was crowded with at least a thousand people.

As a result, it was no surprise that hubbub filled the entire venue.

At the same time, a high stage was also being set up in the manor. Once everything was in place, a few seats were placed upon the high stage. That was where the leaders were going to be seated.

“You’re a wise and resourceful man, Diego! To think that you’d use the civil and military meeting to also portray how powerful we are to that newly founded Royal Dragon Group! Haha! It’s like killing two birds with a stone!”

“I know, right? Still, now that the Royal Dragon Group has acquired the pharmaceutical factory that used to be our main source of income, I wonder if things will turn out the same with the factory’s previous owner. After all, I heard that the Royal Dragon Group’s boss is a rather young man. Does he really think he can gain power and status in Talgo Town that easily? It’s like he’s wishing for death!”

“Indeed. In all honesty, I thought that he wouldn’t attend this time, given his young age. Quite frankly, I’d have respected him a bit more if he had chosen not to. Seeing that he’s agreed to come, however, I guess he’s just another worthless piece of trash!”

In response to that, the few bosses who were talking about Gerald immediately burst out laughing.

The man they were praising, Diego Jey, was the most powerful and influential big shot in all of Talgo Town. He looked to be around the age of forty, and the two gold teeth in his mouth would glisten whenever he talked.

After hearing what the other bosses had to say, Diego then announced, “Ladies and Gentleman! While the issue of the Royal Dragon Group certainly needs to be addressed, I hope that all of you don’t forget that the main reason we’re all gathered here today is to discuss the rearranging and redistribution of influence among the five powerful groups in Talgo Town. Once we arrive at a consensus, I hope that what happened four years ago won’t repeat itself!”

While the gathering—that was held once every four years—was officially known as a ‘civil and military meeting’, the event itself wasn’t as grand as its name suggested. In truth, it was simply a meeting for the five largest groups within Talgo town to divide their territories.

Their method of dividing the territories was somewhat straightforward. Essentially, whoever had more strength was entitled to have more territories.

‘Strength’, in this case, was measured through a competition where the five bosses would pit their best subordinates to fight against each other. The winner among the five would be crowned, king.

Once the meeting was over, the five groups would then reach an agreement, and once signed, none of them were allowed to break their promises.

The vowing process was taken particularly seriously since a few groups had beaten up others due to territory snatching attempts four years ago.

After all, while Talgo town was called a town, it was still much larger than Serene County. In fact, its size could easily be compared with a city in the north of Weston. Being so large, territorial control was crucial.

At that moment, the person standing guard over the door shouted, “Mr. Crawford from the Royal Dragon Group has arrived!”

Hearing that, the entire hall instantly fell silent. It was evident that everyone wanted to see what kind of person the big boss of the newly established Royal Dragon Group was.

Seconds later, Gerald and his bodyguards entered the place. Though he only had about sixty bodyguards with him, the pressuring atmosphere that they brought with them didn't feel any less imposing.

Their solemn expressions alone made many of the other bosses' subordinates feel chills run down their spines.

Heading directly for the high stage, Gerald smiled faintly as he greeted, "A pleasure to meet you, gentlemen."

"Likewise, Chairman Crawford. Do take your seat," replied the bosses as they took turns looking at each other.

All five of them knew that Gerald wasn't a person with an ordinary background from the moment they saw how intimidating his bodyguards were.

Once they were done exchanging pleasantries, Diego narrowed his eyes slightly before saying, "I assume you've heard about the civil and military meeting that we're hosting tonight, Chairman Crawford. Since the competition is about to start soon and your subordinates all look equally powerful, I was wondering if you'd like to partake in it? Maybe we could also broaden our horizons from that."

Diego's underlying meaning was clear as day. He was simply saying that the Royal Dragon Group was probably even weaker compared to the previous president of the pharmaceutical factory.

However, he was also taunting Gerald since he wanted to test the abilities of the Royal Dragon Group's subordinates. After all, the way both Gerald and his men presented themselves was definitely extraordinary if anything.

"I'll have to refrain... While my subordinates certainly look the part, they're all honestly pretty useless. How on earth would they be able to compare with any of yours?" replied Gerald with a bitter smile as he shook his head.

“Now, now, Chairman Crawford! You’re being way too humble! Who’s to say they won’t end up on top if they don’t compete first?” said Diego before roaring with laughter.

“Well, since you insist, I guess I’ll have to agree. Whistler, get the subordinates of these bosses to teach you and the others about the rules of the competition later,” ordered Gerald with a smile.

“Very well, sir! We’d love to learn them!” replied Whistler as he smiled in return.

Chapter 947

It was honestly beyond Diego and the other bosses’ expectations that those from the Royal Dragon Group wouldn’t back down from the competition. Quite honestly, Gerald and his men looked rather confident about the whole thing.

Sensing that, Diego and the bosses knew that if they didn’t show how powerful they were right off the bat, it was only going to get more and more difficult for them to keep Gerald’s company in check in the future.

Soon after, the civil and military gathering began and the participants were led to a large area that had been set up within the center.

The five groups had each naturally chosen their most powerful subordinates to take part in the competition. Gerald himself had sent Whistler and a few of his other more capable men to participate.

Those whom Gerald had selected had all undergone personal special training with him. Due to that, their strength was much more reinforced compared to before.

As soon as the competition began, everyone was surprised to see Gerald’s men immediately go on the offense. With swift and precise attacks, Whistler’s men beat up the other group so vigorously that they never had the chance to even fight back before going down.

“...What?”

Diego and the other bosses could feel their eyelids twitching as they watched the defeated men laying on the ground.

Before the competition had started, the bosses had assured themselves that the subordinates Gerald had with him were simply putting up fronts, pretending to be Special Forces. After all, the way they had presented themselves was somewhat similar to how the previous pharmaceutical factory boss had first done.

Since both the previous boss and Gerald had put on airs before the actual competition, Diego and the other bosses simply assumed that Gerald’s men would be as weak as the old boss’s participants.

Little did they know that no fronts had ever been put up. Gerald’s men were genuinely strong.

“So it seems that Mr. Crawford enjoys keeping a low profile... To think that he would have such powerful subordinates... Claiming that he’ll be the one who will have the most say when it comes to dividing the territories once the meeting is over doesn’t even sound all that far-fetched now...” said Diego as he forced a smile.

With the territories being divided among six people now instead of five, things were definitely going to be a lot different compared to how the civil and military meetings usually went. As if things weren’t looking grim enough for the five bosses, it seemed that Gerald’s subordinates really were going to be crowned champion by the end of the night.

While Gerald said nothing throughout the civil and military meeting, Diego and the other bosses got more and more restless every time a battle commenced.

This was mainly because Whistler himself hadn’t made a single move throughout any of the battles. The other four of Gerald’s subordinates were more than enough to take down their opponents.

By the time all the battles had been fought, an awkward silence filled the room. The silence was so overbearing that one would be able to hear a pin drop.

“My men and I appreciate how modestly you’ve been treating us, Chairman Jey. Thank you very much,” said Whistler as he walked over, breaking the silence.

In response, Diego could only smile awkwardly as he said, “You’re welcome... Still, you and your men are incredibly powerful... My own men weren’t even able to show off that much tonight...”

“I’ll have to correct you there, Chairman Jay. After all, the most powerful person here isn’t any of us, but rather, our master. We learned everything we know from him,” replied Whistler as he looked at Gerald before shaking his head with a bitter smile on his face.

“Oh? You’re saying that Chairman Crawford here is much stronger than any of you are? Then it seems that we’ve truly made a terribly wrong judgment tonight!”

Though a smile was on Diego’s face as he said that, inside, he was getting increasingly flustered.

After all, Gerald’s men had completely defeated all five of Talgo Town’s most influential groups in front of everyone. Not only had they failed to acquire the Royal Dragon Group tonight, most of the territories were now going to fall under Gerald’s hand instead!

“Speaking of which, Chairman Jey... I wonder if what you said earlier was true... The part where the winner gets to divide the territories...?” asked Whistler.

Coughing before clearing his throat, Diego then replied with a smile, “...But of course that was true! With the competition results now out, we’ll be discussing how we’ll divide the territories once the party is over!”

Diego didn’t even dare to say much despite his clear dissatisfaction. After all, he couldn’t just break his

promise.

“In the meantime, you there! Go remove the plaque bearing the names of all five of the influential groups involved in the Civil and Military Groups. From today onward, six names will be on it!” ordered Diego as he pointed at one of his subordinates.

While four other bosses barely said a word, they all had their own thoughts about the situation.

Though some of them resented the Royal Dragon Group for disrupting their affairs despite being outsiders, the others seemed to rather enjoy the misfortune of the displeased bosses.

The ones enjoying the current situation were the weaker groups who hoped that with Gerald’s involvement—which would definitely upset the original balance—they would be able to manipulate how things ended up once chaos eventually ensued.

As a few subordinates returned with ladders to remove the plaque, a voice shouted, “There’s no need to go through so much trouble!”

Chapter 948

The voice had come from Gerald, and after a loud sneer, he picked a fork up.

Looking at the plaque, Gerald squinted his eyes for a second before flicking his wrist extremely quickly. A split second later, the fork was no longer in Gerald’s hand and the sound of something cracking could be heard!

By the time the audience looked up, the fork—that had already been embedded within one of the many shattered plaque pieces—was already falling to the ground alongside whatever remained of the broken plaque.

A crash soon followed as the plaque pieces shattered even further on the ground, the fork still clearly visible to the five bosses as they gulped.

“...W-what...?”

Shock and fear swept through them, and the ones who had earlier been smoking each felt their grip loosen on their cigarettes.

“W-who exactly is that person....?”

“It’s... It’s near impossible isn’t it...? I mean, how could a person have that much force to break a plaque so high up?!”

It was evident that the five bosses had never seen such a maneuver before as they discussed what they had just witnessed, terror reflected in their eyes. Though nobody mentioned it, all of them were thinking the same thing. If the plaque could shatter like that even though it was so high above the ground, what would happen if Gerald used the same technique on their heads?

Whistler and his men, on the other hand, only looked at each other with subtle smiles on their faces as they each thought, ‘Humph. Looks like sir took it upon himself and made a move. Of course they’d be dumbfounded.’

It was evident that the plaque-shattering incident was an indirect message from Gerald to the five bosses. Essentially, he had no interest in dividing territories with them, and if they didn’t behave, they’d probably end up the same as the plaque. Completely ruined in an instant.

With his silent message sent, Gerald then sat down with a subtle smile on his face as he said, “Chairman Jey and the rest of you, please, have a seat.”

“R-right away, M-Mr. Crawford!” stuttered Diego as he desperately tried to keep his cool. However, his calm façade was in shambles and the cold sweat flowing down his forehead only served to further exhibit how terrified he was.

His response was reasonable since he was, after all, in the presence of a man who could kill others with regular forks. And forks were everywhere in the room they were in.

Knowing that made everyone feel obligated to address him differently.

After a brief moment of silent contemplation, one of the five bosses said, "I go by the name of Tristen Jurden, Mr. Crawford, and I must say that I'm extremely impressed with your capabilities. If you allow it, I'm willing to hand over all my properties to you and become one of your subordinates!"

The moment the other bosses heard Tristen say that, another boss immediately agreed to do the same. One after another, the bosses agreed to the same terms, till all that was left was Diego.

As Gerald and Whistler looked at each other, Diego remained silent, thinking about the consequences if he didn't agree. In the end, though he was unable to just accept the chain of events that had taken place tonight, Diego eventually caved in.

The worst part about all of this was the fact that all five of them had been the ones who had invited Gerald over that night. If they hadn't invited him, none of this would've happened.

Then again, it was probably beyond any of their wildest imagination that the civil and military meeting could end in such a disastrous way, at least for them.

Soon after Gerald and his men returned to their mansion, Whistler excitedly told Gerald about how several of Talgo Town's businessmen had already called, asking to seek refuge under Gerald.

Hearing that, Gerald recalled how the bosses had also fawned over Gerald once the meeting was over. In fact, before they left, several other people had already presented themselves before him, showing great interest in wanting to be a part of the Royal Dragon Group.

To top it all off, Gerald also received several gifts in terms of cash from those who wanted to please him.

Gerald, however, was in no mood to bother about any of that. Instead, he ordered Whistler to deal with everything carefully as he thought about his next move.

After tonight's events, the Royal Dragon Group Gerald had established was finally going to gain a firm status within Talgo Town. What more, the Royal Dragon Group now had a lot of influence as well as control over multiple territories.

With all that in mind, Gerald knew it was high time for them to save Drake.

From what Tyson had told him, none of the many influential groups in Heavenly City could be looked down upon.

He was speaking from experience since both he and his brother had previously spent money to establish their power and influence in Heavenly City back when they were still looking for Gerald. Soon enough, however, they were defeated by Sven.

It didn't help that Heavenly City was much larger than Talgo Town. The entire area was simply an all-inclusive place hosting numerous forces and groups.

In fact, the place was so huge that Tyson couldn't even estimate how many groups—as powerful as Sven's—existed.

Gerald, however, was way too concerned over Drake to be worried about that. He was well aware that the longer they stalled, the more dangerous it would be for Drake. They simply didn't have the luxury to wait till everything was ready and in place.

Arriving at his conclusion, Gerald then ordered, "Whistler, pass on my order to the rest. We'll be heading to Heavenly City tomorrow."

“Very well, Mr. Crawford! I’ll begin the preparations immediately!”

Chapter 949

From what Tyson had said, Sven could often be found in the largest underground casino in Heavenly City.

With that in mind, Gerald then led his men straight to that casino. Once they were there, Gerald immediately began gambling randomly at a table to blend in. However, the next thing he knew, he had already won over ten rounds.

This caught the banker’s attention. After the banker secretly notified a subordinate about the incident, the subordinate stealthily headed for the office next.

Once inside, the subordinate stood before a person sitting at the boss’s chair before saying, “Boss Sven! A person out there won a lot of money and he’s even brought along several subordinates! He doesn’t look like someone who’s easy to deal with!”

At the time, the sturdy-looking man with a rather intimidating scar on his face was polishing his katana.

As soon as his subordinate’s sentence ended, he immediately slashed at a jade ornament that was on his table! Following the swift slice, the ornament split in two, sending its top half shattering as it fell to the ground!

Blowing the blade of the katana slightly, he then asked his terrified subordinate, “From your description of him, I’m assuming that he’s quite a capable person. Because of that, he should already know the rules of my place! How daring! Guess I’ll just have to head out there myself to have a look!” sneered Sven as he exited his office.

Though the casino had consistently been noisy before this, the moment Sven and his subordinates made their appearance, everyone fell silent.

Once he was close enough, everyone then shouted in unison, "Boss Sven!"

Barely even acknowledging his customers and subordinates, Sven and his men only stopped once they stood directly in front of Gerald.

"And here I was wondering who the rule-breaker was... So it turned out to just be some young man! Do you truly have no idea of how my place works? Or are you just pretending that you don't know that you have to pay a certain fee after winning ten consecutive rounds?" said Sven.

"Forgive me, for I'm new to this place. I truly didn't know such a rule existed."

"Heh, it's fine. After all, you'll definitely be able to learn once I'm done with you. Since I'm already here, how about we have two rounds of games? Only if you're daring enough to take up the challenge, of course," proposed Sven with a wicked smile on his face.

"I'll have to know what the stakes are first," replied Gerald as he scanned Sven from head to toe. Aside from his sturdiness and fierce look, Gerald found it odd that he couldn't discern the aura of a strong person from Sven at all.

Even Jett and the others he had previously met had warrior-like auras, but not Sven. If this man truly was as strong as Whistler and Tyson had said, then why couldn't Gerald sense any of that from him?

"Hmm... Well how about... We put our lives at stake!" declared Sven after thinking for a while.

Hearing that, everyone present was instantaneously stunned. Whistler and Gerald men, on the other hand, could only look at each other helplessly.

"I accept your challenge!" replied Gerald with a nod.

Though Sven was a considerably slick and experienced person in terms of gambling, in the end, he wasn't even close to defeating Gerald. In fact, all it took was a single round for Sven to be defeated!

"I truly appreciate your modesty, Mr. Westmore. Thank you for allowing me to win!" said Gerald with a smile as he shook his head.

In response, however, Sven simply touched his watch...

And all of a sudden, all his subordinates instantly entered formation and took aim at Gerald and his men!

"I have to agree that you truly are a great gambler! However, I'm afraid that you can't take my life! However, since someone still needs to die, I guess we'll just end yours instead!"

After saying that, Sven stood up before sneering, "Do it!"

Before his men could even fire their guns, Sven was momentarily able to see Gerald get up... The next thing he knew, however, Gerald was already holding him by the neck!

Realizing this a second later, his subordinates wanted to step in, though none of them dared to do so for fear that they would accidentally hurt Sven.

Slowly applying more and more pressure till he was practically choking Sven, he lifted the sore-loser of a man till his feet were above the ground.

"If you don't want to die immediately, order your subordinates to back off!" ordered Gerald sternly.

"You heard the man! All of you, back off already! S-sir... Please refrain from acting rashly! You should be aware that this is my territory!" growled Sven, unable to completely mask his fear as he gestured for his subordinates to retreat.

“Oh? Are you saying that you lied to me then? After all, I defeated you fair and square so your life belongs to me!” replied Gerald.

“N-no! Please don’t do it, friend! Please spare my life! I’ll give you anything you want!” begged Sven, realizing how much trouble he was in.

Chapter 950

“We can honestly resolve this situation quite easily, you know? The way I see it, a life should be traded with another life. Let me ask you something. Did you previously capture a person by the name of Drake Jay? If you have, where is he?” asked Gerald.

“S-so you came here to save him... Yes, he’s with me! I’ll release him now but you’ll have to promise to release me too once he’s free!” said Sven immediately.

“Do you think you’re in a position to be making demands? Quit spouting nonsense and release him now!” growled Gerald as he intensified the force of his palm on Sven’s neck.

“H-he’s locked up in the cellar in this underground casino! I’ll order a subordinate of mine to release him now if you want!”

Thankfully, Sven was a rather straightforward person and soon enough, Whistler—who had followed the subordinate down into the casino’s cellar—led Drake toward Gerald.

Drake himself was in terrible condition, barely conscious, and with severe scars covering his entire body.

The moment Gerald saw how miserable Drake’s condition was, he was so infuriated that he immediately kicked Sven in the stomach, sending him flying across the room. As soon as Sven landed, he instantly vomited blood, his utter fear reflected in his eyes.

Whistler and the others were stunned to see this. From what they had heard, Sven was an extremely strong person. To think that he would end up becoming a mere nobody before their master! Though they knew that their master was strong, wasn't Sven being too illogically weak now?

"Bring him along and let him escort us all the way out!" ordered Gerald as he personally supported Drake out.

Hearing that, Gerald's men instantly held on to Sven's arms and led him into one of Gerald's cars. Once everything was settled, Gerald's group of cars drove off.

Sometime later, Sven knelt before a riverside—that people hardly ever came to—before shouting, "My life is cheap! Please don't kill me!"

"Humph! I never thought that the powerful Sven from Heavenly City would be this pathetic!"

"Yeah! To think that people would actually be terror-stricken to hear the name of such a coward!"

Whistler and the others were now smiling bitterly as they belittled the man they had once feared after realizing how much of a coward he truly was.

Gerald, on the other hand, stared coldly at Sven for quite a while before finally asking, "...Answer this honestly. Where's the real Sven? And who are you to him?"

As soon as Gerald's men heard his question, they were astonished beyond words.

"P-please spare my life, sir... My real name is Leif and I'm Sven's younger brother... He's been gone for about a week and I'm only here to help him look after the casino in his absence... Please spare my life, sir... It's my brother you want to take revenge on, not me!" pleaded Leif in between tears.

“What?! So he really isn’t Sven?” exclaimed quite a few people, stupefied by the turn of events. Thankfully, Gerald had been able to see through Leif.

“You b*stard! So you’ve been fooling us this entire time! Where’s Sven now? Where is he!” growled Whistler as he grabbed Leif by the collar.

“I-I don’t know! He just brought his men along and told me that he would be returning in a few days! He said he was going to find something and that’s all I know!” cried out Leif.

After looking at Leif’s reaction, Gerald simply scolded coldly, “...We’ll be bringing Drake along with us. As for you, you’re too disgusting for us to even kill you. Get lost!”

“T-thank you! Thank you!” shouted Leif before immediately running off.

“What an absolute coward...” muttered Whistler as he followed Gerald and the rest back to their mansion.

As he continued running, Leif rubbed his sore throat as he scolded, “That dmned bstard... I’m the hero of the story! Still, to think that that young man was as ruthless as my brother... I’ll have to tell him to return soon to ruin that guy once and for all!”

Not paying attention as he thought about his revenge, Leif ended up bumping into somebody! Momentarily losing his balance, he ended up falling to the ground.

“F*cking hell! Are you blind or something?” growled Leif angrily. However, he stopped scowling the moment he saw who he had bumped into.

The man standing before him wore a black robe, and it covered most of his facial features aside from his eyes. His eyes alone were both murky and vicious-looking, suggesting that the person under the robe was an old man.

Staring into the robed man's eyes, Leif felt that if he stared at them for too long, his soul would end up getting stolen.

Quivering slightly in fright, Leif then asked, "You... Who are you...?"

The moment Leif said that, however, the robed man began walking over to him. Frozen in fear, Leif felt the old man's hands patting his head softly...

A split second later, a snapping sound could be heard.

Vomiting blood, Leif's eyes widened momentarily before he fell flat to the ground.

The old man himself placed his arms behind his back as he turned to look at the direction Gerald and his men had used to leave, a frown slowly forming on his face.

Chapter 951

Meanwhile, Gerald and his men were returning home when from afar, Gerald noticed a team of cars parked right in front of their manor.

"I wonder who those people could be..." said Whistler, evidently feeling confused.

"From the looks of it, that should be Quest, the young master of the Westley family. He must finally have news regarding the item I've been trying to locate this entire time," replied Gerald with a subtle smile.

Upon inviting Quest into his mansion, Gerald momentarily excused himself to bring Drake to another room to have his wounds properly bandaged. Once that was done, he headed to the living room where Quest sat waiting patiently—with a document in hand—while sipping some tea.

Quest's politeness clearly stemmed from his respect toward Gerald. After all, it would've been impossible for a rich heir like him to behave so courteously to anyone in the past.

In fact, his respect for Gerald was so great that he was the one who had funded the money Gerald needed to purchase the factory. Due to that, it was natural that he'd know where Gerald lived as well.

"It's been a while, Quest! Have you waited long?" greeted Gerald as he approached the seated youth.

"Not at all!"

As they exchanged pleasantries, Gerald recalled how reckless and arrogant Quest had been when they first met. However, he realized—during their first encounter—that if he could tame Quest, then Quest would surely turn out to be an excellent and capable assistant. Gerald's guess was, of course, correct.

After a brief chat, Quest cleared his throat as he went straight to the main point.

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"I'm here today, Mr. Crawford, to tell you that our investigation efforts have finally paid off! After so long, we've finally been able to locate the Ginseng King!" said Quest before taking a large gulp of water.

"...However, we don't currently have it. In fact, we've never actually seen it for ourselves. That's because someone beat us to finding and retrieving it about half a year ago! Honestly, we wouldn't even have found out about this if my grandpa hadn't cast a wide net. The information actually came from a random vendor!"

“From what the vendor said, a group of rather influential people hired him back then to serve as their guide around the mountain since he was famous for knowing the mountain paths like the back of his hand. After searching for the Ginseng King for some time, they eventually found it in Depth Valley, located in the depths of the mountain. Upon digging it up, the group of people handed the vendor a large sum of money to keep quiet about their discovery.”

“In all honesty, however, the vendor felt that the money they provided was simply too little. It was thanks to his dissatisfaction and my grandpa paying relevant people—regardless of status—huge sums of money to gather information about the Ginseng King that the vendor shared what had happened back then to us,” explained Quest as he took in a deep breath.

Lowering his voice, Quest then added, “...The Ginseng King is currently in the hands of the Yowell family.”

“The Yowell family?” repeated Gerald in surprise.

“They’re another powerful family in the business field in Heavenly City, just like the Westleys. While my family is only there because we moved in, the Yowells are locals who were already powerful by the time we arrived.”

“I see... Can the information from the vendor be trusted?”

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Taking another sip of water, Quest then replied, “He can. Speaking of which, while he was scouring for more information, grandpa found out that we’re not the only ones aware that the Yowells have the Ginseng King. A few local and foreign forces seem to be aware of their discovery as well. As a result, several of them began taking action on the Yowells starting from around three months ago. One of the more extreme cases was the kidnapping of Tulip, the second young lady of the Yowell family! Her

kidnapping was most likely linked to the Ginseng King, though she was promptly rescued.”

“While the Yowells are certainly good at hiding the fact that they currently own it, the fact remains that anyone holding on to the Ginseng King is akin to them hugging a ticking time bomb. Once you own it, being targeted will simply become the norm!” said Whistler with a bitter smile on his face.

Frowning slightly, Gerald then replied, “Regardless of how many powerful groups are attempting to get their hands on it, I must be the one to own it in the end!”

It was honestly no wonder why the Ginseng King was so well sought-after. After all, according to legends, it was able to promote longevity.

However, it was also said that normal people who attempted to consume it would simply perish after doing so, unable to endure the power of the Ginseng King. Gerald, however, knew that he was no regular person.

In order to defeat Kort, he would definitely survive eating the Ginseng King once he got his hands on it. He had to.

“Regardless, the Yowells are suffering rather terribly at the moment. After all, while they do have the Ginseng King in their hands now, they don’t even know who to sell it to. There are simply too many people who want it for themselves.”

“If you wish to own it, sir, I’m afraid that stealing it from them isn’t going to work out well. I do, however, have a plan in mind. Whether it’ll work or not is another question...” added Quest.

“Go on,” said Gerald.

“Well, I propose that we use some outflanking tactics... We’ll start by going after the second young lady of the Yowell family. As long as we’re slick about it, we may be able to deceive her into handing the

Ginseng King over to us! That way, we won't have to resort to fighting immediately. If all goes well, we should be able to maneuver covertly with the other powerful groups as well."

Chapter 952

After hearing what Quest had to say, Gerald simply rolled his eyes at him before rather grumpily replying, "I'm sure you're an expert at gaining a woman's affection... Guess I'll be leaving the task to you then. How about it?"

Waving his hands quickly, Quest then said, "I can't since she knows me! The Westleys and the Yowells are well acquainted you know? Regardless, it's not like affection is the only way we'll be able to pull this off. It'll do as long as we're able to approach her. That's why grandpa suggests that you find a suitable confidant for this task aside from me. After all, since Tulip is being targeted by so many people now, we must act fast before she falls into the hands of others."

"Tulip's currently a freshman in Heavenly City University. Once the confidant is ready, I'll help you get them into the university under the guise of a lecturer."

"But who's suitable enough for the task?" asked Gerald as he frowned slightly before scanning through the crowd.

Though Whistler immediately volunteered, his height and sturdy appearance made Gerald feel that he would resemble a security guard more than a lecturer.

While Tyson did look slightly younger, both he and Drake were still injured. What more, both the men were simply too cold and aloof to be suitable for the task. Nobody would ever believe that they were students or lecturers!

Seeing what Gerald was doing, the others began looking around as well. After taking turns shaking their heads, everyone eventually found themselves staring back at Gerald.

"Since you're probably the only one among us who's actually attended university before, I think you're the most suitable person for the job, sir..." said Whistler with a smile.

“Me?” replied Gerald, stunned.

“But sir has a lover! You can’t just tell him to have an ambiguous relationship with another girl!” said Yukie out of the blue as she entered the room carrying several teacups. There was a clear hint of dissatisfaction on her charming face as she said that.

“It was obviously a joke, Yukie... As if we’d ever suggest for the master to gain another woman’s affection! The main focus now is simply to protect Tulip and place her under our group’s care!” replied Whistler as he smiled slightly bitterly.

“...I see!” pouted Yukie in response.

Meanwhile, Gerald himself seemed to be pondering about something.

With both Drake and Tyson currently recuperating and Whistler having the responsibility of managing the properties, in the end, Gerald seemed to be the most suitable person after all.

Resolute with his decision, Gerald then nodded before saying, “Alright, guess I’ll be doing this. I’ll be counting on you to arrange things for me, Quest.”

“Not a problem, sir! Since you’re proficient with medicine, you’ll be under the guise of a Biology substitute lecturer. Since I graduated from that university, I’ll tell you ahead of time that being a lecturer there is a breeze. All you’ll need to do is read the textbook aloud!” replied Quest.

The very next day, Gerald slipped on a suit and blazer—perfecting his scholarly look—as he headed to the university. Upon arriving, he was promptly greeted at the university’s main entrance by the vice team leader of the Biology team alongside a young male and female.

"I see you've arrived on time to report to your duty, Mr. Crawford. Allow me to first introduce you to these two. This here is Miss Marjorie Swift from our Biology team while the gentleman over there goes by Mr. Quinlan Yoxon," said the vice team leader.

Turning to face the two next, the vice team leader then added, "This is Mr. Gerald Crawford, the new substitute teacher. Your position is similar to his, Mr. Yoxon, since both of you are new here. Regardless, you're both colleagues now. Now then, could you please show them around the university, Marjorie?"

Marjorie was a woman with charming looks and long hair. Both slim and tall, she looked to be around twenty-four of age and her disposition seemed somewhat extraordinary. The professional-looking black suit and skirt only served to increase her seductiveness.

"Mr. Yoxon and Mr. Crawford, shall we?" said Marjorie with a sweet smile on her face as she took a few peeks at Gerald.

Chapter 953

It was really no mystery why she did so. After all, Gerald was both handsome and impeccably dressed. It wasn't hard to see why girls would admire him.

As Gerald nodded at her, he guessed that his new female colleague must have just graduated from the university fairly recently.

Quinlan, on the other hand, caught on quickly that Marjorie seemed to admire Gerald a lot. Seeing that, he couldn't help but feel slightly jealous.

After all, both of them were newcomers who had the same post and same specializations. They even came at the same time! With so many similarities between them, Quinlan couldn't help but feel slightly competitive with him.

However, Marjorie wasn't even giving him a chance to shine. Seeing her being nice to only Gerald only added to his gloominess and annoyance.

Despite that, Quinlan wasn't an idiot who didn't know how to read the mood. Because of that, he simply followed behind the two, silently watching as Marjorie continued chatting with Gerald.

"Oh? Are those the two new lecturers who'll be joining our team, Miss Swift? Both of them look quite handsome!" said a few young lecturers as they walked over and greeted Marjorie.

All of them were women and they looked to be around Marjorie's age.

"Indeed! This here is Mr. Gerald Crawford, while his name is... Um... I apologize, but what was your name again...?" asked Marjorie rather awkwardly as she turned to face Quinlan.

Since Marjorie had placed most of her attention on the handsome Gerald, she now realized that she didn't even remember Quinlan's name!

Smiling wryly, Quinlan then said, "I'm Quinlan Yoxon!"

In the end, however, the same thing happened when all the female lecturers began surrounding and talking with Gerald instead of him.

As Quinlan's jealousy intensified, a few luxury cars could suddenly be seen driving toward the group. Screeching to a halt right in front of them, Marjorie and the other women were stunned when they saw a few bodyguards donning black coats getting out of the cars.

Once all of them were out, the bodyguards bowed slightly before saying, "We heard from the boss that this is your first time here in Heavenly City, young master. We'll be hosting a welcoming party for you tonight."

In response, Quinlan simply readjusted his gold glasses before saying, "Very well. Tell my cousin that I'll be there tonight."

“Very well, young master.”

After bowing once more, the bodyguards re-entered their cars and left.

By then, all the female lecturers—who had earlier surrounded Gerald—had their mouths wide open as they looked at Quinlan in shock.

“Why... Did they address you as young master, Mr. Yoxon?” asked one of the female colleagues in amazement.

“Oh, they work for my cousin. He’s established a few bars and hotels here in Heavenly City,” replied Quinlan casually.

Upon hearing that, Marjorie couldn’t help but sneak a few more glances at him before asking with a smile on her face, “I hadn’t expected for you to have such an awesome cousin! Speaking of which, you aren’t a local, are you Mr. Yoxon?”

“That is correct. I’m from Talgo Town. Have you heard about the five forces?”

“I have! Talgo Town is currently being supervised by the five forces, right? From what I’ve heard, they’re all-powerful and they each have high statuses here in Heavenly City!” exclaimed another of the colleagues in shock, sounding very intrigued.

“Well, my dad helps to run the affairs for the Charley family, one of the five forces,” replied Quinlan with a smile.

“What?” said all the colleagues present, utterly astonished.

Being locals of Heavenly City, the girls had been influenced by their environment to prefer people who were more powerful. Nobody could really blame them since the more power and influence one had in Heavenly City, the more they could enjoy a life of grandeur there.

It was simply something that all women, especially those living in Heavenly City, yearned for.

Chapter 954

After seeing all those luxurious cars, all the women there were even more jealous once they found out that Quinlan was actually involved with the five forces.

“Why didn’t you just work with your group then?” asked another colleague.

“Haha! I’d rather not work in Talgo Town now due to all chaos the newly established Royal Dragon Group has created. The five forces are all obeying that group now, you know? Besides, my dad told me that it’d be better for me to go out and try making a living for myself first,” replied Quinlan as he shook his head with a bitter smile on his face.

Hearing that, Marjorie smiled subtly. To think that Quinlan was already so steady and mature!

“Your dad has a point, Mr. Yoxon. After all, you’re still young so who knows? Maybe you’ll be able to blaze a new way out by being a bit more adventurous and making a living of your own out here!” said Marjorie with a smile as she went closer toward Quinlan.

“I agree!”

The girls were now inching closer toward Quinlan as he detailed the major incidents that had recently taken place in both Talgo Town and Heavenly City.

As they chatted happily, Gerald could only laugh bitterly as he shook his head at the side. He had long gotten used to scenes like these.

Seeing that Gerald was now being ignored, Quinlan found himself growing extremely smug.

Since Gerald didn't have lectures to attend to in the morning, he simply sat in the office the entire time till noon came.

Nearing lunchtime, Gerald turned to look at Marjorie—who was seated next to him—before saying with a smile, “How about we head to the cafeteria now, Miss Swift? My treat.”

He was only taking the initiative to ask her out for a meal since she was the one who had invited him out for lunch earlier that morning. After all, Gerald was still new and unfamiliar with the university's layout.

Aside from that, he didn't really have any other unnecessary thoughts.

“Apologies, Mr. Crawford, but I have some business to attend to at noon. I'm afraid I can't join you this time,” replied Marjorie as she gently straightened her hair.

“I see. I'll head there myself then,” said Gerald as he nodded at her before heading off.

While Heavenly City was undoubtedly a chaotic place, it was also well equipped with all the essentials such as medical institutions, education institutions, and so on.

The university itself didn't look particularly different from the ones Gerald had seen before. Well, aside from the fact that all the students looked like gangsters.

Upon entering the cafeteria, Gerald bought some bread, sausages, and a salad before taking a seat at one of the empty tables to enjoy his meal.

It had been quite a long while since he was last able to enjoy such a life, and he found himself thinking that being an educator in a university and leading a quiet life was much preferable compared to being the boss of Whistler and the others.

Smiling bitterly as he thought about it, he then wondered how long he could even afford to live such a peaceful and quiet life.

As he sighed before continuing with his meal, Gerald heard a male voice saying, "Nobody seems to be sitting there, Marjorie. Let's head over!"

"I'm afraid that's the VIP area... You need to pay to sit there!"

"Haha! That's fine. If only we didn't have to be in a bit of a rush for that meeting later, I'd surely have brought you out for lunch!"

Looking up, Gerald could already tell that the voices belonged to none other than Marjorie and Quinlan.

So it turned out that Marjorie's 'business' was actually just her wanting to go out and have a meal with Quinlan. Knowing that made Gerald smile rather wryly.

It was evident at that point that both Quinlan and Marjorie had spotted Gerald. After all, he was sitting at a rather desolate corner beside the VIP area, making him stick out like a sore thumb.

Since it was a symbol of status if one was able to have their meals in the VIP area, people usually avoided the spot Gerald was sitting in if they could.

Noticing that Quinlan was staring at him contemptuously, Gerald simply lowered his head and continued eating his meal.

Marjorie, on the other hand, was now feeling rather awkward since she knew for a fact that Gerald had noticed her. After all, she clearly remembered asking him out for lunch earlier. Despite that, she had lied to him, claiming that she had business to attend to. Her being there with Quinlan clearly suggested that she was going out for lunch with him instead.

Any girl would feel embarrassed to some extent if they were placed in her current shoes.

Straightening her hair, Marjorie quickly averted her gaze before nodding with a faint smile as she looked at Quinlan.

“Hmm? Isn’t that Mr. Crawford? Why did he sit there?” asked a female voice at that moment.

Chapter 955

Looking up, Gerald saw that it was the other female colleagues who were in the same team with him.

Seeing that they had bumped into him as they were looking for seats to have their meals, Gerald simply smiled with a nod as he looked at them.

However, none of them seemed to even bother about his smile. In fact, some of the colleagues found themselves cupping their mouths in amusement as they said, “What a surprise! You really don’t know anything, do you? Why’d you decide to have your lunch here instead of anyplace else?”

After saying that, they simply turned around to leave.

Seconds later, one of the colleagues said, “Huh? Hey, look there! It’s Mr. Yoxon and Miss Swift! Hi there!”

The moment they saw Quinlan, their moods instantly switched, smiling as they waved their hands at him.

“What a coincidence! Why don’t you sit with us? If I had known that you were going to eat here, I’d

definitely have invited all of you along!" said Quinlan with a bright smile.

"Is it really fine if we joined you?" asked a few of the female colleagues.

In the end, however, all of them ended up sitting at the same table, chatting and laughing among themselves.

While Gerald was well aware that he was a nobody in the presence of Quinlan, he didn't really want to have that much contact with his colleagues anyway. After all, befriending them wasn't part of his mission.

Gerald simply hoped that he would be able to meet Tulip soon.

Once the afternoon meeting ended a little later, Gerald prepared to teach his first class. Upon entering the classroom, Gerald saw that there were over thirty students in the class. The most conspicuous of them all, however, was none other than Tulip.

Her demeanor alone allowed anyone who saw her to instantly figure out that she was the boss of the class.

Since the first lecture was a lesson that required experimentation, Gerald brought his students along to a laboratory so that they would be able to observe the specimens there. He simply thought that it would be fitting for them to be able to observe things up-close since the topic he was about to teach was quite a major one in their Biology course.

Excited that they didn't have to remain in class, the students quickly grabbed their notebooks and followed Gerald out.

"Haha! I wonder if you've noticed that that handsome lecturer seems to have an interest in you, Tulip!" laughed a girl on their way to the laboratory as she held on to Tulip's hand.

“What nonsense are you spouting this time, you silly girl...” replied Tulip, almost speechless by her friend’s comment.

“It’s true! I realized that he had occasionally snuck glances at you from the moment he was done with his self-introduction. He continued doing so up till the point he headed out just now! I’m absolutely sure that he’s been charmed by your beauty!”

“There you go again with your nonsense! Still, if he really did sneak that many glances at me, he’d better not let me catch him in the act! If I catch him red-handed, then I’m cutting his eyeballs out and feeding them to my Tibetan Mastiff, Hooch! You know how much I hate quiet and honest-looking men like him! There’s not a hint of bloodthirstiness in him at all!” said Tulip as both of them burst into laughter.

After a while, they arrived at the laboratory. However, to Gerald’s surprise, he found that there were already two classes inside the laboratory.

While conducting lessons in the laboratory with two neighboring classes at the same time was commonplace there, one usually had to abide by a schedule.

Though Gerald and Marjorie’s classes were the only classes that were supposed to be able to use the laboratory during this period, Quinlan was for some odd reason already inside with his own students.

The moment Marjorie saw Gerald, she awkwardly said, “Mr. Crawford?”

“Shouldn’t only both our classes have access to the laboratory during the first period? Why is Mr. Yoxon and his students here instead?”

Although Gerald didn’t really have that much of a sense of belonging there in the first place, he was starting to get annoyed by all this.

“Apologies, Mr. Crawford, but Mr. Yoxon came over to me earlier saying that he had no experience teaching students before this... Because of that, he suggested that we did a combined lesson... I assumed he had already notified you about it, so I simply agreed with his plan...” replied Marjorie as she blushed.

Clearing her throat, one of the students from Quinlan’s class then shouted, “How about this, lecturers? From now on, why don’t we use the current arrangement of classes instead of the previous one? After all, we’d very much prefer having lessons with Miss Swift and Mr. Yoxon.”

“There’s no reason for that! Our classes have already been pre-arranged nicely so how could you just take over somebody else’s class period as you please?” retorted Tulip, clearly feeling dissatisfied.

A quarrel was starting to brew and the reason behind it was quite obvious. After all, Gerald’s pupils had all excitedly brought along their notebooks to the laboratory, only to find that another class had stepped out of line and occupied it without first informing their lecturer about it.

The entire situation was honestly quite humiliating.

“Since we’ve already made preparations for the experiment, why don’t you just take your students back to class, Mr. Crawford?”

Chapter 956

Clearing his throat before saying that, Quinlan then slid his hands into his pockets before sneering.

“What’s with all the commotion? We’re trying to have our lesson here!” shouted a female lecturer as she and her colleague stepped out of a neighboring laboratory in dissatisfaction.

Turning to face them, Quinlan then said, “It’s just Mr. Crawford... I asked Miss Swift to have a joint lesson with me since I wanted to get some teaching experience... Coincidentally, the period I chose clashes with Mr. Crawford’s class! This is honestly all my fault...”

“It really isn’t. Mr. Crawford’s just being inconsiderate! Just take the next lesson! There’s no need to make a mountain out of a molehill, is there?” said the other female colleague as both of them nodded in unison.

Straightening her hair, Marjorie then added, “Why don’t you return to your class first, Mr. Crawford?”

Hearing that, Gerald could only frown. He was very much aware that trying to argue with them wasn’t going to be worthwhile. What more, it would be imprudent of them as lecturers to create a mess here.

With that in mind, he placidly said, “...Let’s just go!”

As he began leading his students back to class, the students in the laboratory, in turn, immediately started an uproar.

“Yeah! Just leave already!”

“You’re all equally annoying mother*ckers! You hear?!” growled Tulip as she tossed her notebook to the ground before waving her two fists in the air.

After the small incident, Gerald earned the nickname, ‘Teacher Skitterbrook’ from the students.

Not that Gerald minded that sort of thing. After all, it didn’t really affect his observation on Tulip.

It wasn’t long after before Gerald realized the existence of secret undercurrents in the university. From what he managed to gather, a few groups of influential people were already plotting against Tulip again.

Gerald also noticed that despite being previously kidnapped, Tulip was still very much ignorant and fearless. She simply acted like a boss wherever she went in the university.

Sometime later, Gerald was about to enter his second-period class when suddenly, he heard someone shouting, "D*mn it! What should I do? Tulip's run off again!"

Frowning slightly, Gerald entered the class and saw that a few of his female students were anxiously discussing the matter.

"What's wrong?"

"Humph! It's none of your business, you useless piece of trash! The others drove you away and you just succumbed to it! As your students, we feel utterly humiliated by that, you know? It's also because of that humiliation that Tulip refused to attend your class! She's driven off somewhere to have some fun instead! Her dad's repeatedly ordered me to keep an eye on her, you know? Now I'm going to get scolded for sure! All of this stems from you! Humph!" complained one of the students as she shoved Gerald to the side.

She was so angry that she wanted to run off to look for Tulip immediately.

For as long as she knew her, Tulip had always bore such a temperament. The girl was simply too used to having things go her way without having to care about anything else.

When things didn't go her way, however, she would head out looking for amusement instead.

As she thought about that, a student wearing glasses panted as he slid the class's door open. Noticing that tulip's bestie was present, he calmed his breathing before saying, "L-Liske! Something's wrong! I saw Tulip driving her sports car toward Bloomlin Mountain! When I asked her about it, she said she was going there to have some fun! She also told me to tell you to wait till Teacher Skitterbrook's clas-"

The moment he saw Gerald standing there, the bespectacled boy immediately fell silent, feeling extremely awkward.

“D*mn it! She really headed to Bloomlin Mountain? It’s all over now! If her father knows that she went there to have fun, my dad will probably be beaten to death as well! All sorts of dangerous people gather at that chaotic place! What should I even do now...? Is there any of you daring enough to follow me there to get Tulip back?” said Nicole Liske as she anxiously stomped her foot on the ground.

“I’m in!”

“I’ll be going as well!”

As a few of their male classmates volunteered, Gerald couldn’t help but ask, “What sort of place is Bloomlin Mountain?”

Chapter 957

“D*mn it! Are you even a lecturer? How could you not know about Bloomlin Mountain? That’s the place where several youths, who are mostly in gangs, usually gather to host parties! What more, they like to have car races there to amuse themselves as well! That place is just bad news!” explained another student rather helplessly.

“There’s no use explaining it to him! Regardless, Tulip’s daring enough to go literally anywhere once her recklessness kicks in! I should know since the same thing happened when she last got into trouble! Come on, let’s just hurry and try to get her back already!” said Nicole who was now so anxious that she was almost in tears.

While Nicole was Tulip’s bestie, she was also the daughter of the Yowell family’s butler. Because of that, Nicole was usually tasked with keeping an eye on Tulip.

After all, almost everyone associated with the second young lady of the Yowell family knew that she was infamous for being reckless. She was a person who valued her own enjoyment above anything else, which was why she was now skipping Gerald’s class.

Gerald found that her classmates were all quite loyal to her as well, as all of them instantly agreed to go

after her. Getting to Bloomlin Mountain wasn't an issue for them either since several of the classmates were rich heirs who had their own cars. After entering the cars in twos and threes, all of them left.

"...Wouldn't your arrival there be rather strange and unexpected...?" muttered Gerald to himself helplessly.

'Just don't get into any trouble... If she gets into any then all my efforts this time around will be for naught!' Gerald thought to himself.

Knowing how many influential groups were targeting her now, it was impossible for him not to be worried. Shaking his head, he got atop his scooter and immediately began following them to the place.

Meanwhile, Tulip—who had just arrived not too long ago—was starting to slightly regret coming to Bloomlin Mountain. Looking around, the place resembled more of a colosseum rather than a racetrack.

The racetrack itself was located at the foot of a mountain in the suburbs of Heavenly City. Since the suburbs were already complicated enough with several intertwining paths, it inspired the planners of the racetrack to build it there.

Due to their efforts, what used to be a deserted open space was now filled with all sorts of cars, even high-end sports cars like Ferraris and Maybachs.

The regulars of the racetrack were all young men and women who were either screaming or playing musical instruments loudly, making the entire area somewhat deafening.

From the moment she had arrived, Tulip was left shocked by the youthful atmosphere there. Her sheer disbelief stemmed from the fact that she had never been exposed to people like these in the past. The existence of such individuals had simply been beyond her wildest imagination.

While she had definitely heard about Bloomlin Mountain before, this was actually her first time here

since her father had prohibited her from ever coming here. While that was the case, Tulip had been in a bad mood recently.

The incident regarding her elder sister still flustered her greatly. As if that annoyance wasn't enough, she was humiliated in front of so many people today due to a coward!

Dwelling on the incidents filled her with so much wrath that she forgot all about her father's prohibitions and simply drove to Bloomlin Mountain to have some fun.

Now that she was there, however, she could only sit in her car, bewildered by all the sights and sounds there.

Just as she was about to consider leaving, a man with big hair—reminiscent of the eighties—who had his left ear adorned with a row of silver studs stood by her car before saying, "Well hey there, girl! Are you a new face here? How about a race with me? If you win, I'll host a party here tonight for you!"

"I'll have to refuse. I just came here to have a look around," replied Tulip as she shook her head.

"Oh, you're not going to race? Well, you are still a student, after all! I guess you must be afraid to compete with others! What a waste that this sports car ended up in your hands!"

"You take that back you mother*cker! Who's afraid? I'm joining the race!" scowled Tulip angrily.

However, upon realizing what she had just said, Tulip found herself regretting it slightly.

After all, she truly had just wanted to have a look at the fabled racetrack in Bloomlin Mountain. Since she had previously assumed that the place would be deserted, she had even considered the thought of speeding along the winding paths of the mountain at least once before returning to university. It hadn't occurred to her that this place would be so populated with hooligans!

Sensing what Tulip was worrying about, he simply pointed at the people surrounding them before saying, "See those beast-like people? F*ck them! Don't see them as humans! Once you see them as mere animals, you'll be fine. However, if you truly are reluctant to look at them, then just close your eyes!"

While Tulip was hesitant, when she looked at his resolute and fearless expression, she replied, "...Since we're competing with each other, cut the cr*p and let's go already...!"

"Settle down, this round has already been taken by someone else. We'll just have to wait for the next round!" said the man as he pointed at two cars revving their engines loudly in the open space.

Hearing that, Tulip could only anxiously smack the side of her steering wheel in anger.

At that moment, a dozen or so cars arrived at the area, signaling the arrival of Nicole and the others.

"Hey! Look over there! That's Tulip's car!" yelled Nicole as the Tulip's classmates ran toward her.

Immediately after, however, a loud clamor was heard.

Chapter 958

Upon noticing the arrival of Nicole and her classmates, the many other youths who were there instantly began screaming and whistling at them. After all, none of them had ever seen students dressed in uniform there before. What more, among the thirty over students, half of them were tall and slim women who looked both innocent and cute.

Their presence at Bloomlin Mountain was nothing short of extraordinary to the hooligans.

Even the big-haired man jumped out of his car in excitement, his eyes widened.

“Nicole... All of you... Why did all of you come here?” asked Tulip.

“Why else would we be here? We were worried about you, of course! Let’s just leave quickly! Still, to think that you would actually come here! What if your dad found out? Do you really want to suffer that terribly?” replied Tulip as she held on to Tulip’s arm.

Since it was evident that Tulip wanted to leave with them, the man from before simply sneered, “Come now, there’s no rush to leave! Why don’t we have a race first? After all, it mustn’t have been easy for all of you to come here. Or are all of you just obedient university students who are still afraid of your parents?”

“Cowards! Cowards!” chanted the crowds loudly.

“F*cking hell! Wait for me here, Nicole! I’m racing him first to shut him up for good!” scowled Tulip.

“That’s the spirit! Speaking of which, beauty, according to the rules here, you’ll have to give a ride to a person of the opposite gender if you’re participating in a car race. Since you already have so many male classmates, why not pick one of them? Or would you rather choose a handsome guy from among us? What do you say?” said the big-haired man.

As Tulip turned to look, she saw a woman with heavy makeup sitting in his car. So he wasn’t lying.

“Me! Me! Pick me, beauty!”

All around them, various men were shouting to get Tulip’s attention.

“As if I’d ever get in a car with any of you! Specky! Get in the car!” ordered Tulip at the bespectacled boy from before as she rolled her eyes at the crowd.

“B-but, Tulip! I can’t... I... I have car sickness!” replied Specky as he gulped before shaking his head quickly.

Tulip’s poor driving skills was no mystery to any of her classmates.

If a regular passenger thanked their driver for their troubles after arriving at their destination, a passenger of Tulip’s would instead thank her for allowing them to leave the car with their life intact!

In short, she was a mad driver.

Specky wasn’t the only unwilling one either. All her other male classmates were similarly deterred from sitting in the car if she was driving!

“Useless! All of you!” shouted Tulip as she smacked her steering wheel in frustration.

As the big-haired man continued laughing, Nicole suddenly pointed in a direction before saying in an astonished tone, “...Hey, that’s our lecturer, right? D*mn it! Why is he here?”

Turning to look at where she was pointing, all the students realized that she wasn’t kidding. Their Biology lecturer was indeed there!

Pushing his scooter along, Gerald soon saw his students and began running toward them. His arrival, however, was nothing short of ridiculous and amusing to the hooligans.

“Haha! Hey, everyone! Look there!”

With everyone’s eyes on him now, a roar of laughter erupted throughout the entire area.

It was funny enough to even think about someone riding a scooter to a racetrack, yet here Gerald was, pushing his now dusty scooter as he ran!

“Why the hell is that piece of trash here, Nicole?! Who even told him to come along?!” said Tulip, flabbergasted by his arrival.

Chapter 959

“Don’t look at me... I really hadn’t expected him to actually follow us here...” replied Nicole rather helplessly.

“It’s going to be all over for me if he tells the university about it! That’s not even the worst part! What if the university informs my dad about it?!” cried out Tulip in a state of berserk.

“Calm down, Tulip. I have a way to get him to cooperate obediently. You currently need a man in your car, right? Why don’t we get him to do it? Once he’s inside, he’ll definitely be afraid of you!” suggested Specky.

“F*cking...” While Tulip certainly wanted to scold Specky after hearing his indirect roast on her driving skill, thinking back, he had a point.

Since she was already annoyed with Gerald anyway after this morning’s incident at the laboratory, Tulip wasn’t too worried about making him suffer too much.

Besides, he looked like an honest and rather silly man. Once she was done with him in the car, he’d definitely not dare to report her misbehavior. With all that in mind, she decided to go along with Specky’s plan.

“Aren’t all of you being too disrespectful to the university? How dare all of you play truant together!” said Gerald as he walked over after parking his scooter properly.

Due to how far Bloomlin Mountain was from the university, Gerald’s scooter ran out of batteries a bit

earlier, explaining why he had pushed it toward the racetrack instead of riding it in.

“Just shut up and get in the car!” ordered Tulip.

“And why should I? All of you had best return to the university right this instance!” replied Gerald.

“Fine! But you’ll still need a ride back, right? After all, we all saw that your scooter’s batteries were drained! Can’t you see that I’m offering you a ride back? Now come on!” added Tulip.

“She’s right, sir! Since you came all the way out here, just let her give you a ride back... As for your scooter, we’ll think of a way to get it back there...” added a few other students.

They were frantically trying to get Gerald into the car since the competition was about to begin soon. In their minds, the sooner the race was over, the sooner they could leave, and none of them wanted to linger there for any longer than they needed to.

“...Fine!” replied Gerald with a defeated nod.

He knew for a fact that Tulip wouldn’t ever be this kind to him. However, he was slightly interested to see what kind of trick she had up her sleeve.

Upon closing the car door behind him, all the car’s doors were immediately locked.

“What’re you doing?” asked Gerald, astonished.

“Haha! You idiot! You’ve fallen straight into my trap! Did you honestly think that I’d be that nice to allow a worthless piece of trash like you to get into my car without a price? You’re coming along with me for a car race! And you’d better not vomit inside my car or you’ll suffer terribly!” warned Tulip.

Now that everything was ready, Tulip and her opponent drove to the starting line. After honking to indicate that both of them were ready, a large screen began projecting numbers counting down as both their cars began revving up.

The moment a loud buzzing sound was heard, both cars immediately sped forward like wild horses that had just been freed.

“Hell yeah! This is so cool!” shouted Tulip excitedly. Though she really didn’t like the atmosphere of the place, it did end up becoming enjoyable once the race actually began.

“The road! Keep your eyes on the road!” shouted Gerald, terrified as he held on to the car’s grab handle.

While Tulip’s driving was definitely as reckless as her classmates remembered, she wasn’t completely devoid of skill. After all, she was still ahead of the big-haired man’s car.

However, that fact alone seemed rather illogical to Gerald. Looking through the rear-view mirror, Gerald found that his doubts were warranted. After all, the man clearly had a lot of chances to overtake her car. However, he just never did.

As Gerald frowned, wondering what was up, all of a sudden, Tulip let out a shout!

Turning to look ahead, Gerald saw that they were headed straight for a few rows of steel nails that had been placed across the road.

They clearly served as roadblocks, yet even if Tulip were to hit on the brakes now, both of them were well aware that she wouldn’t be able to stop the car in time.

As a result, she simply accelerated the car forward with her eyes closed.

Seconds later, two distinct sounds of tires bursting could be heard!

Eventually, the car couldn't go on and Tulip was forced to park the car in the middle of the road.

"Fcking hell! Who would put roadblocks in the middle of a god dmned racetrack!" shouted Tulip furiously.

On the contrary, Gerald appeared extremely vigilant as he turned around to look behind them.

Chapter 960

By now, the car behind them had stopped as well, blocking any possible escape routes.

'Something is definitely wrong!' Gerald thought to himself as he watched the big-haired man and the woman get out of their car.

"Hey, now! How could you people be like this? These roadblocks clearly shouldn't be here! I demand we start over!" scowled Tulip, feeling cheated.

"But of course, Miss Tulip Yowell! You're the second young lady of the Yowell family, after all... We can start over as many times as you please!" replied the big-haired man as he laughed loudly.

"...You... How do you know my name?" asked Tulip, finally realizing that something was wrong.

"Humph! Just get out of the car already, miss! Don't trouble us any more than you need to!" shouted the big-haired man as he pulled his wig off, revealing his bald head!

Following that, he took a gun out, aiming it at Tulip before roaring, "Didn't you hear what I said? Get out, now!"

Seeing the gun, Tulip immediately went pale in fright. It was then when she understood that she was getting kidnapped again.

Raising both her hands to show that she was harmless, she then slowly got out of the car.

Once she was out, the woman revealed her own gun as the bald man shouted, "Wren, go kill that other guy! After he's dead, report to Old A that we've captured her and tell him to take over from here immediately!"

"Got it!" replied the woman with a nod as she walked toward the shotgun seat.

However, when she peered through the window, she was left stunned. Raising her head to look at the bald man, she then said, "...Dominic... There's nobody in there."

"What? We all saw him enter the car earlier, right?" replied Dominic as he dragged Tulip along with him toward Wren's side.

Peering inside, it appeared that she was right. Gerald had completely disappeared!

"How odd! He couldn't have just vanished in broad daylight!" said the bald man in astonishment.

As he continued wondering where Gerald could possibly have gone to, out of the blue, a voice from behind the bald man shouted, "I-I'll try my best to fight you!"

Hearing that, Dominic turned around immediately... Only to be greeted by a large stone!

With a loud 'thud', the bald man felt his eyes roll back as he fell to the ground, now unconscious!

Though Wren wanted to immediately retaliate by shooting the assailant, for some baffling reason, she just couldn't fully raise her arm!

"I-I'll fight you too!" shouted the youth again as he picked the same large stone up and staggered toward the woman before smashing it into her head. Naturally, she fainted as well.

The youth in question was of course, Gerald. Since he needed to keep his identity a secret, he knew that he had to pretend to be weak.

"Wow! You... You killed them, sir! You've killed two people! You're definitely ruined this time!" exclaimed Tulip excitedly now that she knew she had been rescued.

Rolling his eyes, Gerald then replied, "They're not dead! They've just fainted! However, since their accomplices are probably coming over soon, I suggest we leave quickly!"

"You're right! Let's go then!" replied Tulip as both of them headed for Dominic's car.

Getting in the driver's seat, Tulip then turned the car around and sped all the way back to the starting line. Seconds after they left, however, a few ATV cars came to a screeching halt at the spot where both Dominic and Wren lay unconscious.

Watching Tulip and the man make their escape, the leader of the group found himself slamming a fist onto the hood of the car.

"F*cking hell! We were already so close just now! How did things end up failing? Who the hell saved her?!"

"Do we pursue after them, boss?"

“F*ck that! There are too many people at the foot of the mountain! Do you want to die that much? If you don’t, then bring these two useless people along with us! We’re leaving!”

Meanwhile, Tulip was beginning to admire Gerald slightly as she said, “D*mn, sir! You were so cruel earlier!”

“If I hadn’t been, then we’d both be dead by now!” replied Gerald as he thought about what could’ve happened if he wasn’t in the car with her.

“Still, something just doesn’t add up, sir!” said Tulip as she seemed to recall something.

“What do you mean?”

“Well, back when I stepped out of the car, I’m fairly certain that you were still sitting beside me! How could you have just appeared behind the two kidnapers earlier?”

Chapter 961

“...That... Well, when he grabbed you, I simply took the chance to slide down the slope! All I needed to do after that was to take a detour back to where the cars were!” explained Gerald.

“I see! I didn’t expect you to be that smart!” replied Tulip in shock.

Hearing that, Gerald simply shook his head in silence.

Upon arriving at the foot of the mountain, Gerald squinted his eyes and saw that several other luxury cars were currently speeding toward them. Once the cars surrounded the area, Tulip immediately yelped.

“Oh god! That’s my dad’s car! Nicole must’ve told him that I’m here! I’m definitely ruined now!” said Tulip as she quivered in fear.

Seconds later, a middle-aged man stepped out of the car and walked toward her before anxiously asking, “Are... Are you fine, second young lady...?”

“H-humph! If you had arrived any later, then you wouldn’t have been able to see me anymore!” replied Tulip, a hint of fear still lingering in her voice.

“Thank goodness we made it in time, then... Nicole was the one who alerted me that you could be in danger. As a result, I immediately brought all these people here. How wonderful that you’re safe!”

As it turned out, a few men had chatted with Nicole earlier while the race was going on. After chatting for a bit, Nicole found out that the big-haired man wasn’t a usual here. In fact, this was the men’s first time meeting him as well. What more, he was apparently filthy rich. After all, Dominic ended up booking the entire racetrack that day!

Upon finding out about that, Nicole instantly became vigilant about him. After all, if he truly was that rich, why wasn’t he driving an expensive car?

Knowing that it would be better to be safe than sorry, Nicole immediately notified her father about the chain of events.

“So it seems that my guess was correct, Tulip... What kinds of dangers did you have to face? Speaking of which, where’s your car?” asked Nicole in a worried tone.

Hearing that, Tulip then began describing what had happened to her. However, her version of the story had been slightly altered.

According to Tulip, she had pretended to be bait to attract the attention of the two kidnappers. While

they were going after her, Gerald had taken the chance to knock those two people unconscious!

After getting the details he needed, Mr. Liske immediately sent a few men up the mountain. The remaining men were told to surround the entirety of Bloomlin Mountain for investigation purposes.

Once that was done, Mr. Liske nodded at Gerald with a smile before saying, "I'm sure this is the Mr. Crawford you've been talking about. Do know that the Yowell family is indebted to you for your kindness this time around. As thanks for saving the second young lady, we'll certainly provide you with a great reward once she meets up with the master."

"It's fine. Tulip is my student, after all."

"Then how about this, Mr. Crawford? For now, allow me to send you back to the university in one of our cars."

"I'd appreciate that."

With that, Mr. Liske ordered a team of cars to send Gerald and his students back to the university.

Upon returning, Gerald told his students to return to class first. Gerald himself prepared to return to the office. The moment he got there, however, he immediately heard someone shouting, "Something's gone terribly wrong!"

He truly wasn't expecting to receive more bad news right after he had to deal with all that.

As he watched a few lecturers run outside, he casually stopped one of them before asking, "What happened?"

"It's Miss Swift and Mr. Yoxon! They seem to have gotten themselves into quite a bit of trouble! See,

during their joint lesson earlier, there was apparently a student who was quite arrogant in Miss Swift's class! While he was smoking in the washroom during recess, he ended up getting into a fight there with students from other classes!"

"In the end, the arrogant student was beaten up terribly. However, that wasn't the end of the incident! While we honestly just wanted to wait for the university to deal with the situation, Mr. Yoxon was adamant about dealing with it immediately. As a result, he led the male students from his own class over to the neighboring class, which was the class of those who had beaten up Miss Swift's student."

"While Mr. Yoxon had gone over to reason with them, he failed to realize how bad his own temper was. After the argument turned unpleasant, he ended up beating up one of the male students!" explained the lecturer.

"So that's what happened... How imprudent for lecturers to beat up students!" said Gerald as he shook his head with a bitter smile on his face.

However, it was clear as day that Quinlan had only done so to impress Marjorie. After all, it was evident that he had a crush on her.

Sighing, the lecturer then added, "It'd be fine if that was where all the trouble ended, Mr. Crawford... Sadly, it isn't. Do you know which student he beat up?"

"Go on..."

"Well, the student's the son of a rich man in Heavenly City! Since the rich man has a close relationship with the underground forces of Heavenly City, the student declared that he would call some people over! Something terrible is definitely imminent now!" said the female lecturer before running off to the scene.

Seeing that she was running toward the scene of the incident, Gerald simply walked in the direction she was headed to. He was following her mainly because his class was currently also in the same location and he wanted to check on his students.

As was expected, the entire Biology course's corridor was crowded with people.

"Here you are, sir!" said Specky as soon as he saw Gerald. Since the corridor was completely blocked by a wall of people, his students weren't even able to return to class to have their lesson.

Chapter 962

"How are things looking?" asked Gerald.

"Well, the lecturer who took our laboratory time from us was beaten up! Mr. Yoxon's in deep trouble now! After all, he offended the young master of the Lightburn family! If you aren't aware, the young master of the Lightburn family is under the protection of underground forces!" explained Specky.

Hearing that, Gerald looked ahead and saw Quinlan surrounded by a group of men donning black suits. Marjorie and a few other female lecturers were also present, all of them frozen in fear.

"We're far from done!" shouted one of the men in black as he glared at Quinlan. Quinlan himself appeared to have several clear slap marks on his cheeks.

As the university's chancellor continued trying to calm the situation down, Quinlan simply wiped the blood off his glasses before sneering, "It's fine, chancellor. Just let me make a call and everything will be settled."

"Humph! Be my guest! Let's see who you call over!" scoffed the man angrily.

Shaking his head, Quinlan then took his cell phone out before dialing a number.

Seeing how confident Quinlan still was, Marjorie couldn't help but feel a sense of assuredness in her heart.

Everyone else was getting increasingly excited as well. Who was Quinlan going to call over?

“You know, I heard that Mr. Yoxon is from Talgo Town!”

“I heard the same thing too! From what I know, all sorts of cruel people live there!”

“Indeed! Speaking of which, my dad told me that there’s a powerful force in Talgo Town that even has territories in the Heavenly City! Could Mr. Yoxon possibly be calling someone from that group over?”

“Well, that possibility certainly isn’t out of the question!”

Throughout the next twenty minutes, the more well-informed students continued discussing the incident until a few of them finally pointed out of a nearby window before shouting, “H-hey! Look down there!”

As the rest of the students looked out, they were shocked to see at least a hundred black luxury cars driving toward the university. By the time the cars stopped, the area was completely surrounded by them.

Following that, several black-suited bodyguards began getting out of the cars before swiftly making their way to the corridor everyone was currently in.

Due to the imposing aura each of them possessed, all the students simply stepped aside, making way for them to proceed.

Those who were too slow to act, however, were immediately shoved aside as the overbearing bodyguards shouted, “Step aside!”

As Gerald found himself being pushed aside as well, Marjorie and the other female lecturers began

biting onto their lower lips in excitement as they watched the scene further unfold.

Realizing how dominant the other party was, Mr. Lightburn's men found themselves getting more dispirited by the second. In the end, all of them stepped forward to begin negotiating.

"Are you alright, Mr. Yoxon?" asked the leader of the bodyguards.

"Could you perhaps come from Talgo Town, gentlemen? I wonder which force you belong to?" asked Mr. Lightburn's men.

"We belong to one of the families there. However, it was the Royal Dragon Group who ordered us to come here this time around," replied the leader as he respectfully gave way to another man in black.

"I beg your pardon? You're from the Royal Dragon Group, you say?" asked the opposing guards, stupefied by the turn of events.

After all, the Royal Dragon Group was considered to be a very powerful dark horse in Heavenly City. In just a single night, it had acquired all five forces in Talgo Town. The group had even blocked an entire road in Heavenly City! Those from within that group were truly vicious people!

As a result, being only a small force in Heavenly City, Mr. Lightburn's men really didn't dare to offend the Royal Dragon Group.

"That is correct. Mr. Yoxon's father is an ally to the Royal Dragon Group. Due to that, The Royal Dragon Group will now deal with this issue. Which force do you belong to? I do hope you'll give us some respect," replied the man wearing sunglasses, coldly.

"But of course!" replied Mr. Lightburn's men as they nodded with a smile.

“How could we just settle things like this, Bryan?” said Mr. Lightburn, unwilling to just accept defeat like that.

“Please just endure it for now, Mr. Lightburn. The Royal Dragon Group has been looking for targets all over the place. Even the boss has ordered us not to ever offend them,” whispered Bryan in response.

Chapter 963

Though he was dissatisfied, Mr. Lightburn wasn't a fool. After listening to what his subordinate had to say, he understood what was at stake if he continued pushing on with the issue. Because of that, he didn't say anything more.

Gerald's Royal Dragon Group itself had developed at an immense rate in the past few days. After all, it now had help from the five forces it had acquired in Talgo Town. What more, both Tyson and Drake—who had been beaten up terribly by Sven—were now back at Gerald's side.

Though their main base was still in Talgo Town, they had recently begun developing in Heavenly City as well. Their efforts in doing so, of course, had been greatly aided by the Westley family.

“The Royal Dragon Group truly is a powerful dark horse!” muttered Specky—who had been standing next to Gerald this entire time—to himself.

“I wonder how they got so powerful so quickly...” asked a few girls who heard Specky's comment.

“Well, from what I've heard, the Royal Dragon Group's boss is extremely powerful! I've also heard that the bosses of the five forces surrendered themselves only after a single round! Because of that, nobody dares to block their path in the entire Heavenly City now! Well, except for Sven, probably... He still hasn't returned though!” explained Specky who seemed extremely well-informed about the entire situation.

Regardless, Quinlan was now extremely smug and in high spirits. After all, now that the Royal Dragon Group had stepped forward, the incident he was involved with was as good as solved.

Following that, he then began heading to the chancellor's office together with Marjorie and a few others to discuss some issues.

As they passed by Gerald, Marjorie took a glance at him. However, she only shook her head slightly and moved on without even greeting him.

From her middle school days till she was in university, Marjorie had always enjoyed her status as a goddess admired by all. However, once she graduated from university, she knew it was high time for her to get a boyfriend. Of course, not just anyone was going to be able to be her boyfriend.

Upon meeting Gerald the first time, she had truly admired him. After all, he was a handsome young man who had a good disposition to boot! Quinlan, on the other hand, was lacking in every aspect that Gerald succeeded in, or at least that was what she assumed based on her first impression of them.

After getting to know them a bit more carefully, however, Marjorie realized that Quinlan was hands down the more suitable candidate to be her boyfriend.

As for Gerald, he was a nobody to her now. Because of that, her attitude toward him completely changed as well.

Gerald himself could only smile bitterly in silence as he watched her ignore him.

While it was technically his Royal Dragon Group that had helped resolve this mess, Quinlan ended up snatching all the credits from him.

'Humph!'

Even so, this wasn't his first rodeo experiencing such injustice.

Recalling the multiple times similar incidents had taken place, Gerald remembered the time when he had regretted not exposing himself. Back then, he had been just as aggrieved as Alice was.

However, he now felt nothing of the sort anymore.

With that, he then returned to the office as the clock struck twelve. It was a little later when he was just about to get off work when he received a call. To his surprise, the number belonged to Tulip.

“I’m currently in a Starbucks in the city, Mr. Crawford. You’re off work now, right? Could you come over? I have something urgent to tell you!” said Tulip rather mysteriously.

“What is it? Could you be planning to treat me to some coffee to repay my kindness for saving you?” asked Gerald in return.

“Well, yes, but that’s not the only thing. Just come over now. We’ll talk more about it once you’re here,” replied Tulip before hanging up the phone.

Frowning slightly, Gerald knew he still needed to go there in the end. After all, his main purpose was still to maintain a good relationship with her.

Upon arriving sometime later, he saw that Tulip was seated at a table by the window, a cup of coffee placed before her.

However, Gerald was surprised when he saw the woman—who looked to be around twenty-four, the exact same age he was—sitting beside her.

Chapter 964

Just like Tulip, the woman was very beautiful, and both of them resembled each other a lot. However, Gerald could see that while Tulip had a more innocent look to her, the woman, in contrast, looked much

more mature.

“That’s him, sister!” said Tulip with a soft tone as she pointed at Gerald.

Hearing that, she scanned Gerald briefly from head to toe before nodding slightly.

Following that, she grabbed her bag and got up to leave. While Gerald did intend to at least greet her, she completely ignored him.

Once she was gone, Tulip smugly said, “That was my elder sister, Juliet Yowell! What do you think? A beauty, isn’t she? Hah! Even if you deny it, I saw how wide your eyes were the moment you saw her!”

Nodding slightly, Gerald simply replied, “So tell me, what did you want to meet me for?”

“Well, it’s something good so of course I had to tell you in person. Actually, scratch good, it’s great news!” said Tulip before sighing.

“The truth is, I’ve been looking for someone suitable for the longest time. At long last, I’ve finally found you to be the perfect candidate!” added Tulip.

“Pray tell what exactly I’m a perfect candidate for...”

Hearing that, Tulip simply chuckled before saying, “Alright, so before anything else, let me just say that what you’re about to hear will be extremely shocking. If you end up dying from excitement, don’t say I didn’t warn you!”

Taking in a deep breath, she then continued, “...So you see, my sister’s been looking for a live-in son-in-law for a while now... And after searching for so long, you seem to be the most suitable candidate for the job!”

“...I beg your pardon? Me? A live-in son-in-law?” said Gerald as he immediately stood up, wide-eyed.

“Haha! I know, right? I was surprised that my sister agreed with it as well!” replied Tulip happily. Tulip had clearly mistaken Gerald’s surprise for excitement, which explained why she was feeling so joyful.

“...Alright, let’s slow down for a bit. First of all, your sister’s extremely beautiful, so I’m sure she has many admirers. Why’s she only looking for a live-in son-in-law...?” asked Gerald, his resignation evident in his voice.

“It’s a long story...” said Tulip with a sigh before detailing everything.

Basically, after Gerald had saved her, Tulip got scolded by her family the moment she arrived home. However, after being scolded by her father, an idea came to her.

To understand that idea, Tulip had to explain why she ended up going to Bloomlin Mountain in the first place. In short, she had been in a very bad mood recently. Though Gerald failing to get them into the laboratory was the last straw for her, it was far from the actual source of her annoyance.

The main issue, as Tulip explained, had been regarding an incident relating to her sister whom she had a very good relationship with.

According to Tulip, upon Juliet’s return to her homeland recently, she had been taking things extremely terribly due to issues pertaining to a broken heart. Juliet was simply upset all the time, and she was almost completely different from the sister Tulip used to know. Things got so bad that at one point, her sister even considered committing suicide!

It was the reason why Tulip had been so worried and easily angered at the time.

As for why Juliet had a broken heart in the first place, she had initially been studying abroad in M country. During her time there, she had a boyfriend and both of them were in love for a good many years.

However, she eventually found out that that sc*mbag had already been engaged to another person!

When she suggested that he marry her instead, he was actually hesitant about doing so! Understanding at that point that his heart never belonged to her in the first place, Juliet took things extremely badly and immediately returned to Heavenly City in great fury!

Before dumping him, out of spite, Juliet even said word for word, 'Since you're so hesitant about being with me, fine then! Since you think so highly of yourself, I'll just find the most worthless man on the planet to be my husband! You'll regret ever making me feel this way!'

Upon returning, she had asked for Tulip's help to locate such a person. Essentially, the perfect candidate would be someone who was worthless, but honest.

Fast forward to the present, as she said, she got the idea that Gerald was perfect for the role as her father scolded her.

Once her father was done, she immediately sought out her sister and told her all about Gerald.

As Gerald attempted to register all that he had just heard, Tulip replayed the earlier conversation she had had with her sister in her mind.

Back then, Tulip had found Juliet staring out the window. Running up to her excitedly, Tulip had said, "I've finally found the perfect person for you, sister!"

"Who is he?"

“Well, he’s a new lecturer of mine whom we all call Teacher Skitterbrook! He’s also the one who saved me today, so I can say for sure that he’s an honest man. To be quite frank, he doesn’t look bad either. What do you think? Should I ask him out once he’s done with work today? By doing so, you’ll be able to have a good look at him! If things go well, then you can get married to him and have your revenge on that sc*mbag! He’ll certainly be pissed since my lecturer clearly has no advantages to him! Haha!”

“I see... Alright then, please ask him out tonight. Once I get a good look at him and if things go well, we’ll sign the contract so that he’ll be my husband for a year. Once that year is up, I’ll reward him accordingly. With the reward money, I’m certain that he’ll be able to live his life without any more worries till the day he dies.”

“Alright! Just leave everything to me!”

Chapter 965

With that, the memory of the incident came to an end. Looking at Gerald, Tulip could very much tell that he was deep in thought.

Gerald himself was certainly not too excited about the fact that he was about to marry that beauty out of the blue.

However, he was also thinking about the practicality of going along with it.

Quite honestly, Tulip had made a good move in terms of advancing his plans. After all, as long as he was able to sneak into the Yowell family, then he would be able to put a stop to his vagabond lifestyle for at least a while.

However, the main issue still remained. Why did he have to get married to such a strange woman just to achieve that?

A better question yet, would his choice of actions be answerable to Mila later on?

“So, how about it? Haha! Just so you know, the marriage will only last for a year. Once that year is up, you’ll need to divorce her. However! The Yowell family will be sure to present you with a massive amount of money once that happens. I see no downsides to you agreeing! After all, not only will you be set for life once the year is done, but you’ll also have the title of the Yowell’s son-in-law throughout the next year!” said Tulip.

“Deal!” replied Gerald instantaneously as he looked at her.

As long as he could become stronger, then he would have a higher chance to save Mila and also deal with Kort. Gerald was well aware that attempting to do so with his current strength was futile, therefore there was zero hesitance in his final decision.

“...Huh? I haven’t even told you the conditions yet! How could you just agree like that?” pouted Tulip slightly, a hint of contempt in her eyes.

‘Humph! And here I thought you were a gentleman of honor... In the end, you’re just another money-grabbing b*stard!’

“So there are conditions... State them,” replied Gerald.

“But of course there are! Well, there’s only one, though it honestly shouldn’t be that big of a deal for you. Regardless, the most important thing is that you understand that your marriage with my sister is akin to the relationship between an employer and an employee. Don’t even dream about ever being able to go beyond that!”

“I see. What you’re trying to say is that the marriage is only nominal, correct?” replied Gerald with a bitter smile on his face. Though his expression suggested otherwise, this was exactly what he wanted.

“Bingo! That’s pretty much the only condition so if you don’t find a problem with it, then just sign the contract! Do note, however, that the wedding ceremony will be held in the next two days before my

mom returns from abroad. While my dad certainly won't say much about it, my mom's a different story. She'll definitely disagree with the wedding, so we need to proceed with this quickly!"

Gerald really didn't know what sorts of tricks the sisters were up to, but he simply couldn't be bothered about them. Knowing that this was as good a chance as ever to get involved with the Yowells, Gerald immediately signed the contract.

And just like that, seven days came and went.

It was a fine morning sometime later when Juliet and Gerald got into her car.

The moment Gerald closed the door of the shotgun seat, the aloof woman—who was now driving—immediately said in a cold voice, "The gathering we're attending now has been organized by my classmates who are returning from abroad today. All of them have seen much of this world, so once we're there, speak less. Understand?"

It had now been three days since their marriage and Gerald himself had moved into the Yowell family as a live-in son-in-law.

However, throughout that period, Juliet never spoke to him unless absolutely necessary. In fact, she didn't even look him in the eye most of the time.

Gerald completely understood her reasoning. After all, what was he to her but a mere tool? Then again, it wasn't like that bothered him or anything.

"Got it," replied Gerald with a brief nod.

Soon, both of them arrived at a high-end hotel in Heavenly City.

“Ah, welcome, Juliet!” said a few men and women as they stood up when they saw her entering their private room.

Noticing her presence, one of the young men—who was dressed in traditional attire and wore a gold watch—walked toward her before saying, “Hmm! Upon returning to the country, I heard that you got married to some teacher, Juliet! Is that the guy?”

Chapter 966

A hint of slight resentment could be heard in the man’s voice as he pointed at Gerald.

“Indeed! This is my husband, Gerald!” replied Juliet as she locked arms with Gerald.

“Gerald, this is Cavan, a classmate of mine from university!” added Juliet as she introduced him to the man.

“A pleasure to meet you!” said Gerald as he reached a hand out in accordance with the etiquettes Juliet had earlier taught him.

“I truly can’t comprehend what goes on in your mind... Even if you broke up with him, you could’ve easily just gone for anyone else other than this guy...” muttered Cavan.

Noticing Juliet’s warning gaze, however, Cavan simply stopped talking. It was evident that Cavan was one of Juliet’s suitors. That explained why he completely ignored Gerald’s handshake as well.

Cavan wasn’t the only one treating Gerald that way though. Many of Juliet’s other male classmates shot equally hostile gazes toward him, refusing to say a word to Gerald at all.

Even her female classmates were staring at Gerald contemptuously from time to time. It was as though they were all wondering how a beauty like Juliet could end up being with such a pathetic person as Gerald.

“Just look at that guy, Cavan! I would’ve never imagined that Juliet would actually get married to such a person! To think that she actually fell in love with a teacher working in Heavenly City University! I’m speechless! What the hell even goes on in Juliet’s mind?”

It was a while later when several of her male classmates were discussing Gerald right outside the gents.

Their dissatisfaction with him was warranted since most, if not all, of them there had either had a crush or fallen for her once. Cavan himself had had feelings for her for the longest time.

However, since Juliet already had someone else in her heart back then, nobody ever had a chance to even ask her out. Upon finding out that she finally broke up with her boyfriend, all her classmates were eager to finally be able to try their luck!

Alas, the next thing they knew, she had already gotten married to some useless person!

With all of them being distinguished people, it was really no wonder why they looked down on Gerald so much. After all, he was simply a lecturer.

“Humph! I know right? We can’t even say anything to Juliet now since he’s constantly around her! What an inconvenient eyesore!” scowled another classmate.

“In that case, then we should just make him leave then! We’ll make it clear to him that our gatherings aren’t events that just anyone can attend, especially people with his status!” sneered Cavan.

After saying that, he began whispering his plan to all the present male classmates. Once everyone agreed, they all returned to the private room together.

The moment Cavan saw Gerald, he walked over toward him with a smile before saying, “Speaking of

which, we haven't even had a drink with the bridegroom! Since you snatched our goddess from us, you'll have to drink with us today!"

The other males simply exchanged gazes with each other in glee before smiling coldly at Gerald.

Despite the evident and sudden change in Cavan's attitude, Gerald simply returned the smile as he replied, "Sure thing! What are we drinking today?"

"That's the spirit! Also, we'll be drinking liquor! I just so happen to have a few boxes of good liquor in my car that I've brought from home! Someone's bringing some over as we speak!" said Cavan who wasn't expecting Gerald to agree so easily.

"Liquor sounds fine! In fact, I love drinking liquor!" replied Gerald with a laugh.

Since Juliet had easily sensed that Cavan and the others were up to no good, she had initially planned to remind Gerald against falling for it.

Seeing how mindlessly he was acting, however, Juliet was left completely speechless.

'Just let him drink if he wants to so much, then!' Juliet thought to herself before looking to the side.

Soon after, her male classmates returned with two boxes of liquor in hand.

"Oh, and by the way, Gerald. My friend here runs a winery! As a result, he can hold his alcohol extremely well. Would you have a problem with him being the master as we drink along? After all, both of us are plenty eager to enjoy a good drink with you! How about it?" asked Cavan as he continued smiling.

"Not a problem!" replied Gerald with a nod.

Nobody noticed the impish glint in Gerald's eyes as he said that. After practicing the many skills that Finnley had taught him, Gerald had trained himself enough to become immune to all forms of alcohol.

In fact, he was now even able to consume basic poisons without having to deal with any side-effects. Liquor was nothing to him!

The main reason Gerald agreed with Cavan's proposal was because he knew how much Cavan and Juliet's other classmates disliked him. The current Gerald was no longer as passive as he used to be. He wouldn't just endure all his anger after being bashed around so much.

Since they wanted so much to play with him, then play with them he would.

Chapter 967

Cavan, on the other hand, couldn't help but shake his head as he smiled wryly. All humans had a limit to their alcohol tolerance, and he would definitely make Gerald drink till he exceeded his.

True to his word, his classmate's family truly did own a winery. Cavan was certain that he would be able to completely ruin Gerald since his classmate—whom he also considered to be his brother—and his father were both extremely tolerant toward alcohol. In fact, after a check-up, their bodies apparently had access to a lot more alcohol breaking enzymes compared to regular people!

He had once seen his classmate drink seven whole bottles of extremely high alcohol percentage liquors, back to back, before finally reaching his limit.

Seven whole bottles of alcohol!

With that in mind, Cavan felt that Gerald would already be bleeding from his stomach long before his classmate even got too drunk.

Now that all of them were ready, the rules were simple. Each of the five participating people—including Gerald, Cavan, two other classmates, and Cavan’s winery friend—would have to take turns downing cups of liquor, and every time their cups were filled, they had to finish every last drop in it before it could be refilled.

It wasn’t long before both Gerald and Cavan’s friend—whose family owned the winery—managed to finish three whole bottles of liquor, each.

Cavan himself had already gone pale by then, and he bore quite a frightening expression on his face. However, he was still conscious enough to know that he should still be fine for at least three more bottles of liquor.

At the same time, Juliet and the other girls were all getting increasingly scared with each glass the five men drank. They were definitely overdoing it!

Worried, Juliet turned to look at Gerald... However, to her surprise, he looked completely unfazed! It was almost as if he hadn’t drunk any liquor at all!

“You can really hold your liquor, Gerald! I’m sure you can drink another three bottles, right?!” grumbled Cavan in both disbelief and surprise.

“Well of course I can! Still, remember that you three still have to drink together with us! Since this brother and I have already downed three bottles of liquor each, shouldn’t you guys start picking up the pace as well?” replied Gerald with a smile on his face.

“Alright, then! Since Gerald’s willing to carry on drinking, then we’ll continue drinking as well!”

As the other two classmates declared that, Cavan whispered to his good friend, “Say, Jarson, are you still able to hang on...?”

“I... I’m fine...!” replied Jarson—who was the son of the winery’s owner—as he waved his hand dismissively.

Hearing that, Cavan nodded and the next round of drinking soon commenced.

Juliet could only watch in horror as the five of them continued downing more and more liquor.

While Jarson and Gerald were still drinking on par with each other, Cavan and the other two boys had considerably slowed down by this point. What more, as the other two continued downing cups of liquor in single gulps, the remaining trio found themselves drinking half-a-cup at a time.

As a result, in no time flat, Gerald and Jarson had each finished another three bottles of liquor!

Cavan and the other two, on the other hand, had only managed to drink another bottle and a half of liquor, each. While the two other classmates had passed out by this point, both Jarson and Cavan were still slightly conscious.

“You drink rather well, Jarson. Care to have another three bottles of liquor with me?” asked Gerald as he looked at Jarson’s sallow face. As he did so, he also took a peek at Cavan, whose face was now drained of all color.

“You still want to continue drinking? Both you and Jarson have already drunk six bottles of liquor each!” said Juliet, trying to talk some sense into them.

“Drink! We’ll... We’ll continue drinking! Jason! Drink I say-”

Before Cavan could even finish his sentence, he quickly wobbled toward the exit, clearly trying to hold himself back from vomiting in front of everyone.

Eventually managing to make his way to the washroom, Cavan instantly began vomiting as soon as he reached a toilet seat.

He would've never have dreamt that Gerald was this capable of holding his liquor.

Due to him underestimating that, Cavan's entire world was now spinning as his stomach ached like never before.

At some point, he even began vomiting blood! However, due to how drunk he already was, he didn't even register the implications of that.

After quite some time, Cavan could barely feel his legs as fumbled back to the private room. The moment he got to the door, however, he was greeted by the sound of screaming!

Concerned, Cavan immediately pushed the door open to see what was wrong.

To his dismay, the first thing he saw was Jarson sprawled on the ground! Blood and foam were spurting from his mouth and even the whites of his eyes were showing!

"C-call an ambulance! Hurry!" shouted Cavan as he stumbled over, his eyes wide in shock.

Not long after, the wailing of ambulance sirens approached the venue.

With the matter now dealt with, Juliet and Gerald returned to her car.

Now that they were alone, Juliet immediately turned to look at Gerald—who was still looking as fine as ever—before asking in amazement, "You... Are you truly still doing alright...?"

“But of course I am! I’ll let you in on a secret... I’m actually naturally immune to alcohol! The only side effect of me drinking that much is a strong urge to use the washroom!” replied Gerald with a subtle smile on his face.

“How could a man with such an honest-looking face be such a liar!” said Juliet as she couldn’t help but glare at him.

At that moment, Juliet’s phone suddenly began ringing.

Picking the call up, Gerald listened as she made several ‘hmm’ sounds before eventually hanging up, a worried expression now on her face.

“...The call was from my mother who’s just returned from abroad... It seems that she’s somehow found out that I secretly got married without her knowledge!”

Chapter 968

After saying that, Juliet simply frowned before adding, “...You know what? I don’t care anymore. She can just do whatever she wants to, right?”

With that, Juliet drove both of them home.

Upon returning home, both of them were greeted to the sight of a glamorous woman sitting on the sofa.

As soon as she saw Gerald and Juliet, she immediately stood up and pointed at Gerald before saying, “So he’s Gerald? What right does a person like him have to enter the Yowell family?”

The woman who had just insulted Gerald was of course, Juliet’s mother who went by the name of Heidi.

Heidi had been notified about her daughter’s marriage while she was still abroad. The moment she found out that Juliet had gotten married to some wimpy man, she ended up immediately passing out!

When she woke up, however, she instantly booked a flight straight for home. All that led to the current scene.

“Like that has anything to do with you. My marriage with him is a personal matter that doesn’t require your interference!” retorted Juliet.

“Doesn’t require my interference you say? Tell me, Juliet, what exactly goes on in that head of yours? Have you any idea how many marriage-seeking rich young masters I’ve turned down for your sake? Even if you truly wanted to get married without taking me to heart, you shouldn’t have married this kind of man! Do you even understand the shame and humiliation our family will have to endure because of you?!” replied Heidi before tossing a teacup directly toward Gerald.

With a loud shatter, the cup smashed into a million pieces right at Gerald’s feet!

Gerald, however, simply remained silent.

“As for you, Tulip! I heard that you were the one who urged the two to get married in the first place! Just you wait and see how I’m going to deal with you in the future! To think that both of you would actually cause such massive trouble for me while I was abroad looking for a buyer in M Country!”

After saying that, the madwoman immediately stomped her way toward Gerald before giving him a tight slap across his face!

“Why don’t you take a good, long look at yourself in the mirror? Do you honestly think that someone like you is worthy enough to be married into the Yowell family? I’ll say this now so listen closely. If both of you know what’s best for you, then you should get a divorce immediately! Make sure I never see you ever again!” roared Heidi as she stomped up the stairs in a rage while knocking down all the flowerpots—on the stairs—she could see.

While Gerald could’ve easily avoided Heidi’s slap, he had simply been too distracted by something she had said.

As it turned out, Heidi had actually gone to M Country to look for a buyer. Since Gerald was well aware that the Yowells weren't traders, there was no other reason for a rich mistress like her to look for a buyer overseas unless it was regarding the Ginseng King.

Recalling what Quest had told him before, the Yowells were still looking for a buyer at the time though they didn't even know who they could sell it to. In the end, they must've decided that the best course of action was to export the Ginseng King.

Regardless, since Heidi had been the one to go abroad, that must mean that the Ginseng King must be with her.

That was the gist of how Heidi managed to actually land a slap on Gerald's face.

Regardless, when Juliet saw that Gerald still seemed to be in a daze upon returning to their room, she said, "Since she slapped you so hard, I'll be sure to add an extra hundred thousand dollars as compensation when we finally terminate our one-year contract!"

"...Do you honestly think that money means everything?" asked Gerald out of the blue as he raised his head to look at her.

"Is it not? Haha! Didn't you agree to do all this in the first place because of money?" replied Juliet with a hint of contempt in her voice.

Hearing that, Gerald chose not to respond. Instead, he headed to the bathroom outside to wash his face.

As he was washing his face, however, he briefly caught a glimpse of a shadowy figure moving extremely quickly outside the bathroom's window from the corner of his eye.

After training for so long, Gerald knew that he could trust his vigilance. There was definitely someone out there earlier!

Wiping his face dry, Gerald simply looked at the window for a brief moment. Following that, instead of walking out the door, he instead jumped out the bathroom window! Noticing that the shadowy figure was right ahead, he immediately began chasing after the other person.

It was soon evident to Gerald that the unnamed person was someone who was both extremely fast and skilled. After all, no matter how much Gerald increased his speed, the escaping shadow always seemed to maintain a 'safe distance' from him.

The term, 'safe distance,' was used by Gerald to describe the distance from where one would be safe from being killed by others through the use of hidden weapons. The more he thought about it, the more Gerald realized that there was a possibility that the shadowy person was actually more skilled than him.

Eventually, the person stopped moving once he arrived at a boat by a moat. Gerald himself caught up to the shadow seconds later and was finally able to see what the person looked like.

Under the glow of moonlight, the figure appeared to simply be a man with a black robe draped over him. However, the robe itself efficiently covered most of the man's features, leaving only his eyes visible.

Frowning, Gerald then asked, "...Who are you?"

Chapter 969

His eyes stared coldly at the man as he asked the question.

With his keen ears, Gerald was able to hear how the person breathed from where he stood. Based on that alone, Gerald could already tell that this was an extraordinary person.

Since the figure wasn't replying, Gerald was about to consider his next move when all of a sudden, a few flashes of lights flickered before him. The next thing he knew, four other similarly dressed men jumped

out of nowhere and they were now all standing before him!

Just like the person he had initially been chasing after, all four of the new hooded figures seemed to have skills and abilities far higher than what he currently possessed.

'Could it be the Moldells?' Gerald thought to himself.

"There are two reasons why we have called you out today, Gerald!" announced the man who had led Gerald there. From his voice, Gerald could guess that the person under the hood was a somewhat elderly man.

"State them."

"Before that, I hope you're aware that the Crawford family's name has been passed on for many, many years and is widely associated with being distinguished and having great wealth. Know that as the young master of the Crawford family, you've humiliated and ruined the Crawford family's customary moral standards and their way of life by agreeing to become a live-in son-in-law! Therefore, our first reason for calling you out today is to teach you a lesson!"

"So you know my true identity... Based on what you've just said, can I at least confirm if you're from the Moldell family?" asked Gerald.

However, the man didn't reply.

Instead, the man dashed forward and before Gerald could even react, the man was already right in front of him! Immediately after, the man delivered two tight slaps to his face!

Once he recovered, Gerald instantly turned to look at his assailant. However, he was left shocked when he realized that in just a blink of an eye, the old man had already returned to his original position!

Gerald barely had a fighting chance!

In his surprise, Gerald repeated his first question, "...Who... Who are all of you?"

"As for the second reason, I've received an order from our lord to bring you back to see him. However, I am aware that the Ginseng King will be of great benefit to you. Because of that, I'll leave the Mighty Four Kingsmen by your side for now. Do note that they'll take you away once ten days pass, whether you're prepared or not."

"The Mighty Four Kingsmen...?"

"That would be us!"

"During these ten days, all four of you are to stay by Gerald's side and abide to all his orders. Regardless of whether he gets his hands on the Ginseng King or not, once his ten days are up, all of you are to bring him back to our lord!" instructed the old man in black.

"Affirmative!"

Upon hearing that, the old man nodded before turning around. However, before he could leave, Gerald shouted, "Hold it! Who exactly is this lord you speak of?"

Since the corners of Gerald's mouth were already bleeding due to the two slaps he had received earlier, he had asked while cupping his cheeks.

"You'll know who he is once you meet him!" replied the old man before leaving immediately after.

...How very strange. Thinking about it, the strength and abilities of these men far exceeded what even the Moldells were probably capable of. Could there truly be even stronger masters in this world who weren't from the Moldell family?

As Gerald speculated on, he thought about how great it would be if Finnley was by his side now. After all, Finnley would definitely be able to estimate how strong these men truly were!

When Gerald tried questioning the Mighty Four Kingsmen to get further details, all they did was either nod or shake their heads. It was clear that he wasn't going to get any useful information from them, and this made Gerald feel extremely helpless about the entire situation.

Understanding that he would only be able to know more about them once he met their lord, Gerald told them to return to his manor to await further orders. After all, it wouldn't be convenient for him to have them around since he was still living in the Yowell family's mansion.

Speaking of the Yowells, at that moment, Heidi had gathered all of her family members in the Yowell manor's family hall.

Noticing that Gerald wasn't present and that Juliet herself seemed to be looking for him, Heidi then said, "Humph! Well isn't this perfect that he isn't around! Maybe he's already dead somewhere! Wherever he's gone to, don't ever let me see him again! I just feel extremely annoyed and frustrated every time I think about his face! Regardless, I've called all of you here today to announce something extremely important!"

Chapter 970

Heidi then continued, "Throughout my absence, I've been contacting several extremely powerful forces from different countries. As was expected, all of them were very eager to get their hands on the Ginseng King! You should've seen the prices they were offering us for it!"

"But didn't you say that the price wasn't an issue, mom? After all, getting it off our hands should be the priority since all the Ginseng King has brought to our family is trouble! There are already a number of powerful forces keeping a close eye on us because of it! Why are you still contacting so many buyers instead of quickly getting rid of it?" replied Tulip in surprise.

“Pfft! Silly girl... Can’t you see what I’m trying to achieve? Contacting more foreign buyers will definitely be beneficial for our family in the long run! See, once the buyers realize that other forces are also aiming to get their hands on the Ginseng King, all of them will eventually end up fighting for it! With each of the foreign forces being so powerful, the smaller forces in Heavenly City—who are also targeting the herb—will most definitely fail to persist till the end once the foreign forces get involved.”

“To summarize, by involving foreign buyers, the Yowells will essentially—and eventually—force the families in Heavenly City into sieges. Adding the money we’ll get from selling the Ginseng King into the equation, we’ll surely be able to establish our family’s supremacy in Heavenly City in the near future! If everything goes as planned, we’ll definitely succeed in killing two birds with one stone!” explained Heidi.

“I see... I understand your reasoning now! Once the foreign big guns arrive, the smaller forces in the city who are also looking for the Ginseng King will definitely be forced to retreat!” replied Tulip with a nod.

“I’m glad you finally see the bigger picture. Regardless, I’ve decided that the Yowell family will be holding an open auction for the Ginseng King in three days. When the time comes, we’ll simply allow the forces to fight among themselves while the Yowells profit from all of this!” said Heidi, a subtle smile on her face.

Though Tulip’s father was essentially still the head of the Yowell family, Heidi’s position was similar to a dowager’s. Though Tulip’s father wasn’t dead yet, Heidi usually had the final say regarding family matters both big and small.

Heidi, for one, had definitely given it her all this time to be fully in control of matters regarding the Ginseng King. The fact that she had been able to come up with such shrewd ideas proved that this woman was very good at scheming as well.

“Since several of the forces will surely begin gathering here tomorrow once I publicize the auction, both of you aren’t allowed to leave the manor in the next three days. You’re to help me receive our guests instead. Do I make myself clear?” said Heidi as she glared at Juliet.

The sisters simply nodded in response.

Before Heidi could say anything else, however, Tulip suddenly yelled, "Oh! You're back, brother-in-law!"

Hearing that, Heidi immediately glared daggers at Gerald before scowling, "So, the trash is back! Once this matter is done with, I hope you'll disappear from my sight forever!"

After saying that, she turned around to walk upstairs again.

Gerald himself had earlier managed to get back in time to catch Heidi's entire plan.

He honestly felt that this old woman was extremely vicious since she barely sounded guilty for plotting up a plan to get so many powerful forces to fight among themselves. After all, Gerald was aware of how feasible her plan was.

The next day came soon enough, and just as Heidi had said, once news of the open auction for the Ginseng King was made public, chaos was quick to ensue in the entirety of Heavenly City.

After all, it was needless to even talk about the immense economic value of owning the Ginseng King. To think that the herb had been in the hands of the Yowell family this entire time!

Forces both large and small had received the invitation to participate in the open auction. Even several underground forces were already showing up, resulting in all the hotels in Heavenly City getting fully booked.

On that day, the entire city simply came to life like it had never before.

However, just as Gerald and Heidi had anticipated, bloody disputes were soon to follow.

It wasn't even past morning when two local forces got into a terrible fight, resulting in both sides suffering severe losses. Due to that, both the forces found themselves withdrawing from the auction on the very same day they were invited.

Those, however, were only small fries. The two powerhouses that actually mattered in the Heavenly City were the Sven Westmore Group and the Royal Dragon Group.

Sven himself—who was the boss of Sven Westmore Group—had yet to make his appearance up till this point, which led many to begin speculating that Sven must have encountered some kind of mishap. Some wilder accusations even suggested that he was already dead!

As a result, many forces who were initially affiliated to the Sven Westmore Group found themselves eventually submitting to the Royal Dragon Group, the extremely strong and powerful dark horse.

Moving back to the Yowells, they had naturally been very busy seeing that they were the organizers of the event.

For the venue of the event, the Yowells had booked Longstone Mountain Villa which was a large scenic spot in Heavenly City. From the start of the first day, Heidi and her two daughters had spent most of their time there receiving guests from all over the place.

Several locals of Longstone City also came over to join in on the fun, all of them wanting to watch the extremely grand-looking ceremony. After all, nothing similar on this grand a scale had happened in Heavenly City for decades now.

“Aren't there too many people, mom...? It's going to be impossible for us to arrange for all of them to stay in Longstone Mountain Villa! It's simply too crowded already!” complained Tulip.

Tulip had even invited her classmates over to come help them today.

“Have you already forgotten? I kept reminding you that out of all the forces who are attending, we only need to make special arrangements and pay extra attention to eighteen of them! You don’t need to bother about the other forces too much! Speaking of which, just in case you’ve forgotten, please remember to make extra special arrangements for the two major forces in Heavenly City as well. I’m talking about the Sven Westmore Group and also the Royal Dragon Group! After all, the Yowells will still need to deal with them once the matter is over. Because of that, we absolutely cannot afford to offend them at all!” warned Heidi as she turned to look at Tulip.

Chapter 971

“I got it, mom. Still, isn’t the Royal Dragon Group’s boss rather mysterious? After all, he was able to rise up the ranks in Heavenly City so quickly! The boss must be extremely extraordinary! Also, from what I’ve heard, he’s been unwilling to participate in many occasions... It makes me wonder if such a powerful figure would actually want to participate in our family’s event in the first place!” replied Tulip.

“Upon returning to the country, I’ve heard matters regarding the Royal Dragon Group as well. Rumors say that the Royal Dragon Group is packed with extremely fierce and tough subordinates. They also say that the boss of the group is a very young man with extremely vague origins! Would you happen to know anything more about them, mom?” asked Juliet who had also been curious for a while now.

After all, to think that the boss of the Royal Dragon Group was actually at the same age that she was! Juliet was also greatly interested in finding out what he actually looked like, as well as how he had acquired such great abilities to the point where people actually willingly submitted to him.

It certainly wasn’t out of the ordinary for girls to admire such capable people, and Juliet was no exception to that.

“I’m not too familiar with him either... While the Yowells did send someone over to the Royal Dragon Group to congratulate him during their opening ceremony, in the end, the boss himself didn’t participate in his own opening ceremony!”

“Regardless, I’m certain that he’ll attend our auction this time. After all, very few people are able to resist the allure of the Ginseng King. Once the Royal Dragon Group’s boss has arrived, I want both of you to be on your best behavior! You know, if he’s interested in either of you, then the Yowells truly will be

the overlords of Heavenly City in the future! The Westleys can just beat it by then!” replied Heidi with a smile as she crossed her arms.

“I’m already married, mom!” grumbled Juliet as she frowned slightly.

“Nonsense! What sort of marriage even is that? Don’t think I’m unaware of what you’re trying to do by marrying such a wimpy guy! I’m telling you ahead of time that what you’re doing is useless! Also, the divorce happens as soon as the event is over! Stop being an embarrassment to the family!” growled Heidi as her face turned slightly red in anger.

Before she could continue bad-mouthing Gerald, a voice called out, “Our teacher is actually pretty good, Aunt Sachs! He was the one who saved Tulip, after all!”

Turning to look at the owner of the voice, it turned out to be Specky as he and Tulip’s other friends backed Gerald up.

“You’re all just kids, so what would you know? Love and gratitude are two completely different matters you know?” replied Heidi.

At that moment, one of Tulip’s classmates shouted, “You’re here, teacher!”

True to the student’s words, Gerald was slowly walking over to the group of people. He had earlier been making arrangements for the guestrooms after being instructed by Juliet to do so. Now that he was done, he had decided to come over.

“I guess you’ve all come over to have fun since the university’s closed for the next few days,” replied Gerald as he smiled with a subtle nod.

“That’s right, teacher!” said Specky and a few others as they all laughed.

“Pfft! What utter trash! Trying to put on airs here! Just have a good look at yourself! If it wasn’t for Juliet, would you even be able to witness such an event with your own eyes?!” scowled Heidi as she poked Gerald’s chest with a finger.

Heidi was really trying to make it a point that she was extremely upset with her daughter’s decision to marry this wimp. After all, she had made it clear to Juliet before that her son-in-law had to at least be a reputable figure!

Just as she was thinking about that, Heidi heard a female voice saying, “Hello, Madam Sachs!”

Facing the direction of the voice, everyone present saw a group of people walking over to them. The leader was a beautiful, long-haired woman who was dressed in a professional suit.

Her group seemed to have attracted quite a bit of attention by the time they finally stood before Heidi.

“Oh, it’s you, Miss Takena Meiko! I apologize for not greeting you earlier!” replied Heidi with an instant change in mood as she smiled at Meiko.

“It’s alright, Madam Sachs! You seemed to be busy earlier so I didn’t want to disturb!” said Meiko—with her rather inarticulate attempt at speaking the local dialect—as she glanced at Gerald. After looking at the earlier reprimanded man for a brief moment, she nodded toward him before smiling subtly.

The Japanese woman’s smile was truly beautiful. After all, whenever she did so, her lovely eyes would curve into the shape of two breath-taking crescent moons that simply gave off a warm and pleasant vibe.

“My apologies! I was simply lecturing one of my naïve servants! You’re not getting in the way of anything at all! Still, you must be exhausted from your journey all the way from Japan! I’ll immediately arrange for a guestroom for you to rest in!” replied Heidi rather awkwardly.

“A servant? I remember you mentioning something about a son-in-law, however...” said Meiko as she fiddled with her hair.

Chapter 972

“You must’ve heard wrong then! It’s impossible that he could be my son-in-law!” replied Heidi instantaneously as she peeked at the six young Japanese men who were standing silently behind Meiko. All of them had indifferent expressions etched on their faces.

Gerald himself was already looking at the six subordinates Meiko had brought along with her. Sensing their powerful auras, Gerald could tell that all six of them were masters at their craft. This Japanese woman certainly wasn’t an ordinary person to be able to have such powerful guards by her side!

Meanwhile, a large group of people began heading up from below the mountain villa. While several other forces had also been making their way up the mountain road, as soon as they noticed the ascending group behind them, the other forces immediately stood on both sides of the road to make way for them.

“Madam! Those from the Royal Dragon Group are here!” exclaimed Heidi’s butler who had been standing by her side this entire time.

Hearing that, Heidi instantly prepared her most respectful attitude before announcing, “Welcome, Royal Dragon Group!”

By then, even Juliet and Tulip were already looking at the swiftly approaching group. After all, they both wanted to see what the young boss of the Royal Dragon Group looked like.

Even Meiko—who was initially already walking away with her guards—stopped in her tracks and turned around.

“What is it, Miss Meiko?” asked one of her guards.

“I’ve heard plenty about the Royal Dragon Group of Heavenly City... They’re so powerful that they managed to conquer half of Heavenly City in less than a month! I believe that getting acquainted with their boss will definitely be beneficial to me in the future!” replied Meiko with a smile as she looked at the group of people who had just stopped in front of Heidi.

“Greetings, Madam Sachs! I go by Drake and this here is Whistler! Both of us have been sent to be representatives of the Royal Dragon Group!”

With Gerald’s help, over thirty percent of Drake’s injuries had already been healed. Though fighting was definitely not possible yet, Drake could already resume doing normal activities.

“The Yowell family is already very grateful that the Royal Dragon Group took the time to even attend our event! Your attendance is very much appreciated. I’ll get someone to arrange a guest room for you immediately! Speaking of which, about the Royal Dragon Group’s...?” said Heidi as she smiled before looking around. It was evident that she wanted to ask about their boss.

“Chairman Crawford is currently busy. However, he will definitely come albeit a bit late!” replied Drake.

“I see! So his last name is Crawford... Well, it would definitely be for the best if he came!” said Heidi.

The moment her gaze fell upon Gerald, however, her expression immediately changed as she yelled, “What are you still standing there in a daze for? Hurry up and arrange the guestrooms for the VIPs from the Royal Dragon Group and the Takena family already!”

“Roger!” replied Gerald with a subtle nod.

After looking at both Drake and Whistler, he began leading both groups to their respective guestrooms.

“Seriously! The more I look at him the more anxious I get! How is someone like him even still alive when there are so many other outstanding people on this planet! What more, his last name is Crawford as

well so why's there such a massive difference between him and the other party?" scoffed Heidi.

Juliet herself didn't say anything to that. After all, she had deliberately chosen to marry a man who was as useless as Gerald.

Speaking of Gerald, once he had arranged the accommodations for Drake and his men, he quickly gave them new instructions.

A change of plans was definitely needed since he could never have anticipated the participation of so many powerful forces and masters due to Heidi's actions. With how chaotic things were getting, Gerald simply told his men to stand down for the moment until he gave further instructions.

After relaying that, Gerald immediately arranged for Meiko's accommodation next.

"This will be your guest room, Miss Meiko. Service staff will always be present as soon as you step out of your room, so do seek them out if you have any particular requests!" explained Gerald with a smile.

Just as he was about to leave, however, Meiko suddenly called out, "Hold on a moment, sir!"

"Is there anything else I could help you with?"

"Yes, I was wondering if you could do me a favor..." said Meiko as she bowed slightly before Gerald.

"A favor?"

Chapter 973

"Yes... If possible, I'd like you to pass on this message—along with my business card—on my behalf to those from the Royal Dragon Group... 'The Takena family would love to have the opportunity to meet up and have a meal with Crawford-san from the Royal Dragon Group. Do you accept?' I do hope that you'll convey this message to them for me!" explained Meiko as she bowed once more while holding out her

business card.

After taking it from her, Gerald looked at her card while thinking about how remarkable and well-educated this demure lady was.

However, Gerald was well aware that this probably had to do with how strict Japanese culture was. Regardless, he still believed that as an individual, Meiko was no simple person.

The fact that he didn't know what kind of family the Takenas were only served to increase his suspicions.

After thinking about it for a moment, Gerald nodded before replying, "Alright, I'll pass the message to them for you, Miss Meiko. Enjoy your stay!"

With that, Gerald nodded at her before leaving.

Once he was back outside, he saw that Heidi was still waiting in front of the mountains. This struck him as odd since the representatives for all eighteen of the powerful forces had already arrived earlier. Gerald would know since he was the one who had helped all of them settle down.

Who was she still waiting for then?

"Everyone's already here, mom... Shouldn't we leave now?" asked Tulip.

"And who was it that said that? There's one more mysterious guest who has yet to make their appearance! I have to personally receive this guest, you know?" replied Heidi with a smile as she continued looking down the mountain.

"Oh? We still have one more guest? And here I thought that the most luxurious villa within the mountain villa was reserved for us! Could that be for the mysterious guest instead?" asked Tulip again.

“Bingo! I’m thankful to have such a smart daughter!” replied Heidi with a triumphant smile on her face.

“From what we’ve seen, the guests who are already here are all extremely wealthy and distinguished! Not only that, many of the famous foreigners present are known for their power! Is there truly someone else who is even more powerful compared to the people we’ve seen today?” questioned Juliet next.

“But of course! There will always be more famous and powerful people out there! Speaking of our current guests, quite frankly, none of them are even close to comparing to how strong this noble family is!”

“I was only able to meet this person by chance when I was still in M Country. She was both elegant and gentle, the perfect oriental woman one could say! While she’s only about your age, Juliet, I can safely say that your temperance can’t even compare to hers, even after a billion years! If it wasn’t for her distinguished identity, I would’ve already asked her to become my sworn sister!” explained Heidi.

“Is that so?” replied Juliet slightly enviously.

“There’s no need for you to feel so dissatisfied... Regardless, I happened to mention the Ginseng King to her... Who would’ve thought that she would immediately express interest in buying it! She should be here any moment now!” said Heidi.

While waiting, Heidi continued telling her daughters more about the mysterious guest. In short, while she didn’t know where the mysterious guest came from, she did know that the young woman was exceptionally rich.

She was honestly the main reason why Heidi was able to gather so much confidence to host such a major event in the first place.

Gerald, on the other hand, simply listened in to their conversation. The more he listened to her talking, however, the more Gerald felt that Heidi was an extremely snobbish and arrogant woman.

Shortly after, several luxury cars came to a stop at the foot of the mountain. After a group of solemn and respectful-looking bodyguards cleared the way, two women stepped out of a car.

The woman taking the lead seemed to have an excellent temperament and she looked to be around the age of twenty-five. The younger woman, on the other hand, looked to be around twenty-two.

Locking arms, both of them slowly began ascending the mountain as Heidi laughed excitedly before saying, "She's here!"

Seeing Heidi so excited, Gerald and the two sisters turned to look at the young women who were slowly getting closer.

Squinting her eyes slightly, Juliet was instantly filled with awe the moment she saw how beautiful and elegant the woman walking toward them was.

Gerald himself found his eyelids twitching the second he realized who those two women were.

"...Lyra? Bea?" muttered Gerald to himself as he suppressed his urge to shout in shock.

There was no doubt about it. The two women were none other than his fiancée, Lyra, and Bea, his cousin sister!

The men surrounding them were naturally from the Crawford family as well.

It had already been over half a year since they last met and Gerald couldn't deny that he had frequently missed and thought about his family throughout that period.

He really hadn't expected that he would be able to meet them out of the blue and here of all places!

Chapter 974

Though Gerald was considerably excited, he quickly calmed himself down.

While Gerald knew that his family had finally gained some respite after his disappearance so long ago, he was also well aware that he couldn't just rush reconciling with the Crawfords just yet.

His thought process was that once news about the matter got out to the public, then all his effort and hard work in the past few months would go to waste. The foundation that he had so painstakingly established would easily be wiped out by the Moldells once that happened!

Understanding that, he knew that he absolutely couldn't reconcile with his family yet!

After glancing at Bea and Lyra one final time, he turned around and instantly left the scene.

"You've finally arrived, Lyra! I've been waiting for you to arrive!" said Heidi excitedly.

"You must've waited for a long time!" replied Lyra with a subtle smile on her face.

Now that Lyra was standing before them, Juliet herself was starting to feel overshadowed upon getting a closer look at the girl who was currently exchanging conventional greetings with her mother.

As they were doing so, however, Lyra caught a glimpse of a figure entering another room. For some odd reason, her heart skipped a beat the moment she saw him!

"Is something the matter, sister-in-law?" asked Bea.

“...No... Nothing at all...” replied Lyra as she quickly shook her head.

Lyra was here today since she had heard about how important the Ginseng King was from Dylan. From what her father had told her, the herb was extremely valuable and difficult to obtain. Even the Crawfords had apparently sought out for it once, though they were never actually able to find it.

As for how Lyra got to know Heidi, she and Bea had met her while they were attending an economic management class in M Country. Since Lyra and Bea were also there to manage some of their assets in that country, they had bumped into Heidi sometime then, which resulted in Lyra eventually finding out that the Ginseng King was in her hands.

The moment she found out about it, Lyra immediately reported the matter to Dylan. Following that, Dylan barely hesitated as he ordered her to buy the Ginseng King off Heidi’s hands, no matter the costs.

All that eventually led to the events of today.

Soon after, night came, and excluding the most luxurious villa within Longstone Mountain Villa, all the other rooms were filled with joyous singing and dancing.

Almost everyone was drinking and celebrating the night away since the open auction had allowed people from all walks of life to gather in one place.

Meanwhile, Bea—who had just finished her bath—entered Lyra’s room before asking, “What on earth could that Heidi Sachs be thinking...? Why would she go this far when all she’s hosting is an open auction? If it’s money she yearns for, then I’ll just give her a blank cheque and tell her to fill in any amount she wants!”

Hearing Bea’s complaint, Lyra—who was wearing a pastel nightgown as she dried her hair—simply smiled before replying, “You should know that by doing so, you’re only going to scare her away! After all, anyone would immediately wonder if you were up to no good if you simply told them that so casually before handing them a blank cheque!”

“...That... makes sense...”

After that, both of them fell silent for a while as Lyra looked around while cupping a hand over her cheek.

Though neither of them noticed it, a figure was eavesdropping on them right outside their villa’s window.

“Speaking of which, Sister-in-law, I’ve seen you occasionally sighing ever since we got here... Are you sure nothing is troubling you?” asked Bea.

“...Well, earlier when we just arrived, I noticed a figure that looked very similar to your brother...” explained Lyra as she felt her eyes water slightly.

“Ah... You’re missing my cousin again, aren’t you...?” replied Bea with a saddened tone.

“It’s already been over half a year yet there’s still no news about Gerald at all... We don’t even know whether he’s dead or alive...” mumbled Lyra as she slowly covered her entire face, bursting into tears shortly after.

Also in tears now, Bea replied, “Not to worry, sister-in-law... My cousin is a good man so the heavens will always keep him out of harm’s way! He’ll definitely be fine! What more, if the Moldells have truly captured him, then their family would certainly not keep mum about it, right?”

After saying that, Bea pulled Lyra close to her and the two sisters hugged each other tightly.

Upon seeing this, the figure outside found himself clenching his fists tightly as well.

Chapter 975

Gerald himself was well aware of why Heidi hosted the open auction in the first place.

Putting it simply, she had made sure to invite as many large and powerful forces that she could in hopes that they would eventually fight each other to the death.

That way, once everyone else was battered at the end of the day, the Yowells would be the only ones left standing. In other words, not only would they get lots of money, but they would also be placed at an extremely advantageous position!

Of course, Lyra and Bea had no idea about all this and simply assumed that it was an over the top auction.

Surprisingly, they had become easy targets for Heidi to drag into this mess due to how mysterious both of them were.

“Just why the hell did both of you have to get involved in something so complicated...?” grumbled Gerald.

Naturally, he was the one who had been spying on them this entire time. As Gerald looked at the two fresh corpses at his feet, he couldn't help but worry even more for the girls' safety.

Gerald knew that Lyra had planned to be low-key this time around from the moment he saw how few men she had actually brought along with her. The fact that there were so few people guarding her only served to increase Gerald's unease. It was the reason he was so actively protecting and keeping watch over the girls now.

As for the two dead bodies at his feet, Gerald still couldn't guess who they worked for. Regardless, both of them had clearly been sent over to investigate the girls and Gerald just so happened to run into them while coming over to spy on Lyra and Bea himself.

After dealing with them, Gerald did consider ordering the Mighty Four Kingsmen to keep watch over the girls. After all, the black-robed old man had ordered them to follow everything Gerald instructed them to.

However, in the end, Gerald chose not to since he knew he wouldn't be able to rest easy unless he was the one keeping an eye on them. Sitting outside their window, he knew all he could do for now was continue listening in to their conversations.

'I've broken way too many hearts since my disappearance back then... However, it's not like I have a choice since I can't go home yet.... I feel like I've let Lyra down the most though, since she still considers me to be her fiancé after all this time...'

'I'm sorry, but it really is impossible for me to be with you!' Gerald thought to himself.

The hours then passed by and eventually, Bea returned to her own room to rest. Lyra herself slowly cried herself to sleep.

In the dead of night, once he knew Lyra was fast asleep, Gerald silently snuck into the room. Under the moonlight, Gerald could still see traces of tears on Lyra's sleeping face.

Gently using a finger to wipe one final tear off the corner of her eye, he then blanketed her as he sat by her bedside.

"...Gerald... I've been... determined to be your wife ever since I was a child... Please... Just... please show yourself already... Please come home..." muttered Lyra in her sleep.

"...Home? I wonder when I'll finally be able to return home myself..." replied Gerald in a soft tone, a bitter smile on his face.

'I appreciate your love toward me Lyra... Though we can't be together, I swear on my life that I'll never

allow harm to ever befall you!' Gerald thought to himself as he gently caressed her forehead with the back of his hand.

It was at that moment when Gerald heard Lyra's room's door opening slowly.

As Gerald immediately turned to look at the door, Gerald realized that it was too late to even think about escaping now. After all, the girl who had just entered was now staring right at him.

Understandably shocked, the extremely startled girl was just about to scream when the dark figure sitting on Lyra's bed instantly made a dash toward her, covering the girl's mouth!

"There's no need to scream, Bea! It's me!" whispered Gerald as soon as he covered her mouth.

Bea recognized that voice anywhere and as soon as she heard it, her eyes immediately widened.

"Keep it down, we'll talk outside..." added Gerald as he released his hand over her mouth and pulled the girl out of Lyra's room.

"C-cousin!" cried out Bea as she leaped into his arms as soon as they were outside. She was currently experiencing a cocktail of positive emotions, so much so in fact, that she was even shaking slightly in her exhilaration.

"Is... Is this really you, cousin? Am I dreaming?" asked Bea as tears ran down her cheeks.

Gerald could feel how tightly Bea was hugging onto him. It was almost as if she was afraid to let go, thinking that the dream would end once she did.

Chapter 976

"...You're not dreaming... I really am here!" replied Gerald with a smile as he wiped the tears off Bea's face.

“Where have you been in the past six months, cousin...? You seem to be much stronger and tanner now... If this really isn’t a dream, then I... I... I don’t know, I’m just so happy to finally be able to see you again!” sobbed Bea.

“It’s a long story... I’ll tell you all about it in the future. For now, you just need to know that I’m still perfectly fine!” replied Gerald as he felt his eyes going slightly red.

“Speaking of which, how are my parents doing...?” added Gerald.

“Well, it isn’t uncommon for aunt to cry all day long these days... Uncle himself seems to look much older than he used to before your disappearance... Both of them simply spend most of their time worrying about you...!”

“...I see. And what about my sister?”

“She’s... grown to have a very short fuse now... While she used to be very kind to her subordinates, from the day you went missing, she’d occasionally beat them up over very small matters! Nothing seems to please her anymore, and she orders her subordinates to search for you on a daily basis!” replied Bea.

Hearing that, Gerald could feel tears trickling down his cheeks.

Upon seeing that, Bea then continued, “...Still, it’s great that you’re finally back now, cousin... I’m sure that everyone from your family will be overjoyed once they find out about it, especially Lyra! You know, she’s constantly been missing and thinking about you this entire time... She’s also the one in charge of shouldering all our family’s affairs now... The poor girl is just beyond tired and exhausted now...”

“However, she keeps insisting that she be the one to take good care of the family! She’s been positive that you’ll make your return one day now here you are! She’ll definitely be extremely happy once she finds out about all this! In fact, I should probably call her over now! Oh, and I should call uncle as well!” added Bea, feeling so excited that she wasn’t even sure what to do first.

“...Hold on a moment, Bea. ...Please understand that I’m only meeting you now since I couldn’t hold myself back anymore... Bea, please promise me that you won’t tell anybody about what happened tonight... Nobody should find out that we ever met,” said Gerald as he wiped his tears away.

“...Huh? ...Why not, cousin?” asked Bea, clearly confused.

“Because I’m currently at a critical point in my battle with Kort... After killing Kort’s third son and ceasing his power in the Salford Province, everything will come crumbling down should my whereabouts or status be exposed... By then, not only will my family suffer a massive blow, but I probably won’t be able to make it out alive either... Do you understand, Bea?” explained Gerald.

“...W-what? You killed Jett?” replied Bea as she cupped her mouth in shock.

“B-but I heard that Jett was kidnapped by a mysterious master! From what I know, he’s still considered to be missing! After all, the Moldells have frantically been trying to locate him to the point of insanity since the day he disappeared! They just can’t seem to find clues about his whereabouts anywhere!” said Bea, now more surprised than anything.

“Well, I made sure that not even a single strand of his hair remained once I was done with him... He died a very clean death, so I highly doubt that the Moldells will ever be able to locate him!” replied Gerald with a bitter smile on his face.

“How exactly did you kill him, cousin...? Even the top masters in our family are no match of Jett’s subordinates, let alone Jett himself!”

“Just know that Jett wasn’t an actual threat to me. Regardless, I was serious about making the promise. Nobody should ever know that you saw me, understand? Also, please bear in mind that the auction you’re participating in is extremely dangerous so you’ll have to be alert at all times. If you sense anything unusual, notify me about it as soon as possible. I’ll secretly be assisting and protecting both of you throughout your stay here,” replied Gerald as he hugged Bea tightly.

Nodding with a heavy heart, Bea then said, "...Alright, I promise. Regardless, I'm just so happy to know that you're still doing fine!"

"Silly girl... Speaking of which, I'm currently the chairman of the Royal Dragon Group and I'm after the Ginseng King as well. I need your help getting the herb for me once the auctioning begins! It'll be more useful in my hands rather than my family's anyway!"

"Not a problem, cousin! Also... While I'll definitely keep our promise, could I please tell Lyra about our meeting? After all, I spend a lot of time daily with her and I simply can't bear looking at her so upset as she thinks about you day in and day out!"

"I'm sorry, Bea, but you can't. I'll meet her when the time is right so please keep the matter a secret until then!" instructed Gerald.

"...I understand-"

"Shh!"

Before Bea could even finish her sentence, Gerald had placed a finger over his lips as he gestured for her to remain silent as well.

"Someone's coming. Don't say a word!" whispered Gerald as he frowned.

Frightened, Bea did as she was told.

Gerald himself sprinted quietly in the shadows toward the direction of the sound, much to Bea's surprise.

Once he was outside, he saw what seemed to be a masked man donning black clothes slowly

approaching the villa.

Looking at the ground, Gerald noticed a few twigs at his feet and purposely stepped on them. The moment the man in black heard the sound of snapping twigs, he immediately dashed away from the villa with extreme speed!

'How skillful! It seems that there truly are no ordinary people participating in this event!' Gerald thought to himself as he slid on his mask before chasing after the man.

Chapter 977

Under the moonlight, Gerald could see the man running faster and faster on the grassy and leaf-covered ground, leaving a trail of rustling noises behind him.

The gentle rustling signified how light the man's steps were, and he honestly looked like he was almost gliding across the grass rather than running over it.

While Gerald had to admit that the man in black's skill was top-notch, there was still a big gap between that man's and his.

'You're still trying to escape...?' Gerald thought to himself as he let out a tiny sneer.

Gerald then kicked a branch off the ground with the tip of his shoe and, with extreme precision, he flicked it with his finger, sending it flying toward the running man as though Gerald had just fired an arrow!

It wasn't long before the branch connected with the man's back, creating a loud 'thud'! The impact of the branch was so great that the man in black found himself rolling on the ground several times till he eventually rolled down the mountain slope!

To Gerald's surprise, when he went over to inspect the rightfully injured man, the man in black was nowhere to be seen! No traces of him ever being there were left behind either!

'How strange... How could he have just simply vanished into thin air?'

He could only frown at his own carelessness as he continued searching around the area. After a while, Gerald realized that there truly was nothing left behind so he silently left the area.

Elsewhere, a hotel room's door squeaked open as a figure staggered in before collapsing in the bathroom.

Blood was flowing out of the person's arm as they finally removed their mask, revealing the person's beautiful face and long, black hair. Her dark hair honestly made her face look all the more paler.

'How truly amazing!' The woman thought to herself as she gasped to catch her breath before getting some gauze and beginning to wrap her wound up.

In just the blink of an eye, the third day came and it was finally time for the open auction to begin.

Though things had appeared calm on the surface in the past few days, it was evident that the peace was only a façade.

After all, throughout the three days, several of the forces had been busy engaging in countless secret battles and rivalries.

From assaults to kidnapping incidents, anyone who seemed like a competitor to be worried about was dealt with swiftly.

The biggest danger, of course, came from the major forces who had no issues with going on killing sprees.

Due to their honorary receptions, Lyra and many others were just sitting ducks in this event. However, due to Gerald's protection, he managed to foil all of their plans, which included both kidnapping and assault attempts.

Things definitely weren't as fine and dandy as they appeared. However, on the day of the open auction, it was as though nothing had ever taken place under the peaceful façade.

In fact, all the major forces appeared to be beaming with joy as they brought their men over to participate in the auction.

Apart from the mysterious Lyra, the Takena family and Thunderous Dragon Inc. from the north of M Country seemed to have the strongest reputations and power among everyone else.

As for the layout of the auction site, it was set in the open-air front yard of the mountain villa. A large stage had been set up there and rows upon rows of seats had been prepared for the guests.

Though the Yowells themselves were the organizers of the event, they weren't qualified to sit on the platform. Instead, those from that family were all seated on the row of seats right below the stage.

The eighteen strongest forces were all seated up front, and the remaining forces simply sat behind them.

Aside from the bidders themselves, tens of thousands of onlookers were also present. The crowd of people stood around the bidders and it was honestly extremely lively then.

As Heidi—who was wearing a formal dress—delivered a speech for the auction on stage, Tulip called out to her classmates, “Hey! Specky! Nicole! Over here! I reserved some seats for you!”

Hearing that, the two and a few others quickly went to where Tulip was.

They made sure to greet their teacher as well as they passed by him. As a member of the Yowell family, Gerald naturally had to attend the event today. However, he simply chose to sit at a corner.

“Are you really going to continue spending the rest of your life with that guy, Juliet...?”

The question had come from one of Juliet’s many friends whom she had invited over.

Chapter 978

The girls themselves were sitting beside Juliet as they continued staring at Gerald who hadn’t moved from his corner.

“That’s right! Sure, you broke up with that previous guy and that’s honestly fine! However, you really don’t need to make yourself suffer by being with this one! I mean, just look at all the powerful and reputable figures who are here today! You know, I’ve also noticed that several of the handsome men here have already taken interest in you!”

“Yeah! So why not take the opportunity to finally get rid of him today so that you can start seeking out your true happiness again!”

Listening to her friends trying to persuade her, Juliet herself began thinking about it.

Honestly, if her friends had persuaded her on any other day, Juliet knew that her decision to continue on with the fake marriage wouldn’t falter in the least. After all, as the name suggested, the marriage was only for show and Juliet was well aware of that.

However, things were different today. After all, rich, young men from all over the world—with temperaments that far exceeded her ex-boyfriend’s—were currently present.

A person’s circle of friends determined their horizons, and in the past, Juliet used to think that her circle of friends was already large enough. Now, however, she finally realized and came to terms that she had been a person with a narrow view this entire time.

As a result, Juliet was now gripping onto her skirt tightly.

She regretted it. She regretted her own wilfulness. She regretted getting together with Gerald as well. Even though it was simply a fake marriage, she still utterly regretted her actions.

“You know, I think that Mr. Lockhart over there is a pretty good catch. Just look at how he speaks and behaves! Between you and me, he’s secretly been sneaking peeks at you this entire time! I really think that he’s fallen for you! So please come to your senses and seize this opportunity to divorce Gerald already! It’s high time you start seeking your own happiness again!”

While Juliet’s friends continued persuading her, one of them sighed before saying, “...Alright, if you’re too embarrassed to bring this up with Gerald, then I’ll go talk to him about it on your behalf! That way, both of you can get divorced tomorrow then! How about it?”

Since Juliet didn’t seem to disagree with it, her friends took her silence as consent for them to do so.

“That’s great! I’ll go over and tell him right this instant!” said the same girl from before as her other friends smiled with glee, happy that Juliet was finally coming to her senses.

Seconds later, Gerald looked up as Juliet’s friend walked toward him and said, “Hey! There’s something I need to tell you, Gerald Crawford!”

“Go on.”

“Do you honestly think you’re worthy of being with Juliet? Hah! Just have a good long look in the mirror! How could you possibly ever compare to a person like Mr. Lockhart over there? Look, Juliet already regrets marrying you so she told me that she wanted to divorce you tomorrow! Since she’s said that, what’s your response? Are you going to continue pestering her?” explained Juliet’s friend extremely bluntly.

Hearing that, Gerald frowned slightly before smiling.

“A divorce, you say? Sure! I guess I have no choice but to agree!”

Gerald had only agreed to get married to Juliet since he had his eyes on the Ginseng King. If he managed to get his hands on it today, then staying married to her was pointless anyway.

“Well that was straightforward. Haha! I’m glad you’re at least aware of your own status! Fine then!” said Juliet’s friend as she smiled contemptuously before returning to Juliet’s side to tell her the good news.

After hearing that he had agreed, Juliet simply began straightening her hair as her gaze fell upon Mr. Lockhart’s back.

The man had been sitting in the front row this entire time, and Juliet knew little about him. However, she did know that he was extremely popular. From what she had heard, Mr. Lockhart was also the son of a wealthy businessman from Myanmar. What more, he had already established a cooperative alliance with the Royal Dragon Group in Heavenly City!

If she was truly able to end up together with him, then it would certainly spell the best outcome for both herself and the future of her family in Heavenly City!

As Juliet continued thinking about it, Tulip—who had been sitting with her friends—suddenly said in a rather angry tone, “Humph! Why are they here as well? I feel disgusted from just looking at them!”

Those who heard her remark instantly turned to look at who could’ve possibly made Tulip so annoyed.

As it turned out, it was a young man who had brought along several young women with him.

The man himself was none other than Quinlan from Talgo Town. As for the three other females, one of them was Marjorie while the other two were lecturers from the biology department.

While Tulip was angered by their presence, Nicole immediately said, “Keep it down, Tulip! I think Quinlan’s here with his father today! Since his father works for the Royal Dragon Group, you better not let them hear you!”

Hearing that, Tulip could only silently hold her rage in.

“Regardless, Miss Marjorie seems to have gotten together with Mr. Quinlan, hasn’t she?” asked one of the girls.

“Indeed! You know, someone saw both of them holding hands while walking around campus! Speaking of Miss Marjorie, I’ve heard other interesting things about her as well! Haha! It’s about her and Mr. Gerald!” replied Nicole as she lowered her voice.

“Oh? What’s the scoop?” asked Tulip and the others, their interest clearly piqued.

Chapter 979

“Well, from what I’ve heard, Miss Marjorie seemed to be very interested in Mr. Gerald when Mr. Quinlan and him first came to the university. However, Miss Marjorie instantly had a lot of interest in Mr. Quinlan next, the moment she found out about his background! As a result, she’s been treating Mr. Gerald like a complete stranger since then!” explained Nicole.

“Hah! What an evil woman! What’s so good about her anyway?” grumbled Tulip, dissatisfied,

Marjorie and Quinlan themselves walked past the group—hand in hand—without greeting Tulip and the others. After all, they were here as guests today instead of being their lecturers.

As they continued walking on, Marjorie noticed Gerald who was still sitting in the same corner.

When she first found out that Gerald had gotten married to the eldest young lady of the Yowell family some time ago, Marjorie had felt extremely anxious about it. However, she soon calmed herself when she realized that he was only a live-in son-in-law.

Shaking her head with a wry smile on her face, Marjorie then turned to look away from him as she and Quinlan walked on. She wasn't obligated to greet the Yowell's live-in son-in-law on a day like this anyway.

It wasn't long before everyone was seated and the auction began proceeding in an orderly manner.

The moment the Ginseng King made its appearance, a small spike of excitement could be detected from the audience as everyone's eyes lit up while looking at the legendary herb that was being displayed inside a glass cabinet.

Gerald himself couldn't help but take several glances at the Ginseng King.

'The reiki of the Ginseng King is so compelling... It's clear from a single glance that it truly has the ability to strengthen and renew a person's body!' Gerald thought to himself before sighing.

By then, Gerald was starting to get both anxious and impatient. He wasn't alone either.

Like everyone else, Gerald truly wished that he could just grab the Ginseng King now and bring it home with him.

"The Ginseng King is a priceless gem. Regardless of how expensive it is, I, Taito Mahone, am going to be the one to take it back with me today! Anyone who decides to go against that will immediately signify that you refuse to give me any face!" shouted a tanned, middle-aged man out of the blue.

“Oh my! What a coincidence! It just so happens that I’m going to be taking it back with me instead!” retorted another force.

“Are you challenging me? Do you believe that I have the ability to make sure that you won’t be able to leave Heavenly City alive?”

“Sounds rather unlikely to me!”

As both forces continued quarreling, a fight seemed to be imminent.

However, before anything else could happen, a young man who appeared to have come from M Country stepped onto the stage before saying, “Aren’t both of you being too impatient, sirs? Let’s be real here, everyone sitting in the front row is probably filthy rich. Because of that, no matter how high we bid for the Ginseng King, in the end, it’ll still be completely useless. Therefore, it’s useless for both of you to start fighting now!”

Since the young man was speaking in English, his verbal translator explained what he was saying word by word.

“Hah! Who do you even think you are, blue-eyed boy? What do you suggest we should do then?” yelled Mahone in return.

“Personally, I say all the strong forces should just fight it out. After all, since money can’t be used as a standard to get what we want, then fighting is our second best option! The last man standing gets the Ginseng King! Clean and simple!” replied the young man with a smile.

“A brawl? Do you honestly think that a young lad like you is worthy enough to be my opponent? If we’re going all out, then none of you will be able to win against me, the great Mahone! Get down from the stage, right this instant then, young man from M Country!” yelled Mahone coldly.

“What did you say?” said the young man as he locked his gaze onto Mahone, his blue eyes as sharp as an eagle’s. They seemed to bear great meaning behind them.

It was only a second later when Mahone’s face turned pale and cold sweat began pouring out his forehead. His eyes went dull next and all of a sudden, the arrogant man knelt with a loud ‘thud’!

“B-boss!” shouted all of Mahone’s subordinates at the same time, utterly stunned.

Mahone’s expression, however, barely even changed. It was almost as though the man had been possessed.

As was expected, that scene instantly created a massive uproar among the crowd.

“What?! Taito Mahone, the person infamously known for his fierceness actually knelt after receiving a single stare from that young man?!”

“Actually, wait! Don’t any of you realize that there’s something clearly unusual about that young man from M Country? From the look in his eyes alone earlier, it almost seemed like his gaze could pierce through a person’s soul!”

Chapter 980

“Could that person be a practitioner of sorcery? Isn’t that a little too evil?”

As the people in the crowd continued discussing the situation, the young man simply glanced at everyone below stage as he said, “So, what does everyone else think about my proposal? After all, the best things in the world should naturally belong to the strongest, right?”

After all that had happened, several of the big bosses were now too frightened to speak up.

While the bosses momentarily remained silent, someone from the crowd said, “...That young man goes

by the name of Marco Thunder! He's from Thunderous Dragon Inc. and just as the rumors had stated, Mr. Thunder truly is an extraordinary person! It's really no wonder at this point how Thunderous Dragon Inc. managed to dominate so many strong underground forces! How evil!"

"...He's right! Victory should always belong to the strongest! I agree!" shouted one of the bosses after a long silence.

One by one, the bosses took turns agreeing to Mr. Thunder's proposal until eventually, everyone was in on the plan.

With that settled, the rules were decided on the spot. Essentially, those who wanted a chance to bring home the Ginseng King would have to choose a representative to fight against those from other groups. Once their representative lost, they would automatically have to withdraw from the auction.

"How could they even do this...?" muttered Lyra—who had been sitting in front this entire time—nervously. Her nervousness was warranted since she didn't really bring any martial artist masters together with her this time around.

Knowing that, the flustered girl wondered if she had already lost before the competition even began. After all, anyone she sent out would definitely have to deal with extraordinary people.

"There's no need to worry, sister-in-law... All we need to do later is to fork out money for it! Just know that someone will definitely step forward to fight for us later. Our most important role today is to help the Royal Dragon Group acquire the Ginseng King!" said Bea as she smiled at the worried girl.

"The Royal Dragon Group again? Bea, you've kept mentioning their group to me throughout the entire day. While I can definitely assume that you've had a word with their men, why do I feel like you're constantly focusing on assisting them?" replied Lyra who couldn't help but feel that Bea's behavior was a little odd.

"The questions can wait! Regardless, just understand that if you were currently in my shoes, you'd want

to help their group out as well. Trust me when I say that helping them out won't be in vain!" said Bea as she held on to Lyra's hands tightly, a hint of excitement in her voice.

"What on earth are you hiding from me...?" questioned Lyra as she looked at how strange Bea was behaving today.

"Hehe! I can't tell you about it now, so just know that it's something great!"

Hearing that, Lyra simply shook her head helplessly. What was this girl even babbling about...?

Before Lyra could say anything else, a battle had already begun on stage.

As everyone else turned to look at who the representative for Thunderous Dragon Inc. was, many of the selected representatives instantly lost confidence. After all, the one currently standing on stage was Mr. Thunder himself!

It was evident that Mr. Thunder was a master at his craft. There was simply nobody who could last long enough to withstand three rounds against him!

Due to that, several of the initially participating forces simply gave up on their pursuit to acquire the Ginseng King.

"I guess Thunderous Dragon Inc. will be the one getting the Ginseng King this time around..."

As the fights went on, Tulip and the others began discussing the matter. The statement wasn't baseless either. After all, several of the larger and more powerful forces had already been defeated by this point and many of the smaller ones had simply chosen to give up on the herb.

Meanwhile, Mr. Thunder himself was on stage as he threw a leg whip, instantly resulting in a strong and

burly man getting kicked off stage. As shouts filled the air, the man who was kicked out was now lying on the ground, unconscious as foam came out of his mouth.

“There goes another one! Sven Westmore Group really doesn’t stand a chance without Sven himself! They should be the last force that should’ve possibly even stood a chance against Mr. Thunder, right?” said someone from within the crowd.

“Bullsh*t! Neither the Royal Dragon Group nor the Takena family have sent out their representatives yet!” yelled another person.

Hearing that, a young man who had been sitting beside Meiko this entire time asked with a cold expression on his face, “Miss Meiko, should we...?”

Meiko herself—who at the time, had a demure and delicate look on her face—turned to look at the people from the Royal Dragon Group who were sitting close to them.

Sensing that they didn’t intend to take any action for the time being, she simply nodded before saying, “Do try to restrain yourself as much as possible once you’re on stage. There’s no need to try so hard. After all, we only need to defeat Thunderous Dragon Inc.!”

Upon saying that, she smiled before glancing once more at those from the Royal Dragon Group.

She had honestly been waiting for them to take action from the very beginning. Meiko wanted to see for herself what kind of power the biggest and strongest force in Heavenly City possessed. Had they actually already given up?

Meiko simply couldn’t help but feel slightly disappointed by their inaction.

“Understood!” replied Ito as he got up with a nod.

Chapter 981

“It turns out to be a master from the Takena family! Perfect! I have been waiting to compete against you on this trip!” Mr. Thunder said as he smiled lightly while standing on stage.

As for Ito, he had already walked up onto the stage, and he was bowing slightly in front of Mr. Thunder.

A big battle was about to begin.

The people in the audience did not make any more noise, and all of them were simply staring quietly at the stage.

“Although this Japanese warrior is very powerful, I don’t think that he will be Mr. Thunder’s opponent at all because Mr. Thunder is simply too evil!”

“That’s right. But I believe that he will be able to fight at least three rounds against Mr. Thunder. After all, he looks pretty strong and powerful too!”

There was a lot of discussion going on amongst the people below the stage.

“You can start. Let me see whether the Takena family really has this kind of strength and power, or whether it is merely for show!” Mr. Thunder laughed as he said this, crossing his arms across his chest.

“Excuse me, then!”

Upon saying that, Ito started moving at an extremely fast speed.

It seemed as though Ito had left his afterimage and shadow in place.

Mr. Thunder was shocked for a moment.

He had already heard of the Takena family from a long time ago. They were a family with a ninjutsu inheritance.

However, Mr. Thunder had initially thought that his own skills and power had already reached its pinnacle.

Unexpectedly, there were still people who were stronger compared to him.

Ito, who was in front of him, was extremely strong.

As Mr. Thunder was faced with the attack, he was already starting to feel a little tired and exhausted after battling dozens of rounds.

He wanted to use his own secret methods to deal with Ito, but Ito did not give him any chance to do so at all.

Boom!

At the end of the thirty-odd round, a white light suddenly flashed across Ito's chest. After that, Mr. Thunder seemed to have fallen into a trance before Ito kicked Mr. Thunder off the stage with a roundabout kick.

"What?!"

Everyone stood up in shock.

“Mr. Thunder!”

Marco’s men hurriedly surrounded him at this time.

They could only look at Ito with a fearful expression on their faces.

Mr. Thunder had actually been defeated!

Ito nodded slightly. “Mr. Thunder, you let me win!”

“Let me go!” Marco broke free from his subordinates’ grasp, and he was feeling a little dissatisfied at this time.

“The Takena family really have many methods to deal with their opponents! However, there will be another time in the future! As for the auction for the Ginseng King this time, I, Marco Thunder, will give up on my right to bid!”

After waving his hand heavily, Marco sat down directly.

“Then... then the Ginseng King will eventually belong to the Takena family!”

Heidi was feeling a little nervous as she walked up on the stage.

She had also been a little frightened by the scene before her.

At this time, Meiko also stood up as she got ready to get up on stage.

“Wait a minute!”

A voice suddenly sounded.

Everyone immediately focused their attention on the person who had just spoken up.

“Madam Sachs, it seems as though the battle is not over yet. So, why are you in such a hurry to give the Ginseng King to the Takena family? Our Royal Dragon Group has not even competed for it yet!”

The person who had spoken was none other than Whistler.

“Oh! That’s right! There is still Royal Dragon Group!”

“I heard that the boss of Royal Dragon Group is very powerful. Do you think that he will be the one competing?”

“I don’t think it will be him! The boss of Royal Dragon Group is just a young man!”

“I thought that Royal Dragon Group has already given up!”

Everyone continued discussing this matter amongst themselves.

“Sir, please enlighten me!” Ito said with a blank expression on his face.

“You have misunderstood me. I am not your opponent. Your opponent is naturally our boss!” Whistler said.

Meiko's beautiful eyes moved as she smiled slightly. "What? Mr. Crawford is already here?"

"Of course he is already here!" As Whistler spoke, he suddenly glanced at the corner.

Right then, Lyra, who was aside, could not help but curiously ask Bea, who was very happy at this time, "Bea, how did you get to know the people from Royal Dragon Group?"

Bea replied, "Sister-in-Law, just wait and see! Don't ask me anything first!"

"What?! Their boss, Mr. Crawford, is already here?"

Everyone began searching for him at this time.

Chapter 982

"Marjorie, you came at the right time today! You will have the opportunity to see the big boss in Heavenly City!"

Quinlan was also looking forward to this moment.

Marjorie straightened out her hair as she asked, "Based on what you have just said, it seems as though you have never met him before either?"

"Of course, not! Even my dad has only ever seen him once from a distance. Only the head of Talgo Town has ever had direct contact with him!" Quinlan replied as he smiled.

As for Gerald, he had been observing all the major forces from below the stage. He was now almost done observing every force here.

Gerald had already encountered and fought against many masters in the past six months or more.

However, ever since someone had tried to plot a sneak attack against Lyra the other night, Gerald already felt that this group of people were all not that simple.

Therefore, Gerald was not in a hurry to stand up and step forward without knowing and finding out the exact details.

But at this time, Gerald had already witnessed their strength and abilities.

Gerald now felt confident and certain in his heart.

So, why would he need to continue hiding, then?

Gerald stood up directly at this moment.

“Eh?!”

“D*mn it! Teacher, why did you suddenly stand up?” Tulip asked in surprise.

Juliet also glanced at Gerald before she said in disgust, “This has nothing to do with you. Hurry up and sit down quickly. Otherwise, Mom will be upset, and she might even kick you out!”

Juliet’s good friend also chimed in contemptuously, “That’s right! You just have to interfere in everything. You are seriously an embarrassment!”

Gerald moved his muscles and bones slightly.

Instead of answering them, he simply walked up toward the stage directly.

“He... has he gone insane?”

“Would a person’s brain go bad after being a useless person for a long time?”

Juliet’s good friend continued speaking.

“Sir!” The people from Royal Dragon Group and Talgo Town suddenly stood up and bowed before him collectively.

“What?!”

Everyone was dumbfounded as they witnessed this scene.

Juliet’s mouth was also hanging open because she was so surprised.

‘Sir?’

They were all actually being so respectful toward Gerald!

Wouldn’t that mean that Gerald was the boss of Royal Dragon Group, then? Gerald was the mysterious boss, Mr. Crawford?!

A shock! This was seriously shocking!

Marjorie and Quinlan, who were sitting at the side, suddenly saw Quinlan's father standing up and bowing before Gerald. Quinlan's father also hurriedly pulled at Quinlan's sleeve to make him stand up.

He did not turn around until Gerald had straightened out his suit and walked past them toward the front.

The strong aura that Gerald exuded somehow made Quinlan stand up involuntarily.

Meiko could not help but open her beautiful eyes in shock as she spoke with a smile on her face, "You... you are actually Crawford-san?!"

"Miss Meiko, I could not let you know about my identity because of certain matters. I am sorry."

At this time, Lyra, who was sitting aside, slowly stood up because she felt as though she was dreaming.

After exchanging some greetings with Meiko, Gerald approached Lyra.

"Gerald..."

Gerald raised his hand and placed his finger gently on Lyra's lips, almost as though he was motioning for her not to expose his true identity. "Lyra! I will explain everything properly to you after I am done with this matter."

Lyra grabbed hold of Gerald's arm tightly as she nodded heavily.

After that, she tapped Bea on her head.

At this time, Gerald turned around to look at Ito, who was standing up on the stage.

“You... can you represent the Takena family?” Gerald spoke as he looked at Meiko, who was standing aside.

This was because when Gerald had shaken Meiko’s hand just now, he saw that there were traces showing that Meiko’s right hand had been bandaged before this.

This reminded Gerald of the incident that had happened a few nights ago. He had injured a person, but the person dressed in black had disappeared mysteriously after that.

It seemed as though Meiko was truly not as simple as she looked.

She was the real master in the Takena family.

So, this was the reason why Gerald had asked this question now.

“Yes, I can!” Ito replied as he nodded.

“Alright, then. If that is the case, we will not waste any more time and get started immediately!” Gerald said as he smiled and got up on the stage.

Chapter 983

Everyone in the audience below the stage had already stood up at this moment.

As for Ito, he performed a warrior ritual before he rushed directly toward Gerald.

Boom!

After leaping into the air, he wanted to raise his leg to attack Gerald's chest directly.

His speed was extremely fast.

However, even though he was fast, Gerald was even faster than him.

Gerald immediately raised his leg to kick Ito's raised right leg.

After a cracking sound, Ito knelt directly on the ground.

He had a very pained expression on his face.

"What?!"

Everyone in the audience was in shock.

When Lyra saw Gerald going up on stage just now, she had been worried to death because she knew that this Japanese warrior was very powerful. How could Gerald, who had such thin arms and legs, possibly be his opponent?!

Lyra was kind-hearted, and she usually would not be able to bear seeing even a white rabbit get injured.

What's more, when this was her husband?

Lyra had been very fearful, and she was on tenterhooks when she thought about Mr. Thunder's tragic situation just now.

However, she never expected Gerald to be so skilled.

"Wow! Teacher is so amazing!" Tulip exclaimed as she clapped excitedly.

Only Juliet had a very complicated mood at this time.

Ito became even more furious. He instantly knew that this man before him was not to be trifled with anymore.

Thus, he instantly shook his wrist, and a white light flashed across his chest.

Gerald turned his body sideways to avoid the attack.

At this time, Ito's flying kick was already directly in front of Gerald.

Boom!

Right after, everyone in the audience saw Gerald raising his hand as he pushed Ito's leg aside lightly. Ito flew up in the air, and he fell and crashed, smashing the tables, chairs, and benches below the stage.

Meiko's beautiful eyes were filled with shock.

This person in front of her was so strong!

Ito was no match for him at all.

However, Ito had never been beaten or defeated by anyone else like this before, and he was completely unreconciled at this point.

He did not want to continue evading anymore. At this moment, a white light flashed again, and suddenly, he was holding a Japanese katana in his hand.

“Baka!” He roared as he rushed directly at Gerald.

At this time, Gerald had both of his hands behind his back, and there happened to be a broken chair leg beneath his feet.

So, he simply tapped his toes lightly before applying a little force.

Whoosh!

The broken chair leg flew through the air and slashed directly past Ito’s cheek.

It did not stop there, but it continued flying until it embedded itself deeply into a stone pillar that was next to Ito. The stone pillar where the chair leg had been embedded started breaking and spreading into a spider web formation.

Ito froze, still holding the katana in mid-air with both hands.

Then, he lowered his eyes to look at the scratch on his left cheek.

He did not move anymore.

Everyone in the audience stared at the scene in silence with their mouths wide open.

Meiko's eyelids twitched slightly as if she had suddenly thought of something. So, she hurriedly shouted at Ito, who was up on stage, "Ito! We lose! Hurry up and retreat!"

Ito finally regained his senses at this time. He lowered his katana and bowed deeply in front of Gerald.

"I have lost!"

Upon conceding, Ito walked down the stage.

Meiko had a different look in her eyes as she spoke to Gerald, "Crawford-san, thank you for being merciful and lenient just now. The Ginseng King will belong to Royal Dragon Group, then!"

"You let me win!" Gerald said as he smiled on stage.

Heidi swallowed her saliva as she spoke to Gerald after walking up on stage, "Ger... Gerald, you are actually the boss, Mr. Crawford from Royal Dragon Group? I already knew that you did not look like an ordinary person! You are truly worthy of becoming the son-in-law of the Yowell family!"

Gerald did not even bother to look at Heidi as he said, "Madam Sachs, we will transfer the money to the Yowell family's bank account without a cent less! Royal Dragon Group will take this Ginseng King, then!"

Then, he simply took the Ginseng King in his hand before he walked down the stage.

At this time, everyone was looking at Royal Dragon Group with a different view and perception once again.

Ito was filled with guilt as he said, "Sister, I was useless! I could not withstand any of his attacks at all!"

"Ito, the difference between you and him does not lie in your techniques or moves. However, it is simply because he is no longer an ordinary warrior!"

Chapter 984

Meiko spoke softly.

Ito was surprised. "Not an ordinary warrior?"

Meiko stared at Gerald and the others who were walking down the mountain with envy in her eyes. "Well, don't you remember, Grandpa told us that once a person's physical strength and his meridians had already reached a certain level, he would no longer be an ordinary warrior because his body will start releasing inner strength!"

"Wouldn't that mean that he is already a champion, then? In that case, that is not surprising at all! How could I possibly be the opponent of a champion who practices inner strength?! However, it does not seem right, Sister. I remember Grandpa saying that some talented masters cannot produce inner strength even after training and practicing for their entire life. However, he seems to be about the same age as us. So, how could he possibly know how to channel his inner strength?!"

Meiko said, "That is also what I am feeling puzzled about! He is so young, but he actually possesses a physique that an ordinary person would not have. Furthermore, he has even developed extremely strong inner strength. In comparison, I am even more interested in finding out who his master is. What kind of skills and power could his master possibly possess?"

Ito exclaimed, "We should go back home and ask Grandpa about this. I really would not expect a master to be hidden in a place like Heavenly City!"

After the auction had ended, Gerald completely ignored the Yowell family.

Instead, he returned to his manor directly.

As Lyra sat beside Gerald in the car, she said, "Gerald, I really did not expect that you would have already become so strong and powerful after not seeing you for just half a year. I think that you are even stronger and more powerful compared to the people from the Moldell family!"

"I was fortunate and lucky enough to have met a good teacher."

"By the way, Gerald, why don't you come home with us this time? Did you know that Dad is constantly worrying about you every day?" Lyra spoke as she held Gerald's hand.

Gerald smiled as he responded, "Lyra, I cannot go back now. Furthermore, the both of you cannot tell anyone else that you have seen me. I have already told you about the pros and cons. I absolutely do not want my persistence and effort over the past six months to go to waste!"

Lyra became worried again. "Alright, then. I will not say anything to anyone, okay? Gerald, what are you planning to do next? Will you continue staying in Heavenly City? I heard Dad saying that the people from the Moldell family are already in Salford Province. They are simply too close to you now!"

After driving back to the manor, Whistler said helplessly as he looked at the four men dressed in black who were standing outside the door, "Sir! It's those four men again!"

Whistler then asked as he felt that it was really strange, "Sir, how did you get to know these four strange men? They are acting like a dumb person, and they only nod and shake their heads every day. Furthermore, why are they dressed like this in broad daylight?!"

Gerald had brought these four men home and settled them down in his manor a few days ago.

So, Whistler had naturally dealt with them before.

“In truth, strictly speaking, I do not know who they are either!” Gerald replied as he smiled bitterly.

“Then why are you leaving them at the manor, Sir?”

“There is no other way. There is someone who wants to see me. Since this matter is already done, they are waiting for me to honor my words and meet up with their lord!”

Feeling worried, Whistler then said, “If that is the case, wouldn’t it be too dangerous, Sir? Do you want to bring some of our men with you?”

Gerald replied as he took a deep breath, “No need. If they really wanted to cause me any harm, they could have attacked me whenever they wanted to. Whistler, you should continue staying here in Heavenly City with Drake and Tyson. Take good care of our company. I will just make a trip with them first!”

“Gerald, where will they be taking you?” Lyra asked again.

Gerald shook his head.

He did not know where he was going or who he would be meeting.

Just as Gerald was about to enter the manor with Lyra, the four men suddenly reached out their hands to stop Gerald.

“You have already gotten the Ginseng King. Therefore, it is time to leave now!” The four of them said

coldly to Gerald.

Gerald smiled wryly as he looked at them and said, "Where are we going? Furthermore, you should at least allow me to change out of my clothes first, right?"

The four men spoke coldly again, "No need! We will leave now!"

After that, they grabbed hold of Gerald's arm.

"Presumptuous!" Whistler was immediately enraged, and he stretched out his hand to hit one of the men.

Boom!

As for that man, he simply raised his hand gently, and Whistler flew out directly.

"Whistler! Don't do anything!" Gerald hurriedly stopped him. "Sirs, how are we leaving? We cannot possibly be walking, right?"

The four men did not say anything. The leader of the men simply took out a device before pressing the red button on it.

Bzz! Bzz! Bzz!

Not long after that, a large black helicopter came in from a far distance...

Chapter 985

Gerald had no choice but to bring the Ginseng King with him as he boarded the helicopter with them.

After going up the helicopter, Gerald was blindfolded by them.

Who on earth could it be?

Who would want to meet him?

He felt even more surprised and bewildered at this time.

These men were all undoubtedly masters above all masters. Even Gerald himself would not be able to deal a single blow to them at all.

This made Gerald doubt whether they were even ordinary humans at all.

Ever since his childhood, aside from Finnley, Gerald had not known any other masters at all.

However, if it was Finnley who wanted to see him, he would not have to do all this and go to this extent at all!

Gerald did not know how long they flew.

After that, the four men escorted Gerald off the helicopter.

Gerald could smell the faint smell of the sea, and he could hear the sea breeze blowing and howling. Not too far away, there was also the sound of turbulent waves coming one after the other.

His blindfold was then removed.

At first sight, it was indeed an island.

“Where is this?” Gerald asked the four men.

This time, the four men did not continue pretending to be dumb as they answered, “The Soul Palace on Colonel Island!”

“Soul Palace? Colonel Island?” Gerald was secretly surprised.

Gerald had been following Finnley as he traveled to the north and south for more than half a year, and he had gained a lot of insights and experience.

But where was this Colonel Island? What was the Soul Palace?

Gerald really could not understand at all.

However, what he could be certain of was that these men were all from the same organization—A super extraordinary organization!

“Please!”

The four men brought Gerald into the island. The island was huge, and there were many black palace-like buildings on the island.

They brought Gerald to a place in another courtyard before they settled Gerald down there.

“Who wants to see me? Can I meet him now?” Gerald asked as he was already beginning to feel increasingly anxious.

The leader in black spoke up, “Mr. Crawford, please give us the Ginseng King!”

This group of men was obviously not trying to snatch the Ginseng King from him. Besides, even if they were truly trying to snatch it away from him, Gerald would not be able to defend and stop them from taking it anyway.

So, he simply handed the Ginseng King over to them.

The four men did not say anything else to him, and they stepped out after nodding slightly.

Gerald helplessly thought to himself, ‘What are they trying to do?’

He started pacing back and forth in the room anxiously.

Not long after that, the room door was opened.

Then, Gerald saw an old man walking in with a few maids behind him.

Each of them was carrying a plate, and there were various things on each plate.

After that, they placed the plates on the table in front of Gerald.

‘They are treating me to a feast? Well, I am indeed feeling a little hungry. But... the appearance of the food certainly looks a little ugly!’

“Is this food for me to eat?” Gerald asked.

The old man nodded as he smiled. He seemed to be a mute as he was making a hand signal at Gerald, asking him to eat the food on the table.

“Alright, then. I will try the food!”

Gerald picked up the chopsticks, and he picked up something that looked very dark and black.

Since the old man had already said that it was food, no matter how ugly it looked, he should still be able to eat it, then.

Was it because this place was really backward? Was that the reason why their food looked so terrible?

In that case, he would try it!

At this time, Gerald placed the food into his mouth.

After biting the food, Gerald realized that it was a wrap, but the filling inside was soft, and something that looked like soup or gravy started flowing out in an instant.

“It’s so bitter!” Gerald’s face flushed red as he exclaimed in misery.

As for the old man, he simply motioned for Gerald to swallow everything.

“What... what is this? Why is it so bitter?”

Gerald felt absolutely disgusted.

The old man made a gesture, and Gerald understood it in an instant.

“What?! You are asking me to eat a snake’s gallbladder? Furthermore, it is not even cooked! It’s completely raw!” Gerald exclaimed in surprise.

The old man continued making another gesture.

“This is the gallbladder of an anaconda that has survived for more than three hundred years?! It is that precious?!”

Chapter 986

Frank giggled and nodded his head, indicating for Gerald to eat the next plate.

“What is this?”

“What? Eagle’s eyes? Oh no...”

Gerald felt nauseated when he saw the plate of bright red things.

Frank would only let Gerald leave if he finished everything on the table.

“What kind of place is this?!” Gerald retched multiple times as he asked himself that question.

What he could not imagine was things were getting worse.

For the entire month, Gerald had to eat those hundred-year-old snake galls and take baths in a pool of herbs.

Gerald was only familiar with the baths because Finnley had trained him like that.

However, Gerald did feel that this pool of herb was much more effective than Finnley's because, within a month, he was much stronger.

They hadn't meant to use the Ginseng King, but within a month, they had separated the Ginseng King into 30 portions just for Gerald to consume.

They all tried everything they could to help Gerald become stronger. But who were they?

"I'm not eating these anymore. Take them away from me!" Gerald finally burst out when Frank brought in some food for him.

Frank got nervous, and he tried to ask Gerald what had happened.

"Who wants to see me and where are the Mighty Four Kingsmen? Who was that elder that brought me here? What do you guys want, and why is the person trapping me here but not even coming to see me?!" Gerald was going crazy after he had been here for a month.

He pushed Frank aside, and he walked out the door.

If nobody was there to see him, there had to be someone there that was in charge here.

Gerald finally came out, but there was not a single shadow in this big black palace. He walked into a

forest, and he finally saw some people there.

A few kids were playing around, but then he realized that it was a group of boys bullying a girl. When Gerald walked toward them, the boys immediately ran off, leaving the girl crying on the ground.

She was drawing circles with her finger on the ground as she cried.

Gerald walked beside her. "Are you okay?"

The girl got startled, and she lifted her head to glance at Gerald as she pulled her hand back.

"I thought only those people in black were here. Who'd know there were even kids like you here!"
Gerald smiled.

However, the little girl seemed like she was afraid of Gerald. She just stared at him quietly.

Gerald smiled at her and took out a packet of biscuits. "Biscuits?"

The little girl's expression immediately brightened up.

"It's for you! Eat it!" Gerald patted her on her head.

Gerald looked at her smiling. "What did you draw?"

The little girl was not afraid of Gerald anymore.

Kids were easily satisfied.

She pointed to the left and said, "That's my mommy, and next to her is my daddy. The one behind is my grandmother!"

"Are they on this island with you too?" Gerald asked.

The little girl stuffed her mouth with the biscuits and shook her head. "They are not with me. They were buried underground by the masters here. They said that they will be sleeping for a very long time!

"I'm waiting for them to come and get me!" The little girl said.

Gerald's felt a stab in his heart when he heard what she had said.

"What about the other kids?"

"They are the same as me too. Their family members are all sleeping, and now, we are living on this island together!" The little girl said as she finished the first packet of biscuits.

She then mustered all her strength to open up another packet of biscuits, but she was still too young, and she could not open it.

Gerald felt terrible watching her. "Come, let me help you..."

Chapter 987

"What are you guys doing on this island? Did they force you to stay?" Gerald wanted to find out more.

Gerald even started to suspect that the people from Soul Palace had killed these children's parents and

snatched them.

“Young Master Gerald, you’ve thought too much. We saved these children and raised them!” An elder was standing behind Gerald.

He wore a black robe, but his face was not covered.

He walked over and patted the little girl’s head gently. “Little girl, try not to snack on this kind of food in the future, you hear me?”

“Yes, Grandpa Welson. Would you like some biscuits too?” The little girl asked.

“No, thank you. You can have them. Remember to finish up your homework after that. If Hewsky and the boys bully you again, you must come and tell me!”

“Thank you, Grandpa Welson and Big Brother. I’m leaving now!” The girl took the biscuits and ran off after she had said thank you.

“Who are you?” Gerald glanced at the elder and asked.

“It has only been a month, Gerald. You don’t recognize me anymore?” The elder smiled.

“I remember now! You were the one who asked the kingsmen to follow me around!”

“I’m Welson Freed. Everyone on this island calls me Master Welson!” Welson smiled as he shook his head.

"I was looking for you. You said you were going to bring me to see someone. I've been here for so long, shouldn't you let me see that person already?" Gerald was angry.

"I believe you've been eating those foods for a month now. I can tell from your energy that the impurities in your body have been completely detoxed with the help of the Ginseng King. Today, I'm here to bring you to see him!" Welson smiled. "After you, Gerald!"

Gerald frowned, but he did not say anything. He just followed him from behind.

There were buildings on one side of the island, and as they got nearer to the buildings, there were many extraordinary men in black guarding it.

Gerald was brought into the biggest palace that seemed like a very royally ancient palace.

There was a stage before Gerald, and an old man was standing before him with his back facing Gerald. He was staring at a very big piece of map.

"Grandmaster, Gerald is here!" Welson bowed down rigorously.

"You can leave now!" The old man waved his hand with his back still facing them, and Welson left.

"I believe we don't know each other?" Gerald queried.

"Yes, you don't know me, but I do know you! The only heir of the Crawfords, Young Master Gerald Crawford! Oh yes, I almost forgot, you're also the Yowells' live-in son-in-law, and they chased you away after they thought you were a coward!"

Gerald blushed. He was indeed a coward all because he had wanted to look for the Ginseng King and thus, he had become other people's live-in son-in-law.

“That is my personal matter. It’s none of your concern. I’d also like to thank you for all the precious gifts that made me so powerful!” Gerald tried to change the topic.

“Your personal matter? I don’t think you understand the shame you’ve brought to your family!” The elder slammed on the marble chair as he turned around.

They made eye contact, and Gerald could finally see this elder clearly. He had a full head of luscious hair and a young face. His eyes were bright and clear, and he seemed very elegant and respectable.

Chapter 988

For some reason, Gerald felt strange as he looked at that old man, and under that pressure, he even felt embarrassed and looked down.

“Hahaha!” The old man laughed loudly. “It seems like my grandson does indeed understand what he did wrong!”

“Grandson?”

Gerald was stunned. “You’re...”

“You’ve not greeted me ever since you stepped in here. I’m your grandfather, Daryl, you silly boy!” He laughed as he sat on a marble chair.

“You’re my grandfather?! I... I thought you went missing?”

Gerald had never heard anything about his grandparents ever since young, and his father had only told him that his grandfather had been missing for more than a decade.

They had looked for him, but there had been no news of him, and Gerald had always thought that his grandfather had already passed away. Never did he expect that his grandfather was alive, and he was actually the owner of Colonel Island's Soul Palace!

"You seem surprised?" Daryl looked at him happily.

"Yes, I am! I'm very surprised, Grandfather!"

Gerald finally understood why he had felt so strange earlier on.

"Have you always been on Colonel Island and established the Soul Palace?" Gerald asked in shock.

"Yes. I left the Crawfords, and I left everything to young Dylan back then. It has been 35 years!"

"Come, Gerald. Sit next to me and let me tell you some stories!" Daryl smiled.

Gerald sat on the marble chair.

"How many things do you know about your grandfather?" Daryl asked.

"I only know that you left my father 35 years ago after you both had a big fight. You gave up the position as the family's grandmaster and never came back. I tried asking my father about you, but he didn't say much!"

"It seems like Dylan did not tell you anything about the picture of the sun!"

"The picture of the sun?"

“Yes. It is a confidential picture that is passed down from our ancestors, and the content of it contains great knowledge. The Crawfords have always been so powerful and wealthy because we possess the guidance of the picture of the sun. But then, I realized that the picture of the sun predicted that within 50 years, the Crawfords would be gone forever, and the picture of the sun has never lied!” Daryl said.

“I’ve heard about that from my father, and he said that within these few years, the Crawfords might end up bankrupt or dead!” Gerald recalled what his father had told him.

“Yes, that was what I told him too. I’ve always been searching for an answer, and hopefully one day, I might understand what the picture of the sun was trying to say. Until 35 years ago, I finally found a new answer, and I even got a method of survival that is hundred years old, even before the Crawfords existed. Before your father, every generation of the Crawfords knew a thing or two about martial arts. Your dad broke the chain, and that is why I’ve never liked him!” Daryl said.

“Is that why you established the Soul Palace?” Gerald finally knew more secrets about what had happened.

“Yes. I’ve been doing my research, and I found this isolated location to build my reputation. I even gathered some powers to protect my family from being banished!”

“Gerald, you’re very lucky to have people helping you train your skills. That is why I was very happy when my people reported back to me!”

“Does that mean that you knew my master, Finnley? Is he one of your people too?” Gerald asked.

Daryl shook his head. “I don’t know him. However, I did some research on his background, and I found something that surprised me. My informants are all around the world, and there is nothing that I wouldn’t know about, but your master, Finnley Quick, gave me a hard time. I believe Finnley Quick is not even his real name! One thing for sure is that he is a great and powerful master, his skills are far more excellent than mine!”

Chapter 989

“He’s greater than you?” Gerald was shocked.

Daryl nodded his head with a smile. “It doesn’t matter if he’s our friend or enemy because he has saved you and taught you some very solid basics. If it wasn’t because of him, I wouldn’t see you so quickly!”

“I wanted you to have a solid foundation so that you could go through the hellish transformation. It would usually take three years to build up this kind of foundation. However, your body is pretty solid, and with the help of the Ginseng King, your body has everything it needs for you to survive the hellish transformation!” Daryl said.

“The hellish transformation?” Gerald was confused once again.

“Yes. It is something I got out of the picture of the sun, and because of this, I’ve acquired skills that normal people don’t have and become one of the legends! Honestly, your requirements are better than mine!”

“Legends? I’ve heard about that from Finnley. He mentioned that when warriors are trained to a certain level, they will gain inner strength and become champions. After becoming champions, they will stand a chance to be legends, but only the best of the best could become champions, and legends are beyond the realm of mysteries. Grandfather, you’re already one of the legends?” Gerald’s interest was piqued.

Gerald had received many secrets of nourishment from Finnley, and now that he had completely consumed the Ginseng King, he had truly become a champion. However, his grandfather was actually from one of the legends from the realm of mysteries?

“Yes. I became a legend 20 years ago! I’ve also trained a small number of warriors here to become a mid-level or high-level champion through the hellish transformation. Your skills can only be at the beginner level!” Daryl laughed.

“No wonder your people are so strong and mysterious! They are all champions!”

“Hah! Anyone here could beat you up ten times! But don’t you worry, because I’ll use up all of the resources for the hellish transformation on you, and I’ll even teach you the ways. Gerald, from today onward, you will be the future of the Crawfords!”

“So this is what your plan was all about!” Gerald finally understood.

“But...” Daryl seemed worried.

“What is it?”

“It’s just, after the hellish transformation, your powers would improve tremendously, and you’ll receive the blessing of the dragons. You won’t have the body of a normal person anymore, and there will be side effects, which is your personality. You’ll be very different from who you are right now. It took me decades to tone down too!”

“And all this is because I have great powers to suppress it. I’m afraid that once you can’t control the blessing of the dragons within you, you might become...” Daryl hesitated. “You might become a bloodthirsty demon and kill as you like!”

“But don’t you worry! I’ve been observing you since young, and you are a very kind-hearted person just like your mother. You’ll never fight for powers, and I believe you can control the powers within you!” Daryl patted Gerald on his shoulders.

Gerald needed the powers. He needed to get stronger. He understood that money could not protect the people he loved, and only power, the power to control everything could.

“Your second uncle, Peter, was also the right person to go through the hellish transformation, but unfortunately...” A hint of sorrow flashed through Daryl’s eyes.

“Fortunately enough, the Crawfords have you, Gerald. You’re our new hope. You can get used to Colonel Island first. A week later, the hellish transformation will start, and it will go on for half a year. For this one week, I’ll also prepare the space for you. Gerald... I know you’re going to go through a lot of pain soon, but... this isn’t something that you can run away from. As the next generation of the Crawfords, this is your duty! Are you afraid?”

“No!”

Their conversation lasted until midnight.

Seven days later, the grandmaster of the Soul Palace, Daryl, brought along his grandson, Gerald, and entered the mysterious space.

The grandmaster had commanded everyone that within this half a year, nobody should disturb them.

...

Half a year later.

Heavenly City’s Triangle District.

There were rows of cars parked at the roadside, and there were few hundreds of people.

Everyone was waiting for their leader as if they were waiting for their hero to return.

Whoosh!

Soon, a helicopter drew closer, and it stopped in front of everyone.

The door of the helicopter opened, and a bald guy walked out of it with a group of people following him.

Chapter 990

The bald guy had a scar on his face, and he looked very fierce.

“Boss Sven, you’re finally back!” Someone shouted.

“Sven! Sven!” Everyone cheered. They were all expressing their overdue emotions after half a year. Their king, Heavenly City’s king, was finally back.

Who else could it be if it was not Sven Westmore?

“Boss Sven, you’ve been away to further your studies in the culinary arts field for so long, and now, Heavenly City has changed! Your brother...”

Sven waved his hand coldly to ask everyone to keep quiet. “I know about everything that has happened. Leif has been killed, our sites have been intruded, and the Ginseng King is gone. I know everything!”

“Royal Dragon Group? They really think that there is no Westmore left in Heavenly City?” Sven’s eyes were cold and sharp.

The Royal Dragon Group.

“Where did the boss go? There is still no news?”

“We only know that he went north, and he’s in Weston. Even the people from Japan have sent people to

look for him, but there is no news regarding the boss!”

“Continue to search for him!” Drake was furious.

Drake, Tyson, and Whistler were walking up and down the office anxiously.

It had been half a year, and Royal Dragon Group had been one of the strongest organizations in the Triangle District. They had the most sites as compared to the other organizations around them. However, the news about their missing boss would soon be spread out, and the other organizations would start to target them.

“Mr. Jay, Mr. Sankey, things are bad!” One of their subordinates came in terrified.

“Why do you look like someone just died?”

“It’s Sven! Sven is back, and he has brought along his people. They are outside!” The man said.

“What?” The three of them looked at each other and ran out hurriedly.

As they reached the door, both parties were already fighting.

Many people from Royal Dragon Group were lying on the ground.

They saw two men trying to strike Sven with their machetes, but Sven did not even bother to dodge it.

The machete landed on Sven’s body, but it immediately broke, and the two men backed off.

“I was thinking what’s so great about Royal Dragon Group. It seems like their people are just very ordinary!” Sven sneered as he shook his head.

“Oh? There are even two losers here. I think you guys have lived long enough!” Sven said.

Drake shouted, “Let’s kill him!”

The three of them charged toward Sven.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The three of them soon lay on the ground after taking three punches from Sven.

Sven wiped off the blood on his hands and smiled. “Bring them back and take back what’s ours...”

Everything happened in the glimpse of an eye, and the three of them were brought away, leaving the ground splattered with blood stains...

Chapter 991

Though winter in Colonel Island had passed, the entire area was still very cold. After all, it had previously snowed heavily for three consecutive days before it finally stopped.

As a result, the chilly island was enveloped in a layer of silver.

Despite the cold, several men donning black clothes could be seen standing respectfully by the stone entrance of a cave on the island. The men consisted of people who held high-ranks in the Soul Palace.

“Judging by the time, it should be almost done by now,” said grandpa Welson to a few leaders as a

sudden strong breeze blew snowflakes—which were beginning to fall again—into everyone’s faces.

Seconds later, rumbling could be heard as the heavy stone door was pushed open.

As everyone turned over to look, they saw an old man exiting the cave alongside a much younger one.

“Lord! Young master! Welcome back from your training!” shouted all the present men in unison and with utmost respect.

Daryl then laughed loudly before replying, “That’s quite enough! Go prepare the party immediately! Everyone from the Soul Palace will enjoy ourselves thoroughly today!”

Seeing how great his mood was, Grandpa Welson simply nodded before turning to look at Gerald. It was evident that the current young man standing before him was completely different from the one he had met half a year ago.

Gerald now had a beard and his hair looked much messier than before. His torn clothes also revealed the many well-defined muscles on Gerald’s now greatly strengthened body.

However, those weren’t the reason why Grandpa Welson had such a fierce-looking expression on his face.

No, what he was currently feeling had stemmed from the fact that though snowflakes melted quickly upon skin-contact for all the others there, any snow that fell on Gerald remained intact.

Grandpa Welson’s realization of that made the corner of his eyelid twitch rather rapidly.

Initially a Crawford, he had been together with Daryl for the longest time. He could still distinctly remember Daryl’s hellish transformation all those years ago.

However, the impression Grandpa Welson now had on Gerald felt different from that distant memory. To him, Gerald currently exuded an even greater power compared to the lord all those years ago.

Gerald's eyes, in particular, reflected how strong, dignified, and calm he was as a person. However, by contrast, they simultaneously hinted at a constant bloodlust as well.

As Grandpa Welson felt a chill run down his spine, Daryl himself gently patted Gerald's shoulder as he said, "Just head there once you're done cleaning yourself up, Gerald."

"Alright," replied Gerald as he nodded before heading off to clean himself.

On his way to the bathroom, any leader of the Soul Palace whom he walked past would bow their heads to greet him.

Upon opening the door to the large bathroom, Gerald was instantly greeted by warm steam. Inside, more than ten women—both young and old—could be seen attending to their chores at the side.

Closing his eyes, Gerald stretched both his arms out, prompting a few of the women to go over to him and begin massaging his shoulders. The others got busy as well, trimming his hair and giving him a well-deserved shave.

With how masculine Gerald was, none of the women could hold back from blushing.

Once he was all clean, the women then blow-dried Gerald's body with hairdryers before sliding a bathrobe onto him.

"The suit you asked for has been prepared, young master..." said one of the women shyly.

“Alright. You may leave now,” replied Gerald quite placidly.

After suiting up, Gerald found himself heaving a long sigh. He had gone through great pain in the past half-year, and after enduring through all that, his suffering could finally end today.

As he fixed his tie, Gerald suddenly heard a soft and gentle voice behind him saying, “Allow me to help you, young master.”

Turning around to look at who had spoken, Gerald immediately found a fair and demure-looking hand reaching out to touch his body. The hand itself belonged to a woman who was dressed rather seductively.

As Gerald gently lifted her by her chin, the woman seemed to be eagerly awaiting something.

In her mind, she was thinking that if she was able to bewitch the young master, then she would definitely be able to improve her position in the Soul Palace. Once that happened, she would surely rise above the other beauties!

“Get. Lost!”

His immediate response was far from what she had anticipated, and it was evident that it hadn’t occurred to her that the young master could be this aloof.

Chapter 992

His sudden shout frightened the woman so much that her entire body immediately trembled as though she had just been struck by lightning.

“Y-yes, young master!” replied the woman awkwardly as she quickly left the room.

It was only three days later when the party in the Soul Palace finally ended. On the morning of the day

after, everyone from the Soul Palace gathered at the island's public square.

"You've successfully made it through your hellish transformation, Gerald, and I have to say that your final results have far surpassed my expectations. However, while you're currently able to better control your temperament, it's still extremely unstable. If you wish to perform the blessings of the dragon to its maximum degree, you'll need to drink the holy blood of the holy fox. Once you do, it'll assist in helping you control your temperament. I'll have Grandpa Welson stay by your side to aid you when you return there."

"I'm aware, grandpa. Speaking of which, when will you be returning there to have a look around? My dad honestly misses you too," replied Gerald casually

Nodding, Daryl then patted Gerald's shoulder as he said, "I'll return when the time is right."

It was evident that Daryl had high expectations of Gerald.

Not long after, thirty black helicopters could be heard starting up at the base.

Placing a firm gaze on his grandfather, Gerald then said, "Do take care, grandpa. We'll be leaving now."

With that said, he then turned to board one of the helicopters.

As the helicopters took off with Grandpa Welson, over three hundred experts from the island, and Gerald himself, their loud droning slowly faded from the island as they flew south.

Meanwhile, the night was getting darker and darker within the suburbs of the Triangle District within Heavenly City.

There, a pitiful looking woman hugging onto a document folder could be seen desperately trying to

escape over ten cars that were driving slowly behind her.

Though her face was pale and wounds could be seen covering her body, it was clear that the woman found the document folder she had in hand to be much more important than her life.

The cars themselves continued moving slowly as a few people sitting inside stretched their heads out the cars' windows and began shining their flashlights on the woman.

"Haha! That's right! Go on and continue running! Run faster! We're going to catch you soon!" yelled one of the men, causing the others to get increasingly excited as well.

As the woman ran, and ran, she eventually tripped and fell to the ground. However, gritting her teeth, she immediately crawled back up and continued running.

It wasn't long before one of the cars then immediately drove up to her. Shining his flashlight directly at her face, the person sitting beside the driver then said, "We've got you now! Honesty, you'd better run quicker than this if you don't want to fall into Tucker's hands. After all, once he has you, you'll definitely be ruined! Hahaha!"

Hearing that, the others began laughing loudly inside their cars as well, teasing the woman's poor attempt at escaping.

Eventually, the woman found herself falling again. However, she had reached her limit and she simply wasn't able to get herself off the ground anymore.

Knowing that, the woman immediately tried tearing the contents of the document folder apart with the intent of swallowing whatever scraps she could so that they couldn't be recovered.

"You mother*cking bitch! Do you really think we won't kill you?!" roared Tucker Westmore himself as he jumped out of his car alongside a few other of his men. It didn't take long for him to brutally land a

slap on her cheek, causing the woman to drop the document folder in her state of dizziness.

Picking it up, Tucker then sneered, "It would be a pity for a beauty like you to just die like this... Bring her back! I'm going to be enjoying myself with her tonight! All of you can have your turns with her once I'm done!"

"Hahaha! Affirmative, Mr. Westmore!"

Glaring daggers at Tucker, the woman immediately revealed a hidden short blade.

However, before she was even able to take her life, Tucker simply slapped the blade out of her hands.

"Oh? Did you honestly think I would allow you to die that easily? Haha! You'll only be able to once I've sufficiently tortured you!" announced Tucker as he laughed maliciously.

As the woman cried out in despair, a distant droning could suddenly be heard.

It wasn't long before the droning grew louder and louder. The next thing they knew, over thirty helicopters had appeared, and they now hovered over Tucker and his men!

"What the hell is happening?" demanded Tucker, shocked by the turn of events.

After the helicopters landed, several men dressed in black came out and immediately glared at Tucker and his men extremely coldly.

Seeing how extraordinarily imposing they all were, Tucker quickly added, "Hey now, which side do all of you belong to? I don't think I've seen any of you before! Just so you know, my father is Sven from Heavenly City!"

Immediately after he said that, the door to one of the helicopters—that had landed right in the middle of the others—was opened by one of the opposing party’s subordinates.

Turning to look in that direction, Tucker saw a suited man sitting inside as he sipped on red wine.

Before he could even say anything, the woman—who had clearly seen the man in the helicopter as well—immediately cried out, “S-sir! You’ve finally returned!”

Chapter 993

The person she was referring to was, of course, none other than Gerald.

The woman herself was Yukie, the one who had stayed by Gerald’s side for some time back when he had first established the Royal Dragon Group.

Watching the teary-eyed woman run toward him, Gerald felt an acute pain in his heart as he realized how terribly Yukie had suffered.

“You’ve already suffered so much, Yukie... Fear not, for I have returned!” declared Gerald as he led her into one of the helicopters.

Yukie clung on tightly to Gerald’s arm as they walked on, clearly unwilling to part. After all, she had yearned for Gerald from dusk till dawn ever since the day he left half a year ago.

Still, what was this peculiar feeling welling within her upon reuniting with Gerald...? Momentarily shaking the thought away, Yukie knew that there were more serious matters to attend to first.

Holding out the document folder to Gerald, she then said, “Sven is back, sir... As a result, Drake, Tyson, Mr. Whistler... They... They’ve all been captured! Even Lucy and many others have been taken away by him! As if that wasn’t enough, he even snatched away many of our properties! The ones in this

document folder are the final properties that we have left..."

Seeing how desperately she had tried to protect the properties, Gerald wiped a tear off the corner of her eye as he replied, "I've earlier told Grandpa Welson to investigate the incident so I already know most of the details. It's my fault for disappearing on all of you for over half a year..."

"F*ck! So that's Tyson's boss! Also you two, don't go acting all intimate in front of us! Still, it's high time that you finally make your reappearance! Once we're done with you tonight, Boss Sven won't need to even bother about any of you anymore!" growled one of Tucker's men, fiercely.

However, the moment his sentence ended, the same man barely had any time to register what had just happened when he felt his eyes widen.

Seconds later, a 'thud' could be heard and everyone could only stare as Gerald's subordinate stood before the now headless man.

Upon registering what had just taken place, Yukie let out a brief yelp before covering her mouth in utter fear.

Tucker himself grew increasingly frightened and anxious as well. It was now clear that the group of people standing before him now were not only frightening, but they also had great martial art skills to boot.

Quickly understanding that he held no chance against them, Tucker immediately said, "M-Mr. Crawford, there seems to be a few misunderstandings between us. I suggest we get my dad over so that you can talk to him in person! After all, I'm only doing all this in accordance with his orders. Killing me would be useless! So how about it? Should I call my father over?"

When he got no reply, Tucker's fears spiked and the anxious man immediately got to his knees. As his last resort, he gulped before pleading, "P-please spare my life, Mr. Crawford!"

Watching as the terrified man quivered before him, Gerald slowly poured a glass of red wine before replying, "Honestly, I had earlier been wondering whether I should prepare a gift for your father upon meeting him. While thinking about it, I realized that you had quite a few subordinates and some of them are even carrying cameras around! Thanks to that, I now have an idea!"

"A-an idea...? What could you possibly be thinking of, Mr. Crawford...?"

As for why Tucker's subordinates were carrying cameras around in the first place, it was because Tucker had a rather perverted habit. He simply enjoyed taking videos of himself doing immoral things, just like what he had done with Yukie earlier. He saw his actions as something that should be commemorated, which was why some of his subordinates made it a habit to bring along cameras wherever they went.

"Indeed. I'll be needing your cooperation to shoot a short video. I'll present it to your father as a gift upon meeting him," replied Gerald.

"O-of course I'm willing to cooperate! I'll do it, Mr. Crawford!"

Hearing that, Gerald turned to look at one of his subordinates. The subordinate in question immediately got the cue to enter the cabin.

Moments later, Tucker's eyes widened as he saw the subordinate carrying a fuel container out with him. He understood what Gerald was planning to do.

"P-please don't kill me!" pleaded Tucker as he immediately crawled back up and attempted to run away.

Before he could even take a step forward, however, he felt a stone piercing through his chest. Blood now spurting out of his fresh wound, Tucker fell to the ground again, twitching violently.

His subordinates could only stare in horror, completely paralyzed as Gerald's subordinate doused Tucker's entire body with fuel.

“Cover your eyes, Yukie,” said Gerald as he blocked her view with his own hand as a safety measure.

With that done, Gerald then ordered, “Light him up!”

A piercing scream filled the air shortly after.

Chapter 994

After some time, the cries of agony slowly died down. With that, Gerald, Yukie, and his men returned to the manor.

Upon arriving there, Gerald told Yukie to lie down and get some rest first. Turning to look at Welson next, he then asked, “So, where’s Sven currently at?”

“After looking into it, we found that he’s organizing a party at Heavenly City Hotel at the moment. He’s invited several big shots from Heavenly City over since he wants them to welcome his return. Also, we’ve found that though Drake, Tyson, and Whistler have been tortured, their lives aren’t in any danger yet, at least for now.”

“From our investigation, we’ve also learned that Sven had gone to a Southeast Asian country half a year ago to toughen himself up. Due to that, he now has top-notch skills in his arsenal,” replied Welson as he smiled rather bitterly.

“I see. Then we should deal with him now before he has a chance to cause any more trouble in the future. Remain here and take care of Yukie for me while I go rescue my men, Welson,” said Gerald.

“But young master, you haven’t consumed the holy blood yet... With your temperament currently still unstable, I’m afraid that...”

There was a good reason why Welson sounded so concerned. After all, if Gerald had no problem with

killing others the moment he left training, Welson was afraid that he would only grow to become more and more aloof.

“I can control it.”

With that, Gerald selected around thirty people to go with him before setting off for the hotel.

Meanwhile, at the hotel itself, a sudden chill could be felt as the night further darkened.

Despite the gloomy mood, a female’s voice suddenly shouted, “Why are you still running around? Mom’s been trying to find you everywhere! With Boss Sven back today and the recent terrible event in Heavenly City, it’d do you good to be more careful!”

The owner of the voice was a rather mature and seductive looking woman who looked to be around twenty-four. Her tone alone also suggested that she was, in a way, an intellectual beauty.

As for the other girl she was talking to, she seemed to be slightly younger, at around the age of twenty. Even so, she was equally as charming as the older woman.

Both of them were currently standing at the hotel’s entrance, and realizing how loud they were being, the older woman instantly straightened her hair before saying, “Now come along and let’s get inside already!”

“Fine... Actually, you go on ahead first. I came out here in the first place to get some fresh air, you know? I’ll head back up there in a bit,” replied the younger woman.

“...Alright, but you’d better not be lying to me... Promise me that you’ll head up again once you’re feeling better, okay?” said the woman in a slightly anxious tone before finally leaving.

It was evident, however, that the young woman wasn't too enthusiastic about going back inside. Crouching to the ground, she picked a few stones up before tossing them all over the place, one by one.

Eventually getting bored, she pouted before dragging herself back into the hotel.

Upon arriving at the lobby, the girl was shocked when she saw a group of men exiting what seemed to be a secret passage from behind a wall mirror. As if the shock wasn't enough, that feeling soon turned into a cocktail of fear, surprise, and joy the moment she saw who was leading the men.

"...Huh? Isn't that...?"

It had been half a year since she had last met him, so the girl was eager to greet their leader. Before she could do so, however, a gruff voice said, "What are all of you doing here?"

The voice had come from one of Sven's bodyguards stationed at the hotel's entrance. Thanks to the girl's odd comment, he and several other of Sven's guards were able to catch the infiltrating men in their act, and they were now completely surrounded.

Instead of a verbal reply, the men from the opposing group chose to swiftly dash toward each of Sven's present guards instead. With breakneck speed, multiple snaps could be heard as Sven's guards all fell to the ground, all of their heads tilted at awkward angles.

Seeing all the dead guards with broken necks, a waiter—who just so happened to be in the lobby—immediately let out a terrified scream.

The girl herself had gone pale by the sight of so many corpses. In her utter shock, she instantly began running up the stairs to seek safety.

When the frightened girl finally came into view of a family member, the older woman quickly said, "There you are! Hurry up and sit down already!"

Following that, the old woman sighed before adding, "With Boss Sven finally back, big changes are bound to happen in Heavenly City... Because of that, we Yowells will need to grab any opportunity that presents itself. Since you and your sister take after me, both of you are extremely beautiful. Due to that, please be on your best behavior once Mr. Tucker arrives. Who knows, one of you could end up charming him! If that were to happen, then our family will definitely be able to rise up the ranks extremely quickly!"

It was obvious at this point that the three women were none other than Tulip, Juliet, and Heidi.

Since Juliet had grown more mature compared to the person she had been half a year ago, she was able to fairly easily catch on that something was amiss with her younger sister's mood.

Worried, she then asked, "What's wrong, Tulip? Why's your face so pale...?"

Gulping, Tulip then took in a deep breath before slowly saying, "...Earlier... When I was downstairs... I... I think I saw him...!"

"Him?" asked Heidi.

With how keen her mind was, Juliet immediately had a hunch of who her sister had met.

Feeling her heartbeats quicken, Juliet then added, "Who exactly did you see, Tulip?"

Finally unable to hold back her tears, Tulip quivered in fear as she cried out, "It's him! He's finally back!"

Chapter 995

"For the love of god, give us a name!" replied Juliet who was now extremely nervous.

"I met Gerald!" exclaimed Tulip.

"...What?" replied both Heidi and Juliet as their eyes widened.

"...So what if you met him? Why are you so afraid?" asked Heidi.

"...B-because-"

However, before Tulip could say another word, Sven—the organizer of tonight's event—stepped atop the high stage before saying, "Do be silent for a brief moment, ladies and gentlemen."

Raising a hand to signal everyone to keep quiet, the entire hall fell silent.

"I've finally returned today, ladies and gentlemen. First off, allow me to express my gratitude since despite my half-year absence, so many of you still chose to show your support by attending this party. During the time I was away, many things have happened. Thankfully, everything is finally over. On another note, the Sven Westmore Group's territory has now doubled in size compared to half a year ago! I hope you'll all continue to lend me your support from here on out," announced Sven.

Though his tone sounded friendly, his vicious gaze suggested otherwise. Nobody within the hall even dared to look at him in the eye, and that was exactly the effect Sven had wanted to achieve that night.

From tonight onward, only the Sven Westmore Group would remain in Heavenly City, and Sven wanted to make sure that everyone bowed down to him.

Understanding that everything was going to plan, Sven couldn't help but smile subtly as he briefly clapped his hands. Hearing their cue, his subordinates marched into the hall—from another hall beside it—leading over ten beautiful women in with them.

“Humph! As you can see, these are the female servants who used to work under Mr. Crawford from the Royal Dragon Group! All of them are certainly attractive! Haha! However, I don’t think I’ll be able to properly appreciate them... Because of that, I’m going to be auctioning all of them off tonight! Do bid all you want for any of the women that you fancy!” announced Sven as he let out a roar of laughter.

“How absolutely cruel! Not only did he ruin the entire Royal Dragon Group, but to think that he would even go so far as to auction off Mr. Crawford’s female servants! What a brutal man!”

“Indeed! While Mr. Crawford upheld morality and justice, Sven himself is just an inhumane beast! Looks like we’ll have to get prepared to be exploited by him again!”

“Speaking of which, have any of you heard about what happened to the Westleys? Since they had a good relationship with Mr. Crawford, Sven completely took over their family. What more, he even kicked all the Westleys out of their own home! We’ll certainly lack any sense of security with a person like this being our leader!”

Several rich businessmen—who were sitting further away from the stage—were now whispering among themselves about how unacceptable Sven’s behavior was. Though many of them were certainly angry by how much Sven had crossed the line, nobody dared to say anything against him.

Snapping his fingers, Sven then said, “Without further ado, let the auctioning begi-”

Before his sentence could even end, however, the hall suddenly turned dim as half of the lights in it were turned off.

Following that, the projector came to life, forming a white rectangle on the large screen in the hall.

“What the hell is happening? Are the staff courting death or something?” scolded a butler as the people offstage exchanged glances with each other before turning to look at the screen, unsure of what was even happening.

Their puzzlement immediately turned to shock when the projector began playing a video that displayed a man pleading, "P-please don't kill me!"

Their silence was warranted since everyone there could clearly see the face of the man in the video. It was none other than Mr. Tucker Westmore himself! What more, he was crying while kneeling!

"I suggest we get my dad over so that you can talk to him in person! After all, I'm only doing all this in accordance with his orders. Killing me would be useless! So how about it? Should I call my father over?" said Tucker in the video, clearly terrified.

"Tucker!" shouted Sven, his eyes widened as he clenched both his fists tightly.

While nobody knew who Tucker's assailant was, everyone was sold that whoever it was, the person must have been extremely terrifying for Tucker to look so frightened.

As the video played on, the audience watched as Tucker crawled up and attempted to escape. However, before he could even take a step forward, he looked like he was hit by something.

Though nobody knew what the weapon was, blood instantly began gushing out of his chest, resulting in Tucker falling back to the ground as he twitched violently!

The true horror, however, came when someone approached the struggling man and poured fuel all over his body! A match could briefly be seen being tossed in his direction and the next thing they knew, Tucker's entire body was engulfed in flames!

As his screams of agony filled the hall, one of the attendees immediately ended up vomiting! Several others soon did the same and their legs shook violently even as they sat in place.

The few women who didn't were so shaken up that they held onto their heads while screaming hysterically!

Once the video finally ended, the lights were switched on again.

Chapter 996

“Who... Who is responsible for all this?!” roared Sven, enraged as he slammed his fists onto the table before him, sending it smashing into pieces! Even the muscles on his face were twitching uncontrollably as the angered father growled.

Though Sven’s current state was certainly terrifying, many of the businessmen were secretly rejoicing after they realized how much pain Sven was now in. What went around, came around, and it was high time that Sven finally received the punishment he deserved.

The Yowell mother and daughters themselves were now huddling close to each other in fear.

“My, my! I wasn’t expecting it to be so lively in here!” said a voice out loud as the hall’s large doors swung open.

As everyone turned to look at who was daring enough to say that, they were all shocked to see Gerald entering the hall together with a group of men.

Though still astonished, several of the influential forces in the hall immediately stood up and bowed, submitting to Gerald’s authority as they simultaneously shouted, “Mr. Crawford!”

“...Gerald?” muttered Juliet as she looked at him with a dumbfounded expression on her face. Her heartbeat quickened as she recalled the last time she had met him six months ago.

Back then, Gerald had revealed that his true identity was the boss of the Royal Dragon Group. That had been an extremely humiliating moment for her.

As if that wasn’t enough, he didn’t even say a word to her once he got his hands on the Ginseng King!

Due to that, she came to resent Gerald, and was secretly pleased once she found out that Gerald had gone missing.

After all, the person who had brought her so much misery was finally out of the picture. However, Tulip had told her that he was finally back before the video even began, and Juliet had been nervous from that very moment.

Now that she knew that he truly had returned, she was filled with complicated feelings as she observed how different Gerald's demeanor and appearance was from half a year ago.

"Are you the Crawford from the Royal Dragon Group? You seem quite young. Pray tell, were you the one responsible for my son's death?" growled Sven as he gritted his teeth.

As he glared at Gerald with his eyes dyed red with murderous intent, Gerald simply nodded before replying, "Bingo."

Hearing that, Sven's imposing aura seemed to amplify as he roared, "If that's the case, how dare you come all the way here?! Fine, then! We'll settle all our grudges today! I'll make you suffer terribly if it's the last thing I do!"

As soon as his sentence ended, he stretched out both his arms and flexed his muscles so hard that his shirt exploded into shreds! Now topless, his bulging muscles made him look as impenetrable as a tank!

Tucker was his only son and Sven deeply adored him. Sven even already had plans to begin educating Tucker on the right ways to be his proper heir once Tucker grew a little older.

After watching his son being burnt alive, it was no wonder why Sven was driven mad. Now looking like a complete maniac, the hulking man rushed toward Gerald with surprising swiftness.

"Get away from them! Hurry!"

“Sven’s gone completely mental! Be careful not to get caught up in their battle or you’ll accidentally get hurt!”

Shouts filled the hall, warning everyone to retreat to the corners and sides of the room.

By the time everyone was at a relatively safe distance away from the two men, their eyes immediately widened as Sven swung his fist directly at Gerald.

While there certainly was a loud collision, that wasn’t why everyone was staring with stupefied looks on their faces.

No, they were all flabbergasted by the fact that Gerald had casually grabbed Sven’s fist before it could even land! In fact, he made it look easy!

Though Sven immediately tried to release his fist from Gerald’s grasp, no amount of struggling allowed him to free it.

“You’ve made three terribly wrong mistakes,” said Gerald rather casually before closing his eyes.

When he opened them again, however, his eyes were tinged red and his entire body gave off an aura akin to a demon’s.

Turning to look at each other, the subordinates who had been standing behind him this entire time took turns taking three steps back.

Sven himself felt a chill run down his spine as his imposing aura grew weaker, now almost completely overshadowed by Gerald’s murderous intent.

He couldn't even deny that he was now feeling frightened as he stared at the demon of a man standing before him.

"...Firstly, you should've kept your hands off my group!"

After saying that, Gerald placed both his hands on Sven's shoulder blades.

"Secondly, you shouldn't have done things to my men!"

As Sven's eyes widened in terror, Gerald gnashed his teeth viciously before growling, "And thirdly, you shouldn't ever have humiliated my subordinates right in front of me!"

Now that Gerald was done lecturing him, he took in a deep breath before yanking both of Sven's shoulders forward! The disgusting sound of skin and flesh being torn apart filled the room and soon after, and with one final 'rip', there was a momentary silence.

However, the silence didn't last long as many of the people within the room instantly began screaming. Their screams of pure fear were so high-pitched that several of the wine glasses ended up shattering!

While many others found themselves having severe nervous breakdowns, some of the women present simply fainted on the spot!

What a cruel demon of a man!

Chapter 997

The entire hall fell into chaos as the people within it frantically tried finding ways to cope with what they had just witnessed.

While many were able to maintain their sanity by curling up into balls near the corners of the room, those who were less lucky ended up foaming on the floor due to the immense fear they were feeling.

Juliet herself was so terrified that she had already burst into tears by this point. However, due to utter fear, she didn't even dare to say a single word.

On the contrary, Gerald simply closed his eyes before taking in a deep breath. Completely silent, he stayed that way for a brief moment before finally opening his eyes again. By then, the terrifying redness in his eyes had already disappeared.

Slowly walking up to the butler form before, he then asked, "Where did you lock my comrades up?"

Instead of giving a reply, however, the butler instantly began trembling vigorously before ultimately vomiting blood and falling to the floor! Though the butler's body continued twitching for a brief moment, in the end, he stopped moving for good.

Due to Gerald's medical expertise, he was able to tell that the butler must have been so terrified that all his blood went up to his brain, causing a rupture in his blood vessels there. In short, the butler was now brain dead.

Looking at the fresh corpse by his feet, Gerald simply turned to face the subordinate standing behind him before ordering, "Go look for them!"

"Right away, young master!"

After his men went off to investigate, Gerald was just about to leave when he caught a glimpse of the mother and daughters from the Yowell family huddling closely together in fear. However, he simply averted his gaze before leaving the place for good.

Despite his absence, nobody dared to even move a muscle, even after an hour had passed! Throughout that time, an almost ungodly silence had filled the room.

It was evident that from now on, everyone in Heavenly City's Triangle District would be fear-stricken whenever they heard the Royal Dragon Group's name being mentioned.

Three days later in Gerald's mansion, Welson came up to him before saying, "After being told by the lord to look for the holy fox, I've glad to say that I've finally located it, young master! As it turned out, someone came across the holy fox about a year ago within the dense forest west of the Logan Province."

"I'm sure you're aware of why the lord is so keen on you locating the hold fox. Let me remind you that if you fail to nourish yourself with the fox's holy blood, there exists a chance for your temperament to be influenced by your hatred. Once that happens, it'll be incredibly difficult to salvage your old personality," added Welson before sighing.

Hearing that, Gerald frowned slightly though his expression contrasted how touched he was feeling from Welson's words.

After all, he had to admit that though he was easily able to control his bloodlust in the beginning, from the moment he made his move on Sven, his hatred intensified so much that it was akin to a tiny spark turning into a bush fire. Once a single bush was ignited, it was extremely difficult to stop the flames from spreading to the rest of the forest. In other words, Gerald was well aware that he could potentially lose control of himself due to his overwhelming hatred.

Since he had resolved the issue with such brutality the other day, a near irresistible urge to kill had constantly lingered around Gerald throughout the past three days.

"I get where both of you are coming from, Welson... I don't want to end up becoming a killing machine either. Very well, relay my command to the others that we'll be heading off to the west of the Logan Province immediately in search of the holy fox," ordered Gerald.

"Right away, young master!"

After giving his order, Gerald stood up and walked toward a window where a flower pot—with fresh flowers inside—had been placed. As he gently held on to one of the flower’s petals, he muttered to himself, “If I’m not mistaken, the Moldell family base established by Kort is located in the Logan Province...”

As Gerald thought about the possibility of exacting his revenge on Kort when he arrived in the Logan Province, his grip tightened slightly. At that moment, all of the flowers within that pot immediately wilted!

Welson was watching as the incident happened, and he felt his eyelids twitching. As was expected, it was right for the lord to be worried about the young master.

The hellish transformation had greatly improved the young master’s strength, and from what Welson could remember, the young master was actually even stronger than the lord had been all those years ago when the lord had just completed his own transformation.

The old man was also well aware that if the lord hadn’t been worried about Gerald falling into immorality, he wouldn’t have told Welson to follow the young master around in the first place.

“There’s something I’d like to say, though I’m not sure whether I should actually say it, young master...”

“Go on, Welson.”

“Well, we may need a few days to locate the holy fox. Due to that, I’m afraid that there’ll be a chance that you’ll get controlled by your inner demon if you fail to hold yourself back properly. See, when the lord himself was learning the blessings of the dragon back then, he found a solution to mediate his bloodlust. I was wondering if you’d like to give it a try...” said Welson.

“What sort of solution?”

Chapter 998

“Well, back then, the lord himself was feeling troubled by his inner demons. As a result, he searched high and low for a way to better control his temperament. After all, he was fully aware that until he could easily and skillfully manage the blessings of the dragon, he wasn’t going to be able to truly achieve the status of a legend.

“He began by visiting several monks and other religious people. The lord secretly went to Weston as well to search for a few renowned masters in hopes that he would be able to gain more insight into his issue. However, it wasn’t all that long after his search began when one day, the lord ended up killing someone on the spot just because the person said something wrong!”

“Due to that, he stopped trying to seek out help out of fear that he would end up killing another innocent person. Oddly enough, he found the answer to his question himself one day. In his moment of enlightenment, he sealed his strength away and reverted to living life as a regular human. Once that happened, he looked just like a lonely, old man. The lord kept a low profile for quite a while but once he perfected his skills, he broke the seal again, and from then on out, he knew he had truly become one of the legends.”

“Since this way of doing things will require an extremely high resolution, it isn’t exactly for everyone. However, since you’ve led a poor life before and you’re an actual kind-hearted person, I think you should give it a try,” explained Welson.

Hearing that, Gerald nodded slightly before replying, “Well, Grandpa did teach me a method to seal my strength... I’ll do it. After all, I’ll be trying my best to stay away from disputes and fights anyway since I don’t have the holy blood yet. Besides, by sealing all that power, I should be able to manage my strength with greater ease sooner. With any luck, I’ll be able to enter the mysterious realms of legends earlier as well.”

“Thank you for the suggestion, Welson!” added Gerald as he smiled.

As soon as his sentence ended, however, a knock came from the door. After getting permission from Gerald to enter, Yukie immediately rushed in before saying, “Sir!”

“What’s wrong, Yukie?”

"I... I heard that you're leaving again... Is that really true?" asked Yukie.

"Indeed it is," replied Gerald with a subtle smile.

"I... see... Could I at least know where you're headed to?" asked Yukie again as her eyes grew slightly teary.

From the moment she had met Gerald and was given permission to leave alongside the other maids, Yukie had given all her heart to Gerald.

She had missed him dearly throughout his half-year absence, and now that he was finally back, she found it difficult to just accept that he would be leaving again so soon.

"I'll be heading over to the Logan Province!" replied Gerald.

"The... Logan Province...?"

The moment Yukie heard that, she averted her gaze for a second as both her hands became slightly restless.

As the two men wondered why those two words unsettled her so much, Yukie took in a deep breath before saying, "...Could I please be allowed to come along, sir? I really don't want to leave you anymore!"

"You can't Yukie. He will have to travel separately from us to get there anyway. What more, if a beauty like you stays by his side, you may attract the attention of villainous characters! As a result, he may have to unseal his strength to save you, causing the entire effort to be wasted! Which is why you're not allowed to come along," replied Welson as he shook his head.

“Well... You’ll eventually still need to meet up with each other again, right? When that happens, someone needs to be by sir’s side to take good care of him! No offense, but could you be more sensible and considerate than a woman, Mr. Freed?” said Yukie in reply.

Welson was speechless after hearing that. After a while, he simply shook his head before laughing bitterly.

“I suppose what you said did make sense... However, if you’re coming along, you’ll have to follow us. You’re not allowed to disturb the young master’s endeavor to quietly discipline himself. If you refuse to agree to that, then you can’t come along,” said the old man.

“I... I agree!” replied Yukie as she smiled broadly.

And just like that, the affair was decided there and then.

That afternoon, Gerald returned to Weston before getting on a green train to the Logan Province.

The journey itself took two whole days, and Gerald finally stepped out of the train on the morning of the third day.

Feeling hungry, Gerald then headed to a small restaurant that had been built along the train station.

As soon as he opened the door to the restaurant, however, he immediately heard a man’s voice saying, “Just order whatever you want, sisters! Everything will be on me!”

Following the source of the voice, Gerald saw a man and two women seated at a table. With all three of them looking equally charming, it was no wonder why they had attracted the attention of several of the restaurant’s customers as well.

As the man smiled on, one of the women simply replied, “Are you the only rich one here? Regardless, we’ve had enough fun out there so it’s high time we return home. Otherwise, we may end up getting scolded or even punished!”

“That’s quite enough... We’re already back here anyway after all that fun, right?” said the other woman as she too, smiled.

“...Hmm? Say sister, look over there... That’s the young man who sat beside us on the train earlier, right...?” said the same woman as she pointed at the man standing at the door.

Chapter 999

“Well, hello there! We meet again!” said Haven Lovewell—one of the charming women—as she waved at the youth.

“We do, indeed...” replied Gerald with a subtle smile as he closed the door behind him. Placing his baggage down at a specially designated area for tourists, Gerald then headed over to an empty table that was coincidentally beside Haven’s.

As Gerald sat down, Haven added, “Do you remember our little conversation on the train earlier? It was so pleasant that I even wanted to ask you for your Line number at some point! Still, I never expected to meet you again so soon... I guess our meeting must have been written in the stars!”

“That’s quite enough, Haven. He came here to have his meal so don’t trouble him any more,” said Xareni—Haven’s elder sister—as she gently stepped on Haven’s foot, reminding her to be courteous.

“She’s right, Haven. Why did you even ask him for his Line number?” added Quintin.

Hearing that, Gerald simply shook his head before smiling wryly.

As Haven had said, Gerald had earlier bumped into the three Lovewell siblings while they were still on the train. At the time, the Lovewell siblings were sitting right across Gerald.

Quintin, however, had been dissatisfied with his window-side seat since the old man—who looked to be around eighty—sitting beside Gerald was an eyesore for him. The old man himself had been sleeping with his head leaned against the window throughout most of their journey, and Quintin couldn't bear having to look at his sleeping face for any longer.

As a result, Quintin asked Gerald to switch seats with him. Though Gerald initially had no problem with that, Quintin had tossed a hundred dollars at Gerald while asking.

If he had been a bit nicer and more polite, Gerald would've switched seats with him anyway. However, from the moment the hundred dollars were tossed his way, Gerald completely ignored Quintin's request.

Had Haven not stepped in to advise Quintin, he would've definitely started a fight with Gerald.

Later on, Haven herself began chatting with Gerald. Since Gerald has traveled so much in the past year, he was no longer the same person who only knew about Serene County and Mayberry City.

Due to his extensive knowledge of many different places, Haven soon found herself getting fascinated by him.

Xareni, on the other hand, never said a word to Gerald. Being the eldest among the three people, she was slightly colder and more aloof in general.

That was the gist of their interaction back on the train.

“So, where are you headed to next? Did you come to the Logan Province to study or work?” asked

Haven curiously.

“I’m just here to travel!” replied Gerald with a smile.

“Oh! If you’re traveling around here, then I recommend that you go to a place called Balbrick Manor! There are lots of amusing things to do there, from golf to even horse racing!”

“Haven, not everyone can go there... You can’t expect an ordinary person to just go there! Regardless, just hurry up and eat already,” said Xareni who clearly didn’t like Gerald one bit.

If it wasn’t already obvious, all three of them shared a rather extraordinary background.

Being born with great pride and elegance, Xareni was the least realistic among the three of them despite being the eldest. She was simply too used to only meeting up with prestigious people. As a result, she looked down upon normal people like Gerald. To Xareni, such people didn’t even have the right to befriend her!

“Alright...” replied Haven, saying nothing more.

With that, Gerald ordered a plate of fried rice with an egg on it. Once his meal arrived, he immediately began eating slowly.

As he ate, he realized that the Lovewells didn’t really eat much based on what they ordered.

Sometime later, all three of them got up to get their baggage. Before they left, however, Haven sneakily returned to Gerald’s side before whispering, “Hey, I live in the Lovewell Manor in the Logan Province! If you find the time, come over and have some fun with me! Also, just in case you’ve forgotten, my full name is Haven Lovewell!”

Before Gerald could even reply, Xareni was already dragging Haven by the arm out of the restaurant.

“...What a naïve girl she is...” muttered Gerald to himself as he smiled in resignation.

He, for one, was in no mood to have any sort of fun with her.

Now that he was finally getting a chance to ignore all his past resentments and grudges for a few days, Gerald wanted to take the opportunity to properly relax.

With that in mind, Gerald began touring around tourist spots in the Logan Province. Before he knew it, evening had come and night was swiftly approaching.

Realizing that he still needed to find someplace to stay, Gerald was just about to go hotel hunting when he heard a voice saying, “What do you plan on doing?”

The feminine voice had come from the entrance of an alleyway. Taking a few steps back to look down the darkened area, Gerald realized that a few drunk youths had dragged a woman into the alley which only led to a dead end.

“What do you think? We’re going to have some fun with you, of course! Now, come on!” said one of the three hooligans who instantly began dragging her further down the alley.

As she desperately struggled to escape, the corner of her eye caught a glimpse of another youth walking toward them. Seeing that someone was coming over to help, the woman used all of her strength to shove the hooligan—who was pulling her arm—away from her.

Thankfully, the hooligan was drunk enough to let go and the woman immediately ran over to the new youth’s side before clinging on to his arm and crying out, “They’re trying to take liberties on me, hubby!”

She made sure to pinch his arm as well, a clear indication for him to cooperate with her.

Chapter 1000

“Hubby?” said all three of the gangsters simultaneously as they turned to look at each other. However, their confusion quickly turned to hostility as they began glaring at the youth.

“Hold on now, I’m not her husband!” replied the youth as he began waving his hands quickly in fear.

Hearing that, the woman found herself rolling her eyes as she thought to herself, ‘D*mn it! How could anyone be this much of a coward?’

The hooligans themselves broke into roars of laughter as one of them said, “It appears you’re quite smart, little beauty! We’ll be sure to teach you a good lesson later!”

Just as they were about to lunge at the duo, the youth suddenly turned around and pointed at the entrance of the alleyway before shouting, “Police!”

As soon as they heard that, the three drunk gangsters immediately stopped in their tracks and turned their backs against the duo, squatting immediately after with their hands placed behind their heads!

“W-we won’t do it again so please let us off easy!”

Seeing that the gangsters were now distracted, the youth immediately began dragging the woman by her arm as he said, “Now’s our chance! Run!”

It was only a few steps later when he realized that the woman could no longer run. Thankfully, he noticed a manhole cover close by.

Pulling her over, he applied a slight force on his foot, tilting the manhole cover up. The moment the three gangsters stepped out of the alleyway, the youth immediately—and quite effortlessly—kicked the

cover toward them!

Spinning at a high speed, the manhole cover whizzed across the air before finally striking all three of the gangsters who had been standing close to each other! As a result, the gangsters all fell to the ground.

With that, the youth turned around to catch up with the woman and continue aiding her in her escape. The woman herself had already been slowly jogging away from the scene by then, which meant that she wasn't able to witness the youth's amazing feat with the manhole cover.

Eventually, both of them arrived at a park, at which point the woman simply said, "Stop, I can't run anymore..."

As the youth turned to look at her, he could see that the woman was breathing heavily, her hands on her knees as she slowly caught her breath again.

Naturally, the youth in question was Gerald.

Thankful that the only luggage he had to carry along was in the form of a satchel, Gerald took the chance to properly observe the beauty now that they were safe.

However, since the uniform-wearing woman had bent over to catch her breath, Gerald was able to catch a glimpse of her fair bosom. Averting his gaze since he had no idea where to even look, the woman soon caught on and quickly held on to her collar as she blushed deeply.

After a brief silence, the woman smiled rather awkwardly before saying, "...Thank you for saving me back there... If it wasn't for you, who knows what would've become of me by the end of tonight!"

"You're very welcome!" replied Gerald as he nodded to her before turning around to leave.

Unable to just accept that, the woman then said, "Hold on, sir. I haven't even finished talking! You know, earlier when I called you my husband, you could've just gone with it for a while! Why did you have to straight-out deny it?"

Her tone reflected her slight annoyance and it wasn't hard to guess why. After all, women were usually particularly sensitive to how others viewed them. Being an extremely beautiful woman herself, this stereotype definitely applied to her.

The way she saw it, Gerald almost seemed frightened to even pretend that he was her husband. It simply made her feel slightly unhappy about the entire situation.

"I have a girlfriend... Besides, I still managed to save you without having to impersonate as your husband!"

"Still! Don't you think that- Ow!"

As the woman pouted to release some of her dissatisfaction, she had taken a step toward Gerald which instantly resulted in a sharp pain in her ankle!

Yelping in pain, the woman then cried out, "I've sprained my ankle!"

Shaking his head, Gerald then squatted down before asking, "Where's the sprain? I'll have a quick look at it..."

"There's no need for that! You have a girlfriend, right? She could misunderstand!" replied the woman.

"Then this is where we'll part ways. Have a safe trip back!" said Gerald as he immediately carried his bag again and prepared to leave.

“Hey! Hold it! Don’t you know how to take care of a woman? At least send me to a hospital!”

Closing his eyes, Gerald took in a deep breath before turning back to face the woman. Finding a park bench, he led her there and lifted her sprained ankle. The woman simply sat anxiously, wondering what he was trying to do as he felt around her foot.

The moment he found the spot he was looking for, he twisted it slightly and a ‘crack’ was heard.

And just like that, the woman’s sprained ankle was healed!

“You should be good to go now. Anyway, since it’s already getting dark, you’d better head home as soon as possible,” said Gerald as he got up, finally ready to leave.

“Hold on a moment!” replied the woman, stopping Gerald from leaving again.

“What is it this time...?”

“Well, you’ve helped me a lot but I haven’t even been able to thank you properly! At least let me treat you to dinner!”