

Chapter 2241

If it was fun Kai wanted, then fun he would get. Thinking back, it'd be meaningless if he got rid of Kai that easily anyway. With that in mind, Gerald then returned to his room before lying in bed to get some rest.

...

It was sometime later when Kai who was drenched in cold sweat finally reopened his eyes, followed by a terrorized scream. The boy had dreamt that Gerald had brought him to a deserted mountain before tearing his head off...!

Upon realizing that he was still lying on his hotel bed, Kai quickly grabbed a glass of water that was right beside his bed before downing it in one gulp... Once he calmed down a bit, he wiped the sweat off his forehead before grumbling, "God d*mn it! That scared me half to death...!"

Shaking his head, Kai then took a look at the time. Realizing that almost four hours had passed, Kai figured that Gerald must have fallen into his trap by now.

Since Kai had planned for everything that happened in that room to be recorded by the surveillance system, he couldn't help but smile smugly. After all, he now had something to prevent Gerald from getting in his way! As long as Gerald made one wrong move, Kai could just spread that video around, causing Gerald and Fujiko to instantly suffer a bad reputation!

Unfortunately, this was the best idea he could currently think of to deal with Gerald, but it was better than nothing. With that in mind, Kai began humming as he skipped toward the monitoring room.

Upon entering, however, Kai's glee quickly turned into rage. Trembling from both anger and worry, Kai couldn't help but walk toward the pitch-black screen. Hadn't he told his confidant to keep an eye on things...?!

“God d*mn it...!” growled Kai, wondering if anything had been recorded at all. He should’ve been informed that the screen had turned pitch-black the second it happened! Now fuming with anger, Kai slammed his fist against the table, nearly causing the monitor to fall to the floor!

It didn’t help that Kai knew that he couldn’t just repair or set up more surveillance systems in Gerald’s room. After all, Gerald was most probably awake now and had probably figured out that he was being set up after seeing the two university students he had slept with.

With that in mind, Kai was afraid that the second he stepped in, Gerald would just beat him to death! Actively holding his anger back, Kai then called his subordinate.

The second the subordinate saw who was calling, he gestured for the C-list celebrity not to say a word before picking up, only to hear Kai growl, “Where the hell are you...?!”

“...I-I’m just outside taking a smoke...!”

“Get back in here!” roared Kai, clearly not buying it at all. After all, if his confidant had only gone out to smoke, he should’ve realized by now that the screen had gone dark!

Whatever the case was, it was a few minutes later when the subordinate came running back into the room and the second he saw the darkened screen, he became so anxious that he nearly toppled to the ground...!

Glaring at the subordinate, Kai who felt like killing him now then growled, “Care to explain what the hell is going on...?!”

“I... I... H-how could this have happened...?! Everything was fine before I left...! C-could something be wrong with the computer...?” stuttered the subordinate who didn’t dare reveal that he had never entered the room in the first place!

Seething with rage, Kai almost burst into a maniacal fit of laughter as he roared, “Well, what are you waiting for?! Go turn it on and test it out!”

Kai, for one, had spent a few thousand dollars on the computer. With that in mind, there was no way the computer would malfunction at the most critical of moments...!

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Knowing that he didn't really have any other choice, the subordinate then switched the computer on and just like that, it was revealed that the surveillance system was functioning normally. However, not a soul was in the room...!

“What was that about something being wrong with the computer...?!” growled Kai as he smacked the back of his confidant's head. Not only had his subordinate disobey his orders, but he even tried to fool him! If this wasn't such a high end place, Kai would've already beaten him to death...!

Holding the back of his aching head, the confidant who was already in tears quickly get to his knees before crying out, “I-I'm sorry, young master...! I have no idea what went wrong...! Everything was going smoothly, last I checked!”

Holding back his anger, Kai who knew that he needed to focus on Gerald then growled, “Where the hell did you go...?!”

While Kai knew that Gerald wasn't going to be fully sober in just four hours, he couldn't help but quiver now that he knew that Gerald was no longer in the room. No matter how drunk Gerald was, there was always a chance that he'd see through his plans! If that came to be, then Kai's life would surely be in danger...!

Regardless, not daring to lie to Kai anymore, the subordinate gulped before saying, “I-I... used the money you gave me to look for a C-list celebrity...!”

“You...! You, good for nothing...! Even if you’re horny, go look for women at less critical moments...!” roared Kai, his face as red as a beet now.

“B-but how was I supposed to know that something like this would happen...? After all, it was clearly fine during the initial inspection... E-either way, since Gerald’s not in the room now... Do you think he’s seen through our plans...?” whimpered the subordinate as he stared at the empty room on screen.

“Don’t try to change the god d*mned topic...!” growled Kai who was more scared than angry at this point. After all, what he had feared most was now a reality...!

Barely a second later, Gerald’s voice could be heard outside their room, saying, “My, my, how you spoil me, Mr. Kanagawa. Not only did you treat me to a lavish meal, but you also got me two beauties to sleep with! Unfortunately, I have to say that I’m not interested in sleeping around.”

Upon hearing that, Kai instantly went pale.

At that moment, he recalled the moment Aiden had kidnapped him from his manor that night. Had Gerald truly wanted him dead, he would’ve surely perished in that Futaba warehouse back then. Now that his plan had failed, he was once again in Gerald’s grasp...!

Watching as his terrified confidant leaped to his feet before clinging against the wall, Kai then forced a smile before replying, “I... just wanted to make sure that you were comfortable...! E-either way, I’m sorry if they weren’t your type! Just tell me what kind of women you want and I’ll get them for you...!”

“Really now...?” asked Gerald as he lit a cigarette before sitting cross legged before Kai.

“... O-of course, buddy...! Buddies need to take good care of each other, r-right...? You can pick any woman you like in the entirety of Japan, and that includes A-list celebrities...!” declared Kai who knew that he could only play along now.

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Simply shrugging in response, Gerald then replied, "As I've said, I'm not really interested in such things."

"Then tell me what else you'd like to do...? Worry not, I'll definitely be able to get whatever you ask for!" declared Kai who figured that Gerald hadn't actually figured out what was happening.

For one, Gerald wasn't infuriated yet. With that in mind, Kai realized that Gerald could have just left since he didn't like the women he had chosen for him. If that was the case, then Kai didn't really mind this outcome. After all, though he failed to obtain a way to threaten Gerald, at the very least, he wasn't in trouble yet.

"Hmm... Well, I have a place in mind. Follow me, I'll drive you there!" replied Gerald as he tossed his unfinished cigarette to the floor before stomping on it.

Watching as Gerald then walked out, Kai and his confidant were left utterly puzzled. Shortly after, the subordinate inched toward Kai's side before whispering, "Should... we follow him, young master...?"

"Do you even dare not to?" grumbled Kai before taking a deep breath. Summoning all the courage in him, Kai then began following Gerald to his car, his subordinate staying close to him at all times.

Once the trio got to the car parked right outside the hotel, Gerald got in the driver's seat whereas Kai and his confidant sat at the back. Already sensing that something was wrong, Kai cleared his throat before saying, "...Um... Gerald...? Where exactly are we headed to...? You know, I'm sure my subordinate and I can find an even better alternative!"

"Just trust me on this. I'll be bringing you guys to an extremely nice place," replied Gerald with a subtle smile as he shook his head before stepping on the gas and heading South.

Though Gerald drove at nearly a hundred and fifty miles per hour, Kai and his subordinate who kept their backs glued against the back of their seats throughout the journey remained silent for fear that they would accidentally offend Gerald.

However, after about two hours of driving, Kai was starting to get worried out of his mind. After all, dawn had already come and they still had no idea where Gerald was taking them! It was half an hour later when Kai finally gave in to fear and asked, "...Um... Gerald...? Where are we going...?"

"You'll know once we get there," replied Gerald in an indifferent tone.

It was around ten in the morning when Gerald finally stopped the car atop a barren mountain.

"... The... Yamashita family's territory...?" muttered the stunned Kai.

Thinking back, hadn't Ryugu told him that Gerald had a good relationship with the Yamashitas? The thought of that alone was already starting to worry Kai.

"Get out," ordered Gerald as he opened the door to the back seat.

Doing as he was told, Kai whose legs were now shaky couldn't help but ask, "...Why... are we here, Gerald...?"

Though he knew that following Gerald was bad news, there was simply no escaping him...!

"Hmm? I just brought you over to have a nice chat. Don't worry, there'll be tea," replied Gerald with a subtle smile as he patted Kai on the shoulder. Though Gerald's pats weren't particularly strong, the terrified Kai's legs were already close to giving in.

Just as the two got out and Gerald closed the car door behind them, an unfamiliar voice greeted, "Hmm? If it isn't Mr. Crawford! It's been a while!"

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As it turned out, the voice belonged to one of the Yamashitas. Since he knew that Gerald had a good relationship with the family elder, he didn't ask what Gerald was doing here.

Whatever the case was, Gerald simply nodded in response before replying, "Indeed. I'm here to have some tea with these two gentlemen. Do lead them in."

Watching as Gerald then began walking deeper into their territory, the Yamashita man turned to face Kai and his subordinate before cordially saying, "Please, come with me, gentlemen!"

Not daring to disobey, Kai and his subordinate simply silently followed after them. Kai, for one, knew that if he didn't follow Gerald's orders now, Gerald could easily turn around and kill him in a single strike!

Either way, after walking for about ten minutes, Gerald finally arrived at the old man's yard.

Hearing footsteps, the old man who was fetching a new kettle of tea turned around and was pleasantly surprised to see Gerald walking in with his hands behind his back. Putting the kettle down, he was then prompted to ask, "Oh? What brings you here today?"

"I came over to deal with some things," replied Gerald with a faint smile.

Before the old man could ask any further, he watched as Kai and his subordinate entered after Gerald. Putting two and two together, the old man then lifted his kettle again before walking into his living room.

Seeing that, Gerald stopped before the living room's door before gesturing toward it as he said, "Please come in, Mr. Kanagawa."

Unwilling to enter, the awkward Kai who was getting increasingly bad vibes about this place was prompted to ask, "Before that... What are we even doing here...? To be a Kanagawa in the Yamashita

family's territory... That... isn't exactly a good thing..."

"I've already told you, haven't I? We're here to have a talk while enjoying some tea. Naturally, your subordinate gets to join in too. Don't worry, I'll send you back once we're done," replied Gerald as he walked into the living room.

Momentarily shuddering, Kai truly hoped that he was simply overthinking things as he slowly entered the living room as well.

Watching as Kai whose hands were clearly trembling sat opposite of him, Gerald took one of the cups of tea that the old man had just poured and placed it before Kai before saying, "Here, have some while it's warm."

Not even bothering about the fact that his subordinate had been ignored, Kai who was now beyond anxious gulped before asking, "P-please, Gerald... What are you really trying to achieve here...?"

Raising a slight brow, Gerald who knew that he no longer needed to pretend to be cordial replied, "First off... You were the one who set up these cameras, correct?"

The sooner he could get rid of Kai, the better. If he did things quickly enough, he could possibly even make it home in time for dinner.

Regardless, upon hearing that, Kai instantly went pale. Feeling his heart skip a beat, he slowly replied, "W-what cameras...?"

"The ones in my room, of course. Wasn't your master plan to get me drunk before slipping those two women into my room and filming everything? Were you planning to then threaten me with the footage?" said Gerald in a calm tone as he sipped his tea before narrowing his eyes at Kai.

"I-I'd never do anything of the sort...! I simply wanted to treat you to a nice meal and let you have some

fun with those women...! A-as I said, I'm fine with inviting you to another entertainment center if that experience wasn't to your liking...! As for the cameras... T-they came with the hotel!" declared Kai, desperately trying to clear Gerald's suspicions.

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Kai just didn't understand. Even if Gerald had lied about not being a good drinker, that drink contained seventy percent of alcohol...! Gerald had drunk six glasses of that alcohol, and any regular adult would've definitely gotten drunk out of their mind after taking that much! Yet here Gerald was, looking completely sober even though Kai was certain that Gerald had

Properly drunk every glass! How had Gerald digested all that alcohol so quickly?!

"Oh? Is that so?" replied Gerald with a faint smile. Though Kai had said all that, his terrified eyes told Gerald that everything he had guessed was on the mark.

While all this was happening, the old man simply remained silent. The elder, for one, knew that he only needed to provide this space for Gerald to do whatever he needed to. While he wasn't sure why Gerald couldn't have just held this conversation back at the Futaba manor, the old man knew better than to inquire about that at the moment.

Whatever the case was, Kai whose forehead was now drenched in sweat then added, "I... I mean it! You, of all people, should know that I'd never do anything to harm you...!"

"I see... and what do you say?" asked Gerald as turned to look at Kai's subordinate.

"T-the young master speaks the truth! We were simply trying to give you a relaxing time in hopes that you'd forgive us after all we've done in the past! We meant no evil!" declared the quivering subordinate.

"Hmm... Did I wrongly accuse you then...?" asked Gerald with a slightly raised brow.

“Y-you did...! Look, if I really wanted to harm you, wouldn’t it have made sense for me to do it while you were drunk? Why’d I provide you with women if I really wanted to hurt you!” replied Kai with a nod.

“So that’s your answer...? Do you really think I didn’t hear your conversation earlier?” growled Gerald with a frown.

“T-that... H-how do I explain this...” muttered Kai as he instantly averted his gaze.

“Not the slightest bit of sincerity in you... Since that’s the case, I won’t need to keep you two alive,” replied Gerald with a sigh.

Realizing that he had truly f*cked up this time, the nervous Kai instantly yelled, “N-no-!”

However, before Kai could say anything else, Gerald simply flicked a toothpick toward the boy’s throat! The toothpick itself pierced through Kai’s neck before embedding itself onto the wall like a nail! Though Kai could tell that Gerald had done something since there was now a searing pain in his throat, he hadn’t even been able to see Gerald’s attack clearly!

“G-Gerald... You...!” muttered Kai, unable to say anything else due to the immense pain that came whenever he talked. Before long, blood began dripping out from the corners of his mouth.

By this point, even breathing had become difficult for Kai. It felt as though someone was squeezing his neck, and no matter how much Kai tried to breathe, he simply couldn’t take in any air.

“Y-young master...!” cried out Kai’s subordinate as he turned to look at the bloody toothpick that had been embedded into the wall. Easily seeing the connection between the toothpick and Kai’s agony, the subordinate couldn’t help but wonder how all this was even possible! This wasn’t some action movie...!

“First assassins, now this? You really deserve what you’re currently experiencing. Regardless, I brought you here since I won’t be in much trouble for killing you within the Yamashita family’s territory,”

retorted Gerald, glaring at Kai the entire time.

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Kai, however, was too preoccupied trying to breathe to even reply. He simply couldn't breathe no matter how much he tried!

Hearing no reply, Gerald simply watched in silence as Kai's death swiftly approached.

Throughout the process, the old man seemed completely unfazed about what was taking place before him. Remaining indifferent, the old man simply opted to have more tea as he read through a few books that were laying around. Kai's subordinate, on the other hand, was so terrified that he was paralyzed in place.

By the time Kai finally died, his hands had been grasping so tightly onto his neck this entire time that they remained frozen there, an agonized expression etched on his face. Till the very moment he died, Kai had failed to realize what had killed him, though none of that mattered anymore.

Either way, now that the boy was dead, the old man tossed his book aside before looking at Gerald with a smile as he said, "As expected, you truly are strong..."

"That was nothing compared to what you're capable of," replied Gerald in a slightly embarrassed tone as he scratched the back of his head. After all, he had previously witnessed the old man summon a flame in his palm out of thin air. Now, that was awe worthy.

Before the old man could reply, his nose suddenly twitched as he asked with a frown, "What's that smell..?"

"Smells like... urine...?" muttered Gerald. For people like Gerald and the elder, discerning even the faintest of smells was nothing to them.

"I-I'm sorry...! I couldn't hold it in...!" whimpered the terrified subordinate who was traumatized after watching Kai die so miserably.

Shaking his head, Gerald then waved his hand before saying, "Leave. I won't kill you."

"... R-really...?" asked the subordinate who didn't want to be given false hope.

After watching Gerald nod, the subordinate instantly bolted out of the room! As he ran helter-skelter away from the manor, the subordinate thought about how he needed to leave the country as soon as possible. He needed to find someplace where nobody knew him so that Gerald wouldn't ever be able to track him down...!

Regardless, after the subordinate ran out of his manor, the puzzled old man was prompted to ask, "... Are you really sure you're fine letting him off like this? Aren't you worried that he'll cause you more trouble by revealing what you've done after this?"

Laughing in response, Gerald simply replied, "I only said that I wouldn't be the one to kill him. That doesn't mean he's going to leave this place alive."

Upon hearing that, the old man simply nodded before gesturing at one of the Yamashitas who was standing at the door as he said, "Dispose of him."

Immediately doing as he was told, it was less than ten seconds later when an agonizing scream could be heard. Soon after, the man returned. Getting to his knees, the Yamashita member then declared, "He's been dealt with, sir."

"Good. Now get rid of their corpses," replied the old man with a satisfied smile as he pointed at Kai's corpse.

Once the corpse was dragged out and the door to the living room was closed, the old man took a sip of tea before facing Gerald as he asked, "So... That person you killed was the youngest master of the Kanagawa family, correct?"

"He's the one," replied Gerald with a nod.

"I see. You've done a good job deciding to deal with him here. It'll surely eliminate a lot of potential trouble for you," said the old man in an approving tone.

"Thank you, though I do have to apologize for causing you trouble," replied Gerald in a slightly embarrassed tone.

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This was pretty much the best place Gerald could think of to safely dispose of Kai. Otherwise, he wouldn't have decided to bring trouble to the old man's doorstep.

"Oh please, this is just a trivial affair. Regardless, if people do come looking for them, I'll just tell them that they left with you shortly after. In other words, I have no idea where those two Kanagawas are," replied the old man with a wink.

"I appreciate it. Speaking of which, though I came here mainly to dispose of Kai, I also have something to discuss," said Gerald with a much more serious tone.

"Go on..." replied the old man with a nod.

"Well... I've found a way to get to Yearning Island," said Gerald after taking a deep breath. Honestly, just talking about it made it difficult to even breathe.

"... Hmm? Then what are you still sitting here for? Hurry and rescue your parents and sister! We can't let

Daryl continue to use them to threaten you anymore!” declared the old man with a stern expression.

“To clarify, at the moment, I’ve only found out where I can get information on how to get to the island. You see, the Seadom tribe has apparently placed everything related to Yearning Island in the ancient ruins in Yanam. Once I get there, I should be able to get the information I need,” replied Gerald with a faint smile. Though he had only met this old man a few times, he couldn’t help but respect him as an elder. It was a feeling Gerald hadn’t experienced in the longest time.

“The ancient ruins in Yanam you say... Can’t say I’ve heard of that place before. Hopefully you’ll find it after searching around for a bit. Also, keep in mind that it probably won’t be easy to enter,” muttered the old man after thinking for a bit.

“I’ve been there before,” replied Gerald with a nod.

“Oh? That’s a great start! Was it easy to access?” asked the old man, his expression returning to a relaxed one.

“Well... I did bump into an old man guarding the place, but due to my Herculean Primordial Spirit, he ended up greatly respecting me. In fact, he even said that everything there belonged to me, and that I was free to take whatever I wanted. I had no idea why that was when I first visited that place a few months ago, and quite frankly, I still have no idea why all that happened,” replied Gerald with a shrug.

“Now isn’t the time to be bothered by that. You should head over quickly to learn how to get to Yearning Island already!” grumbled the old man, sounding much hastier than usual. After all, not only did he want to help Gerald, but he was also curious to find out why Daryl had ended up the way he currently was.

“I’ll head off once I’ve settled the Futaba family’s issues. While it’s true that I initially only got in touch with them to get in contact with the Seadom tribe, now that I’ve gotten this involved with them, I can’t just leave,” replied Gerald as he shook his head.

“And how long do you plan to help them exactly?” asked the old man.

“I’ll be off once their current issues are resolved,” replied Gerald who really didn’t want to leave the Futabas to fend for themselves, especially since they had now pointed him in the right direction. While it was true that he could’ve eventually learned that the secrets of the Seadom tribe were in the secret ruins in Yanam, by that point, there was a high possibility that he would’ve been too late to save his parents and sister, and that was a possibility that Gerald didn’t want to even think about.

“... I can get my family to help you,” suggested the old man after thinking for a while.

“I appreciate it. Then let’s go after the Hanyus first. I really can’t rest easy knowing that family is still up and about,” replied Gerald.

“Negative. Focus on saving your family first. You can deal with the Hanyus once you’re done with that,” said the old man after giving it some thought.

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Upon hearing that, Gerald momentarily fell silent. While it was true that Amare had told him that his parents and sister were being treated humanely, he was still worried that things could change at any moment.

However, simply leaving to save them felt irresponsible toward the Futabas. After all, the second the Kanagawas and Hanyus learned that he had left, they would surely start harassing the Futabas again, and Gerald was pretty sure that the Fareast Consortium could do little to stop them.

Now that the old man was volunteering to help, however, Gerald couldn’t help but feel more assured.

After all, the most mysterious family in Japan was stepping in! Knowing how strong the Yamashitas were, Gerald believed that nobody would be able to touch the Futabas if they were really going to help him.

Seeing how silent Gerald had gotten, the old man was prompted to ask, "So... made your decision?"

Looking at the old man for a while, Gerald then replied, "Are... you really willing to help me...?"

"But of course! In the end, you're still Daryl's grandson, so helping you is only right. Besides, I'm curious to find out why that old man underwent such drastic changes since we last met... Honestly, I still find it hard to believe that he locked your family up!" declared the old man with a smile.

"Well, alright then! I won't be as worried as long as you're involved! While I'm sure you're already going to do this, please do your best to help the Futabas once I'm gone. I'll definitely return to help out once I've rescued my parents and sister!" said Gerald in a determined voice as he slapped his thigh.

"Oh, I won't be involved," replied the old man as he shook his head.

"Come again?" asked Gerald, rightfully puzzled.

Laughing in response, the old man then took a sip of tea before replying, "Allow me to clarify. In return for getting the Yamashitas to guard over the Futabas, I only ask that I be allowed to join you on your quest to save your parents. I believe that my family is more than capable of handling themselves, and you'll get extra help on your journey there too. What's more, though it's been ages since we've last met, I trust that once Daryl meets up with me, he'll be compelled to treat your family better. So? What do you say?"

Frowning slightly, Gerald then said, "But... remember, we still need to head to the ancient ruins in Yanam first in order to locate Yearning Island. What more, I have a feeling that we'll come across quite a few Crawford cultivators along the way..."

"Hmm? Worried that I'll end up burdening you?" asked the old man with a smile.

"Of course not! You're much more powerful than me..." muttered Gerald as he shook his head.

“Then what’s the issue? Listen, I advise you to head back and prepare yourself as soon as possible. I’ll be getting my family ready to protect the Futabas as well. If everything goes smoothly, then we should leave by dawn. How’s that?” asked the old man with a wave of his hand.

“... Fine. Let’s go with that,” replied Gerald in resignation. Though he had agreed with the plan, Gerald was honestly still worried that the old man would suffer some injuries in the end. After all, though the old man was strong, the Crawford cultivators weren’t pushovers either.

Whatever the case was, Gerald then left the Yamashita family’s territory before driving straight back to the Futaba manor.

Gerald, for one, wasn’t worried about Kai’s murder at all. After all, he trusted that the old man would know what to do with the corpses. While it was true that the Kanagawas would surely fly into a rage once they realized that Kai was dead, Gerald was sure that this would also deter them from dealing with the Futabas any time soon.

Either way, by the time he finally arrived at the Futaba manor, the sky was already starting to darken. Come to think of it, Gerald had wasted two entire days just to get rid of Kai.

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Whatever the case was, upon entering the manor, Gerald quickly told everyone to gather in the living room.

Once Takuya and Fujiko were sitting by his sides, Gerald casually said, “...Alright, so... I’ve killed Kai.”

“You’ve... what?! Gerald, isn’t that a bit too rash?! My family’s just gotten back on track you know? Once the Kanagawas find out about this, the Futabas will surely be in hot water!” exclaimed Takuya as he leaped to his feet.

“Don’t worry, patriarch, I killed him in the Yamashita family’s territory. With that said, the Yamashitas will be settling any subsequent issues that arise from Kai’s murder,” explained Gerald with a wave of his hand.

“I see. Well... that’s good then,” replied Takuya with a sigh of relief. Thank God Gerald and the Yamashitas were on good terms...

“Speaking of which, I’ll also be leaving tomorrow morning to head to the ancient ruins in Yanam. Don’t worry, after notifying the Yamashitas about it, they agreed to send some men to guard all of you. With that in mind, you won’t need to worry about any trouble from the other families,” said Gerald to ensure that Takuya wouldn’t get unnecessarily worried.

Naturally, Takuya ended up frowning slightly. After all, it was best if Gerald stayed with them forever.

However, knowing that it was impossible, Takuya simply replied, “That’s good! The sooner you leave, the less suffering your parents will face on Yearning Island. We wish you luck, Gerald!”

“Thank you. Well, those were the two things I wanted to talk about. Also, once I’ve saved them, I’ll be sure to return to properly help you deal with the two families,” said Gerald with a nod.

“After you’ve dealt with the Hanyus and Kanagawas, will you remain with my family...?” asked Takuya.

“Unfortunately, I simply can’t, ” replied Gerald with a subtle smile. While it was impossible for him to remain in Japan, Gerald promised himself that he would visit them from time to time. After all, he had honestly grown fond of the Futabas.

“Will we be coming along?” asked Master Ghost.

“That’d be nice, but I don’t mind if you guys wish to remain here either,” replied Gerald.

"I'm coming along!" declared Aiden, and though Master Ghost said nothing else, his expression made it evident that he was doing the same.

As all this was happening, Fujiko remained seated silently at the side. While she knew that Gerald would have to leave someday, she hadn't expected it to be this soon. Truth be told, she simply had a feeling that she would never be able to meet him again once he left.

Regardless, after drinking some tea, Gerald, Aiden, and Master Ghost returned to their respective rooms. Once they were gone, Takuya sighed before turning to look at his dazed daughter before asking, "Well you were oddly silent earlier."

"I... I'm just feeling a little tired..." muttered Fujiko as she shook her head.

Before Takuya could say anything else, she simply got to her feet before walking off. Sighing once she left, Takuya couldn't help but say, "This girl..."

Still, as her father, he knew exactly what was going on in her mind. Then again, he was also well aware that Gerald had zero interest in his daughter.

Fast forward to the next morning, Gerald could be seen standing in the living room at the break of dawn.

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Having only a backpack and a cigarette in hand, it wasn't long before Gerald was joined by Master Ghost and Aiden. Taking one final look at the manor, Gerald then sighed before saying, "Let's go."

After getting into the SUV, the three of them were about to head off when all of a sudden, knocking could be heard at the side of the car. Momentarily surprised to see who it was, Gerald then lowered the car's window pulling the cigarette out of his mouth, before asking with a smile, "Is there anything I can do for you, Miss Futaba?"

"I... I'm coming with you!" declared Fujiko, her tone showing just how determined she was to come along.

Naturally surprised to hear that, Gerald simply replied, "While you may be Japan's Queen of Soldiers, I hope you understand that the journey isn't going to be some cakewalk. With that said, I'll have to refuse."

"Since you already know my title, you should be well aware that I'm perfectly capable of lending you a hand!" said Fujiko as she circled the SUV before knocking the door to the shotgun seat.

Unsure what to do, Aiden who was sitting there then opened the door before saying, "Miss Futaba--"

Not even letting Aiden finish his sentence, Fujiko simply yanked him out before getting onto the car and saying, "You sit at the back."

After placing her bag down, Fujiko then added, "I've already thought this through. You've been continuously helping us this entire time. With that in mind, if you just leave like that, then won't I be considered an ungrateful person?"

As Gerald wondered how to even reply, Aiden sighed before sitting by Master Ghost's side at the back while muttering, "Why do I get the bad treatment..."

Ignoring Aiden, Fujiko simply pointed ahead before saying, "Drive."

"Are you really sure that you want to come with us...?" asked Gerald, finding it difficult to reject her kind intentions.

"But of course! I'd never joke about something this serious!" declared Fujiko as she nodded

determinedly.

“Fine... However, I emphasize that this is going to be a very dangerous mission. In fact, I’m sure there are going to be plenty of opponents that even Aiden can’t take down, ” replied Gerald after taking in a deep breath.

“Worry not! I definitely won’t end up burdening you! If there’s anything you need, just say the word and I’ll definitely help you!” said Fujiko.

“Where have I heard those words before...” muttered Aiden as he stretched his head to look at her.

“You pretty much said the same thing when you asked to come with me back then,” replied Gerald with a faint chuckle.

Upon hearing that and recalling the events in Yanam, Aiden couldn’t help but grin as he said, “Just a heads up, but our opponents will most likely be in a completely different league compared to those we usually face during regular missions. Before such opponents, even I have to admit that I’ll be a burden at best!”

“I’m aware...” muttered Fujiko who only had Gerald’s strength as a referential point. Aside from that, she had no idea just how much stronger their opponents could get.

Seeing that nothing else needed to be said, Gerald then began driving.

It was nearing noon by the time they arrived at the Yamashita family’s territory. Upon nearing the front gates, however, Gerald was surprised to see that aside from the familiar Yamashita who had initially greeted him back when he brought Kai over, the old man was also already waiting there for them.

Quickly stopping the car, Gerald then got out before jogging toward the old man while asking, “Sir? How long have you been waiting here?”

Aside from being Daryl's old acquaintance and bearing the status of an elder, the old man had also helped him on numerous occasions. With that in mind, it only made sense for Gerald to respect the old man.

Chapter 2251

"Not long, actually. I estimated you'd be here around this time, so I simply got out a little earlier," replied the old man in a cheery tone as he slipped his hands into his sleeves.

"Hmm? Are you proficient with fortune telling as well ...?" asked Gerald as he turned to look at Master Ghost.

"Negative. I simply estimated how long it'd take for you to get here if you set off at dawn! Don't worry, I only waited here for a little while just so we could get things done a little faster," replied the old man as he shook his head.

Feeling slightly pleased that the old man was being so eager to leave thus showing just how concerned he was over Gerald's affairs, Gerald was then prompted to ask, "So... are we leaving right away?"

Nodding in response, the old man then turned to look at this family members before saying, "Remember my orders last night. Keep a constant eye on the Futabas and immediately stop anyone who poses a threat to them. If they don't get the message, then just get rid of them. If anything else takes place, I'll deal with it once I return. Understand?"

"Got it! After leading everyone there, I'll make sure that each of the Futabas will remain well guarded till you return!" declared what appeared to be the leader of the group with a nod.

"Well said. Let's get going then," said the old man as he turned to look at Gerald again.

Looking at the four seater SUV that was now going to be cramped because of Fujiko's sudden intrusion,

Gerald who didn't want the old man to be forced to sit behind with Aiden and Master Ghost was prompted to ask, "Um... By chance, do you have a bigger car...?"

Upon hearing that, the old man then yelled, "Get the car!"

Nodding in response, one of the old man's subordinates then bolted off and shortly after, a seven seater MPV came to a halt before everyone.

"This should suffice, right? I just had a feeling that space would be an issue the night before, so I got this car prepared. As for how we're getting to Yanam, my family has a small cargo ship at the dock. With that said, we shouldn't have a problem getting to our destination," said the old man with a smile.

Momentarily stunned, Gerald quickly snapped out of it before placing his hands together and saying, "I... appreciate the thoughtfulness."

"It's really no big deal. I was practically the unofficial head butler of your family back then, you know? With that in mind, even after all these years, considering such things is second nature to me," replied the old man with a chuckle.

Nodding in response, Gerald then opened one of the car's doors before saying, "After you."

Laughing joyously, the old man then got in as he called out, "Come now, get in as well, you four!"

Going on a trip with Daryl's descendant was making the old man reminisce about the good old days, which explained why he was feeling so cheery. Regardless, once everyone was inside, they immediately began driving toward the docks.

Once they were gone, the other Yamashitas couldn't help but whisper among themselves, "I've never seen Third Elder this happy before..."

For as long as they knew him, the elder had rarely ever portrayed any other emotions aside from the solemn expression he was known for. Hell, most of the time, he barely even spoke, simply communicating through gestures. However, from the day the Westoner first came to their family, the elder had said more than he ever had. In fact, it probably wasn't even a stretch to say that the elder had spoken more in these few days compared to the entirety of last year!

"That has nothing to do with us. Let's just focus on what Third Elder told us to do," replied the leader of the group who didn't like them talking behind their elder's back. Hell, they shouldn't even be talking about all this in the first place. After all, the Yamashitas had rules that prohibited them from doing so!

"Roger!" declared everyone else upon hearing that.

Nodding in response, the leader then added, "Alright, once you and your subordinates arrive at the manor, remember to keep your eyes peeled at all times. If anyone tries to look for trouble, take them down the second you can. Remember, prioritize keeping the Futaba family members safe. If we fail to do that, then none of us will be able to answer to the Third Elder once he returns!"

With that agreed upon, over ten cars began driving from the Yamashita territory toward the Futaba manor.

Chapter 2252

Moving back to Gerald and his party, it wasn't long before the five of them arrived at the dock. Under the old man's lead, they soon saw a small cargo ship that had been anchored near the docks bearing the logo of Yamashita family.

Before they even got to the ship, a man came running up to them before saying, "Third Elder! Just as you've requested, we've prepared enough oil in the cargo ship for you to head back and forth from Japan to Yanam up to three times!"

"Good job," replied the old man as he patted him on the shoulder.

Feeling overwhelmed to be praised by the elder, the man immediately bowed before declaring, "I-I only did as I was ordered to!"

Once that person ran off, the old man turned to look at the others before saying with a smile, "Speaking of which, there are quite a few shops on this dock, so if you need anything, go ahead and get them. If nothing's needed, then we can just set off now."

"I mean... From my past experience, Gerald's probably going to stop us from getting anything unnecessary! He says it's a waste of money!" grumbled Aiden who would definitely love to get some snacks.

Unfortunately, Gerald didn't share the same sentiment.

"Hmm? Now who said anything about spending money?" replied the old man as his smile broadened.

Confused, Aiden then scratched the back of his head as he asked, "Um... How else are we going to get things...?"

"My boy, the Yamashita family owns this dock. I've already told them of our arrival yesterday, so feel free to get anything you want from those shops as long as the items can be brought up the ship," replied the old man as he pointed at the shops that were in business.

Upon hearing that, Gerald thought for a moment before saying, "Well, while I assume the ship already has plenty of food and water prepared for us, I believe we'll be needing extra sets of clothes. Remember, this isn't going to be a short trip. With that said, I'd rather not stink to high heaven as we traverse through Yanam and eventually to Yearning Island."

Gerald knew that he had to be clean and neat when he finally reunited with his family. After all, his sister would probably begin lecturing him about the poor way he dressed the second she saw him wearing his current tattered clothes. Thinking back, he remembered playing in a bog a lot as a child, and

every time he returned, his sister would grab him by his ear before dragging him to the shower room and leaving him there. The thought of it alone made Gerald smile a little.

Whatever the case was, aside from saving his family, Gerald was also secretly hoping to learn more about the Sun League.

Regardless, Gerald snapped out from his train of thought when the old man replied, "As Gerald said, there's ample food and water on the ship, so you guys should probably focus on getting clothes. When asked to pay, just say that you're with the Third Elder."

Before anyone could say anything else, they ended up staring wide eyed as the old man leaped off the ground and right onto the approximately sixteen feet high ship's deck! Aiden and Fujiko in particular were momentarily shocked speechless. After all, not even high ranking soldiers like them were able to perform such a feat! Yet the old man had made it seem like a piece of cake!

Already used to seeing such things, Gerald himself simply headed into the nearest clothing shop to get some new apparel. Once he was done, he got aboard the ship, only to see the old man sitting on deck while enjoying a cup of tea. Upon seeing Gerald, the old man quickly got a new cup before pouring more hot tea into it.

Sitting beside the old man, Gerald then placed his new clothes aside before saying, "Well, that's done with. Speaking of which, I still don't know your name, Sir."

"Well, names aren't really important, but if it helps, you can call me Senior Jobson," replied the old man with a wave of his hand. Thinking back, it had been a few decades since he had used his real name. After all, to Jobson, names were simply a referential code that bore little meaning.

"Got it, senior Jobson," replied Gerald with a nod as he noted down the old man's surname.

Nodding in response, the old man then said, "So... what's the plan?"

Chapter 2253

“Well... the only plan is to head to the ancient ruins of Yanam now. Aside from that, there’s not really a Plan B. After all, it’s exactly because we know so little about Yearning Island that we’re heading there in the first place. Hopefully we’ll learn more about the island once we get there, otherwise, we’ll just hit another dead end...” muttered Gerald as he shook his head with a sigh.

“Nothing else?” asked Jobson with a slight frown, clearly expecting Gerald to know more about Daryl.

“Sadly. However, I do have this...” replied Gerald as he slipped his hand into his coat before pulling out the sea map.

“Hmm? Is that the legendary sea map?” asked Jobson as he took the map from Gerald before studying it carefully.

“Oh? You know about it, sir?”

“Of course, I do. Remember, I’m a Weston cultivator as well, so it makes sense that I’ve heard about the map. Regardless, according to legends, this map leads to a secret treasure in the sea, right? The one that if obtained, grants the seeker great wealth?” replied the old man as he pointed at an island in the middle of the map.

“A... secret treasure...?” asked Gerald, his eyes widened in surprise.

“Indeed. Why? Weren’t you going after that? Or does the map serve another purpose?” replied Jobson in a curious tone.

“I used the map to try locating Yearning Island... You see, I once saw the island appear on the sea map, but it only lasted for a little under ten seconds before disappearing again... As for the secret treasure you mentioned, it’s the first I’ve heard of it,” explained Gerald as he shook his head.

“If that’s the case, then I guess that the sea map leads to multiple things. Either way, if we have the chance, we should try seeking out the secret treasure as well. I have a feeling that it’s the real deal,” replied Jobson.

“Oh, I’ve already been there. I just didn’t know that the treasure was there back then. As for Why I headed there in the first place, I initially thought that it was Yearning Island. Unfortunately, the island only houses a sect of the Crawford family,” replied Gerald as he pointed at the same island that Jobson had identified earlier.

“Oh? How interesting... ” muttered Jobson.

“Indeed... Regardless, while I was on the island, Daryl sent his subordinates over to test my strength. Shortly after that, Will sent some of his own men to assassinate me. All in all, I think I got attacked three times on that island...” said Gerald as he recalled those incidents.

“Will?” asked Jobson.

“Ah, he was adopted by Daryl, and he’s about the same age as I am. From what I know, he’s currently the heir of the Crawford family, and he apparently thinks that I’m trying to find the island to snatch his position away! You can tell how desperate he is since he even dared to disobey Daryl’s orders!” explained Gerald with a laugh.

“How interesting... To think that while Daryl merely wishes to test your strength, his heir is trying to kill you. The current Crawford family doesn’t sound peaceful at all,” replied Jobson as he stroked his beard with a smile.

“Indeed... Either way, I really couldn’t care less about that position. I just want to rescue my family already...” muttered Gerald as he shook his head. In fact, even if Daryl really wanted him to be the next patriarch of the Crawford family, he would’ve declined.

“Speaking of your family, how long have they been locked up?” asked Jobson.

"A very long time," replied Gerald with a sigh.

"And Daryl hasn't hurt them?" asked the old man as he poured more tea for Gerald.

"From what an assassin that Will sent over told me, they're apparently treated well, though they've remained locked up in a room at the back of the Crawford manor this entire time..." replied Gerald.

Chapter 2254

"I was also told that only Daryl is allowed into the area they're locked up in, so Will can't mess around with them. At the very least, that's what the assassin told me," added Gerald as he shook his head, unsure of whether to believe that or not.

"Things simply get more and more interesting, huh... So after he captured your parents and sister, he's now forcing you to go save them? At the same time, he doesn't want you dead either. I wonder if you're missing something here..." muttered the old man who knew Daryl's personality well, which was why he still refused to believe that Daryl would harm his family without good reason.

Understanding that Jobson was trying to justify Daryl's actions, Gerald simply clenched his fists before replying, "Even if I am, no grandfather should ever make their grandson learn about something through such despicable means..."

It was clear that his hatred toward Daryl had peaked, and had anyone else said that, then Gerald would've already attacked them without the slightest hesitation.

Sensing Gerald's hostility, the old man simply muttered in a slightly resigned tone, "... Let's talk about this again once we reach the manor. Who knows, he may finally tell you why he did all that once you arrive. Again, before parting ways, I remember him always being extremely kind to his family members, especially your parents. In fact, he's hardly ever scolded them!"

Before Gerald could reply, Fujiko, Master Ghost, and Aiden returned. Seeing them, Gerald chose not to continue the topic. Instead, he slipped the sea map back into his coat before sipping on his tea.

Once they were close enough, Aiden fished around in his bag before taking a beer bottle out. Tossing it toward Gerald, he then said, "Have a drink!"

Easily catching it, Gerald then placed it on the table before getting on his feet and replying, "Appreciated. Either way, I bet you guys are hungry. Let me cook something up for us!"

It was now three in the afternoon, and none of them had eaten anything since last night's dinner. Since even he was feeling a little hungry, he could only imagine how starved ordinary people like Aiden and Fujiko were.

"We're on a cargo ship, you know? Not some private yacht! With that said, we already have chefs on board. We have sailors and a captain as well, so all of you can just relax," replied Jobson as he held onto Gerald's arm.

Upon hearing that, Gerald nodded in response. How convenient.

It was sometime later when Gerald decided to take a walk around the deck. Since Master Ghost and Fujiko were busy distributing the things they had bought, Aiden who didn't have anything else to do and just so happened to see Gerald walking out tossed whatever he was doing aside before running after Gerald.

Once he was on the deck, Gerald stared at the slowly shrinking country of Japan behind them. Holding onto the ship's rails, Gerald sighed as he felt a light and salty sea breeze brush against his face.

Walking to Gerald's side, Aiden remained silent for a while before asking, "Who exactly is that old man...?"

“He’s the Yamashita family’s elder... He’s also a cultivator who, together with my grandfather, studied under the same master...” replied Gerald.

“And... he simply wants to help us...?” asked Aiden.

“It would appear so,” said Gerald after taking a deep breath, not even able to see Japan anymore.

“I see... well, not to be rude but... he’s quite old, isn’t he...? Rather than helping us, don’t you think we’ll have to spend more time taking care of him instead...?” whispered Aiden after taking a peek at the cabins.

Bursting out in laughter, Gerald simply replied, “You know, even I can’t say for sure that I’ll be able to beat him!”

Though he had never witnessed the old man in combat, the fact that Jobson was able to summon a flame out of thin air showed just how strong his cultivation was. However, the fact that Jobson was able to do that meant that Daryl could probably do the same. If that was the case, then Gerald was worried that he’d fail to rescue his family once he got there.

Even so, Gerald had already made up his mind. Even if he got heavily injured or even killed, he was still going to try to save his family.

Chapter 2255

“... Come to think of it, he did leap onto the ship’s deck earlier! How could I have forgotten?!” exclaimed Aiden as he quickly covered his mouth. Was Jobson even human?!

“Indeed. Either way, that just shows how strong he is. The truth is, I’m feeling much more confident with him here,” replied Gerald as he leaned against the railing while lighting a cigarette.

Shortly after, they entered the ship's restaurant, only to realize that the chef was already done with their meals. From the looks of it, the chef was a pro. After all, even though only five of them were eating, the chef had prepared up to eight Weston dishes with even some soup on the side. Seeing that, everyone quickly gathered around the table to begin digging in.

Since everyone was already gathered there, Gerald took the chance to remind them that danger could pop up at any time during their mission to uncover the secrets of the Seadom tribe.

After all, even during the special forces competition, a Yanam soldier had come looking for trouble with them. With that in mind, Gerald had no doubt that the second they docked at Yanam, news about his arrival would get to the Yanam Military in no time. Still, the fact that the military leader was just Carter made Gerald a little more relieved.

Either way, once Gerald was done, Jobson looked at everyone before asking, "Speaking of which, are any of you interested in participating in an auction once we arrive in Yanam?"

"Hmm? What sort of auction?" asked Gerald.

"From the rumors I've heard, it's focusing on traditional medicine, though I could be wrong," replied the old man as he shook his head.

"Then I'm afraid I'm not interested," replied Gerald with a wave of his hand, clearly prioritizing saving his family.

"I see... Well, I just thought to say it out... Just in case anyone would be interested, you know?" said the old man before going quiet.

Meanwhile, a very flustered Will could be seen in his room. Though he had initially assumed that Amare would successfully assassinate Gerald, in the end, Amare never came to him to report how the mission went. With that in mind, Will wasn't even sure whether Gerald was already dead or not! He couldn't just look for Amare to clarify things either. After all, Daryl had already caught him trying to assassinate

Gerald once. If he messed up now and Daryl managed to put two and two together, he would surely end up in boiling water...!

As Will continued wondering how to settle this dilemma, the corner of his eye caught a glimpse of Amare walking past his door. Eye widening, Will immediately called out in a hushed tone, "Amare...! Come over here...!"

Ever since Daryl learned that Will had attempted to assassinate Gerald, Will had noticed that more cultivators from his family had been transferred to his living space. With that in mind, Will knew that Daryl had sent them over to keep an eye on him, which explained why Will was trying so hard to lie low.

Instead of deterring Will from doing the same thing, however, Will was now keener than ever to kill Gerald! He was utterly convinced that this person would snatch his position as the heir!

Chapter 2256

Whatever the case was, upon hearing Will's voice, Amare couldn't help but shudder as he turned around and replied, "Master Will..."

"Get in here...! Hurry...!" grumbled Will as he continuously looked left and right, glad that none of Daryl's cultivators were around at the moment.

Watching as Will then gestured for him to hurry up, Amare knew he had no other choice but to obey. Though Amare had actively been trying to avoid Will since he returned, it appeared that he couldn't run forever.

Once Amare entered, Will quickly got two teacups out before asking, "Care for some tea?"

"I... No, I'm fine. Is... there anything I can do for you, Master Will...?" asked the uneasy Amare with a gulp.

Raising a slight brow, Will then replied, "What do you think? Tell me what happened already...!"

"W-what happened where, Master Will...?" stuttered Amare who was a terrible liar.

"I told you to assassinate Gerald, didn't I? It's already been a week since you've returned, don't you think it's high time you told me whether you succeeded or not?" grumbled Will with a frown, knowing full well that Amare was playing dumb.

"O-oh...! So you were asking about that, Master Will... Well... though I searched far and wide, I simply couldn't locate Gerald in Japan! He's really good at hiding..." replied Amare as he smacked his forehead, hoping to fool Will that he had just recalled the incident.

"Bullsh*t! I already got confirmation that Gerald had been where the special forces competition was being held! With that said, how the hell couldn't you find him if you went there?! You didn't take my order seriously, did you?!" growled Will, actively trying to suppress his anger.

"O-of course I did...! You're our family's future patriarch! There's no way I'd disobey your orders on a whim! Believe me when I say that I would've definitely assassinated him had I managed to locate him back then!" declared the anxious Amare.

"... Then explain why you didn't immediately report back to me the second you returned to the island?" replied Will in a slightly calmer tone. The fact that Amare had called him the future patriarch of the family had clearly pleased him, and Will was now starting to think that Amare was telling the truth.

Clearly getting better at lying now, Amare quickly explained, "Well... I just didn't have the courage to face you after failing the mission... After all, you trusted me to complete it!"

By this point, Will was so overjoyed by the thought of getting to be the future patriarch that he didn't even care anymore. Thinking back, of course a simpleton like Amare would fail to outsmart Gerald! With that in mind, Will then replied, "Well, since Gerald managed to evade even me, I guess it makes sense why he was able to escape your grasp. Fine, you're forgiven!"

Hearing that, Amare who couldn't help but secretly sigh in relief then declared, "If the chance ever arrives, I'll gladly attempt to take him down again!"

"Just go back for now. And remember, don't tell anyone about this...!" replied Will in a slightly resigned tone.

"Very well. If there's anything else you wish to get done, make sure to call for me again!" said Amare before attempting to leave the room.

"Wait," called out Will.

Chapter 2257

Momentarily frozen in fear, the terrified Amare gulped as he slowly turned to face Will again.

Seeing that, Will then cleared his throat pretending to be serious as he said, "Keep in mind that I'm just a regular member of the family. With that said, don't identify me as the future patriarch since Mr. Daryl is still in control."

"Got it," replied Amare as he nodded before swiftly leaving.

After he left, Will quickly closed his room's door before pacing up and down his hands behind his back as he muttered, "How odd... Aside from being able to take Wolf and Luc down, Gerald was even able to evade Amare for so long! What kind of cultivation does Gerald even possess? Could his talents exceed that of ordinary people...?"

Though there were many questions in his mind, Will decided to put everything aside for now.

In the end, he was pretty sure that Daryl was still dissatisfied with him for sending others to assassinate

Gerald before this. With that in mind, he didn't dare make another move so soon or he may really need to give up his position as the heir of the patriarch... It certainly didn't help that there were many others who were more talented than him within the family. What more, though being adopted by Daryl made him special, it also meant that he didn't possess Crawford blood in him.

Fast forward to two days later, the cargo ship from Japan finally arrived in Yanam waters. Aside from eating and sleeping, Gerald had spent much of his time staring out at the ocean in the direction Yanam was. Knowing that he was getting closer to saving his family, Gerald couldn't help but feel slightly anxious.

After all, if he failed to save them now, there was a high chance that such a good opportunity wouldn't present itself again anytime soon.

Whatever the case was, since the cargo ship was now so close to Yanam, it wasn't long before the Yanam Military received news that Gerald was coming.

Upon getting the news, Carter who was in his office instantly got up from his seat before exclaiming in fear, "W-what?! Gerald's back?!"

It had been extremely difficult to send Gerald off in the past. To think that that devil was back when Carter had barely had the time to relax and enjoy his new position as the Yanam Military leader!

"He is! We saw him standing atop a cargo ship through a telescope as we were inspecting the local sea areas!" reported a subordinate who was standing before Carter.

Feeling his palms grow sweaty, Carter was prompted to ask, "A-are you sure you weren't mistaken?"

"A hundred percent! Otherwise, we wouldn't have reported this to you in the first place! Regardless, why do you think that evil man's returned leader...? Not only did he cause a massive mess in our military, but he's also exterminated three major families here! If he's really back for more trouble, then we may not be able to stop him!" replied the subordinate.

“Should we arm our most capable soldiers with our heaviest weapons to kill him before he lands? I’m sure trouble will start brewing the second he disembarks!” suggested the individual in charge of Yanam’s seas. He, for one, didn’t want history to repeat itself.

“Like I haven’t thought about that already! Either way, resume with whatever you were doing! I’ll contact you if I need anything else! Also, keep a close eye on Gerald at all times! Don’t let him sneak past us!” grumbled Carter who could feel a minor headache coming.

Chapter 2258

Carter honestly couldn’t believe that the living nightmare had returned to haunt him again so soon! He had barely even been able to enjoy his new post as military leader!

What more, he was utterly terrified that he would somehow end up just like Godwin. After searching for an entire month, they eventually managed to find him.

However, he looked more like a savage than anything at the time. Hell, had the investigation team not recognized his clothes, he would’ve probably been shot to death the second they bumped into him!

Either way, Carter had made sure to conceal the incident well. After all, he didn’t want unnecessary trouble to brew since that could potentially affect his post as leader. With that said, Carter had hidden Godwin in a remote mountain village, making sure to have a few of his subordinates guard him there at all times.

Regardless, after seeing what happened to Godwin, Carter was determined not to repeat his ex-leader’s mistakes. With that in mind, though the individual in charge of Yanam’s seas had made a tempting proposal to immediately send heavily armed military teams to take Gerald out earlier, Carter knew better than to just agree with that.

After all, Gerald had yet to make a move on them. Due to that, even if they did manage to take him down, Weston as a whole would potentially come after him next for murdering an innocent man!

However, if he allowed Gerald to set foot on Yanam, then dealing with Gerald would become even more difficult. As the saying went, prevention was better than cure.

Thankfully, after thinking for a good, long while,

Carter finally thought of a good idea. Picking the phone on his office desk up, Carter then called the person in charge of Yanam's seas. Once he picked up, Carter immediately told him to come back, stating that he was about to issue an extremely important order to him.

Shortly after, the man from before burst into the room before asking in a hushed tone, "Are we going to make Gerald disappear before he reaches land, leader...?"

As the person in charge of Yanam's seas, he wasn't about to allow Gerald to cause any more trouble if he could help it. Hell, after Gerald left the last time, he had even filed an application to pursue and kill Gerald while he was still out at sea. Unfortunately, Carter had denied his request, so he had to give up on the idea at the time.

Whatever the case was, upon hearing that, Carter couldn't help but narrow his eyes as he asked, "Are you really planning to kill Gerald just like that?"

"Are you proposing that we let him enter Yanam? If he manages to get to land, Gerald will surely cause a chaotic scene like the last time! He was Godwin's murderer, for heaven's sake!" replied the man in a slightly reluctant tone. When Godwin was leader, he never hesitated when it came to dealing with his opponents. Carter was the complete opposite of him. With how hesitant he always was, Carter didn't have the demeanor of a leader at all!

"Remember that he's still a Westoner. If we look for trouble with him out of the blue, I'm sure Weston will try to make an issue out of this. After all, we haven't exactly had a good relationship with the country in recent years," muttered Carter who found out about these things while he was still working under Godwin.

“Then... why did you summon me here...?” asked the man in confusion.

“Right. I want you to keep a close eye on Gerald and report his every move to me. If it truly seems like he’s approaching our docks, immediately report back. I’m meeting him in person this time...” ordered Carter after thinking for a bit.

Chapter 2259

“B-but leader! You should know how cruel Gerald is...! Not only did he kill our former leader, but he’s also taken out our country’s three major families...! With how much chaos he’s caused here, it’s only safe to assume that you’ ll be in serious danger if you face him!” replied the terrified man.

“It’s fine, I’m the leader, after all. If I don’t step up, what right do I have to hold this position?” said Carter as he pointed at his seat in a calm tone.

Truth be told, Carter was extremely terrified. However, he was also well aware that he had yet to offend Gerald. In fact, he had even given Gerald his silent approval to leave Yanam back then, and he was sure that Gerald would remember that.

As for why he wanted to meet Gerald, Carter wanted to inquire why he had come to Yanam this time. Regardless of whatever or whoever Gerald was looking for here, Carter would surely obtain and hand it or them to the youth in exchange for peace. With any luck, Carter would be able to retain his new position for much longer.

“Leader... I...!” said the person in charge of Yanam’s seas before his voice trailed off. While he had no idea what Carter was thinking, he couldn’t help but feel that his previous opinions about Carter were too rash now. As it turned out, the leader had been placing Yanam first this entire time. Hell, he was even willing to risk his life for the country!

“There’s no need to say any more than that. Just do as I ordered,” replied Carter as he gestured for the man to leave.

“...Understood! I’ ll get some men to be with you, just in case! That way, if Gerald tries anything funny, you’ ll at least be able to remain relatively safe!” declared the man before leaving Carter’s office.

The second he left, Carter couldn’t help but slump into his chair. Just thinking about meeting Gerald made his hands tremble uncontrollably. Even so, he’d rather take the initiative to look for Gerald rather than the other way around. Doing so could at least minimize the potential damage done.

Either way, Carter’s orders were quickly spread around, and in no time at all, over ten fleets from Yanam’s maritime forces set off to keep a close eye on Gerald, everyone aboard making sure to detail the location of Gerald’s cargo ship at all times.

It was only when evening fell when Gerald’s ship was finally anchored at Yanam’s docks. By that point, aside from the old man, the other four had changed into new sets of clean clothes.

The second they were about to go through customs, however, they were immediately stopped by ten armed soldiers.

“Quite the warm welcome we’re getting, don’t you think?” said Jobson with a chuckle, seemingly unafraid of all those guns. After all, he had already seen much of the world.

“Let’s just say I had some issues with them before so they’re a little scared of me...” replied Gerald as he scratched the back of his head before sighing.

Shortly after, the person in charge of Yanam’s seas stepped forward before saying, “Mr. Crawford! Our leader would like to meet you!”

“Carter wants to meet me?” replied Gerald with a slight frown, recalling how Carter had merely been an executive before Gerald had gotten rid of Godwin. Thinking back, it was rather funny how that drunken man whom Gerald had captured back then ended up getting elected to be the next military leader of Yanam Whatever the case was, the man then nodded before saying, “Indeed. Please cooperate with us,

Mr. Crawford.”

“Gladly, though could you accommodate my friends for the meantime?” replied Gerald.

“We’ve already considered that. With that said, please come with me, ladies and gentlemen. I’ll be leading you to your guest rooms to rest in the meantime,” said the man as he turned to look at Aiden and the others.

Chapter 2260

Feeling a chill run down his spine, Carter fought the urge to flee before gesturing for the men surrounding Gerald to leave as he said, “Leave us be.”

Hearing that, the soldiers gave a salute before leaving the office.

The second they were gone, Carter quickly closed the door. Gulping as he walked toward Gerald and handed him a cigarette, Carter then said, “Um... So... Why exactly have you returned, Gerald...? I-if there’s anything or anyone you need, just say the word and I’ll help obtain them for you...!”

Lighting the cigarette before sitting on the couch, Gerald then crossed his legs before replying, “I’m not looking for anyone or anything.”

“H-huh...? Then... Why are you here...?” whimpered the terrified Carter.

“I’m just here to sightsee. Or am I not welcome here? Just so you know, I still have the green card issued by your government,” said Gerald, amused by Carter’s hypervigilance. This man was incomparable to Godwin!

“O-of course you are...! I welcome you if you’re just here for that...!” replied Carter as he placed his hands together.

“Good to hear. Anyway, if there’s nothing else, I’ll be taking my leave first,” said Gerald as he placed his unfinished cigarette into an ashtray before getting up to leave.

“P-please wait! ” called out Carter.

“What is it now? Stop wasting my time...” growled Gerald with a deep frown.

“I-I... Please... is that the only reason you’re here in Yanam...? I’m just worried for my country’s sake after all you’ve done here in the past...” whimpered Carter who had no choice but to be honest since he didn’t want to accidentally anger Gerald.

“You’re worried, you say...?” replied Gerald as he looked at the terrified man.

“Y-yes... You should know that I’m telling the truth since I’ve always been honest with you... P-please remember that I was also the one who gave the order for you to safely leave back then... Had I not done that, the person in charge of Yanam’s seas would’ve definitely continued trying to retaliate, you know...?” stuttered Carter as he revealed an awkward smile, clearly trying to butter Gerald up.

“So you’re saying I should state my true objective as thanks?” sneered Gerald in response.

“O-of course, not! I’m just saying that we’ll definitely help you if you need anything! In return, I only ask that you don’t... well... go on another rampage...” muttered Carter.

Chapter 2261

“Fine, I came to Yanam to look for something, but I’m not interested in causing any unnecessary trouble,” replied Gerald before turning to face the door again.

“T-then I’ll-” However, before Carter could even finish his sentence, Gerald had already walked out.

Still, since Gerald had clarified that he wasn't here to cause trouble, Carter couldn't help but feel slightly relieved. As long as he didn't go out on his way to offend him, then Gerald wouldn't be an issue for Yanam. Regardless, Gerald soon made it to the guest rooms that wasn't too far from Carter's office where the others already were. Though the term 'guest room' had been used, the truth was, Carter had booked one of the more luxurious hotels in Yanam for them. Since the place was usually reserved for important people from overseas, if one didn't have the right connections, then they wouldn't be able to stay there, even if they had the money.

Either way, the others were eating at the moment Gerald entered the room.

Seeing him, Aiden immediately put his food down before asking, "Gerald! What did Carter want from you?"

"He's just worried that I'll cause unnecessary chaos here. After all, he just got promoted to being the military leader," replied Gerald as he shook his head with a smile.

Watching as Gerald then sat beside him, Aiden couldn't help but sneer, "Hah! It all depends on whether they pick a bone with us first!"

"Indeed. Either way, all of you should rest up for the night. For tomorrow, I'll have Master Ghost come along with me. Aiden, Fujiko, and Senior Jobson, you three can continue resting here," replied Gerald, not taking Carter who was nowhere near as big a threat as Godwin was seriously at all. As long as Carter made one wrong move, Gerald could easily get rid of him.

"I'll be coming along," said the old man.

"Alright," replied Gerald, knowing how knowledgeable and experienced Jobson was. Hell, though the probability was low, there was always a chance that Jobson would notice something that Gerald missed while they were in the ancient ruins. Either way, once dinner was over, everyone returned to their

respective rooms to rest.

Lying on his bed that was right next to the window, Gerald took a peek outside and saw that several Yanam soldiers were guarding the hotel's entrance. Not even bothering about them, Gerald then turned to face the vast, silent ocean before looking at the cloudy and moonless night sky.

"We're going to have heavy rain tomorrow..." muttered Gerald as he lit a cigarette.

Just seconds after he began puffing on it, a few raindrops fell against the windowpane. Soon enough, torrential rain began crashing down. Despite the heavy rain, the Yanam soldiers seemed completely unfazed as they continued patrolling the area.

Staring at the falling rain, Gerald was reminded of the night his family was kidnapped. Drenched in rain upon returning home, Gerald had no idea what had happened to his family till he eventually rescued Master Ghost and found out.

Putting his hands together, Gerald then closed his eyes while facing the sky before wishing, "May things go smoothly this time... The sooner I get to save them, the better..."

The second his sentence ended, thunder rang in the sky, followed by a bolt of lightning that momentarily lit the dark sky up.

Chapter 2262

Daryl appeared in his dreams that night, and the old man kept on talking about Gerald's childhood till the moment Gerald finally awoke from his nightmare. Even as he panted vigorously upon waking up, Gerald couldn't help but check his surroundings. It had all felt so real. Once he calmed down a little, Gerald saw that it was only four in the morning.

Looking out the window, Gerald realized that it was still raining heavily. Knowing that he wasn't going to get any further rest that night, Gerald then rolled out of bed and stood by the window, silently gazing out.

All of a sudden, knocking could be heard from his door. Raising a slight brow, Gerald then looked through the door's peephole and saw that it was Aiden. Opening the door, Gerald couldn't help but smile as he said, "Well someone's early..."

"Yes, about that... You see, I just received an urgent message from my superior, but before that, do you still remember Miss Lawrence?" asked Aiden in a nervous tone.

"That unruly young lady? Of course, I do. You escorted her back, right?" replied Gerald who needed a moment to even remember her.

"Bingo. While I did send her back, she apparently returned to Yanam alone. Since then, nobody's been able to contact her. With that in mind, my superior has urgently ordered me to locate her. Following that, I'm to safely escort her back." Muttered Aiden as he double checked if anyone was nearby before closing the door behind him.

"Now why on earth would she come here?" asked Gerald with a frown as he recalled the time he and Aiden had escorted her to the Grubb family. Had they not stepped in back then, she would've surely gotten deflowered.

Either way, Gerald also remembered telling Lindsay time and again not to contact that family, and he was pretty sure that she had promised not to back then.

"How should I know? My superior has even asked the Lawrence family regarding this, though they refused to explain why she had returned. Personally, I assume she's here because of that mysterious keepsake that she sent. The Grubbs may have some contact with the Lawrences as well, so the Lawrences probably had no say in Lindsay's return, which ultimately resulted in the current situation," replied Aiden with a helpless shrug.

"Well isn't this interesting..." said Gerald with a chuckle.

“Easy for you to say... What should I do...?” muttered the anxious Aiden.

“You like Lindsay, don’t you?” replied Gerald with a slightly raised brow.

“...H-huh? Where did that come from...” muttered Aiden, failing to stop himself from blushing.

“Be honest with me.”

“That... I’m... not too sure about that, to be honest...” replied Aiden as he lowered his head. Since he had been in the military for so many years, he had never truly considered starting a love life.

“Alright, listen up. You, of all people, should know that my goal is to uncover the secrets of the Seadom tribe at the ancient ruins so that I’ll potentially be able to locate Yearning Island and save my family. I trust you understand how much this matters to me, correct?” asked Gerald after taking a deep breath.

“I do,” replied Aiden with a slight nod.

“Good. Now... If you truly like Lindsay, I’ll definitely help you save her. After all, what are friends for? However, if you dislike her, then this is a matter between you and your superior. In other words, you’ll be saving her on your own. With that said, what’s it going to be?” asked Gerald in a solemn tone.

Chapter 2263

“I... Don’t know...” muttered Aiden, clearly conflicted about the whole matter. While he wasn’t sure if he really liked her, he did feel great unease the second his superior told him that Lindsay had gone missing. After all, his first reaction was to update Gerald about this despite the ungodly hour!

“If that’s the case, remind your superiors that you’re currently on vacation and tell them to send someone else to save her. If you’re not serious about her, then stay with me. I’ll need all the help I can

get,” replied Gerald as he looked out the window.

“But... Miss Lawrence could be in danger...” said Aiden.

While he would normally prioritize Gerald, the thought that Lindsay was locked up by the Grubbs was making him hesitate. However, Aiden was also worried that if he rushed over, he could potentially ruin things.

“Hmm? Didn’t you say you disliked her?” replied Gerald with a laugh. Gerald, for one, knew Aiden well enough to know that if he didn’t care about Lindsay, he wouldn’t have come running over to tell him about this in the first place. Hell, if that really was the case, he would’ve probably rejected his superior’s orders the second he got them!

Upon hearing that, Aiden went silent for a moment before eventually saying, “... Alright, I’ve made up my mind. Let’s save her.”

“Well said. We’ll focus on rescuing Miss Lawrence first, then,” replied Gerald with a nod.

While saving his family was important, Gerald knew that Lindsay’s rescue had to be prioritized. After all, he was well aware of what kinds of people were in the Grubb family. With that said, if she truly had been captured by them, then any delays would surely result in her either getting hurt or defiled.

Should that come to be, then Aiden would definitely be brimming with self reproach, and Gerald really didn’t want to see his good friend drowning in such grief.

“Thank you, Gerald...” said Aiden, pleased that Gerald was willing to help.

Shaking his head, Gerald simply replied, “There’s no need for that. Either way, did your superior provide

any hint as to where she could be?”

Though he hadn't said it, Gerald had been keeping tabs with all the times Aiden had remained by his side to help him. With that in mind, now that Aiden needed his help, Gerald was definitely going to lend his aid. Regardless, Aiden then shook his head before saying, “Unfortunately, no. He just told me that Miss Lawrence went missing in Yanam, and that the Lawrences provided no useful information about all this...”

“I see... Well, either she was captured by the Grubbs, or she may not be in Yanam at all,” replied Gerald as he narrowed his eyes.

“That's what I'm thinking as well,” muttered Aiden with a sigh.

“Then let's start the investigation at the Grubb family's manor,” replied Gerald in a helpless tone. Since he had killed Frey back then, nobody else in the Grubb family should have ulterior motives against Lindsay. Though that was the case, they really didn't have any other leads at the moment, so they may as well inquire the Grubbs about this first.

“And the ancient ruins...?” asked Aiden, feeling slightly embarrassed for causing Gerald's goals to be delayed.

“Let's save Miss Lawrence first,” replied Gerald with a slight wave of his hand.

With their minds made up, the duo then immediately left the hotel. On their way out, Gerald made sure to send a text message to Master Ghost, explaining the gist of where he and Aiden were off to. Aside from telling him to relay the message to Fujiko and Jobson, Gerald also stated that they would return immediately if they managed to save Lindsay.

Chapter 2264

Though it had already been raining for ages, the rain only seemed to get heavier as the duo got into their car. Since Yanam soldiers were still patrolling the area, the second they saw Gerald and Aiden

leaving, one of them immediately reported the situation to their superior.

Meanwhile, Carter was sleeping soundly within the leader's lounge. After learning that Gerald wasn't here to cause chaos, Carter had been so relieved that he had invited several executives to drink with him the night before, which explained why he was in such a comfortable slumber.

However, the snoring man was abruptly awoken when his butler burst through the door, gently shaking Carter's sleeping body as he exclaimed, "B-bad news, Captain...!"

Annoyed that he was suddenly awoken, Carter then yelled, "Get lost!"

"Captain! Gerald and that special forces soldier from Weston have just left the hotel! Should we send our men over to keep an eye on them?" replied the butler who wasn't intimidated in the least.

Under normal circumstances, the butler would've surely sent people after the duo without even needing to ask for Carter's permission. However, since Carter apparently had his own ways of dealing with Gerald, the butler refrained since he was worried that sending their men to tail Gerald would eventually ruin everything.

"Let's just talk about it once I'm up...! With that said, if you don't get lost now, you're in for a world of trouble ...!" growled Carter. Since he wasn't fully sober yet, he hadn't really heard what his butler had said. To him, everything was simply gibberish.

"With all due respect, captain! Gerald and his ally have left the hotel...!" replied the butler who had no choice but to raise his voice a little.

"Are you courting death?!" roared Carter as he fished for his pistol that was by his bed before aiming it at the butler!

“I-I’ll leave immediately...!” cried out the butler before rushing out of the room. While he knew that the half awake Carter hadn’t gotten the message, the butler wasn’t about to risk his life just to get his point across.

Knowing that he had successfully gotten rid of the loud butler, Carter then tossed his pistol onto the floor before lying in bed again. It wasn’t long before his snoring resumed.

Back on Gerald’s side, he and Aiden continued speeding toward the Grubb family’s manor. Though the wipers were doing their best to clear the windscreen, the rain was absolutely horrendous. Not wanting to risk crashing the vehicle since he could barely see the road by this point, Gerald had no choice but to slow the car down.

Staring at the onslaught of rain outside his window, Aiden was prompted to ask, “Do you think Miss Lawrence is in danger, Gerald...?”

“You know I can’t answer that,” replied Gerald as he focused on the road. Honestly, had it not been a mission to save his friend’s love interest, Gerald wouldn’t even have considered driving in this weather.

“I see... Still, since we’ve gotten rid of Prey, she should be fine if she’s currently with the Grubbs. After all, aside from being her father’s good friend, Lucian is also Miss Lawrence’s godfather. With that in mind, I really hope that she’s there and that her phone is just broken or she just hasn’t been looking at it...” muttered Aiden.

“That would be for the best,” replied Gerald with a shrug.

Chapter 2265

While the journey to the Grubb manor should’ve taken three hours at most, it ended up extending to five hours due to the torrential rain. With that said, it was near noon by the time they got to the manor.

After parking the car, Gerald checked his phone and saw that Master Ghost had seen his message. Pleased that Master Ghost had also said that he would relay the message to the others, Gerald was

about to leave the car when he suddenly noticed a servant running toward him with an umbrella.

Outstretching his hand that was holding onto a folded umbrella, the servant then asked, "Good day, sir. May I know why you're here?"

"I'm looking for Mr. Grubb to discuss something," replied Gerald as he took the umbrella and opened it.

Once Aiden was under Gerald's umbrella as well, the servant smiled before asking, "Pardon me, but which Mr. Grubb could you be referring to?"

Aside from the live in son-in-law and the daughter-in-law, most of the people living there were Grubbs.

"Lucian," replied Gerald in a calm tone.

"Oh? You're here to meet the master?" replied the stunned servant who quickly straightened his back to appear more respectful.

"Is he in? If he isn't, there's no need to ring him up. We'll just wait here for a bit," said Gerald as he and Aiden began walking into the manor.

"He's in. With how heavy the rain is today, he doesn't have any other guests visiting either," explained the butler as he lowered his gaze, not even daring to look Gerald in the eye. After all, not only had the youth dared to come over, but he had even called his master by name! All that could only mean that Gerald either possessed a high status or he was someone his master took extremely seriously.

"Lead us to him," replied Gerald.

With that, the servant instantly led the two to the reception room, where they were promptly served some hot tea.

A short while later, Aiden who had ants in his pants couldn't help but say, "... I'm taking a look around."

If Lindsay really was locked up in here, he was going to take every chance he could to search for her.

Frowning slightly, Gerald replied, "Just remain seated here. I'm sure he'll come soon."

"But I'm worried about Miss Lawrence's safety...!" grumbled Aiden as he stared out the window. Not showing signs of letting up at all, the rain was so heavy that he could barely see a thing.

"Even if she's here, haven't we already alerted the enemy by showing ourselves? If you start searching now, aren't you just making it even more obvious that we're looking for her?" replied Gerald as he sipped his tea.

"I... didn't think of that..." muttered Aiden as he quickly calmed down.

"I'm glad you've realized. Now get back here and have your tea while it's hot," replied Gerald as he held Aiden's cup out for him.

The second Gerald's sentence ended, Lucian under the guide of his servant could be seen entering the reception room. Though his pants were drenched in rainwater, he didn't seem to care at all, especially when he saw Gerald.

Instantly breaking into a smile, Lucian then walked up to Gerald his hand extended while saying, "And here I thought my servant was kidding when he said you were here!"

"It's been a while, Mr. Grubb," replied Gerald as he began walking toward the enthusiastic man as well.

“Indeed! Still, why are you back so soon? Do you have some affairs to attend to? Or could it be that... You’ve managed to grasp the meaning behind the Devotion Mirror and you’re here to return it?” asked Lucian as he shook Gerald’s hand.

“You’re thinking too highly of me, Mr. Grubb. There’s no way I’d be able to see through the mirror this quickly! Truth be told, I’ve yet to even scratch the surface of the mirror’s secrets!” replied Gerald as he shook his head with a laugh.

Chapter 2266

The truth was, Gerald hadn’t even looked at the Devotion Mirror from the second he got it. He had simply been too busy to unravel its mysteries. What more, the mirror wasn’t exactly as important as Lucian would’ve liked to believe, though Gerald knew better than to tell him that. After all, an enraged Lucian would only spell more trouble for him.

“Oh please, your talent’s exceptional, mister! After all, you’re the first person who’s been able to retrieve the mirror from the cave! Since you’ve even obtained recognition from my ancestors, I have reason to believe that it’s only a matter of time before you uncover its mysteries,” declared Lucian as he shook his head, making it clear that he trusted the Devotion Mirror’s choice.

“Don’t worry, I’ll definitely share what lies within the mirror if I manage to crack the code,” replied Gerald with a hearty laugh.

“If you manage to do so, you’ll truly be a great benefactor to my family!” declared Lucian, his eyes glimmering with hope.

According to his family’s ancestral records, anyone who managed to grasp the meaning of the mirror would gain supreme skills and cultivation that would then grant them easier access in becoming a top cultivator. With that said, if Gerald succeeded in decoding the mirror, then the Grubbs would easily become the largest and strongest family in the entirety of Yanam! Actually, since all the cultivators in their family would be able to max out their cultivation by then, forget Yanam, they’d become the strongest cultivating family in the cultivation realm!

Regardless, Gerald then replied, "It's already an honor to be given the chance to inspect this mirror..."

Throughout their conversation, Gerald had kept tabs on Lucian's expressions. Aside from excitement, however, Gerald couldn't discern any other vague expressions, which meant that Lucian hadn't kidnapped Lindsay. Though that was the case, that didn't mean that the other Grubbs hadn't done the deed.

Whatever the case was, upon hearing that, Lucian couldn't help but exclaim, "You truly are my family's lucky star, mister!"

"You flatter me. Speaking of which, have any weird incidents happened within your family recently?" asked Gerald.

"Hmm? Everything's been normal as far as I'm concerned... Honestly, have you returned to deal with my family's affairs, mister? Does it concern the cave or the mirror...?" replied Lucian after thinking for a bit.

"Let's just say that I've returned to look for something, though it doesn't concern your family. Don't overthink my earlier question," replied Gerald with a wave of his hand, not wanting to accidentally mention that he was here to investigate Lindsay's disappearance.

"I see... You scared me for a moment there... However, there is one other thing I'd like to talk to you about..." muttered Lucian after heaving a relieved sigh. It was something that he had realized right after Gerald left back then.

Chapter 2267

"Go on," replied Gerald as he momentarily looked at the heavy rain outside.

"Well... I'm sure you know of my adopted son, Frey, right? You see, it's been ages since I've last seen him... He seems to have just vanished into thin air! It doesn't help that as far as I know, he didn't have

any disputes with my other family members. With that said, I was wondering if you had bumped into him..." muttered Lucian with a slight frown.

In his search for Frey, not only had Lucian searched every nook and cranny of his manor, but he had even gone to all the places Frey usually went to. Hell, aside from meeting up with Frey's friends, he had also used all his connections to locate his son to no avail even after two entire months.

"Frey?" asked Gerald in a calm tone, though honestly, he couldn't help but feel sad for Lucian. After all, he had killed Frey back in that cave, and Gerald was pretty sure that not even Frey's ashes remained. Still, to think that Lucian the mighty master of the Grubb family would end up adopting such an evil son... How truly pitiful.

"Yes... While I had initially doubted that he had met with an accident or was kidnapped, after so long, I just want news about him already... Any news..." muttered Lucian, his eyes now slightly red and teary.

Unable to bear telling Lucian the truth, Gerald simply replied, "...I'll keep an eye out for him. If I hear anything about Frey, I'll definitely notify you."

"I appreciate it. Still, I have a feeling that he's probably been killed by an accident somewhere... Even if that's the case, I still have to find his corpse in order to give him a proper burial..." said Lucian before sighing heavily. It was clear that he no longer had any hope that his son was alive, and that he was only saying all this to get it out of his system.

"I agree. As Weston customs go, all dead individuals need to be buried," replied Gerald.

Nodding in response, Lucian then wiped his tears away before looking at Gerald and saying, "... Either way, do stay here till the rain goes away... It's dangerous to drive in such horrid weather... Speaking of which, you said you were here to look for something, right? Tell me what it is. I get my men to obtain it for you."

"I can get it easily, so don't worry about it. Whatever the case is, let's talk about it once the rain stops in a few days," replied Gerald as he looked outside.

"A few days indeed... Well, it doesn't seem like the rain will be letting up anytime soon, why not stay here in the meantime? I'll get my butler to clean up a few of our guest rooms later. Also, you've probably driven for quite a while to get here, correct? You must be starving! I'll get my chefs to prepare something for us right this instant! We can just eat in the reception room," said Lucian with a subtle smile. Gerald's arrival had honestly been the best thing that had happened to him in the past few days.

"I'll be troubling you then, Mr. Grubb," replied Gerald as he placed his hands together before Lucian.

"Oh please, you're no trouble at all! Truth be told, I'm glad you're staying here!" replied Lucian with a wave of his hand. As it turned out, Lucian's temperament had undergone quite the change ever since Frey disappeared.

...

"Well, looks like we'll be staying here for the next few days, Aiden," said Gerald as he turned to face the dazed boy.

Quickly snapping out of it, Aiden simply replied with a nod.

It wasn't long after before servants began appearing with several dishes in hand. To celebrate Gerald's arrival, Lucian even got his special wine out, and the trio found themselves enjoying their meal in the reception room as rain continued pouring outside.

Once they were done with their meals, Gerald and Aiden headed to their guest rooms that had thoroughly been tidied up. The second Aiden closed the door behind him, he immediately inched closer to Gerald before whispering, "Do you think Lucian's aware of Lindsay's disappearance...?"

Narrowing his eyes, Gerald then thought for a moment before replying, "...I don't think so, no..."

Chapter 2268

"I see... Still, let's start investigating tonight. After all, even if Lucian's not aware of it, his other family members are still highly suspicious. The longer we don't make a move, the higher the chances of Miss Lawrence being in danger... !" declared Aiden who didn't even bother whispering anymore. Though the heavy rain masked his voice well, it didn't change the fact that his tone suggested that he wanted to flip through the entire manor to see if Lindsay was present.

Frowning slightly, Gerald then replied, "Calm yourself."

"Like hell I can! If Miss Lawrence ends up bumping into someone like Frey again, she'll definitely be ruined!" grumbled Aiden with a sigh.

"And that's exactly why you should remain calm. How are you going to save her with an unclear mind?" replied Gerald who knew how Aiden felt.

After all, he had been much more anxious than Aiden back when Mila first got captured. As Gerald would come to learn, until he calmed himself, he wouldn't ever be able to resolve his problems. Thankfully, he managed to slowly calm himself over time.

Whatever the case was, knowing that Gerald's words made sense, Aiden then lowered his head with a sigh before saying in a resigned tone, "Fine, I'll try to remain calm..."

"Atta boy. Now... let's think this through. If it really was a Grubb who kidnapped Lindsay, who would be our prime suspect?" asked Gerald slightly loudly due to the crashing rain as he sat at the side of the bed.

"Frey's men," replied Aiden almost instantaneously. He had already considered that possibility while they were still in the car earlier.

“While they do sound like the most plausible suspects, why would they want to capture her in the first place?” said Gerald with a nod.

“That... I... can’t say for sure...” muttered Aiden as he shook his head. It was clear that he hadn’t thought that far ahead.

“First off, Frey’s men only went after her in the first place because of Frey’s orders. Now that he’s dead and the members of the Grubb family have no idea where he’s gone to, why would his subordinates suddenly want to kidnap her?” replied Gerald.

“I mean... when Frey was about to deflower her that night, plenty of his men were with him... I’m sure at least some of them yearned for her... To me, that alone is reason enough for them to kidnap her!” said Aiden as he recalled the events of that night.

“While that’s certainly a possibility, it’s a low one. Besides, that’s mostly just speculation,” replied Gerald with a nod.

“Then... Where do you think Lindsay has disappeared to?” asked the puzzled Aiden.

“For one, I don’t think the Grubbs have anything to do with her going missing. However, I do have a feeling that they have other issues that they didn’t report to your superior... ” replied Gerald as he narrowed his eyes.

“Other problems...? Come to think of it, back when my superior contacted me, he told me that the Grubbs had only told him that Lindsay had gone missing on her way back to Yanam and nothing else...” muttered Aiden, now starting to feel enlightened.

“Lindsay isn’t a fool, Aiden. After that incident, I believe that she’d have reported any subsequent journeys she made to her family. What more, there’s a high chance she had made sufficient preparations before even arriving at the Grubb family’s manor. With all that in mind, there’s no way a

similar incident could've taken place," replied Gerald with a faint smile, seeing that Aiden was finally starting to see his point.

"That's right! Lindsay should've told her family before coming over!" exclaimed Aiden who now had a new outlook on the case.

"Bingo. While we don't know whether she's being locked up in the manor or she's just having general troubles reporting back, I can say for sure that the Grubbs are definitely hiding something from us," replied Gerald as he opened the window before lighting a cigarette.

Chapter 2269

From the looks of it, the heavy rain wasn't stopping any time soon.

"Should we ask the members of the Grubb family then?" asked Aiden as he fished his phone out, fully prepared to contact his superior.

"Let's do a thorough investigation here first. Still, if she isn't in the manor, then this incident is definitely much more complicated than what we initially imagined... The Grubbs may have either been afraid of the other party which would explain why they've remained quiet about it, or there's just some other reason we're not seeing yet," replied Gerald as he placed his hands against the windowsill while staring outside.

"The Grubbs truly are an interesting bunch... Lindsay's gone missing yet they still refuse to reveal it! Are they only going to be satisfied once something bad happens?" growled Aiden as he slammed his fist against a table, wondering what Lindsay was experiencing right now. If she ended up getting defiled by someone like Frey, Aiden wasn't against murdering the culprit...!

"I can't say for sure," replied Gerald as he shook his head, making it clear that even he had no idea what the Grubbs were thinking and why they would commit the deed.

"Then... what should we do now...?" asked Aiden as he walked up to Gerald.

“Let’s get some test first. I’ll try getting some information out of Lucian tomorrow. Hopefully that’ll clear our suspicions of the family,” replied Gerald as he tossed his cigarette out into the rain.

Knowing that that was probably the best course of action, Aiden simply nodded in response.

Fast forward to the next day, the rain didn’t seem to be letting up at all. In fact, had Gerald not checked the time and realized that it was already eight, he would’ve surely assumed that it was still in the middle of the night with how dark it was outside. Regardless, after getting himself cleaned up, Gerald immediately headed off to look for Lucian.

Once they met up, Lucian invited Gerald for breakfast. Soon enough, the two were sitting opposite each other as servants served them their meals.

Biting into a loaf of bread, Lucian then turned to look at Gerald before asking, “So, had a good rest?”

“The rain was a bit too loud for my taste, but I mostly slept well,” replied Gerald with a smile, making sure to carefully observe any changes in Lucian’s expression the entire time.

“It’ll unfortunately be raining cats and dogs in the next few days. Still, that means you’ll get to stay longer here. Truth be told, it’s been the longest time since I’ve had a chance to have breakfast with a youth ever since Frey went missing...” muttered Lucian with a sigh.

Though he was aware of Frey’s bad habits, Frey was still Lucian’s adopted child. In a way, this was his fault since he had spoiled Frey too much as a child. Hell, he had even promised to make him the heir of the family! However, that didn’t mean that he didn’t want Frey around. Honestly, Lucian would’ve surely fallen into much deeper depression by now had it not been for the fact that he still needed to take care of his large family.

"I see... Could you detail me on the incident...?" asked Gerald who had been waiting for Lucian to bring it up.

"I don't know much myself, though it seems that he vanished not too long after you guys left back then..." replied Lucian who looked particularly saddened every time he had to talk about Frey.

"How unfortunate..." said Gerald, expertly pretending that he didn't know anything.

"Indeed... After about a week of attempting to contact him to no avail, I finally lodged a police report to investigate his disappearance. However, as I've said, he seems to have vanished into thin air..." replied Lucian with a heavy sigh.

Chapter 2270

"Were there no clues left behind at all...?" asked Gerald who was now pretty sure that Lucian had nothing to do with Lindsay's disappearance. After all, Lucian hadn't revealed any odd expressions throughout their conversation.

"If there were any, we would've found them ages ago. What a tragedy... Not only do I not know whether my son's dead or alive, but even if he's passed on, I can't find his corpse! This is truly as depressing as things can get..." muttered Lucian as he shook his head.

"Have you considered questioning Frey's subordinates? After all, they were closest to him so they may have an idea of what befell him," replied Gerald as he scratched his chin.

"I've asked them on multiple occasions, but every time I did, their responses remained the same. Essentially, all of them said that after Frey left one afternoon, he ceased to contact any of them. That was probably the day he went missing," said Lucian who had already considered everything that Gerald had suggested, making it evident that he had gone all out to locate his son.

"I see..." replied Gerald with a sigh.

“Well, I don’t have much hope that he’s alive by this point, so I’m only hoping that I can at least bury him. Still, being buried abroad is quite frowned upon by us Westoners...” said Lucian as he shook his head.

“It’s simply karma...” muttered Gerald to himself.

“Come again?” asked Lucian who genuinely hadn’t caught what Gerald had said.

“Hmm? Oh, I said it’s such a pity. After all, he’s the heir of your family, no?” fibbed Gerald.

“He is. Though he’s my adopted son, his character and behavior are much more outstanding compared to my biological children... He’s been helping me manage my family business a lot in recent years, you know? And as far as I know, he’s never made a mistake. I was about to tell him that he was going to be the heir of the Grubbs too, but alas, he ended up vanishing off the face of the earth!” muttered Lucian in a helpless tone.

“Truly a pity...” repeated Gerald.

“Well... Let’s not talk about him anymore... Speaking of which, there’s going to be a local auction in a few days. I could bring you there if you’d like,” replied Lucian who didn’t want to sound overly sad before his guest.

After all, though his son was most probably dead, the fact that Gerald had returned meant that not everything was all doom and gloom.

As his butler had previously said, it truly was the right choice for him to hand the Devotion Mirror to Gerald. After all, not only did he trust that Gerald wouldn’t run off with his family’s treasure, but he also believed that the youth would eventually share his findings with him once Gerald cracked the mirror’s

code.

By that point, everyone in his family would undoubtedly be able to improve their cultivation, and Lucian genuinely hoped that that would help give birth to more outstanding youths like Frey who would try their best to be part of the family.

Either way, upon hearing that, Gerald simply shook his head before saying, "I'm not that interested in auctions."

"Well, this isn't an ordinary auction by any means. It's actually the largest auction of the cultivation realm that's held once every five years! With that said, lots of rare treasures will be there, and if you're lucky, you may be able to get your hands on some!" explained Lucian.

"... Oh? The largest you say..." replied Gerald as he raised a slight eyebrow.

"That's right. Just so you know, Mr. Lawrence is coming along as well. Come to think of it, it's been almost twenty years since I last met him... With that said, meeting Lindsay back then was truly an eye opener. To think that two decades had passed in the blink of an eye..." muttered Lucian with a sigh.

With the mention of the Lawrence family, Gerald took a deep breath before saying, "...If it's alright with you, could you answer a question of mine honestly?"

Chapter 2271

"Of course! Ask away!" replied Lucian with a nod.

"Well... Miss Lindsay... She never returned since she left, correct?" asked Gerald with a slight frown, though after talking twice to Lucian about it, he felt that the man truly didn't know a thing about all this. What more, with how fondly he spoke of Lindsay, it was hard to imagine Lucian to be her kidnapper.

“... What do you mean by ‘returned’? Weren’t you and Aiden the ones who came with her?” replied Lucian, clearly startled to hear that.

Shaking his head, Gerald then replied, “No, I meant after that...”

“Well... Ever since you left together, she’s never returned... Besides, Mr. Lawrence never mentioned anything about sending his niece back...” muttered Lucian in response.

“I see...”

“Though... Where’s this coming from? Could something have happened to Lindsay...?” asked Lucian in a serious tone. He, for one, wasn’t the head of the family for nothing.

“Unfortunately, yes,” replied Gerald.

“What? Why haven’t I heard about this? Actually, how did she even manage to disappear? After all, not only does she have you, a person who was able to take out the high elders of the three largest families in Yanam, but she also had Aiden a special forces agent on her side!” exclaimed Lucian as he clenched his fists.

“It happened after Aiden sent her back. Apparently, she received a mission from her family and supposedly returned to your manor in Yanam. That was when she went missing,” explained Gerald in an indifferent tone.

“But that’s impossible! Mr. Lawrence never even told me that Lindsay was coming back! I’ll call him right this instant to ask what really happened! How could she have just disappeared on her way here? And why hadn’t he told me about this serious matter!” exclaimed Lucian as he got to his feet before getting his phone.

“Hold it, Mr. Grubb!” replied Gerald as he grabbed Lucian’s arm.

“With all due respect, not only is Mr. Lawrence my lifelong friend, but Lindsay is also my niece! How do you expect me to wait when something could’ve happened to her?!” exclaimed Lucian who was honestly more anxious now compared to when he was talking about Frey.

“If things were really that simple, then the Lawrences would’ve surely notified you the second Lindsay departed. After all, she had only made it back safely back then since Aiden was with her!” replied Gerald as he shook his head.

“Are you saying that the Lawrences don’t want me to know about all this?” asked Lucian after a slight pause.

“While I don’t know what’s happened between you two, I suspect that to be the case. After all, we only learned about her disappearance from Aiden’s superior who was the only one the Lawrences had notified about the incident. With that said, Aiden and I had come here in the first place to investigate whether the Grubbs were involved with Lindsay’s case,” explained Gerald once Lucian calmed down a little.

“What? Why on earth would we do that? It’s not like she has anything particularly valuable that we need...” replied Lucian as he firmly shook his head.

Chapter 2272

“Well... that should be the case...” said Gerald as he raised a slight brow.

“Are you hiding anything else from me, mister...?” asked Lucian, curious about Gerald’s response.

“The truth is, Frey had previously attempted to harass Miss Lindsay, though I managed to stop him in time,” replied Gerald as he stared straight into Lucian’s eyes.

“That utter b*stard!” yelled Lucian.

“Hmm? Aren’t you going to at least suspect me of slander...?” replied Gerald who couldn’t help but chuckle.

“Unfortunately, while Frey is good with most things, the one thing he’s bad at is self control... I can’t even count how many girls he’s harmed, and every time it’s my job to compensate them... Still, to think that he’d actually set his eyes on Lindsay this time... That boy really is losing his conscience! If he succeeded, I don’t think I’d ever have the face to meet Mr. Lawrence for the rest of my life!” explained Lucian with a deep sigh.

“I see... Well, since we’re now on the same page, I admit that I had initially suspected the culprits to be Lucian’s men. However, from what I’ve managed to gather here, I believe that they may not be involved this time. Still, since the Lawrences are trying to limit the number of people who know about her disappearance, I have reason to believe that the case isn’t going to be cracked that easily...” replied Gerald. By telling him all this, not only would he be able to curb Lucian’s anxiety, but he could potentially get the Grubbs to also help in the search for Lindsay.

“There’s no reason for her to come over in the first place. Also, as you’ve said, Mr. Lawrence should’ve notified me about all this... What could he be hiding...?” muttered Lucian as he pondered the situation.

“There’s no point in brooding over it. Either way, I’d like to meet up with Frey’s men so that I can completely rule your family out. Once I confirm that they’re not involved, I can head off and start investigating elsewhere. Are you alright with that?” asked Gerald as he lit a cigarette.

“I have no problem with that,” replied Lucian before fishing his phone out and giving his butler a call. Once his message got across, Lucian placed his hands on the table as he racked his brains, wondering what the hell was going on.

Minutes later, the duo saw the butler running in with his umbrella, though the heavy rain still managed to completely drench his pants. Regardless, after walking over and giving Gerald a nod, the butler was

prompted to ask, "You called, master?"

"Indeed. How's the investigation on Frey's disappearance going?" asked Lucian with a sigh.

"Unfortunately, we've made no progress even after using all the family's connections... With that said, please mentally prepare yourself, master..." replied the butler as he shook his head.

"Indeed. Well, I'm already expecting the worst. Either way, go call Frey's men over. I have some things to ask them about," ordered Lucian with a wave of his hand.

"But master, we've already questioned them over ten times now... Adding that to the fact that you've promised them a million dollar prize if they managed to provide any clues, I'm sure they would've told you anything they knew by now..." muttered the butler.

Chapter 2273

"This isn't about Frey... It's about Lindsay. She's apparently gone missing on her way here! Also, since Frey's harassed her before, Gerald's asking for his men to come over to see if they're involved!" replied Lucian with a sigh.

"W-what? She's disappeared?!" exclaimed the butler, clearly shocked by the news.

"Indeed... Also, if any of his men refuse to come, call the police to conduct a search on them! We have to ensure that Lindsay's disappearance has nothing to do with our family!" ordered Lucian.

Nodding in response, the butler then quickly rang all of them up, telling them to gather there. Once he was done, however, the butler couldn't help but ask, "Um... Why haven't I heard that Miss Lindsay was coming over, master...?"

"I was just made aware of this myself," replied Lucian.

"If that's the case, then why would the other family members know about this? Could one of the Grubbs know someone from the Lawrence family...?" muttered the butler as he scratched the back of his head.

"You make a fair point! How on earth had they known about this before us?" exclaimed Lucian.

"Mr. Grubb, as I've said, Lindsay's disappearance may have nothing to do with your family. With that said, I'm merely asking for Frey's men to come over to confirm that," replied Gerald.

"If I may, could you detail all that's been happening? I'm just curious as to how Miss Lindsay suddenly disappeared. After all, not only were we notified in advance of her arrival back then, but I also remember Miss Lindsay getting escorted by a special forces agent from Weston the last time she came over," asked the butler, wondering what changed that led to her disappearance.

"Well, the Lawrences apparently notified Aiden's superiors about Lindsay's disappearance while she was on her way to your manor. With that said, we in turn only found out about all this through Aiden's superiors. Either way, aside from that, the Lawrences apparently gave no further details..." explained Gerald.

"How absolutely strange..." replied the butler as he continued scratching the back of his head.

"Whatever the case is, Lindsay's gone missing within Yanam, so we have to find her!" growled Lucian as he clenched his fists.

Shortly after, Frey's men came running in, completely drenched in rain. Not knowing why they were called over, they simply stood at the door, waiting for Lucian to say something. However, Lucian simply stared at them without saying a word, immediately causing all of them to gulp. Had they messed up? But that couldn't be! After all, ever since Frey went missing, they hadn't left the manor at all...!

Eventually, the butler who realized that Lucian wasn't going to say anything soon was prompted to say, "So... Do all of you realize why you've been called over?"

"We don't..." replied a few of the men as they shook their heads.

"I'd like you to consider everything you've done in the past few days. If you admit to doing something wrong, then you won't be held responsible. However, if you continue trying to keep it a secret, then I'm afraid the consequences will be dire," said the butler.

Chapter 2274

"B-but we haven't done anything!"

"Yeah! We've been staying in the manor this entire time! If you don't believe us, you can check the surveillance footage!"

"Is this about young master Frey? Is there any news about him?" asked the frightened men as they tried to remember whether they had accidentally violated any of the family's rules.

"How many days ago, Gerald?" asked Lucian.

"About a week ago," replied Gerald.

"Send someone to go through all the surveillance footage from the past week! Conduct thorough investigations on anyone who's left the manor for personal matters in the past week! " ordered Lucian, prompting the butler to begin calling someone to review the footage.

Either way, after hearing all that, Frey's men couldn't help but feel dumbfounded. After all, aside from how serious Lucian and his butler looked, Frey's men were well aware that Lucian barely ever requested for the surveillance footage to be checked. With that in mind, they knew that something major was

definitely happening.

Once the butler was done with his call, he turned to look at Frey's men before asking, "So... What have all of you been doing in the past few days?"

"As we've said, we really haven't done anything! The footage will prove our innocence!"

"That's right! Still, what's all this about...? Did something big happen...?" asked one of the men with a gulp.

"You don't need to know. However, note that till this matter is properly investigated, none of you are allowed to leave the manor. Know that all your movements within the manor will be monitored as well," replied the butler with a frown.

"Understood!" declared the men in unison. Whatever was happening within the family, they were apparently involved.

Regardless, upon hearing that, the butler simply waved his hand before saying, "Now leave..."

Nodding in response, the men then left the scene, disappearing once more in the pouring rain.

Once they were gone, the butler closed the door behind them before walking up to Lucian and saying, "I don't think they're involved with her disappearance."

"Let's check the footage first before jumping to conclusions. Even if they didn't leave the manor, there's always a chance that they sent someone else to do the deed! With that said, I'm sure traces of the crime will be left behind! Either way, if they truly are the culprits, I won't be letting them off lightly...!" growled Lucian.

"I'll make sure to run a thorough investigation," replied the butler.

"While I'd like to contribute, I only know as much as you do know," said Gerald with a sigh. Since he didn't even know where Lindsay had first gone missing, locating her was near impossible at this point in time.

Still, since this was for Aiden, Gerald was going to do his best. He, for one, had already experienced the pain of losing Mila, and he didn't want Aiden to go through the same agony.

"Still, Mr. Lawrence is quite the character. After all, his daughter's gone missing yet he refuses to notify us about it! Even if he has his reasons, he can't just disregard Lindsay's safety...!"

Chapter 2275

Knowing that looking for her this way was no different from looking for a needle in a haystack, Lucian couldn't help but feel slightly helpless. It certainly didn't help that the longer they took to locate her, the higher the chances of her being in danger.

"Then... should we just call Mr. Lawrence for an explanation...?" asked the butler.

"I attempted to, but Gerald stopped me earlier, stating that if the Lawrences were already refusing to elaborate to the Weston special forces, there was little chance that they'd give us any more details. With that said, however, I believe that Mr. Lawrence must be in quite a pickle. Since he probably won't provide us with any necessary information, let's just try our best to save Lindsay. Even if we fail to do so, at the very least, we can say we tried our best. That way, it won't be too embarrassing for me to meet him in the future," replied Lucian as he shook his head.

"Speaking of which, the organizers for the big auction sent us three admission tickets for the auction last night, master. With that said, not counting the both of us, we're going to have one extra ticket due to young master Frey's absence..." muttered the butler as he fished three golden tickets out from his breast pocket before placing them on the table.

Hearing that, Lucian then looked at Gerald before asking, "Well... Are you interested in going...?"

"I'd be glad to. After all, you said it only takes place every five years, correct?" replied Gerald with a nod.

While he hadn't been interested in it at the start, after being told that it wasn't an ordinary auction, he figured that he may as well try his luck there.

Besides, while it was true that his priority was still to learn the secrets of the Seadom tribe in the ancient ruins in order to get to the island and save his family, getting stronger was equally as important. After all, though he had the power of the Herculean Primordial Spirit on his side, he still wasn't that confident that he would be able to take on Daryl. Hell, he wasn't even sure if he could take on Will or the other Crawfords that he had yet to meet.

Regardless, upon hearing that, Lucian couldn't help but smile as he said, "It's a deal, then. The auction's a week away. If it's not a problem, let's head there together."

Nodding in response, Gerald then left Lucian's room before returning to his room to update Aiden on all that had happened. Once that was done, Gerald then left the manor in his car.

Gerald, for one, estimated that reviewing all that footage would take at least three days. Since the auction wasn't taking place any time soon anyway, he may as well use the time to check the ruins out. After all, the sooner he learned the secrets of the Seadom tribe, the sooner he could plan things out.

Still, the rainstorm wasn't making things any easier for him... In the end, he managed to arrive at the forest through memory in the late afternoon. Due to the continuous rain, however, the second he stepped out, he immediately realized that he was going to be trudging through a muddy path the entire way. Completely drenched in a matter of seconds, all Gerald could do

was wipe some of the rainwater off his face before making his way into the forest. Though the canopy blocked quite a bit of rain, Gerald still had to occasionally wipe the water off his face to even be able to

see the path before him.

It was about half an hour later when Gerald finally made it to the mountain cave. Upon entering, he saw bones littered all over the ground just like last time, though he was less cautious now. After all, the old man guarding the cave had previously told him that everything in here was his.

With that in mind, the second he entered the cave, the old man's voice could be heard saying, "You're back."

"I am, senior," replied Gerald with a bow, his palm and fist meeting each other.

"I expected you to return in a few years, not in two months. With that said, have you returned to find something?" asked the old man in a much kinder tone than before.

"You guessed correctly," replied Gerald as he walked further into the cave.

Chapter 2276

After stepping on several mounds of bones, Gerald soon arrived at the innermost part of the cave.

Walking out the stone chamber, the old man momentarily looked at the drenched boy before shaking his head as he said, "A rare heavy rain..."

"Indeed... Regardless, I'm here because--"

"Stop. Come over here and warm up first. I'll go get some dry clothes for you," interrupted the man as he placed a finger over his lips before heading further down the stone chamber.

While Gerald honestly wasn't even bothered about his current condition, since the old man insisted, he

simply shook his head before following him. As he walked down the chamber, he couldn't help but note that the chamber had barely changed from the last time he was here.

Regardless, he soon saw the old man rummaging through a stone cabinet. Poking his head out, the old man then tossed a bag at Gerald while saying, "Try these on."

By the time Gerald caught the bag, the old man was already tossing some firewood into a basin next to his bed. With just a snap of his finger, flames flared out the dry wood, instantaneously warming the entire stone chamber.

Naturally, this surprised Gerald, and he was momentarily speechless. While he remembered Jobson performing something similar back at the Yamashita manor, it was clear as day that this old man was even more powerful than Jobson.

Noticing how stunned Gerald was, the old man couldn't help but laugh before saying, "Summoning a flame like that is nothing!"

"The fact that you can say that means I have a long way to go..." replied Gerald with a sigh. After all, if an old man tasked with guarding some ruins was already this strong, then Gerald's current cultivation was just the tip of the iceberg.

"So what if I'm strong? There's no place for me to use my powers! Though I guess being able to summon fire whenever I want is convenient... Either way, enough talk, go change already before you fall sick," said the old man as he sat cross legged by the fire while extending his palms out.

"But... this..." muttered Gerald in a slightly embarrassed tone as he looked at the bag the old man had thrown at him. Gerald figured that all the old man's clothes were hemp robes since he had only ever seen the old man wearing them, and while it definitely suited Gerald's temperament as a cultivator, they were now in the secular world! If he wore this out, then he would surely draw unnecessary attention, thus inconveniencing him to do things.

“What? You don’t like my clothes?” asked the old man as he glared at the boy.

“Of course, not...” muttered the flustered Gerald as he unwillingly undressed before opening the bag only to find himself surprised since it contained a set of rather modern and casual clothes! In fact, there was even modern underwear and socks! Gerald, for one, wasn’t going to complain, and he quickly got himself changed.

Upon hearing the buckling of a belt, the old man was prompted to ask, “Well? Does it fit?”

“It fits perfectly, honestly. Still, to think that you’d foresee my drenched arrival and even get me this fitting outfit...” muttered Gerald, feeling slightly touched.

“Oh please, I didn’t get them for you. I simply bought them to look at whenever I felt bored! As for the perfect fit, I guess you just happen to share the same measurements as my son!” replied the old man with a cackle. ‘

“H-huh?” said Gerald as he awkwardly took a sniff at his clothes.

Chapter 2277

“Don’t worry, they haven’t been worn before,” replied the old man in an indifferent tone.

Sheepishly nodding in response, Gerald then hung his clothes by the fire before sitting in front of the old man as he asked, “So... Do you know why I’m here, senior?”

“Do you think I know divination techniques or something?” replied the old man as he rolled his eyes.

“Well... I’m here to uncover the secrets of Yearning Island. From what the descendants of the Seadom tribe told me, all the important records of their tribe were kept here...” muttered Gerald with a sigh.

“Yearning Island? Seadom tribe?” replied the old man, looking slightly confused.

Seeing that, Gerald was prompted to ask, “Perhaps... I could look around myself...?”

“By all means. As I’ve said, everything in here is yours since you have the Herculean Primordial Spirit within you. I’m just here to guard your belongings,” replied the old man as he continued warming himself by the fire.

Nodding with a sigh, Gerald then got to his feet before walking toward the bookshelves in the stone chamber while saying, “For context, my parents and sister have been imprisoned on that island. With the help of the sea map that I previously obtained here, we managed to find the descendants of the Seadom tribe who then told us that the secrets to getting to Yearning Island were within these ancient ruins...”

“Then go ahead and start searching,” replied the old man without even lifting his head.

Hearing that, Gerald then nodded before starting to browse through the many books there.

Shortly after, the old man yawned before waving his hand slightly prompting the fire to move a bit closer to Gerald’s wet clothes and saying, “While I may be prying, with your power, you should’ve easily been able to protect your family. Unless, of course, you’ve offended some powerful people in the cultivation realm.”

“In a way. My grandfather’s the culprit,” replied Gerald as he momentarily stopped flipping through a book.

“Oh? How interesting... Are you telling me that your family fell out with your grandfather, resulting in him kidnapping them? If that’s the case, why didn’t he kidnap you as well?” asked the old man with a

slightly raised brow.

“Beats me,” replied Gerald as he shook his head.

Waving his hand fan for a while, the old man then laid on his bed before saying, “What a queer turn of events... Regardless, I hope you’re aware that you’ve just learned the basics of the Herculean Primordial Spirit. With that said, if your grandfather is really strong, you may not be his opponent.”

“Even so, I still have to try,” replied Gerald as he gritted his teeth, knowing how true the old man’s words were.

“Good luck finding information on whatever that island’s name is then,” said the old man as he closed his eyes.

“Yearning Island,” replied Gerald in a calm tone.

Upon hearing snoring, Gerald couldn’t help but turn around with a slightly raised brow. Realizing that the man had fallen asleep, Gerald went silent, not wanting to accidentally wake him up.

Following that, aside from the occasional sound of Gerald’s footsteps, pages flipping, and the crackling of burning wood, all else was silent. Even the old man stopped snoring after a while. Regardless, throughout that period, Gerald made sure to carefully read through every page he came across, fearing that the record on Yearning Island would end up being just a simple and easily miss-able footnote.

Unfortunately for him, there were bookshelves against all four of the walls. From what he could tell, there were at least a hundred books on each bookshelf, and it was honestly way more than Gerald had anticipated.

Truth be told, he had expected the old man to just get him the book that he needed the second he mentioned Yearning Island. Sadly, that simply wasn’t the case, and he was pretty much forced to slowly

flip through all the books there. While it was certainly annoying, this was the only way to get the information he needed.

After quite some time, Gerald found his eyesight getting blurrier and blurrier. However, he didn't dare stop since he had barely even finished reading a fifth of the books there. How frustrating.

Chapter 2278

Just as he was starting to smoke and rest his eyes for a bit , Gerald heard the old man say, "Found what you were looking for?"

"Not yet," replied Gerald with a sigh.

"I see. You should know that there are at least a thousand books in here, with most of them about cultivation skills and the others being historical records. With that said, if you really want information on that island, I'm afraid you'll need a minimum of half a month," said the old man while rolling off his bed.

"Is there no better way to do this...?" muttered Gerald as he watched the old man walk toward him.

"Of course, not! Though the ancient ruins have existed for over a thousand years, I've only been here for the past sixty of them. Even then, I've yet to touch a single book in here!" replied the old man as he sat beside Gerald before looking up.

Stubbing his cigarette out, Gerald then got to his feet before reaching for a book as he said, "How troublesome..."

Despite how time consuming all this was, Gerald knew better than to give up. After all, this was his best shot of learning the secrets of Yearning Island.

Regardless, seeing that Gerald had resumed reading, the old man went silent before eventually deciding

to head back to bed to take another nap.

Waking up again sometime later, he stared at Gerald for a while before leaving the cave, his hands against his back. Around half an hour later, the old man returned with a few bags.

Moving a stone table up to Gerald's back, the old man then placed the bags on it before saying, "Alright, time to eat. You'll need the energy if you want to keep searching."

Realizing that the senior had brought food back, Gerald then straightened his stiff neck before replying, "I appreciate it, Senior."

Watching as Gerald loosened his muscles, the old man then sat before tearing off a chicken drumstick and asking, "So, do you only plan on leaving after you've found the information you need?"

"Most probably," replied Gerald in a casual tone.

"Then be prepared to sleep outside. There's only one bed here," said the old man as he pointed at his stone bed.

"You're being a bit too much, don't you think...?" muttered Gerald, feeling slightly speechless.

"Were you thinking of sleeping on my bed then?" replied the old man as he raised a slight brow.

"...No, of course not..." said Gerald with a sigh. Truth be told, he didn't mind sleeping on the floor, but at the very least, he wanted to sleep someplace away from the wind and rain.

"Speaking of which, where's the general area of that island?" asked the old man who had nearly finished

eating the entire chicken on his own.

“Northbay,” replied Gerald.

“Finally, a familiar name. If I’m not mistaken, there’s an ancient book about the islands in Northbay on that bookshelf, though I’m not sure which book it is,” said the old man as he licked his fingers clean before pointing at one of the shelves.

“Oh?” replied Gerald, his eyes momentarily glinting with excitement.

“Relax, kid, get some rest after eating. You can continue once you wake up. From what I can tell, the rain should last for at least three more days, so it’s not like you can leave anytime soon,” said the old man as he took another roasted chicken out of another bag.

Chapter 2279

Watching as the old man then pushed the chicken toward him with a grin, Gerald simply nodded before saying, “I appreciate it, senior.”

Biting into a drumstick, Gerald couldn’t help but feel that it was a special treat to be able to enjoy a piece of hot and crispy fried chicken in such cold weather. Regardless, once he had his fill, Gerald sat by the fire to rest. Seeing that, the old man then got up to start looking for the book that contained information about the Northbay Sea.

After a while, Gerald couldn’t help but feel bored. Staring at the fire before him, he was suddenly reminded of the old man’s ability to conjure fire out of thin air. Since Jobson could do the same, Gerald was prompted to ask, “Say, senior? Do you know anything about ninjas?”

“No idea what they are,” replied the old man as he picked another dusty book up before starting to flip through it.

“I see... Well, back when I was in Japan, I met an elder who was capable of summoning fire out of thin air, just like you,” said Gerald.

Pausing for a moment, the old man then replied, “He’s pretty strong, then.”

“Indeed... I wonder when I’ll get to that level,” said Gerald as he looked at his palm, trying to figure out how it was done. After all, creating fire out of thin air was almost magical in nature.

“You’ll find out once you better understand the Herculean Primordial Spirit or Devotion Mirror,” replied the old man as he pointed at Gerald’s chest.

Looking at where the old man was pointing at, Gerald realized that he was pointing directly at his supposedly well hidden mirror! From the moment he had left the Grubb manor, Gerald had kept the mirror close to him at all times, fearing that he might accidentally lose it.

However, though he hadn’t mentioned it from the moment he entered the cave, the old man had apparently known about it from the very start! Fully aware that he had also been particularly careful to conceal it while changing earlier, the surprised Gerald couldn’t help but mutter, “Senior, you...”

“You’re wondering why I know you have the mirror, correct?” replied the old man with a smirk as he casually tossed the book in his hand to the top of the shelf.

Watching as Gerald nodded in response, the old man then added in a rather disdainful tone, “If I was able to detect your Herculean Primordial Spirit, what makes you think that you can hide the Devotion Mirror from me? It’s nothing special!”

The way he said it made it sound like the Grubb family’s ancestral treasure was nothing more than a common cabbage.

After pondering for a moment, Gerald then asked, “Then... Do you and the old senior I mentioned possess powers stronger than the Herculean Primordial Spirit?”

“Negative. In case you haven’t noticed, the Herculean Primordial Spirit is something all cultivators yearn for. If I had it, I’d certainly not remain stagnant at my current cultivating level. In fact, I’d probably have advanced to another legendary realm! Regardless, there’s no point talking about all this to a newbie like you,” replied the old man with a frown, making it evident that he believed that Gerald wouldn’t understand him even if he tried to explain things.

“Then... Why do I have to fully understand the power of the Herculean Primordial Spirit before I can attain a cultivation level like yours...?” asked Gerald who had constantly been fumbling throughout his path of becoming a better cultivator. With that said, since it wasn’t easy to come across someone who knew their stuff in terms of cultivation, there was no way he was going to miss this chance to learn from the old man.

Upon hearing that, the old man tossed his book away before sitting before Gerald and saying, “Alright, listen up.”

Chapter 2280

“To create fire out of thin air, you first need to create a resonance between your own power and the power of heaven and earth. With that said, you can use your essential qi to mobilize the natural elements. Know, however, that creating fire is one of the simplest things. From what I’ve heard, the great masters in ancient times were capable of overturning mountains and even making the sun and moon vanish with a simple gesture!” explained the old man with a longing gaze, knowing that that was the true limit of cultivation.

Unfortunately, a cultivator capable of that hadn’t appeared in over a thousand years. After all, not only did one need to be extremely talented, but they also needed to have great skill and luck before they could even remotely succeed in achieving such greatness.

Up on hearing that, Gerald couldn’t help but mutter, “But... isn’t making the sun and moon vanish impossible...?”

Gerald, for one, had received enough education to know that it was literally impossible to control the sun or moon. Such an action simply violated the most basic of natural laws!

Hitting Gerald on the head with a karate chop, the old man simply snapped, "Did you seriously just take me as a fool? Haven't you heard of figurative language before?!"

Watching as Gerald who was now holding onto the bump on his head groaned in pain, the old man then added, "Regardless, once you reach a certain level of cultivation, you'll be able to form a connection with the surrounding natural energy. It's been raining cats and dogs for a few days now, right?"

"Indeed..." muttered Gerald as he checked on his clothes that were now fully dried.

"Look at my palm," replied the old man as he extended his dry hand, prompting Gerald to keep a close eye on it. Watching as the old man frowned before moving his palm slightly, Gerald was soon able to feel moisture around him. As he stared on, Gerald was surprised to see more and more water droplets forming on the old man's palm. Soon enough, there was enough to form a small puddle.

As water began dripping from the old man's hand and onto the concrete floor, the stunned Gerald who hadn't witnessed such a technique before couldn't help but ask, "Is... this natural energy as well...?"

"But of course! This is merely an example of how my cultivation resonates with the surrounding natural energy. With how heavily it's been raining these past few days, I could flood this cave in a matter of seconds if I wanted! Would you like to see that?" asked the old man with a grin as he clapped his hands together.

"Please don't!" yelled Gerald, knowing that this cave was filled with his possessions. If the old man really decided to flood this place, then forget the treasures stored in here, he'd probably lose his once chance of locating Yearning Island!

"Heh. Either way, since you have the Herculean Primordial Spirit in your body, once your cultivation gets to my level, you'll be way stronger than me. Since I can mobilize the natural energy within ten

kilometers at my level, you'd probably be able to mobilize at least a hundred kilometers by then," replied the old man as he outstretched his hand toward the bookshelf and a split second later, a single book was launched from the shelf toward him!