

Chapter 2281

He grabbed the book steadily and continued reading after licking his finger.

Gerald did not stay idle. Instead, he cleaned up the stone table, walked to the previous bookshelf, and started rummaging.

Meanwhile, in the Grubb family, under the instructions of the butler, the footage of the surveillance system over the recent week was checked.

“Where is Gerald?” Lucian glanced at the footage and turned around to ask the butler behind him.

“Master, Mr. Gerald has gone out this morning, saying that he is investigating something. He estimated that he would take around two to three days to come back,” said the butler.

“Where is the young man who came with him?” Lucian asked.

“In the guest room. However, this gentleman has not been in a very good mood. He didn’t eat the three meals sent to him today. He only asked for a few cups of water from the servants,” said the butler.

“Sigh. I guess the higher ups from Weston must have put pressure on him to get Lindsay out safely of Yanam. Still, with the information we have now, let alone save her, we don’t even know who abducted her and where she is.”

Lucian put his hands on the table and sighed.

“Master, should we ask for help in your name from a few families and consortia that are close to us to investigate if there have been any kidnapping cases or any strange situations recently?”

Although the butler had been working under orders, he had been thinking about how to solve this matter all the time.

“You’re right. You go and handle it in my name.”

Lucian frowned, and after thinking it over for a while, he said immediately, “Right, go and call the special forces agent over. Since Gerald is not here, let him take a look at the footage.”

“No problem.” The butler responded and left right away.

After a while, Aiden knocked on the door and came in, his face extremely gloomy. He hadn’t received any news of Lindsay over these two days, and he even suspected she had been killed.

“You’re Baker, right?” Seeing Aiden come in, Lucian asked.

“Yes.” Aiden nodded.

“Here is the footage of the manor over these seven days. I have ordered my men to look at all of them all day today. Nothing strange was found. It can almost rule out the possibility of the Grubb family being involved with Lindsay’s incident.”

Lucian pointed at the men going through the footage on the computer screen as he spoke.

“It’s not the Grubb family. Then, What should be the situation?” Aiden believed Lucian’s words. After all, when they talked about this last night, he had been present.

“We don’t know yet. I’ve just ordered the butler to ask the families and consortia in Yanam who are close to us to help investigate. I think there should be some clues.”

Lucian got up and poured a glass of water for Aiden.

“Thank you, Uncle Grubb.” Aiden took it with both hands and nodded his head to thank him.

“Don’t pressure yourself too much. If something truly happens to Lindsay and your higher-ups blame you, the Lawrence family and I will prove that you have done your best.” Seeing Aiden’s dejected face, Lucian couldn’t help but pat his shoulder and comfort him.

Aiden was just about the same age as his own youngest son.

“No. Nothing will happen to Miss Lindsay.” No one expected that after hearing Lucian’s words, Aiden’s eyes became stern immediately. Even the cup he was holding was cracked by his grip.

Chapter 2282

Lucian was a little surprised and wondered why Aiden’s reaction was so intense, but he didn’t question the latter any further.

“We all know that Lindsay will definitely not be in danger. Don’t worry!” Lucian continued.

“By the way, Patriarch Lucian, do you think it could be the work of the war department of Yanam?” Aiden dragged Lucian into a small room, closed the door, and asked in a soft voice.

“What do you mean?” Lucian frowned.

“You should know that Brother Gerald and I have had a conflict with the war department of Yanam before, right?” Aiden gulped and asked. Ever since he had woken up, this thought had been on his mind the whole day. The more he thought about it, the more he felt it was possible.

“I know. Gerald killed the high elders of the three largest families, and even the former head of the war department, Godwin Linwod, has disappeared strangely. This was also done by you guys, right?”

Lucian nodded. This matter was no longer a secret in Yanam. Everyone knew about it, but no one dared to talk about it in public.

“So, could it be that the war department held a grudge and abducted Miss Lindsay, and the Lawrence family could not have started a dispute between Weston and Yanam, so they chose to hide it from my higher ups?” Aiden continued. He had prepared to break the news when Gerald came back.

“Hmm...” Lucian’s face turned somewhat gloomy.

Aiden’s words were not entirely unreasonable. It was indeed possible for the war department to capture Lindsay. If that was really the case, it was right for Mr. Lawrence to not tell the truth.

“I’ll investigate the army!” Seeing Lucian’s reaction, Aiden was even more certain.

“Wait, don’t rush!” Lucian grabbed Aiden’s arm.

“Uncle Grubb, we cannot wait anymore. Miss Lindsay may be being tortured even at this moment. I have to save her as soon as possible to ensure her safety!” Aiden was very emotional.

“How are you going to go there?” Lucian held him tightly.

“Of course I’m going by car!” Aiden felt a little baffled.

From here to the war department of Yanam, it took at least three hours of driving. If he walked there, he would have no strength left by the time he got there.

“I’m not talking about that.”

“Although Yanam is not as strong as Weston, it is still a war department. There are countless soldiers and guns inside. With you going there alone, what other consequence would you face other than you getting killed by them? Besides, do you have a gun in your hand?”

Lucian sized Aiden up and asked slowly.

“I...” Aiden was dumbfounded. He had indeed neglected this aspect. Although he was the King of Soldier, the war department of Yanam was not weak Besides, when he had taken his leave, he had already handed over his gun and bullets. From head to toe, he didn’t even have a bayonet.

“So, although this may likely be the work of the war department, you still have to wait here at least until Gerald comes back to discuss the next step.” Seeing that Aiden had calmed down, Lucian lowered his tone slightly.

“Then, we can’t just sit here and wait. Brother Gerald said that he will come back in two to three days, but we can’t be sure.” Aiden knew what Gerald was going to do. So, two to three days was the shortest estimation, but as for how long it would take, it was not certain.

“How about this? I have a few friends in the war department. We can ask them to look into it.” Lucian didn’t know why Aiden was so impatient, but Lindsay was his niece, so he would try everything he could.

“Thank you, Uncle Grubb.” Aiden clasped his fist and bowed deeply to Lucian.

Chapter 2283

“There is no need to thank me. I am Lindsay’s uncle. You were only ordered to protect her. Talking about gratitude, I should be the one to thank you. I thank you for being so attentive. Even after your mission ended, you’re still very much concerned about Lindsay’s safety.”

Lucian grabbed Aiden’s hands. He had not seen such a sentimental young man for a long time. Although he was acquainted with some outstanding people in this industry, those were merely profit oriented men who were good at flattering people.

“Uncle Grubb, you’d better contact them quickly. I honestly feel that this was done by the war department.” Aiden continued.

“Okay, I’ll call those friends and ask them to find out what is going on in the war department. I’ll let you know if I find anything.”

“However, you must stay in the manor. Don’t rush out on a whim. With your strength alone, even if Lindsay was truly locked up there, before you can even find her, you’ll be caught.” Lucian was still a little worried, so he continued to advise Aiden.

“Don’t worry, Uncle Grubb. I will calm down.” Aiden nodded in agreement. “Then, I’ll go back first. Feel free to call me if you need anything.”

“Go ahead.” Lucian waved his hand.

Right after Aiden had left, Lucian called his friends in the war department. Instead of mentioning Lindsay, he pumped his friends for information about the war department under the pretense of chatting and catching up.

In the cave.

After a few hours of searching, the old man finally found the records about the Northbay Sea. He patted it to get the dust off and handed it to Gerald.

“This is the ancient book with records about the Northbay Sea. There should be information about that so-and-so island. If it is not even in this book, you can only go and search for the things left behind by that family. As for where it is, I truly don’t know.” The old man pounded his back and lay on the stone bed to rest.

“Thank you, Senior.” Gerald nodded in gratitude.

Ignoring the dust on it, after blowing it once, he opened the book.

It could be seen that the papers of the whole book had turned yellowish, and there were even some tears. In the book, there really were records about the Northbay Sea. However, as Gerald flipped through it, the smile on his face gradually disappeared.

Upon comparing it to the sea map, Gerald realized that the island he, Aiden, and Master Ghost had gone to was called Gong Island.

Even after reading it twice, there was still nothing about Yearning Island.

“It’s not there?” The old man leaned sideways. Seeing Gerald’s face, he could already make a guess.

“Yes.” Gerald sighed and shook his head as he put the ancient book back onto the bookshelf.

“This Yearning Island is indeed well hidden. I guess it should not be an ordinary island. Are you sure that whatever family left behind really has a way to find this island?” The old man leaned on his arm, looked

at Gerald, and asked.

"I don't know, but right now, there is no better way other than this." Gerald shook his head once again.

Chapter 2284

"Then, you can only continue searching here. It just so happens that I haven't seen a single person here for decades, so you can chat with me." The old man couldn't help but show a smile on his face.

"Didn't you go out and buy something just now?" Gerald glanced at the garbage he had just cleaned up.

"That's different. If you were not here today, I would not have gone out. Before this, I would only go out once a week. If I keep staying in this stone chamber, I will turn into a psycho sooner or later."

The old man rolled over and said, "Some years ago, there were still some people who tried to break in. I could still tease them for fun, but now, I don't encounter those types anymore."

"Tease them?"

Gerald raised his head and looked around the cave. Seeing the white bones on the ground, he suddenly felt a cold shiver running down his spine.

"I'm just joking." The old man shook his head.

"By the way, did the former chief of Yanam come here before? I followed him to get here in the first place."

Gerald suddenly thought of the previous incident and asked.

“He was just standing at the entrance. Apart from cultivators with Herculean Primordial Spirits, no one is allowed to come near this place. This is the rule set by our ancestors.” The old man rolled over again and looked at Gerald.

“It seems that I have to thank the Herculean Primordial Spirit in me, otherwise, I would have died here.” Gerald pointed at the piles of white bones and said with lingering fear.

“Not necessarily. With your ability, it’s impossible for you to barge in by force, but I wouldn’t be able to stop you either. Maybe you would have ended up with some serious injuries and run away.” The old man sized up Gerald as he responded.

“Serious injury...” Gerald felt that the old man was talking more and more boldly, so he stopped replying.

“By the way, Senior. I still have one question.” Gerald wanted to smoke. When he put his hand into his pocket, he touched the sea map and said hastily.

“Just ask” The old man said coolly.

“This sea map.” Gerald took out the sea map and walked toward the old man. “Previously, I saw the Yearning Island on this sea map, but it kept moving, and it only lasted less than a minute. Since then, I haven’t seen it anymore.”

“You want to ask me what happened and how to make it reappear, then with this map, you can confirm the exact location of the island and find a better way to get there?”

The old man took the sea map and looked at it twice before throwing it away casually.

“That’s right!” Hearing the old man say everything that was on his mind, Gerald nodded excitedly and waited quietly.

“I don’t know.” Who would have expected that the words that came out of the old man’s mouth would make Gerald feel incomparably depressed.

“I thought you would know.” Gerald retrieved the sea map and put it back safely into his pocket.

“I’m just a guardian here, not an encyclopedia. How would I know anything about those things?” The old man sat up and took out a metal box from the bedside. He took out a piece of cigarette paper and put a handful of tobacco on it. After rolling and sealing it with his saliva, he stuffed it into his mouth. “Do you have a lighter?”

“Yes.” Gerald took out his lighter and lit the cigarette for the old man. Then, he smoked one too.

“Although I don’t know anything about it, from what you’ve said, I feel that this Yearning Island is not an ordinary place. It should be very hard to locate it. I honestly don’t know how your grandfather found it in the first place.” The old man spoke as he smoked.

“If only I knew.” Gerald exhaled a puff of smoke and replied slowly.

“Let’s continue searching, then.” The old man stretched out his hand which was clutching the cigarette and pointed at the bookshelves.

Chapter 2285

Gerald walked to the front of the bookshelf and continued to search with the cigarette still in his mouth.

Meanwhile, as Gerald was still looking for the records of the Seadom tribe, far away in a secret base in the outskirts of Yanam, Lindsay had already been locked up there for three days.

She had been locked up in an almost pitch-black prison with no light, and there were only about four to five square feet of space. When she walked forward, she could feel the cold iron bars.

“Mealtime!”

An impatient and noisy voice came from the distance. Not long after that, Lindsay saw the light of a flashlight. It was with this faint light that she was able to see her surroundings.

She was indeed in a very small prison. The surroundings seemed to be of the same construction, but it seemed like she was the only one being held here. Lindsay never heard any other voice or saw anyone else sending food to the other cells.

Just as she was thinking about this, a rather old lunchbox was thrown into her cell.

“Where am I?” Lindsay gathered her courage to ask.

Not long after Aiden had sent her home, she had received an order from her father to return to Yanam once more to give Uncle Grubb a surprise, and the surprise gift was in her pocket, wrapped in an envelope. However, once she had arrived in Yanam, the moment she had gotten off the plane, she had been ambushed from the back, and her mouth had been covered with a wet towel. No matter how hard she struggled, she could not break free. When she had woken up again from the effect of the anesthesia, she was already here.

As for the envelope and other things with her, they were all gone. Only her clothes were left.

“Girl, I’m warning you not to ask, or else you might lose your life here.” A deep voice rang out.

“Are you a Westoner?” Hearing the voice, Lindsay was a little startled. “Am I in Weston or Yanam?”

“If you ask once more, your life might just be taken away.” The other party did not say much and left right away.

Lindsay called out a few times but did not get any reply. She could only helplessly look for the lunchbox in the dark and eat the mediocre food. Although it tasted rather bad, if she did not eat, she might really die here.

After drinking the water in the lunchbox and filling her stomach, Lindsay started thinking about why she was here.

No matter how much she thought about it, she could not figure out how it had happened.

Her heart was filled with anxiety and fear, and she suddenly thought of Gerald and Aiden. Although it was dangerous being by their side and they did not take care of her as the young lady of a large family, she had, nevertheless, always been safe.

Lindsay knew clearly that with either Gerald or Aiden by her side, she would not have ended up in this situation.

Now that she was locked up here, she was not even sure if she was in Weston or Yanam. She didn't even know who the other party was. The only thing she could do was stay in this small space.

After the man had delivered her meal, he went back the way he had come, up through the stairs. She got to know the reason this place was dark was because it was underground.

-

A thick iron door was installed to the house and the prison, and not a beam of light could come in.

“Do you think it’s necessary to transfer all the people locked up here just because of this girl?” When he came up, a man in the uniform of the war department of Yanam asked.

These two people were the soldiers of the war department. They had been ordered to guard Lindsay. One of them was a leader of a small team of the war department, and another one was his subordinate.

“Don’t ask. This is not what we should know. Since it is a mission from the higher ups, we should just follow the order without question. Be careful not to get into trouble!” The one who had come up from the prison was the leader. Hearing his subordinate’s words, he scolded him hurriedly in a low voice.

“There are only two of us here. Besides, I am just whining to you, Leader. How can I say this to other people?” Being stuck here for two days, the subordinate felt rather bored.

Apart from the man who sent food and drinks on time every morning by car, he would not see anyone else the whole day, and not even a sound could be heard.

“Anyway, you should not talk nonsense. From what I know, this is a very important matter. What we are doing now is a secret mission for the war department. If you are not afraid to die, you can keep on mentioning this. If you get into trouble, don’t involve me.”

The captain apparently did not dare to say much. After saying that, he stopped.

The subordinate did not want to make a fool of himself, so he stopped talking.

Unexpectedly, just after their conversation, a car stopped outside.

“Remember, don’t say a word. You might want to die, but I don’t!” The captain reminded him in a soft voice before running to open the door.

“I know.” The subordinate nodded and cleaned up the table quickly.

Before the captain could open the door, the door was pushed open, and a middle aged man with a senior arm badge of the Yanam war department came in. Behind him, there were four armed soldiers.

“Is there anything?” Once the middle aged man came in, he asked.

“No. Ever since she was locked up, she has been staying in the cell obediently. When I bring her food, I talk to her in the Weston language as instructed. She is probably wondering if she is in Yanam or Weston now.” The captain stood straight and replied.

“Good. When this is over, I will give you all a promotion in rank!” The middle aged man patted him on the shoulder in satisfaction.

This middle aged man was none other than the man who had reported to Carter Lucab about Gerald’s arrival in Yanam and the person in charge who wanted to send the fleet to get rid of them. Since he felt that Carter Lucab had not done anything after becoming the chief, he had decided to secretly handle it himself. By the time he had gotten everything done, he would then take Carter’s place and become the new chief. Besides, he believed that after he had confessed everything he had done, the whole war department would support him.

“Thank you, Sir!” said the captain and his subordinate in chorus.

“I came here today not just to check the situation, but also to tell you that from today onward, there will not just be the two of you here. I will send a small armed team here every day.” The middle-aged man paused momentarily as he spoke.

“Is there any danger?” Hearing this, the two immediately felt a bit scared and asked hurriedly.

“Not for now.” The middle aged man denied.

Actually, the reason for his action was very simple. When he had abducted Lindsay after Gerald’s departure from Yanam, he had already sent his men to keep watch on the Lawrence family. The moment Lindsay had left, they had followed her and carried out the abduction when she had arrived at Yanam.

He did that because he wanted to use Lindsay to make Gerald return so that he could make him fall into the traps that he had prepared in advance.

Chapter 2287

As long as he could kill Gerald, he would be able to establish his position in the war department.

Still, he didn’t expect that Gerald would actually come back, and when he suggested this to Carter, his suggestion had been firmly rejected. If they had followed his suggestion, Gerald would have died at sea by now.

But now, they had let Gerald enter Yanam. He remembered clearly what had happened the last time Gerald had come, so he was worried that Gerald would find this place. After all, the impact Gerald had given him the last time was too strong. He had to be well prepared.

“We are not afraid of any danger!” The captain simply did not care about what he was saying and bit the bullet as he agreed to it.

“You can go out and prepare. Do it fast.” The middle aged man nodded and waved his hand at the people outside.

“Yes!” Unexpectedly, apart from the few standing at the door, a dozen men from outside also replied in unison.

“What is this?” The captain asked carefully.

“I am setting up traps around this place. You two don’t have to go out for the time being. I will send you food and water daily,” said the middle aged man.

“Understood!” The captain replied quickly.

“Is she inside?” The middle aged man pointed at the iron door.

“Yes,” said the captain.

“Bring me to her.” The middle-aged man walked toward the iron door.

The captain took a few steps quickly and walked in front of the middle aged man to open the iron door. Then, he illuminated the path with a flashlight. Walking along the long path, they finally came to the cell where Lindsay was being held.

“Lindsay Lawrence.” Looking at the woman in the cell, the middle aged man revealed a smile on his face. This was the bargaining chip he was going to use to threaten Gerald. He knew that as long as Lindsay was in his hand, Gerald would step into his trap sooner or later.

“Who are you?” Seeing the light from the flashlight, Lindsay stood up and asked.

“You don’t have to know who I am. You just have to know that as long as you stay here obediently, you

will be doing me a great favor. However, if you think of doing something else, I will kill you without hesitation.”

The middle aged man walked forward and talked to Lindsay from across the iron bars.

“You are from the war department of Yanam, right?” Lindsay stared at the man, and when the flashlight swayed, she saw the arm badge on his arm.

“That’s right. I am indeed from the war department of Yanam. But what can you do even if you know about this? Can you send a message out from here? Don’t forget that all your belongings have been confiscated. You can only shout.”

The middle aged man laughed loudly.

“Okay, then. I will just stay here.” After knowing his identity, Lindsay understood that it was no use for her to say anything. She turned around and sat down in the innermost part of the cell.

“Keep a firm eye on her. If anything happens to her, I will take your lives, understand?” After talking to Lindsay, the middle aged man turned to the captain and spoke in a low voice.

Chapter 2288

“What exactly is her identity?” The captain looked at the skinny girl in the cell and asked curiously.

Many people had been held in this secret prison, but no one had been treated so seriously before to the extent that they had to set traps outside.

“Do you know that there are things you should not ask?” The middle aged man glared at him and scolded him in a low voice.

The captain shuddered and did not dare to say anything anymore.

“Miss Lawrence, we will meet again. But when it happens, it will not be in this place.” The middle aged man looked at Lindsay. After saying this, he turned around and left.

Lindsay stood in the cell. She had roughly figured out the situation. She was most probably bait to attract his target, and the target should be Gerald, who had made trouble in the war department of Yanam before.

Other than that, Lindsay really couldn't think of a reason for the war department of Yanam to abduct her.

In the Grubb family.

Lucian received news from the war department.

“Are you serious? Where did he go?” After receiving the news, Lucian returned to his room immediately and asked in a low voice into the phone.

“I don't know. I just saw him leave with quite a few men. He seemed very nervous and cautious. Besides, when Gerald came to Yanam previously, he once proposed to make a move at sea, but Carter rejected his proposal.”

“Maddox Chabert has been very complicit and aggressive ever since Godwin Linwod was in power. Now that he has an unthinking chief like Carter Lucab, he should not be able to resist his loneliness.” Hearing his words, Lucian said.

“Yes. After Carter became the chief, Maddox has done a lot of things both openly and secretly. He has

the intention of replacing the chief. Miss Lawrence from Weston is most probably part of his plan," said the person on the other end of the phone.

"Okay. Continue to keep an eye on it. Call me whenever there is news. If you can find out what Maddox is trying to do, that would be best!" Lucian nodded.

"I'll try my best. Maddox is a very cautious person. It's very difficult to follow or pry him, but I'll see what I can do." The person sounded a bit uneasy, but he still agreed to it.

"Sorry to trouble you. I will thank you properly the next time we meet." Lucian was very grateful for his help.

"We'll talk about that later. Don't call me for the time being. When I get any clues, I will contact you," said the man.

"No problem," replied Lucian.

Hearing this, he directly hung up his phone.

Sitting in his room, Lucian drank his tea and began mulling over the phone conversation he had just had with that man. He was an office director in the war department, so his rank was considered not very high. Still, that was not to say that his rank was low. He would still be considered part of the upper level.

When Lucian had come to Yanam decades ago, he had gotten to know him coincidentally. It was with his help that Lucian could establish his position in Yanam. Although they had not contacted each other over several years, they were still very good friends.

This time, when Lucian asked him for help, he agreed to it right away.

“What did he say?” The butler stood beside him. When he saw Lucian hang up the call, he asked.

“Aiden’s speculation should be right. Lindsay’s disappearance really seems to have some connection with the war department, and it is very likely that Maddox is the one responsible for it.”

Lucian lit a cigarette and spoke slowly.

Chapter 2289

“Maddox Chabert? Isn’t he the person in charge of the sea? How can he be related to this matter?” The butler was confused.

“You don’t know that when Gerald returned to Yanam, the war department knew about it at once. Maddox planned to directly exterminate Gerald at sea, but Carter refused it firmly. If Lindsay’s disappearance truly has something to do with him, he should be planning to use her to threaten Gerald.”

“In that case, Brother Lawrence should not know about this. Or, if he knows a little, he is unlikely to say it directly. After all, it’s the war department who is responsible. If he reports it, it will inevitably make things even bigger.”

Lucian smoked his cigarette as he analyzed things. “Then, we cannot just stand by and watch. Master, I think I should remind you of this. Although our family has a high position in Yanam, we cannot fall out with the war department because of Lindsay. That would be very bad for us.”

The butler was worried that Lucian might not consider this for the sake of his relationship with the Lawrence family. No matter how strong a family was, it was impossible for them to fight against the war department head on. It would be like hitting a stone

With an egg.

“Of course I know.” Lucian rolled his eyes.

"Then, what do you mean?" The butler continued.

"Nothing in particular. I will just let him continue keeping an eye on the war department and Maddox Chabert. As for the rest, we will wait for Gerald to return and discuss it with him before making a decision." Lucian exhaled a puff of smoke and said coolly.

"This is indeed the best way." The butler nodded in agreement.

"By the way, has there been any news about Frey?" Lucian raised his head and asked.

"Still nothing, Master. I suspect that the young master has already been killed..." The butler sighed and shook his head. "We've done everything we could, but..."

"Enough. Don't say it." Not waiting for the butler to finish his words, Lucian waved his hand.

He knew what it meant, but he was not willing to believe it. He was such an outstanding adopted son. How could he disappear overnight without even leaving a single clue?!

"Do you want to continue the investigation?" The butler paused and asked.

"Sigh. Let's stop for now until after we settle the matter at hand." Lucian let out a long sigh. When he said that, he felt as though his aura had diminished. He did not look like the head of a family at all. In fact, he looked more like an old man in the latter years of his life.

"Understood." The butler nodded and stopped talking.

In the cave. Gerald was still searching for the secrets of the Seadom tribe kept here.

One whole day passed by in the blink of an eye. Although there was light coming in from the entrance of the cave, due to the heavy rain, the sky was dark. If he didn't check his phone, he wouldn't know if it was day or night.

The only sounds that could be heard vaguely were the sounds of the pouring rain and the occasional thunder.

"Not bad. You've searched one entire bookshelf in a day. I bet you will be able to find it in a week."

The old man spent most of his time sitting cross legged on the stone bed, leaning against the wall as he looked at Gerald.

"Don't make fun of me, Senior. Please help me out. I still have other matters to take care of, and I'm running out of time." Gerald smiled bitterly. He rubbed his somewhat sore hand and spoke.

Chapter 2290

"Look for it yourself. I am already so old. My physical strength has long been exhausted." The old man shook his head and lit a cigarette.

"Who would believe that?" Gerald said disdainfully.

"I can't help you search for it, but if you are interested, I can teach you how to make your essential qi resonate with the surrounding natural energy." The old man shook his head.

"Really?" The moment he heard that, Gerald's eyes shone immediately. However, after a while, he shook his head and refused. "Forget it. I'll just continue to look for what I need."

“Oh? Are you not interested?” The old man did not expect that Gerald would say that.

“I’m very interested in it.” Gerald shook his head again.

“Become my apprentice, and I can teach you.” The old man threw away the cigarette and said seriously.

“If it were any other time, I would surely agree to it immediately. But now, I still have many things to settle. Besides, controlling natural energy is certainly not something that can be learned overnight. I don’t have that much time to waste here.”

Gerald took a deep breath and said with some regret, “Besides, you told me before this that my current cultivating level is very low, and I have not mastered the power of the Herculean Primordial Spirit completely. Even if I wanted to learn, I am afraid I can only learn the basics.”

“I didn’t expect that you are still quite self aware.” The old man nodded in satisfaction.

“Senior, after I settle all my matters, I will definitely come back here and study under you. By then, it won’t be a problem for me to become your apprentice,” Gerald said as he continued to pick up the dusty books on the bookshelf and rummage through them.

“Can you tell me what other troublesome things you have to solve?” The old man crossed his legs and posed as if he was listening to a story.

“A friend of mine has strangely disappeared in Yanam. I have to save her.” Since the old man could even know about his Herculean Primordial Spirit and Devotion Mirror, Gerald thought that there was nothing to hide. Besides, it was probably a very small matter to him.

“Okay. Tell me where she is and how she looks. I can bring her back in half a day.” Sure enough, the old

man did not take it seriously at all.

“She disappeared strangely. If I knew where she was, I would have solved it already.” Gerald shook his head helplessly.

“So, she disappeared.”

“Why do you keep encountering such bizarre things?” The old man cocked his eyebrows and laughed hoarsely.

“If I knew that, I might not have encountered all this trouble.” Gerald randomly grabbed a book and flipped through it. However, before he could finish his words, his pupils dilated.

On the page he had turned to, the words ‘The Records of the Seadom Tribe’ were written clearly on it. Although it was written in the ancient script of the tribe, Gerald could still recognize them somehow. After all, he had seen many such scripts in the secret room of the Futaba family.

“Found it?” Seeing Gerald’s surprising reaction, the old man rolled out of the bed and asked as he rushed forward.

“This should be the one.” Gerald’s hands were shaking in excitement.-

Chapter 2291-2295

Chapter 2291

After taking a deep breath, Gerald slowly began flipping through the pages, making sure to be particularly gentle for fear that the thousand year old book would accidentally turn to dust.

To his dismay, however, he couldn’t understand what was written in it at all! At most, he was able to gather based on the crude sketches on a few of the pages that the book was detailing some sort of

sacrificial ritual, not unlike what he had seen on the sea map back then.

Carefully and slightly excitedly carrying the book over to the old man, Gerald was prompted to ask, "Can you read this, senior?"

Raising a slight brow, he then gave the book a look before eventually shaking his head as he said, "Unfortunately, I can't. However, based on the sketch, I'm assuming they're attempting to summon rain."

"What? Isn't this a sacrificial ritual?" replied Gerald.

"Whatever it is, it doesn't matter. After all, though you've finally managed to find the book, you can't make heads or tails of it! It's no different from a brick!" said the old man before laughing aloud. To think that after all that effort, it was ultimately just a waste of time.

Chuckling in response, Gerald then replied, "While I can't read it, there's someone who may just be able to..."

"Oh? Who?"

"A good friend of mine... Regardless, I'm saying this since after getting to know the descendants of the Seadom tribe, we were given access to a secret room that contained several books in an unknown language. However, this friend of mine seemed to be able to read them just fine," replied Gerald as he thought about Master Ghost.

"I see... Perhaps he'll be the key to cracking this code," said the old man with a nod.

"Indeed... Either way, I'll be taking my leave. I'll definitely come back to visit when I have the time,

senior!” replied Gerald as he carefully slipped the ancient book into his coat pocket. After placing his hands together and bowing in respect, Gerald then turned to leave.

“Hmm? You’re leaving already?” asked the old man, looking slightly surprised.

“Yeah! Don’t worry, I’ll definitely return to visit once I’m free!” declared Gerald rather enthusiastically.

“Aren’t you at least going to change back into your original clothes? They’re completely dry now!” replied the old man.

“Just leave them there for now! I’ll switch clothes again the next time I return!” yelled Gerald who was now so far away that even all his shouting sounded faint.

“How impatient can that boy get...?” muttered the old man to himself as Gerald disappeared in the distance.

Shaking his head with a chuckle, he then turned to look at the piles of books scattered all over the place before walking toward them to start tidying up.

The truth was, he had read nearly every book in here throughout his stay, which meant that he had no actual issues with understanding the language of the Seadom tribe. With that said, he had only lied to Gerald about not understanding since he wanted the boy to stay for another day or two.

Still, to think that Gerald would actually know someone capable of reading the Seadom tribe’s language! The boy was also lucky that he had managed to find the exact book he needed in a single day.

Clapping the dust off his hands once he was done rearranging all the books back on the bookshelf, the old man then muttered, “Return when you’re free? I’ll be lucky if you still remember me after ten years! Then again, I’ll probably be dead by then...”

Shaking his head, he then waved his hand causing a large shale to cover the cave's entrance before sitting cross legged on his bed. Closing his eyes, the old man then entered a cultivating state.

While it was still raining outside, it was much lighter than before. Understanding that, Gerald made a mad dash till he got to his car. Ignoring how drenched he was and how muddy his shoes were, Gerald immediately took his coat off the second he got into the car to check on the book. Thank heavens it had remained dry.

Leaning against his seat, Gerald couldn't help but breathe a sigh of relief as he said, "Alright... I've finally found it..."

Once he had caught his breath, Gerald began driving out of the forest to return to the Grubb manor. On his way there, he made sure to send a text message to Master Ghost, telling him to bring Jobson and Fujiko to the Grubb manor as well. There was something important that he needed to attend to.

Chapter 2292

Though he had accelerated the entire way, it still took Gerald four whole hours to get from the forest to the Grubb manor. Regardless, upon Gerald's arrival at the manor at about nine that night, his return was quickly notified to Lucian who upon learning that instantly urged Aiden to head to the reception room. Lucian himself then jogged out the manor together with his butler to greet the youth.

Upon seeing them, Gerald nodded before asking, "Good evening, Mr. Grubb. Have my friends arrived?"

"... Friends?" replied Lucian in a confused tone as he led Gerald to the reception room.

"I guess they haven't. Either way, do prepare three guestrooms for them since they may need to stay for quite a while. Don't worry, we'll all leave once we've rescued Miss Lawrence," said Gerald as he estimated how long it would take for Master Ghost and the others to come over.

Just as he figured that they'd be here by the hour, Lucian who finally realized how drenched Gerald was hurriedly replied, "No problem, but before that, do get a change of clothes! You're soaked from head to toe!"

Simply nodding in response, Gerald then followed the butler to another room to get himself changed. Taking the opportunity to get a cold shower as well, Gerald returned about ten minutes later, looking fully refreshed.

Seeing Gerald, Lucian was prompted to ask, "So... Did things go smoothly, whatever you were doing?"

"They did, indeed," replied Gerald with a nod.

"Glad to hear. Regardless, while you were gone, we think we've managed to find the person responsible for kidnapping Lindsay!" declared Lucian with a smile.

"Go on..."

After exchanging glances with his butler, Lucian then said, "We believe that Maddox Chabert is the culprit!"

"Never heard of him before," replied Gerald after thinking for a while.

"While you may not know him, he definitely knows you," said Lucian.

"... Hmm? Havel offended him before?" replied Gerald, understanding just how many enemies he must have accidentally made throughout the years.

“You could put it that way. You see, Maddox is from the Yanam military, and he’s the one in charge of Yanam’s seas. From what I’ve been told, Maddox’s first reaction upon hearing that you had returned to Yanam was to propose to Carter to have your life ended while you were still out at sea. Since that didn’t happen, it’s fair to assume that Carter denied that,” replied the butler.

“So you’re saying that he’s captured Lindsay to threaten me?” asked Gerald as he thought about it.

“I believe so. I know a few people from the military, and after asking around, it appears that Maddox has rarely appeared at work in the past few days. For those who managed to catch glimpses of him, they stated that aside from him looking immensely vigilant, Maddox had apparently gotten ten replacement soldiers to follow him at all times as well. What more, some also said that he had taken a few items from the military’s equipment department!” explained Lucian.

“... It doesn’t add up,” replied Gerald after thinking about all that he had just heard.

“What do you mean?” asked Aiden who had been silent the entire time.

“Well, if Maddox kidnapped her to threaten me after Carter rejected his proposal, I find the timing for that to be a bit off. How long has Lindsay gone missing again, Aiden?” replied Gerald as he turned to look at Aiden.

“About a week ago. While we immediately took action after I got the mission, my superiors had actually received the request from the Lawrences a few days prior,” said Aiden.

“Bingo. But we’ve only been here for three days,” replied Gerald.

Chapter 2293

“... Are you saying that Maddox’s actions simply coincided with your return? As in, he kidnapped Lindsay to lure you back and finally deal with you, not knowing that you were planning to return anyway...?” said Lucian as he tapped on his desk

"It's certainly a possibility," replied Gerald.

"Indeed... Regardless, I've already told my friend to keep an eye out on Maddox. With that said, he'll definitely notify me the second Maddox does anything weird. With any luck, we'll soon get the opportunity to tail Maddox and hopefully be able to save Lindsay. So, what do you think, Gerald? Any better suggestions?" asked Lucian.

"Not at all. I'm fine with that plan," replied Gerald with a nod, knowing that going with Lucian's plan was probably their best bet of saving Lindsay, at least for the moment

The second his sentence ended, one of Lucian's servants entered the room with a dripping umbrella in hand before saying, "There are a few people claiming to be Gerald's friends at the door, master."

"How many are there?" asked Gerald.

Upon hearing that, the servant went silent for a moment before eventually replying, "Three, I presume. Unfortunately, it was a bit too dark for me to say for certain..."

Nodding in response, Gerald then said, "Invite them in."

Though Lucian knew that Gerald wouldn't just invite anyone random to his house, he couldn't help but ask, "... Care sharing who those individuals are...?"

"Of course. One of them is a good friend, and the other is the young lady of Japan's Futaba family. As for the third person, he's an elder from another Japanese family. In case you're worried about their trustworthiness, I know all of them well, Mr. Grubb,"

Explained Gerald.

“Glad to hear,” replied Lucian as he noted down everything that Gerald had just told him.

Shortly after, Jobson’s voice could be heard saying, “I’ve heard that the Grubbs are quite influential in Yanam. To think that you were acquainted with such a great family!”

Upon realizing that Jobson, Fujiko, and Master Ghost who were being led into the reception room by the servant from before were here, Gerald immediately got to his feet before greeting, “Senior Jobson!”

Seeing that, Lucian quickly got up as well, understanding that Jobson was no ordinary person since even Gerald respected him.

As the butler immediately began serving the three new faces some hot tea, Jobson walked over to Lucian before placing his hands together and saying, “Ah, you must be Mr. Grubb! I’ve heard quite a bit about you!”

Before Lucian could reply, Gerald could be seen gesturing toward the seat beside him as he said, “Whatever the case is, do take a seat first, sir. After all, I’m sure the journey here was long and tiring.”

Hearing that, Jobson then nodded as he, Master Ghost, and Fujiko took their seats. Once seated, Jobson was prompted to ask, “So... I’m assuming you’ve found a way to save that missing girl?”

“We have, though it’ll probably be a while before we manage to get any results,” replied Gerald as he poured more tea for Jobson.

Having a feeling that Gerald still wanted to talk about other things with them, Lucian then cleared his throat as he said, “Regardless, it’s getting rather late so I’ll be excusing myself first. Also, your rooms have already been prepared, so once you’re all ready to turn in, just tell the servant who led you in to bring you there.”

Following that, Lucian gave his butler a brief glance, and the two then began leaving the room with umbrellas in hand.

“Thanks for having us, Mr. Grubb!” called out Jobson just seconds before Gerald closed the reception room’s door behind them.

Once the two were gone, Jobson’s smile instantly vanished as he whispered, “So... Since you called all of us here, I’m assuming you’ve made progress in our main mission?”

Chapter 2294

“I have indeed,” replied Gerald with a nod as he placed the ancient book that he had guarded carefully up till this point onto the table.

Frowning slightly, Jobson then asked, “... And this is?”

As the others got closer to the book as well, Gerald carefully opened it before pointing at the squiggly, worm like words as he said, “I found this in the ancient ruins, and I believe that it contains the Seadom tribe’s knowledge on how to get to Yearning Island.”

“This belongs to my family...?” muttered Fujiko as she curiously looked at it.

“It should be. Though I can’t read the language, the words look similar enough to the ones in the books in your family’s secret room back in the Futaba manor,” replied Gerald with a nod.

“Well, your assumption was right on the mark!” said Master Ghost after getting a good look at the book.

Chuckling in response, Gerald then playfully jabbed at Master Ghost’s arm before replying, “I knew you could read it! Hurry and see if there’s any information regarding how to get to Yearning Island!”

Immediately feeling pressured by Gerald's words, Master Ghost immediately said, "Just to clarify, I only learned a little about the Seadom tribe from my master. With that said, I'm no expert in the language, so don't expect my translation to be perfect..."

Patting his back, Gerald simply replied, "Just do your best!"

Nodding in response, Master Ghost then took a deep breath before picking the book up and attempting to translate it. Upon seeing that, everyone instantly went quiet, not wanting to affect his concentration.

Fast forward to half an hour later, Master Ghost made it past the fifth page before rubbing his slightly sore eyes as he said, "So... From what I was able to gather, the very start of the book details how to conduct one of the Seadom tribe's sacrificial rituals... With that said, I believe the parts about getting to Yearning Island should come much later on..."

Watching as Master Ghost then took a sip of his tea that had already gone cold, Gerald replied, "That's great progress! Don't worry, you're doing good. Take your time..."

Following that, Master Ghost resumed reading. However, once he got to the later parts of the book, his frown started getting deeper and deeper. As he had said, he was no expert in the language, and it certainly didn't help that most of the words were near indistinguishable since the book had been in that damp cave for so long.

Eventually, however, Master Ghost finally said, "... Alright, so apparently, the Seadom tribe had to leave Yearning Island about a thousand and two hundred years ago due to the arrival of a group of people who suddenly took over their home... Since the invaders had mastered the elements of water and fire, the Seadom tribe had no choice but to leave..."

"The invaders are most likely cultivators of old..." replied Gerald as he thought about Jobson and the old man's ability to bend natural forces to their wills.

Regardless, upon hearing Master Ghost's groan after he resumed reading for a while, Gerald who had a bad feeling about that was prompted to ask, "... Is something the matter?"

"Well... According to the book, Yearning Island is a magical place that was formed by the essence of heaven and earth. With that in mind, to prevent others from easily locating it, the Seadom tribe had placed the sole method to get to Yearning Island on the island that they moved to after being kicked out of their home. In other words, you'll have to find the island that the Seadom tribe moved to in order to even remotely get a chance to get to Yearning Island..." muttered Master Ghost as he looked at Gerald.

Chapter 2295

"C-come again...? Are you sure you didn't mistranslate...?" replied Gerald as his expression stiffened.

"Unfortunately, while I may mistranslate a word or two, I doubt that I'd get an entire section wrong..." muttered Master Ghost with a sigh, knowing that his translation was probably right on the mark.

Upon hearing that, Gerald flopped onto his chair, feeling immensely drained.

"G-Gerald?!" called out Aiden as he rushed to Gerald's side.

"I'm fine, I just... need a moment..." muttered Gerald as he closed his eyes while waving his hand. This was simply too much, even for him.

After all, every clue he got only seemed to lead him further down the rabbit hole. While he had initially thought that he'd be able to get to the island by locating the Seadom tribe, that only ended up leading him to the ancient ruins of Yanam in search of his answer. Despite all his efforts to obtain this book, however, he now apparently had to search for yet another island.

It certainly didn't help that he'd probably need to scour through that entire island to even remotely stand a chance of finding a way to get to Yearning Island. All these repeated let downs were starting to take a serious toll on his morale.

Truth be told, he was now most worried that he'd fail to get to Yearning Island even after finding the island that the Seadom tribe had relocated to. How much longer did he need to wait in order to reunite with his family...?

Looking at the disheartened boy, Jobson cleared his throat as he got to his feet before saying, "Well, I'm feeling rather sleepy, so I'll leave you young people to talk among yourselves."

Realizing that Jobson was leaving, Fujiko gave Aiden a look before whispering, "You said you were sleepy earlier, right? Let's head back to our rooms together. It's dark outside, so I'm a little unsettled to go out there alone..."

"I'm not sleepy... I'm staying here with Gerald," replied Aiden who failed to get her hint.

"Oh, for heaven's sake...! Just come along... !" grumbled Fujiko as she glanced at the exhausted looking Gerald.

"Fine..." muttered Aiden. Though he still didn't get the message, he still obediently followed her out and with that, the only people left in the room were Gerald and Master Ghost.

A short while later, Master Ghost took a cigarette out before handing it to Gerald and saying, "Care to have one?"

Taking in a deep breath now feeling much calmer than before, Gerald then frowned slightly before asking, "Are you sure you translated it correctly?"

"Most of it, yes. So, what's our next step? From what I can gather, the island mentioned by the book should be the one we had previously seen in the corner of the sea map. The one where we saw the Seadom tribe performing the sacrificial ritual," replied Master Ghost who was just relieved that Gerald

was talking again.

“What else can I do? All we can do is try locating that island next...” muttered Gerald with a tired smile.

“It won’t be easy to locate that island,” replied Master Ghost as he began smoking.

“I know... I plan to head to the ancient ruins again to see if that old man will be able to help. After all, he was the one who had located this book for me in the first place,” said Gerald as he thought about the old man.

“Are you heading out already?” asked Master Ghost.

“No, I’ll do that after we save Lindsay. After all, I can’t just postpone things now that we finally have more clues on her case,” replied Gerald as he shook his head.-

Chapter 2296-2300

Chapter 2296

“Got it,” replied Master Ghost with a nod.

“Either way, let’s put this incident aside for the moment. I’ll need some time to consider how to resolve the issue,” said Gerald as he puffed on his cigarette as well, now completely calm.

Truth be told, he simply couldn’t figure out how Daryl had led the entire Crawford family to Yearning Island. After all, it was extremely difficult to even locate and get to the place!

He already had everything needed to get to that island, right? Could the past Daryl have taken the same approach as him to locate Yearning Island...? But if that was the case, then Takuya would’ve surely told him about it. What more, the Futaba’s would’ve surely recorded such a major incident, but since Takuya had been so bewildered when Gerald first mentioned the topic, Gerald was sure that the record didn’t

exist.

Regardless, after giving a nod, Master Ghost pointed at the ancient book before replying, "Can I keep that for a while?"

"What do you intend to do?" asked Gerald.

"I'd like to look through it whenever I have the time. While the possibility is low, there's always a chance that I missed something out," replied Master Ghost.

"I see... Feel free to take it, then, but keep it safe. I still need to return it to the ancient ruins," said Gerald with a nod. While the book was useless in his hands, the same didn't apply when Master Ghost had it.

Watching as Master Ghost then carefully kept the book, Gerald was prompted to stub out his cigarette before getting to his feet with a stretch and saying, "Well, do get some rest for now. We'll be saving Lindsay first before resuming our main mission..."

After thinking things through, Gerald realized that he wasn't all that devastated. After all, he already knew that it wasn't going to be easy to save his family. This failure only solidified that the journey was going to be a complicated and dangerous one.

He hadn't obtained any new information about the Sun League either, though Gerald was pretty sure that he would only get the slightest chance of learning a thing about them once he got rid of the Crawfords. While achieving that would surely be no piece of cake, Gerald had made up his mind. He wasn't stopping till he got to his goal.

Either way, upon returning to his room and getting a cold shower, Gerald was able to put those thoughts away just in time for him to turn in for the night.

Fast forward to the next morning, Gerald was determined not to talk about the incident again. With that in mind, he immediately went off to look for Lucian and the others to discuss how they were going to get more news from the military.

“Really?!” exclaimed Aiden once they were all gathered with excitement after hearing Lucian’s good news.

“Indeed! Remember that friend of mine? He was able to eavesdrop on a conversation between Maddox and his subordinates!” replied Lucian with a nod.

“He must not have wanted to attract unnecessary attention. After all, he did do all this at night, which is rather suspicious, to say the least...” muttered Gerald though he knew better than to slander them without any evidence. Still, after obtaining all this information, it was getting clearer and clearer that those from the Yanam military especially Maddox were involved in this affair.

“Truly so... Regardless, since my friend didn’t follow him not wanting to accidentally expose himself and get into trouble with the military, we don’t exactly know where he went...” said Lucian.

Chapter 2297

Upon hearing that, Gerald quickly replied, “No worries there. Aiden and I will just head over to have a look.”

“Agreed!” added Aiden who would’ve requested to do so even if Gerald hadn’t wanted him to come along in the first place.

Hearing that, Fujiko then said, “I’m coming along too!”

“Just stay here. Don’t worry, I’ll definitely ask for your help in the future when I need it,” replied Gerald as he shook his head.

“But... I’m stronger than Aiden!” muttered Fujiko, feeling slightly puzzled.

“Take into consideration that we’ll be making our move at night. With that said, it’d be slightly inappropriate for you to be with two men in the dark. Besides, we won’t know where Maddox will go, so I’d prefer if only Aiden came along with me,” replied Gerald.

Hearing how resolute he was, Fujiko had no choice but to obey. After all, she remembered promising him that she’d listen to all his orders as long as he allowed her to follow him to Yanam back then. With that said, she’d rather listen than to potentially get sent back to Japan.

Regardless, pleased to hear that Gerald and Aiden were stepping in, Lucian who knew how powerful Gerald was then said, “I’ll be notifying my friend about this so that they can cooperate with you once you’re there, then!”

If they truly managed to locate Lindsay, then they’d surely be able to bring her back by dawn.

“Unnecessary. Aiden and I will just wait at the entrance of the military base. Speaking of which, I need to know what he looks like,” replied Gerald who’d rather not trouble others if he could do it himself.

“Hold on, let me find a picture of him,” said Lucian as he fished his phone out. After scrolling through several pictures, he finally managed to find the group photograph that had been taken during an event that had Maddox in it.

Showing it to Gerald, the youth then took a careful look at it before replying, “Alright, I’ve memorized his face.”

“Glad to hear. Either way, though you’re heading over at night, do be careful. Remember, since Maddox was trying to lure you over in the first place, he probably has all sorts of preparations to deal with you

should you appear!” muttered Lucian after lowering his phone in a slightly worried tone.

“No worries, dealing with such people is a piece of cake for me,” replied Gerald with a hearty laugh before patting his chest.

“Well, I’m sure the mission will go swimmingly then! Either way, since you’re making a move tonight, we may as well eat early so that you can rest a bit after the meal.”

Seeing that it was two in the afternoon, Lucian turned to face his butler before adding, “Order the chefs to prepare some food.”

“Right away, master,” replied the butler with a nod before hurrying out. About half an hour later, a multitude of dishes were served.

Throughout their meal, Lucian made sure to tell Gerald everything he knew about Maddox and the military in general. Naturally, Gerald made sure to note everything down. Once their meal was over, instead of heading back to their rooms to rest, all of them simply sat around in the reception room. It was when dusk began to fall when Gerald patted Aiden on the shoulder, prompting the duo to leave the reception room.

After they had left for a while, Lucian looked at his butler before saying, “Have some of our men follow them from a distance. While the priority is to keep both of them safe, should danger befall the duo, tell our men not to do anything rash. Instead, they have to report to me.”

While he was confident in Gerald’s strength, Lucian knew that Maddox was no ordinary person. With that in mind, Lucian was sure that the man had set several traps up for Gerald, and he was simply worried that Gerald would end up falling into one of them.

Chapter 2298

“Right away!” declared the butler with a nod. Soon enough, eight of the family’s stronger men began tailing after Aiden and Gerald.

Throughout the duo's drive toward the Yanam military base, Aiden kept his fists clenched, clearly worried about Lindsay's safety. After all, who knew whether Maddox and his men would do anything inappropriate to her.

Sensing how tense Aiden was, Gerald smiled subtly before saying, "Calm yourself. Remember, our main goal today is to get a firm grasp of the situation. While it's best if we manage to find Lindsay as well, there's no need to be overly anxious if we can't find her yet."

Hearing that, Aiden then took a deep breath as he replied, "Got it."

"Good. Also, even if we do come across Lindsay, I need you to remain calm and listen to my commands. After all, not only are we still dealing with Yanam soldiers, but there's also a good chance that Maddox has already set up traps for us. With that said, if you behave rashly, there's a good chance that we'll quickly be overwhelmed. By that point, even if we do manage to escape, our next attempt to save Lindsay will surely be exponentially difficult to achieve," said Gerald, knowing full well that Aiden was prone to behaving rashly. It certainly didn't help that there were already a few instances where Aiden had nearly ruined his plans.

"Got it!" replied Aiden with a nod. Pleased to hear that, Gerald then began accelerating to the military base, sending water on the drenched road flying all over the place.

Sometime later, Gerald through his rearview mirror noticed several cars following them. Though it was still raining rather heavily, he was able to make out that those cars belonged to the Grubbs.

Shortly after, Aiden couldn't help but say, "... Have you noticed those cars? They've been following us for a while..."

Though Aiden was generally playful, in the end, he was still a special forces soldier of Weston. With that in mind, it made sense why he was eventually able to notice the same thing as Gerald.

Hearing that, Gerald then looked at the cars one more time before calmly replying, "They're cars owned by the Grubbs."

"... Huh? But why are they tailing us?" muttered Aiden, unable to see the connection.

"Perhaps Lucian sent them over as backup, fearing that we'd get into trouble. Either way, just ignore them. Their presence won't affect us," replied Gerald who didn't take them seriously at all.

After all, it's not like they were capable of helping. Hell, they could potentially end up burdening him! Still, he didn't want to tell them to leave since Lucian had probably sent them over out of kindness. Whatever the case was, it was going to take them at least three hours to get to the military base.

It was around then when Maddox could be seen preparing to send a group of soldiers out to continue setting up traps near the area where Lindsay was locked up. If everything went swimmingly, then once everything was set up, he would release the news so that Gerald would learn where Lindsay was. Following that, Gerald would surely come rescue her.

While it was true that Gerald was immensely strong, in the end, he was still only a human. With that in mind, the boy would surely be unable to survive all the traps and snipers Maddox had set up around the area. The second Maddox gave his command, Gerald would be hit by an onslaught of bullets, and Maddox was sure that the youth would finally die by then!

Shortly after, a soldier entered his office before reporting, "The captain has sent a representative to us, asking why you've been continuously leading soldiers out in the night. He also wishes to know why you've taken quite a few resources from the armory..."

Chapter 2299

"Just make up an excuse. That good-for-nothing Carter is nothing but a coward... He's probably just worried that his position will be negatively influenced if anything happens! How unfortunate for our military to have a person like him as our leader!" sneered Maddox.

“Loud and clear,” replied the soldier with a nod.

Juggling his army dagger that had a crimson blade, Maddox then looked at the soldier before asking, “Speaking of which, have all of you prepared the things I’ve told you to?”

“We have. We’re just waiting for your command before we set off,” replied the soldier.

“Wait till night comes. Remember, if anyone asks, just tell them that I’m leading all of you out for a routine patrol. Don’t answer anything else!” ordered Maddox after thinking about it for a while.

Throughout this period, Maddox had been doing quite a few eye catching activities in preparation for getting rid of Gerald for good. Since it was clear that he was trying to replace Carter to become the new leader, Maddox was well aware that he could make new enemies within the military at any second. With that in mind, the less his men revealed, the lower the chances of his goals getting affected by those under Carter in the end.

“Not to worry! This isn’t my first day working under you, deputy captain!” replied the soldier with a chuckle.

“Glad to hear. Now leave me be. Once all this is over, not only will you get a two month vacation, but you’ll also be given fifteen thousand dollars to enjoy the new year with, ” said Maddox who was looking at his desk calendar as he gestured for the soldier to leave.

“I appreciate it, deputy captain!” declared the soldier with a wide smile before bowing and leaving Maddox’s office.

The second the door was closed, Maddox’s eyes went sinister as he stabbed his dagger into his office desk, causing the desk to crack a little.

“Once I end you, I’ll surely be promoted to military captain...” growled Maddox as he grinned wickedly.

Truth be told, he had already been planning all this ever since Gerald took down the three major families in Yanam. His excitement had only grown with Godwin’s disappearance, thinking that he’d surely become the next captain with how capable he was.

Unfortunately, that d*mned Carter had appeared out of nowhere and snatched the position from him! Naturally, this caused several of the more diehard military captains Maddox included to feel utterly repulsed by him.

Regardless, once he got rid of Gerald, Maddox was going to make sure that everyone in the country would learn about what he did. Following that, they’d surely believe that he was better than Carter at protecting Yanam, thus giving him a chance to replace that coward...!

Fast forward to dusk, Maddox and his secretary who was holding onto their umbrella could be seen walking toward a large gate at the side of their base. Aside from the ten prepared looking people whom Maddox had transferred over, Maddox could also see the equipment that he had taken from the armory being loaded into the back of one of the SUVs.

Upon realizing that Maddox was here, everyone immediately declared, “Vice captain!”

“Everything ready to go?” asked Maddox as he looked at his men.

Chapter 2300

“Indeed. We can set off as soon as you command us to,” replied the secretary.

“Let’s head out then. The sooner we get things done, the sooner we return. I’d rather not attract too much unnecessary attention either,” muttered Maddox with a slight frown when he saw all the staff members looking at him. Once Maddox got into the leading car, it didn’t take long before they began

making their way to a secluded prison.

Meanwhile, Gerald who had parked his own car in a well hidden corner near the entrance simply lit a cigarette when he saw the team of cars leaving.

Glaring at the vehicles, Aiden then muttered, "He should be in one of them, right...?"

"If you're talking about Maddox, yes, I believe so," replied Gerald as he took a puff of his cigarette before narrowing his eyes and starting to tail the cars at an appropriate distance.

Realizing that Gerald had made a move, those from the Grubb family began taking a detour using a smaller path instead of following them from behind. After all, though Gerald and Aiden were out in the open, a single car driving past the military base's entrance wasn't going to appear that suspicious. The same couldn't be said if their cars were included in the equation, and they'd rather not run the risk of getting halted by the military.

Regardless, when they finally got to the main road again, they quickly realized that none of the cars were there!

"They aren't here!" exclaimed the anxious driver of the leading car through his walkie talkie.

"Where have they driven off to?" replied the others at the back, feeling utterly confused.

"I... I don't know! They were clearly driving in this direction! It doesn't make any sense! They were only out of sight for about a minute! "

"Then what should we do? The master will surely have our heads if we return like this!"

“I suggest we split up! After all, there are three roads here! With any luck, we’ll be able to find them again! Remember to notify the others if you do!”

“Sounds good! I’m in on the idea! ”

“Then let’s take our alternate paths now! Keep in touch and pray that we manage to find Gerald again! I really don’t want to piss the master off! ” declared one of the Grubbs as the men immediately began executing their plan.

Moving back to Gerald, he hadn’t disappeared due to a sudden acceleration or anything. The truth was, the military cars had simply turned toward the opposite direction not long after they left the base!

Sitting in the shotgun seat, Aiden who had already seen the military cars make several turns by now couldn’t help but ask, “ ... Do they really have to be this cautious at their own base’s entrance...?”

“The Yanam military probably isn’t that peaceful. Regardless, it’s clear that Maddox is doing something shady. After all, he wouldn’t have to be this cautious if he was merely executing a mission issued by the military,” replied Gerald with a subtle smile.

“Indeed... Either way, if this b*stard really did kidnap her, I’ll definitely tear him to shreds!” growled Aiden as he clenched his fists.

“Let’s not do that,” said Gerald as he shook his head with a smile, making sure to always maintain a safe but not easily detectable distance away from the military cars.

As for the Grubb family’s subordinates, even after speeding along all three roads for over ten minutes, none of them even came across a single car.-

Chapter 2301-2305

Chapter 2301

After updating each other and knowing that they had truly lost Gerald, the men helplessly regrouped before reporting the incident to Lucian.

At the time, Lucian was entertaining Jobson and the others as they had their tea. As expected, upon picking the call up, his smile instantly vanished. A frown now on his face, Lucian then growled, "Get back here...!"

Hearing the clear change in tone, Jobson who was enjoying some dessert was prompted to ask, "Is something the matter...?"

"The men I sent out to help Gerald and Aiden have lost track of them, Senior Jobson!" muttered Lucian with a sigh. Still, to think that they'd make such an amateurish mistake at such a critical moment when they were key personnel of his family.

Laughing in response, Jobson then replied, "And here I thought it was something serious!"

"... Is this not serious enough? Gerald and Aiden are dealing with the military here... What if something happens to them?" said the worried Lucian.

"You truly underestimate that boy," replied Jobson as he stuffed a cupcake into his mouth.

"While I know that he's strong, this is the military we're talking about... Aside from the traps that Maddox has probably already prepared for him, he also has access to powerful weapons...!" said Lucian as he considered calling his friend in the military to step in.

Extending his hand and cupping it over Lucian's phone, Jobson then replied, "That's exactly why I said you underestimate him. Correct me if I'm wrong, but Gerald alone was able to take out the respected elders of the three major families in Yanam, right?"

Nodding slightly, the confused Lucian who had no idea how this contributed to the conversation said, "... Indeed, and several others in those families were killed as well. Without their leaders, the three families are about to completely crumble..."

"I see... I see... Now tell me, which is stronger? The military? Or the three families?" asked Jobson as he sat beside Lucian while gesturing for Fujiko to bring him more dessert.

"Well... though the military has access to modern weapons, the three families have cultivators... With that said, if they're pit against each other, I feel the three families are definitely stronger..."

"Bingo. So if Gerald was able to take them out alone, do you really think the Yanam military stands a chance against him? Truth be told, had your men managed to tail him all the way, I feel they may have ended up burdening him more than being a help!" replied Jobson with a satisfied smile, knowing that Lucian finally understood his point.

Smacking his forehead, Lucian who was now feeling much better then said, "... I get it. To think that I'd overlook something like this! All that worry was for naught!"

"I agree. Either way, let's just wait for his return. Even if he fails to rescue her today, I'm sure he'll be able to obtain some relevant news," replied Jobson as he continued eating.

Realizing that Jobson was almost finished with his plate of desserts, Lucian turned to look at his butler before saying, "Get more dessert for Senior Jobson."

"I'm good. While the desserts are good, I'm afraid I may get tired of them if I have any more. With that said, do you have any tea?" asked Jobson.

"Of course! Green or black?" replied Lucian with an enthusiastic nod.

Chapter 2302

“Either will do. Still, all of you truly underestimate him That boy’s way stronger than any of you could ever imagine...” said Jobson as he nonchalantly waved his hand.

“... Including me?” asked Fujiko as she pointed at herself. She, for one, believed that she understood Gerald extremely well. While she didn’t know why he was this strong, after spending so much time with him, she was pretty sure that she knew the extent of his capabilities.

“But of course. In fact, the boy probably isn’t aware of how strong he is either,” replied Jobson with a shrug before laughing heartily. From the looks of it, he appeared to be the one who knew Gerald best among the rest of them there. Regardless, Jobson’s tea arrived shortly after and the old man began drinking it in satisfaction.

Moving back to Gerald, he had been maintaining a safe distance from the military cars this entire time.

Feeling slightly impatient, Aiden who just wanted to know how Lindsay was doing was prompted to ask, “Where the hell are they going...? It’s been almost an hour now! All this is just too weird...”

“A bit anxious, aren’t we? Are you this impatient when you carry out other missions?” replied Gerald with a slight frown.

“But Lindsay...” muttered Aiden who knew better than to behave the way he currently was. However, he simply couldn’t help it. After all, Lindsay wasn’t someone random he had to save. Since emotions were involved, Aiden couldn’t deny that it slightly affected his professionalism.

“What about her? Also, last I checked, you’re not that emotional a person. Are you going to commit suicide if you find out that she’s dead?” sneered Gerald.

“I... No, I wouldn’t go that far...” muttered Aiden who didn’t dare to further anger Gerald.

“Good. Now be a bit more serious and stop saying such pointless things,” replied Gerald who could sense how much Aiden liked Lindsay. Even so, Aiden’s impulsiveness would only lead to their ruin, so Gerald had to keep him in check.

Recalling how anxious he had been when Mila first disappeared and his family got captured, Gerald reminded himself that he had only been able to start making rescue efforts after forcing himself to calm down and think things through. With that said, being anxious was completely useless.

“I was just venting a little...” muttered the slightly aggrieved Aiden.

Before Gerald could reply, he noticed that the military cars had suddenly slowed down. With that, he was prompted to say, “Quiet down. They’re about to make a move.”

“In this forest...?” muttered Aiden as he looked out the car window.

“Apparently. Still, it’s a wonder what they’re planning to do all the way out here...” replied Gerald who had a feeling that Lindsay may be close by. After all, why else would Maddox come to such a remote area in the dead of night? Adding that to how vigilant he had been upon leaving the military base, it was evident that his actions were nothing short of shady.

“Indeed... Regardless, just say the word and I’ll make my move!” declared Aiden rather enthusiastically as he unsheathed his army dagger.

“Relax. Let’s see what they’re planning to do first,” replied Gerald as he slowed the car down. Though they were quite a distance away, Gerald was still able to clearly see what the soldiers were up to.

Parking the car by the road, Gerald then placed a hand on Aiden’s thigh before whispering, “Let’s finally see what they’re up to. Don’t get discovered.”

After getting out of the car together, Aiden then gulped as he held on tightly to his army dagger while saying, "Loud and clear."

As for Maddox, he had no idea that the two were keeping an eye on him. After all, to him, his plan was perfect, so there was no way Gerald would be able to learn about all this. Till he eventually released the news, he was certain that only a few people would even know about this place.

Chapter 2303

Even those guarding the place had no idea who Lindsay actually was, which was why Maddox was so sure that nobody would be able to expose the incident till he released news about her capture. Everything was going to be perfect!

Whatever the case was, after getting out of the car, Maddox began walking deeper into the forest, making sure to carefully avoid all the traps that he had set up. Since the leader and team member who had been tasked with guarding the place had been informed that Maddox was coming over, they were already waiting for him by the time he walked over.

Watching as they quickly jogged over to greet him, Maddox who was now holding onto an umbrella looked around before asking, "So, how's the situation?"

"I mean... Nobody would ever come to such a remote place... Forget humans, both of us barely even see birds here!" replied the leader as he shook his head.

"Is that how you should report to a superior...?!" growled Maddox.

"N-no, sir! Nothing happened!" replied the frightened leader as he immediately straightened his posture.

"Good. Either way, I've brought your supplies for tomorrow so that I don't have to come over in the morning. The less I come here, the lower the chances of me getting found out," said Maddox as he gestured toward one of his soldiers who promptly walked over with a black bag in hand.

“We appreciate it, deputy captain,” replied the leader as he took the bag with a nod.

Nodding in response, Maddox then turned to look at the soldiers who had just gotten out of the cars before ordering, “Alright, get to work. Everything needs to be set up within three days. I can’t wait any longer!”

Following that, Maddox couldn’t help but imagine Gerald falling into one of his traps upon entering the forest. Unable to move an inch, Maddox would then order his hidden men to begin shooting at the boy!

There was no way he was going to survive that!

“About time!” yelled Maddox with glee, only to realize that he had yelled his thoughts out!

Looking at his men, Maddox then cleared his throat before saying, “... Either way, it’s eight now. We’ll be leaving at midnight, so make haste, or I’ll deduct your allowances!”

“R-right away, deputy captain!” declared the soldiers as they rushed to start work, not wanting their salaries to be cut.

Forcing a smile, the leader then walked up to Maddox before saying, “So... would you like to come in and have a seat, deputy captain...?”

Ignoring the question, Maddox simply asked, “Is she doing fine?”

“She is!” declared the leader.

“Good. Make sure to feed her the bare minimum just so she doesn’t starve to death. This is a prison, not a hotel!” growled Maddox as he walked into the room and looked at the iron door.

“W-we’ve already been doing so... If we feed her any less, she’ll die for sure! What more, the food she’s been getting is worse than what strays are fed...” muttered the leader who had almost gagged when he first saw what he was supposed to feed her.

“Are you taking pity on her?” asked Maddox with a raised brow.

“O-of course, not! I’ll do anything you ask!” stuttered the leader as he shuddered slightly.

Turning around, Maddox then said, “Tell me... Do you know why I chose you to guard this place?”

Chapter 2304

“I can’t say I do...” muttered the leader as he shook his head.

“It’s because you’re smarter than the others, and I intend to train you if you do well. Don’t miss this opportunity,” sneered Maddox.

“T-thank you, deputy captain...! I won’t let you down!” declared the leader with a broad smile as he quickly began massaging Maddox’s shoulders.

Meanwhile, Gerald and Aiden were still keeping an eye on things from the forested area. Gerald, for one, had refrained from getting too close to them since he wasn’t sure whether they had installed any surveillance cameras nearby.

Regardless, after paying close attention to his surroundings for a while, Aiden was prompted to say, “... There’s a house over there I think...”

Aiden had only been able to see the building's outline, which explained why he sounded slightly unsure of his statement. Regardless, upon hearing that, Gerald who had been sitting on a rock for a while now replied, "Indeed... Either way, what do you think Maddox plans to do? His actions have been extremely shady up till this point..."

"I don't know... Maybe he's trying to hide a corpse?"

"With his rank? He could've just told one of his random subordinates to do the deed. With that said, he wouldn't have come along if it was just to hide a corpse," replied Gerald as he shook his head.

"Well... what do you think, then?" asked Aiden.

"I feel that Maddox may be hiding something important here," replied Gerald, who was only able to clearly see the exterior of the desolate house from where he stood.

"Could it be Lindsay?" asked Aiden.

"We don't know that yet."

"Still... Regardless, are we going to eventually sneak in or are we just going to continue observing from here?" asked Aiden as he clenched his dagger, fully ready to heed Gerald's commands.

"Let's wait a bit more," replied Gerald as he crossed his legs...

It was sometime later when one of the cars was driven away. Thankfully, Gerald had parked his car behind a few large trees, and the darkness of night made it even harder for untrained eyes to detect.

Either way, it was almost four hours later when the other cars were driven off as well. After giving the cars a good look, Aiden couldn't help but whisper, "... Something's off."

"Elaborate," replied Gerald.

"Well... it's been raining this entire time, right?" asked Aiden as he continued staring at the boots of the cars.

"For three days in a row, yes. What's your point?"

"I'm getting to that... You see, when one of the cars passed by us earlier, I couldn't help but notice that the mud traces on its tires had been raised particularly high. In other words, they had probably been transporting quite a lot of heavy things earlier. With that said, the items have probably been left behind since I was able to discern all this in the first place," explained Aiden.

"You're not half bad!" exclaimed the surprised Gerald as she patted Aiden on his back. He hadn't considered all this at all!

Feeling slightly embarrassed to be praised by Gerald, the grinning Aiden then sheepishly scratched the back of his head as he said, "It was just a basic observation..."

"Regardless, I don't think we should make our move first. Still, we've definitely made quite a bit of progress just by locating this place," replied Gerald.

"... Huh? Why?"

"As you said, they probably left a bunch of stuff here. However, if they were simply leaving things behind, why did they have to spend so many hours here? The fact that they also scattered around the area throughout their time here leads me to believe that they were probably burying traps. Let's continue talking about this once we're back in the car," explained Gerald as he got to his feet.

Chapter 2305

“... Alright...” muttered Aiden in a helpless tone. While he had a feeling that Lindsay was definitely in there, since Gerald had prohibited him from entering, there was nothing he could do about it.

Regardless, after getting into the car, Gerald immediately began tailing the military cars again. After driving for a bit, he was prompted to say, “As I said, they probably have traps buried around the area. Adding that to the fact that there are probably people guarding the vicinity, I’d rather not risk getting caught while trying to save her. If we fail and get noticed, saving her in the future is going to be increasingly difficult.”

Shortly after, they caught up to the military cars again, and Gerald quickly slowed down to keep a safe distance from them. By that point, Aiden had mostly calmed himself, leading him to mutter, “... Well, at the very least, we now know that Lindsay is most probably in there...”

“From how shady Maddox has been, I agree,” said Gerald with a nod as they continued following the cars till they eventually arrived at the military base.

Naturally, Gerald didn’t follow them in, and instead began driving back to the Grubb manor. It was around two in the morning when they finally got back.

Before entering their guest rooms, Gerald made sure to look at Aiden before saying, “Try not to think too much about tonight and get some rest.”

“I will...” replied Aiden with a firm nod...

Nodding in response, Gerald was just about to enter his room when the butler suddenly ran over while saying, “Mr. Crawford! Master has ordered me to lead you to him the second you return! He said it was extremely urgent.”

“What’s the issue?” asked Gerald as he turned to look at the butler.

“I’m not sure either. However, following a call that made the master frown, he told me to keep an eye on the surveillance system and to also tell you to meet up with him the second you return,” replied the butler as he shook his head.

Frowning slightly, Gerald then replied, “Lead the way, then.”

With that, the butler then led the duo to where Lucian was currently resting. The second they entered, they were immediately greeted by a cloud of cigarette smoke. Looking at the ashtray that was brimming with cigarette butts, Aiden who was worried that all this had something to do with Lindsay was prompted to ask, “You called for us, Mr. Grubb?”

“Indeed. I received a call from Maddox about two hours ago,” replied Lucian as he puffed on his cigarette.

“What? But he was still in a remote area located west of the military base back then...” muttered Gerald with a slight frown.

Ignoring Gerald’s statement, Aiden then said, “Well, what did he say?”

“He was inviting me and those from a few other major families to discuss the development plans of each family over a meal. Maddox also stated that he wanted to take the chance to get the families to cooperate with each other in order to improve Yanam’s economy,” replied Lucian.

Chuckling in response, Gerald couldn’t help but say, “Isn’t he in charge of the Yanam’s seas? Why’s he meddling with the economy?”

“You’re telling me. Regardless, as you can probably guess, events like these were usually officiated by the ministry of finance as well as the ministry of commerce and industry. With that in mind, since Maddox is taking the initiative to run the event this time, I can only assume that he’s up to no good,” replied Lucian with a nod.

“No need to even assume, he’s definitely planning something. Still, since he wants to hold a party so much, let’s go together,” said Gerald as he lit a cigarette.

“You... Want to go too?” asked Lucian, feeling slightly surprised.

“But of course! Since he wants to kill me that much, I may as well take that chance to meet him,” replied Gerald with a smile.-

Chapter 2306-2310

Chapter 2306

“... Fine, I’ll bring you along. However, do keep in mind that Maddox has invited people from several other families and companies as well. With that said, even if he makes things difficult for us, we can’t just fight him there...” said Lucian in a concerned tone.

Laughing aloud, Gerald simply replied, “Don’t worry, I’m well aware of that! ”

“I’m glad to hear that. Well, putting this aside, how did things go on your end? Did you manage to find where Lindsay is being locked up?” asked Lucian, pleased to hear that Gerald wasn’t planning to do anything rash.

Hearing that, Gerald then began detailing everything that had happened in the past few hours.

Once he was done, the satisfied Lucian who now knew that Gerald wasn’t the kind of person who did things impetuously, was prompted to say, “From the looks of it, Lindsay is most probably being locked up there. Still, I’m glad you didn’t just rush in. I’ve heard plenty of bad rumors about that cruel man, and

I'm pretty sure you'd have triggered one of his traps if you had attempted to save her earlier. Whatever the case is, let's resume this discussion after properly considering everything..."

Seeing that their conversation was over, the butler cleared his throat before saying, "Speaking of which, the auction is in a few days. Would you like to start making preparations, master?"

"Hmm... Has the money been prepared?" asked Lucian.

"Everything's been prepared, including the money. We've sent the quota of people as well, but that's not what I meant. If you've forgotten, the auction is being held on a small island within Yanam. With that said, you'll need to make a move about three days from now in order to get there a day before the auction begins," explained the butler.

Upon hearing that, Lucian turned to look at Gerald as he asked, "Do you have a problem with that?"

"Not at all, I can go anytime," replied Gerald with a shrug.

"Then after joining Maddox's party tomorrow and taking the following day off, we'll set off early for the island on the third day," said Lucian with a nod.

"An auction on an island...? What kind of auction even is that...?" asked Aiden.

"Long story short, it's an auction for cultivators," explained Gerald.

"Even if you refuse to detail it, could I come along...?" asked Aiden who genuinely wanted to learn more about cultivators from the day he learned that Gerald was one.

“Unfortunately, we only have three tickets,” replied the butler.

“I see... What a pity...” muttered the disheartened Aiden.

“However... If you really wish to go there, I don’t mind giving you mine. After all, I’ve already partaken in multiple similar auctions with master, so missing out on one won’t mean much,” replied the butler.

“Can I...?” asked Aiden as he looked at both Gerald and Lucian.

“I don’t mind. Besides, if my butler stays, he’ll be able to inform us if anything goes wrong,” replied Lucian after thinking for a while.

“But... I’m not exactly a cultivator... Is it really fine if I come along?” asked Aiden, now feeling slightly worried.

“Oh, don’ t worry about that. Plenty of the attendees aren’t cultivators, you see. After all, aside from items that cultivators can use, rare plants and minerals with various special effects will also be up for auction. With that said, many of the participants will be regular people from large families,” explained Lucian.

“Well, that’s good to hear...” muttered Aiden with a relieved sigh.

“Indeed. Regardless, it’s getting late, so go on ahead and get some rest,” replied Lucian with a yawn.

Honestly, he would’ve headed to bed ages ago had Gerald returned earlier!

Chapter 2307

Regardless, after returning to his room, Gerald began thinking about all that had happened tonight...

As for Maddox, he could be seen sitting before a few of his confidants in a high end villa near the military base with a glass of red wine in hand. After gulping it down, he was prompted to say, "Alright, once you return, I want all of you to tell your subordinates to dress smartly tomorrow, got that?"

"We know. Don't worry, everything has already been well prepared. Things will surely be perfect tomorrow," replied one of the confidants after looking at the others.

"Still... Are you really sure that Gerald will come over tomorrow, deputy captain?" asked a bald confidant.

"Why wouldn't he?" replied Maddox as he poured himself another glass of wine.

"I mean... Ever since he entered Yanam, we've lost all news regarding him..." muttered the bald man in a slightly worried tone. He, for one, had been by Maddox's side for the longest time, which was why he didn't fear talking about his worries.

"While that's a good question, why don't you start considering where Gerald could've gone to ever since he arrived? After all, he couldn't have just been sleeping on the streets this entire time, right?" replied Maddox as he placed his wine glass down.

"Well... maybe he's been sleeping in a hostel or guesthouse...?" said the bald man.

"Or maybe he's at a friend's house," added another confidant.

"Though those are definitely viable suggestions, all of you have ignored the fact that it's been about a week since we've captured Lindsay. With that in mind, I'm sure the Grubbs would've already heard about this. Since Gerald would've surely taken the chance to meet up with the Grubbs upon arriving, I have reason to believe that Lucian would've asked for his help to save the girl. Due to the fact that he

knows Lindsay, Gerald would surely be compelled to assist. Little does he know that she's in our possession!" declared the smiling Maddox in a confident tone.

"I understand now!"

"You truly are the smartest person within our military base, deputy captain!" exclaimed Maddox's subordinates who hadn't even come close to seeing the way Maddox saw things. Truth be told, they had been wondering why he wanted to organize a business party out of the blue. After all, he hadn't done anything like that in the past. Now, everything was clear as day.

"Flattery will get you nowhere. Regardless, just follow and learn from me and I assure you that you'll all be promoted in no time! By that point, I'll expect all of you to be able to think critically and handle other affairs for me. That's the only way you'll improve!" declared Maddox as he pointed at them.

"We await our promotions!" yelled the men as they bowed toward Maddox.

"Well said. Either way, make sure to check for any imperfections tomorrow! Everything needs to be perfect! If Gerald dares to come over, we'll finally be able to capture him! Following that, I'll have Lindsay killed right before his very eyes!" declared Maddox.

After the meeting was adjourned, Maddox couldn't help but hum as he returned to his room. He, for one, was sure that Gerald wouldn't be able to escape his grasp this time, no matter how strong he was. Unfortunately for him, Gerald had already seen

Through all his plans.

Fast forward to the next day, Gerald uncharacteristically remained in bed past dawn. After all, now that he had momentarily put research on Yearning Island aside and he already had quite a bit of information on Lindsay's case, he didn't have much to do but wait to participate in Maddox's party that night.

Perhaps he could get more information there.

Lying in bed, he couldn't help but think about all that he had gone through in the past few months just to learn more about Yearning Island.

Chapter 2308

In no time at all, evening came, and Gerald got himself cleaned before changing into a nice set of clothes. Though the event was organized by Maddox, a party was a party, so he had to make sure that he was at least well dressed.

Regardless, once Lucian was prepared, both of them left the manor to head to Maddox's villa where the party was being held. The villa itself was only two streets away from the military base, so soldiers could be seen patrolling the area all daylong.

Aside from Maddox, this high-end villa neighborhood was also where most of the military leaders including Carter stayed. Rather than being interconnected, each of the villas was built individually with separate access paths and small gardens.

Whatever the case was, upon entering the car, Lucian instead of telling the driver to start the car up was prompted to look at Gerald before asking, "Honestly, do you think we should bring a few others with us? After all, if Maddox is really attempting to set us up, I'll end up burdening you since you'll have to focus on protecting me..."

"While I see where you're coming from, in the end, I feel that I'll have to protect both of you instead of you alone! With that said, bringing more people along is only going to be more troublesome for me," replied Gerald who knew that he was at least capable of protecting Lucian as long as he was alone from the most dangerous of situations.

"I see.. Well, I'll be in your care, then..." muttered Lucian before chuckling awkwardly.

"Indeed. Either way, let's go meet him already," replied Gerald as he leaned against his seat before closing his eyes. Hearing that, Lucian then nodded at his driver, and the car came to life just seconds

later.

Meanwhile, Maddox could be seen puffing on a cigar in his villa as he stood before twenty sniper soldiers whom he had specially chosen for tonight about two days ago.

Knowing how capable they each were, Maddox couldn't help but say, "Truly elites among elites..."

Hearing that, his confidant stepped forward before reporting, "I've already given them an entire day's worth of special training for this event, deputy captain! Once Gerald appears, they'll definitely be ready to snipe his head!"

"And who told you that I wanted Gerald dead?" replied Maddox with a raised brow.

"Huh...? But... then why did you organize this party and request for all these snipers...?" asked the puzzled confidant who had assumed that everything had been prepared this way to finish Gerald off.

"Use your head and don't ask things you shouldn't!" grumbled Maddox as he stubbed his cigar against his confidant's neck!

Flinching from the searing pain, the confidant then backed away as Maddox puffed into his cigar and ordered, "Alright, enough dilly-dallying! Head to your respective positions and prepare yourselves! Remember, nobody shoots unless I give the order!"

By the time the twenty snipers got into position all around the villa, the sky was already starting to darken. More and more guests were starting to arrive as well, and all of them were discussing why Maddox had invited them there. While they were all confused, all of them had still rushed over since they were well aware of how high Maddox's status was, being the deputy captain and all.

Standing on the Villa's top floor, Maddox placed his hand against a window as he peered down, constantly on the lookout for Gerald's arrival. When he finally saw the youth exiting a car, Maddox instantly smiled as he slammed his fist onto the windowsill.

Taking in a deep breath, he then said in a sinister tone, "Gerald...! So you really were with the Grubbs...!"

Chapter 2309

Moving back to Gerald, he and Lucian could be seen walking into the villa, leaving their driver behind in the car.

Upon seeing Lucian, everyone in the villa immediately cupped their hands as they greeted, "Mr. Grubb!"

Though the Grubbs didn't have the best properties in the country, they were still a cultivating family, so they were definitely worthy of respect.

Regardless, Lucian simply smiled as he replied, "Evening, everyone."

"Who's that young man, Mr. Grubb? And where's Frey?" asked one of the members in the crowd, prompting everyone to look at Gerald. They were rightfully curious since Lucian was well known for bringing Frey along regardless of the event. Not even

His biological sons were given such a right.

Fighting the urge to frown upon hearing his son's name, Lucian quickly managed to calm himself before replying, "This is Gerald Crawford, and he's an important guest of my family. I brought him over in hopes of introducing him to all of you."

"G-Gerald...?! " exclaimed several people from the crowd, making it clear that they all recognized the name. Then again, it was impossible to forget after that person wreaked havoc in their country back then.

Sensing how tense everyone suddenly was, Gerald quickly cupped his hands before saying, "Greetings. I'm new to this place, so I'll be in your care from now on!")

Upon hearing that this was his first time here, everyone immediately breathed a sigh of relief. Since they had only heard about Gerald's name, they quickly assumed that this youth only shared the same name as the other more dangerous Gerald. With that in mind, a few people from the crowd began saying, "But of course! A guest of the Grubbs is a guest of ours! Feel free to ask for help should you need any in the future!"

"Indeed! Aside from your good temperament, you look rather handsome as well! I'm sure you'll be an even finer man in the future!"

After the duo walked through the sea of compliments, the crowd slowly began sharing details about the properties they owned, with some even starting to discuss potential collaborations.

Though the scene got rather noisy, the second Maddox showed himself, everyone instantly went silent. Momentarily looking at Gerald, Maddox then pretended not to see the youth before enthusiastically declaring, "Greetings, everyone! Please move to the banquet hall..."

While he definitely noticed Maddox's leer, Gerald simply chose to ignore it.

Either way, the two thousand square feet banquet hall was located beside the villa, and Maddox usually used the area for either organizing social activities for members of the military or for entertaining guests.

As everyone began walking toward the hall, Lucian and Gerald made sure to lag behind the group. Once most of them had walked past the hall's doors, Lucian took the chance to whisper, "Is anything wrong...?"

“What do you think?” replied Gerald with a subtle smile.

Gerald, for one, had already sensed the presence of several snipers from the moment he arrived at the villa, and he was pretty sure that there were even more that he hadn't pinpointed yet. Maddox had definitely prepared a large surprise for Gerald.

Nodding in response, Lucian then sighed before saying, “Just be careful... If necessary, notify me of any danger in advance so that I don't end up burdening you too much...”

“Don't worry, there's hardly any danger,” replied Gerald with a nod.

Regardless, once everyone entered the hall including Gerald and Lucian, the doors to the banquet hall were slowly closed.

Chapter 2310

The second that happened, the snipers who had been lying in ambush immediately rushed toward the banquet hall's exterior, efficiently surrounding the area in no time flat as they patiently awaited Maddox's command from the outside.

Meanwhile, inside the banquet hall, Maddox cleared his throat before declaring, “Thank you all for attending tonight! While some may say that the military shouldn't be involved with the country's economy, I say otherwise! We're truthfully interested in knowing how you 're all developing as well! With that said, let us begin discussing the next step in improving Yanam's economy!”

Ashe said all that, Maddox made sure not to even look at Gerald for fear that his true intentions would end up getting exposed. That idiot would finally be his...!

Unfortunately for Maddox, Gerald had already seen through all his plans.

Whatever the case was, Maddox then turned to look at Lucian making sure to casually glance at Gerald in the process before adding, "Why don't we start with you, Lucian? Do share what the next step for your family is!"

"Though the Grubbs don't have that many properties when compared to the others here, I'm honestly satisfied as long as I can keep them up and running. With that said, my family's just going to continue doing what it's always done. However, we aren't against change, so do share your plans with us!" replied Lucian who had momentarily been caught off guard as he replied in a bureaucratic manner.

"Well said! What about the others?" said Maddox with a nod, clearly not planning to do anything just yet.

"I do have some things planned. Ever since 'that' incident, the three major families' properties have been on the decline. If we just continue ignoring that, our economy could be negatively affected! With that said, since my family's in the food industry, I'm planning to acquire all the food factories belonging to the Jewells. What do you think?" asked a middle aged man who was donning a suit rather loudly.

"I think it's an excellent idea! If you need anything, do notify me and the military will try our best to fulfill your needs!" replied Maddox without the slightest hesitation. After all, he didn't have much interest in who did the job. Still, he wasn't against obtaining long term benefits from them by helping them now.

"I appreciate the feedback, deputy captain!" declared the middle aged man with a bow.

"As for my family, we don't have any plans to further develop yet, so we'll be doing the same as the Grubbs. Even so, I'd still appreciate help from the military!" said another middle aged man.

"But of course, we'll help! Just contact my secretary whenever you need aid!" replied Maddox.

"That..." muttered the middle aged man, feeling rightfully puzzled. After all, throughout his many years

doing business, not once had he gotten involved with those from the military. Yet here Maddox was, telling him to just contact his secretary. Since when had the military started getting involved with Yanam's economy? It certainly didn't help that Maddox sounded serious about all this!

"Hmm? Any questions?" asked Maddox.

"No, I... was just wondering how I should repay you for your help!" replied the middle aged man after quickly making something up, knowing that he'd get into trouble if he revealed his true thoughts.

Laughing in response, Maddox simply said, "We're all people of Yanam, are we not? I'm just doing my part as a citizen! Also, I thought that this would be a good chance to get to know you guys, so don't worry about repaying my aid!"

"Hear! Hear!" declared everyone, unable to help themselves from breathing sighs of relief...-

Chapter 2311-2315

Chapter 2311

"Regardless, enough talk! You can contact my secretary when the time comes, but for now, dig in! No need to hold back just because I'm the deputy captain!" declared Maddox with a wave of his hand, prompting several servants to begin serving dishes and drinks.

"As if everything's that simple... If his words were genuine, then the Maddox we're looking at is a fake..!" sneered Lucian in a soft tone.

"Either way, we'll see how things go. Still, I don't think he'll be daring enough to cause a mess before so many people," replied Gerald as he began eating.

"Aren't you worried that he'll try to poison you...?" muttered Lucian in a slightly concerned tone.

“Even if he does, his poison probably won’t affect me at all. Remember, I’m no ordinary person,” replied Gerald with a smile.

“... You’re right. Well, I guess I’ll dig in as well!” said Lucian who hadn’t considered that earlier. Only someone with high cultivation like Gerald would’ve been able to obtain the Devotion Mirror in the first place. With that said, ordinary poisons would definitely be ineffective on someone like him!

Either way, Gerald quickly finished his meal before raising his hand as he said, “Deputy captain? Could I have another set? I’m not quite full yet!”

Though he hadn’t expected Gerald to just call out to him like that, Maddox simply smiled as he faced one of the servants before ordering, “But of course! Serve that boy more food!”

To Maddox, the fact that Gerald had used such a friendly tone to speak with him must’ve meant that he was completely unaware of his plans. With that in mind, Maddox didn’t mind humoring Gerald’s request. After all, the boy was going straight to hell once he was full!

After thinking about that for a bit, Maddox turned to look at Lucian before saying, “Lucian!”

“Yes? Can I do anything for you, deputy captain?” asked Lucian as he lowered his fork and spoon.

“Indeed! Now that I think about it, who’s that young man beside you? I don’t recall seeing him before this,” replied Maddox as he looked at Gerald.

“Hmm? Oh, his name is Gerald Crawford, and he’s a guest of the Grubbs. Since his family owns quite a number of properties in Weston, I brought him over to widen his horizons. Who knows, he could end up collaborating with some of the bosses here!” explained Lucian.

“Oh? I heard that companies from Weston are known for their honesty and integrity!”

“Same here! I’m up for a collaboration!” exclaimed several of those present.

All of them knew that Lucian wouldn’t just bring someone random over. With that said, though Lucian hadn’t specified the kinds of properties Gerald’s family owned, the attendees were pretty sure that they were big ones. After all, why else would Lucian treat Gerald so respectfully?

“Gerald Crawford...? Wasn’t that the name of the person who had caused quite a bit of chaos in our country a while back?” replied Maddox with a slight frown, still pretending that he wasn’t aware of who Gerald was.

Hearing that, Gerald then got to his feet before cupping his hands before Maddox as he said, “I assure you that we just share the same name, deputy captain. After all, not only is this my first time in Yanam, but I’m also merely an ordinary person! There’s no way I’d ever be able to cause any sort of chaos!”

“... I see! True enough, plenty of people on the planet share the same name! Either way, I’m quite interested in Weston, so why don’t you stay back and introduce me to some of your properties after the party? Who knows, I could facilitate your collaborations with those in Yanam!” sneered Maddox.

Chapter 2312

Though Lucian’s hands instantly began trembling, Gerald simply replied, “Why not? I may as well take the chance to learn more about Yanam as well!”

Upon hearing that, Lucian couldn’t help but whisper, “Why on earth would you promise him that...?!”

“Don’t worry about it. Since he wants me to stay so much, I’ll just oblige,” replied Gerald with a faint smile.

“Still... Allow me to remind you that we’re still pretty close to the military base, so don’t do anything unnecessary to him. Remember, Lindsay is very likely in his hands, so if you kill him, we may never be able to get her back!” muttered Lucian who knew that Gerald wasn’t easily dissuaded.

“Copy that,” replied Gerald with a slight nod.

“Good to know... Either way, I’ll be trying my best to stay back with you,” replied Lucian as he resumed eating, not wanting Maddox to find him suspicious.

Shortly after, Gerald finished his meal and leaned against his seat with his eyes closed. Though he looked like he had dozed off, the truth was, Gerald was actively spreading out his essential qi to get a better grasp of what was happening around the mansion.

By the time he was done, Gerald sensed the presence of twenty snipers and over a hundred special forces soldiers around the area. There was apparently a group of people surrounding the banquet hall’s exterior as well.

Seeing all the effort Maddox had made to trap him, Gerald couldn’t help but smile. It would be rude of him not to stay back.

Meanwhile, Maddox who was unaware of what Gerald was doing could be seen talking and laughing with the entrepreneurs and patriarchs whom he had invited. While it was true that he had set all this up just to deal with Gerald, he wasn’t about to pass up the chance to get into these peoples’ good books. With their support, he would surely have an easier time snatching Carter’s position from him in the future...!

Regardless, the party soon ended and almost everyone was left satisfied. After all, Maddox was providing them with benefits unlike any other military official had done in the past! Of course, they were well aware that they’d have to return more commissions to him in exchange. However, since they were still going to be earning much more anyway, they didn’t find sharing a part of their earnings to Maddox as something unprofitable.

With nothing else to talk about, the drunken middle aged men then hobbled out of the banquet hall while saying, “Well... We’ll be taking our leave first, deputy captain...! We’ll surely pay you a visit once we’re free in the future...!”

Naturally, the soldiers outside had long retreated before the men even left the building.

Whatever the case was, upon hearing that, Maddox walked up to them with a smile as he replied, “Feel free to come anytime you want! I’ll be sure to keep all of you company!”

Once he had sent all of them off, Maddox’s smile instantly vanished as he nodded at his confidant before gesturing toward Gerald who was still in the hall. Seeing his cue, the confidant then got his walkie-talkie out before telling the snipers to get ready.

Following that, Maddox returned to the banquet hall and sat beside Lucian before saying, “You know, it’s getting rather late, Lucian. Why don’t you head back first? Don’t worry, I’ll have someone drive him home once I’m done talking to him.”

“With all due respect, Gerald’s new to this place, so he’s still unaware of many of our customs. Because of that, I insist that I say,” replied Lucian with a slightly awkward smile, not wanting to offend Maddox.

“It’s fine, isn’t it? In the end, we were all once ordinary people who worked our way up, so I couldn’t care less about formalities. Besides, it’s not like we’re going to have an important talk or anything. It’s just going to be a friendly chat,” replied Maddox in an annoyed tone.

“... Fine... Then... Can I at least wait outside...?” muttered Lucian in resignation.

Chapter 2313

“Just head back first. I’ll get someone to send him home later,” replied Maddox with a wave of his hand.

Though he was clearly worried, all Lucian could do was nod as he slowly left the area. On his way out, however, he recalled what Jobson had said regarding Gerald's strength. If the boy was strong enough to take out the elders of the three major families, then Maddox was probably nothing to him. The thought of that definitely helped Lucian relax a bit more.

Regardless, once Lucian was gone, Maddox lit a cigarette before clearing his throat as he said, "So... Any idea why I told you alone to stay back?"

"Hmm? Not the slightest idea," replied Gerald in an indifferent tone as he lit his own cigarette before turning to look at Maddox.

"Well, not only does everyone now know that you're staying back with me, but they're also aware that you're Lucian's guest! With that said, should anything happen to me, the Grubbs will surely suffer!" scoffed Maddox as he crossed his legs, sounding like he had everything under control.

"You make a fair point," replied Gerald.

"Of course, I do. Either way, allow me to say that I really hadn't expected you to be daring enough to return to Yanam. Just so you know, the second we saw you out at sea, my first action was to propose to Carter to send out a fleet to end you! To think that that coward of a man would reject my idea! Had he simply listened to me, you would've been dead by now! You have no right to be sitting before me, got that?!" growled Maddox.

Though he said that, he couldn't help but feel thankful that Carter had rejected his idea back then. After all, had Gerald died then, Maddox probably wasn't going to get his chance to replace Carter as captain by claiming the glory of killing Gerald himself this soon. While he was no longer that angered by him, Maddox was still disgusted by Carter's cowardice.

Either way, upon hearing that, Gerald simply pretended to be innocent as he said, "Come again? I don't get what you're saying at all!"

“Oh, cut the act. We’re the only ones here now,” replied Maddox with a wave of his hand.

Not even bothering to play along anymore, Gerald who truly felt that what Maddox was doing was meaningless simply asked, “Fine, fine... Regardless, why do you want me dead that much?”

“Glad you asked. Once news about me killing you spreads, I’ll surely be promoted to captain!” said Maddox as he got up before slowly walking around the boy.

“Do it, then,” replied Gerald as he placed his hands against his chair’s armrests while leaning back.

“While I’d love to, I’m going to be the prime suspect if I kill you here. Not to worry, you’ll definitely fall into my hands in the next few days,” said Maddox as he shook his head.

“You sound pretty sure of yourself. ”

“For good reason. Regardless, know that when the time comes, you’ll surely come to me obediently,” replied Maddox.

“I look forward to it, then. Now if you’ll excuse me, I’ll be taking my leave, deputy captain,” said Gerald as he got to his feet before tossing his cigarette butt onto the floor. The second he walked out, however, he was immediately greeted by the sight of twenty armed men, all of them aiming their sniper rifles at him.

Chapter 2314

“A bit overprepared, don’t you think?” scoffed Gerald before chuckling.

“Can’t be helped. After all, I had several prestigious guests over today. Have to make sure I keep them safe, you know? Either way, step aside and let him leave,” replied Maddox.

“Roger!” declared the snipers before making way for Gerald.

Simply shaking his head, Gerald then walked out of the villa as everyone watched him leave.

Shortly after, Maddox’s confidant inched over to Maddox’s side before whispering, “... Um... Deputy captain...? That was our best shot of killing him...! Why did you just let him off like that...?”

Smacking the back of his confidant’s head, Maddox then grumbled, “Do I have to spell everything out? Today’s goal was just to see who Gerald had been staying with! The last thing I want is for him to continue being off radar! Putting that aside, if we deal with him now, not only will the Grubbs be after our heads, but Weston as a whole will also be giving us trouble!”

“I... I get it now...! You’re planning to get rid of him once he finds out that we have Lindsay and attempts to save her, right...?” whimpered the confidant as he covered his head.

“Bingo. If we take him out like that and everything goes perfectly, then his death will be called a ‘mysterious disappearance’ that won’t implicate us!” said Maddox as she watched Gerald finally leave his sight.

Moving back to Gerald, he had barely left the villa when he saw the Grubb family’s car parked not too far away. Up on seeing Gerald, Lucian immediately got out of the car before asking, “That was fast. Why did you leave so quickly? Did he make things difficult for you?”

“Putting that aside, why didn’t you head home, Mr. Grubb?” asked Gerald as he got into the car.

"I was just worried for your safety... I figured that as long as I was here, they wouldn't dare to do anything to you," replied Lucian with a sigh of relief now that he knew Gerald was safe.

"He wouldn't have dared to kill me with or without you. Besides, his men wouldn't have been able to defeat me in the first place," said Gerald without a worry in the world.

"His... men?" asked Lucian, feeling slightly puzzled.

After all, he had previously asked Gerald if he sensed any danger, but the boy had simply shrugged the question off.

"Indeed. Twenty snipers and about a hundred special forces soldiers, to be exact. They had been hiding all over the villa this entire time," replied Gerald as he patted the driver's shoulder, prompting him to start driving.

"My god!" exclaimed the shocked Lucian.

"Don't worry, it was all just for show. He probably wanted to scare me or something," replied Gerald as he rolled the car window down to look around.

"That's absolutely terrifying! Had Maddox simply ordered his soldiers to open fire, all of us could've died there and then!" exclaimed Lucian, his forehead now drenched in cold sweat.

"Relax. Remember, he's still the deputy captain of Yanam's seas, so he won't make such an amateurish mistake," replied Gerald.

"Either way, let's head back... I was slightly drunk earlier but this conversation has fully sobered me up..." muttered Lucian as he rolled his own window down to feel the cool night breeze on his face.

“Speaking of which, I no longer have any doubts that Lindsay is with Maddox,” replied Gerald with a sigh. “Oh? Did he mention anything about her?” asked the surprised Lucian.

Chapter 2315

“He said that I’d fall into his grasp within the next few days, so what else could that imply?” replied Gerald, honestly amused by how confident Maddox had sounded.

“Well, that pretty much confirms it. All the things you learned that night pretty much pointed to him being the culprit anyway. Either way, what’s the next step? With how confident he seems with his plan, you should really refrain from acting rashly...” muttered Lucian in a worried tone.

“I’ll just wait for him to tell me the news,” replied Gerald as he looked out the window.

It was nearing midnight when they finally got back to the manor. The second they got out of the car, Aiden immediately rushed out, yelling, “Gerald!”

The butler who had two umbrellas in hand soon ran out as well, calling out, “Master!”

Upon standing before Gerald, Aiden immediately added, “Why didn’t you tell me you left? I could’ve followed to give extra protection!”

“While I appreciate the thought, you’d probably end up needing my protection instead,” replied Gerald with a chuckle as he patted Aiden’s shoulder.

“Heavy rain is apparently going to persist for another week, master. With that said, I’ve already prepared some thick clothes for all of you. That way, you won’t get too cold during the auction,” said the butler as he handed an umbrella to Gerald before raising the other above Lucian’s head.

“Let it rain. It’s rare to get such long periods of heavy rain anyway,” replied Lucian.

“Indeed. Regardless, did Maddox make things difficult for both of you...?” asked the butler as the group began walking back into the manor.

“Not too much, though he did have several men lying in wait...” muttered Lucian who couldn’t help but shiver at the thought.

“I assume he did so out of worry that his guests would find themselves in danger,” replied the butler who lacked the context that Gerald and Lucian had.

“I suppose you’re right,” said Gerald, ending the conversation.

Since it was already past midnight by the time they entered the manor, Lucian chose not to say much and simply returned to his room guided by his butler to rest. The party had given him enough scares for one night.

Gerald himself returned to his guestroom, followed by Aiden. Hanging his coat in the closet-and seeing that Aiden had no intentions of leaving, Gerald was prompted to ask, “Not planning to get some rest?”

“I already took a nap in the afternoon, so I’ve had plenty of rest. Regardless... Did you manage to gather any clues while you were there?” asked Aiden as he shook his head before pulling a chair out for Gerald to sit on.

“What clues are you hoping for?” replied Gerald as he poured himself a glass of water.

“Clues regarding Miss Lawrence, of course!” said Aiden.

“I guess I did manage to gather something.”

"Go on..." muttered the anxious Aiden.

"Well, it's confirmed that Lindsay has been captured by him," replied Gerald as he gestured for Aiden to sit beside him.

After taking a seat, Aiden waited patiently for Gerald to continue... However, the youth showed no signs of having anything else to say. With that, Aiden eventually asked, "... Is that it? What about whether Lindsay is being imprisoned back in that forested area?"

"And how would I learn about that?" replied Gerald as he rolled his eyes.

"... Huh? Then... What should we do...?" muttered Aiden in a disheartened tone. It was clear that he had expected Gerald to bring more news back.-

Chapter 2316-2320

Chapter 2316

"What else can we do? We wait for news to come, of course! Do you really think it's that easy to expose Maddox? Do you take him as a fool?" replied Gerald as he ruffled Aiden's hair.

Brushing Gerald's hand off, Aiden then said, "... So... We really can't do anything...?"

"Precisely. Look, it's pretty much confirmed that Maddox has Lindsay with him now, so all that's left to do is to wait for his news. It probably won't be a long wait anyway since he wants to kill me so much," replied Gerald with a chuckle as he took another sip of water.

"Then let's prepare ourselves in the meantime," said Aiden as he relaxed slightly.

“There’s nothing to prepare. After all, you won’t be helping out much in the first place,” replied Gerald.

“Huh..? Why would you say that?” asked Aiden, rightfully confused.

“Aiden, you only have a single army dagger. Maddox had twenty snipers and at least a hundred soldiers under his command earlier. Tell me again how you’re planning to help?”

“That...” muttered Aiden as he looked at his only dagger before falling silent...

“Still, I’d rather not expose the fact that I’m a cultivator if possible. With that said, I’ll still be bringing you along. Go ask Lucian tomorrow to see if he can get you better equipment,” replied Gerald with a shrug.

“Expose? Gerald, I’m pretty sure everyone in Yanam already knows you’re a cultivator!” said Aiden with a laugh.

“The fewer people who know, the better. Regardless, now that I think about it, just let me ask Lucian about the equipment. Hopefully I can get some good ones for us,” replied Gerald with a sigh.

“Got it,” said Aiden as he nodded in response.

Fast forward to the next day, Gerald went off to look for Lucian the second he got up.

Upon hearing what Gerald had to say, the surprised Lucian couldn’t help but reply, “You... need equipment...?”

“It’s fine if you don’t have any, though I just thought I’d ask,” said Gerald, who was well aware that guns

couldn't be legally obtained in Yanam, which meant that even families with high statuses like the Grubbs had trouble getting their hands on them. With that in mind, apart from the guns owned by the military, all other guns in the country were most probably smuggled in.

"Well, I can get some, but I'll need some time... Regardless, why are you requesting for them out of the blue?" asked Lucian.

"Let's just say I don't want too many more people learning that I'm a cultivator while I'm saving Lindsay. With that said, having guns will surely help with keeping that a secret," replied Gerald.

"I see... How about this? I'll make some arrangements later to see if I can get some supplies from the war department. It'll probably still take a few days, though," said Lucian, who was eager to help as long as it contributed to saving Lindsay.

"I appreciate the help," replied Gerald.

"Now, now, remember, you're the one doing a big favor for me! I should be the one thanking you for going all out just to save my niece!" said Lucian in a sheepish tone.

Before Gerald could reply, Lucian's butler showed up and said, "Oh? So you're here as well, Mr. Gerald! How convenient!"

"Is something the matter?" asked Lucian as he watched his butler jog over.

Chapter 2317

"Well, due to all this heavy rain, it's honestly best if you leave for the island today. Otherwise, delays may happen and you wouldn't want to miss the first day of the auction, right?" said the butler.

Hearing that, Lucian turned to look at Gerald before asking, "Are you fine with leaving today?"

"I'm good to go," replied Gerald with a shrug.

Nodding in response, Lucian was about to leave when he suddenly remembered Gerald's request. With that, he turned to look at his butler again before saying, "Speaking of which, use our family's connections to obtain some guns. The more, the better."

"That'll be difficult, but I'll try my best," replied the butler with a slightly troubled expression.

"I don't care even if you have to spend extra to get smuggled ones. They're crucial for the rescue mission," declared Lucian.

Upon hearing that, the butler had no choice but to reply, "... Understood."

"Now that that's out of the way... Go get Aiden. We'll be leaving as soon as we're done packing up. As Mr. Schmidt said, the rain will probably impede our journey, so the sooner we head out, the better," said Lucian as he looked at Gerald. Fast forward to half an hour later, all three of them were all packed up and ready to go.

After driving for quite a bit, they eventually arrived at the port where they would be transported to the island at around noon. As the trio made their way to the small pier, they saw that at least a dozen small boats had already been moored there. From the looks of it, they had been hired by the auction's organizers to help people get to the island. Regardless, though the boats were pretty small, together, they were still a sight to behold.

Whatever the case was, after approaching a seated man who was wearing a long robe, Lucian asked, "How much to get to the island?"

"Twenty thousand dollars," replied the man without even looking up.

“Here,” said Lucian as he handed the man a wooden box, unsurprised by the outrageous price. After all, this wasn’t Lucian’s first time here, and the pricing had been different every time anyway. Still, it was lucky that he had prepared enough before coming over.

Taking the box, the man then looked inside before closing it again, not even bothering to count the exact amount inside. Following that, he handed it to another man-who was standing nearby-who then tossed the cash into his car.

“The three of you, right? Go on!” said the man as he pointed at the boats.

As they began walking down the dock, Aiden couldn’t help but mutter, “... Isn’t that pricing a bit outrageous...?”

“Twenty thousand is nothing for those attending the auction. In a way, the pricing also acts as a screening process to differentiate between those who really wish to participate and those who are merely here hoping to get some excitement,” replied Lucian as he displayed proof of his payment upon arriving at one of the small boats.

Following that, the three were handed oars before they got into the boat and began rowing. Looking around, Gerald saw that many others were also rowing in the same direction.

Before he could wonder how long they would need to row, however, a tailwind suddenly began blowing. While the wind itself wasn’t all that strong, it allowed their boats to sail forward extremely smoothly.

“You know, I really can’t even begin comprehending the power that the auction organizer holds!” muttered Lucian as he stopped rowing and placed his oar to the side.

“Indeed... This really is something else...” said Gerald with a nod. After all, aside from the fact that there were so many boats on the move, the island wasn’t even in sight yet! How strong was the organizer if they were able to conjure winds to move them forward from this range...?

Lighting a cigarette as he enjoyed the cool sea breeze, Lucian then muttered, "I wonder what's going to be on auction this time... I remember the final auction item being a treasure map the last time the auction was held."

"I see... speaking of which, do they accept cards?" asked Gerald, remembering that Lucian had paid in cash earlier.

"Of course they do. It's not like they're completely isolated from the world. Still, bear in mind that everything here will cost at least a few million dollars..." replied Lucian with a nod.

Chapter 2318

"Glad to hear," said Gerald.

"Is there something you're hoping to buy?" asked Lucian in a curious tone.

"Nothing in particular, though if I find anything good, I may bid for it," replied Gerald as he shook his head. While he wasn't a big fan of auctions, since this one was held once every five years, he had a feeling that there were bound to be items that would catch his fancy. Should he come across one, he would surely bid for it.

After all, what was money to Gerald?

"... Well, alright, but again, I warn that this auction is going to be unlike anything you've ever seen in Weston. Once we're on the island, even random street stall items can cost millions of dollars! With that said, you'll need millions to purchase even a single auction item..." explained Lucian, hoping that his warnings would help Gerald avoid getting overly disappointed by his lack of purchasing power later.

"I understand," replied Gerald in an indifferent tone.

After all, he already knew that this was a game for the rich ever since Lucian had told him that the auction was only held once every five years.

"I'm glad. Either way, we'll probably be on the boat for a few more hours, but rest assured, the organizers have designated places for us to rest once we arrive at the island. While the auction starts the day after tomorrow, the street stalls on the island will begin operating by morning. With that said, maybe we'll find something nice tomorrow morning," explained Lucian as he looked at all the other similar boats.

After giving a nod, Gerald simply closed his eyes in response, releasing his essential qi in the process. Since Lucian had mentioned that many cultivators were attending the auction, Gerald knew he had to be careful. True enough, with the aid of his Herculean Primordial Spirit-which allowed him to sense everything within a ten kilometer radius, Gerald quickly learned that there were cultivators in almost every boat. Some of them were even stronger than him, but only marginally.

Gerald wasn't about to let his guard down before those who didn't appear to be cultivators either. After all, who knew whether they were actually at cultivation levels so high that even he was unable to detect them?

While he wouldn't have been this cautious in the past, after getting to know Jobson and the old man in the ancient ruins, Gerald now knew that there were countless more cultivators out there who were much stronger than him. He just wasn't strong enough to be worthy of meeting them yet!

Regardless, as he looked at the boats around them, Aiden couldn't help but ask, "... Say... Won't commoners find all these boats leaving the port suspicious...?"

"Well, every time there's an auction, the organizers disguise the event as something else. Due to that, commoners tend to just ignore all this. Besides, the island is quite far from shore and there's even a sea fog around it, so there really isn't a chance of the auction getting found out," explained Lucian as he pointed at the fog in the distance.

Fast forward to around five hours later, the outlines of the island could be seen, prompting Gerald to stretch before giving his surroundings a good look. Though this was just an auction, there were countless cultivators attending, so he had to remain vigilant at all times.

Chapter 2319

It was half an hour later when the boats were finally anchored at the shore by a few men donning long robes.

Upon disembarking, Lucian immediately displayed their tickets before saying, "The three of us are from the Grubb family in Yanam."

"Right this way," replied one of the men after taking a brief glance at the trio.

Nodding in response, Lucian then put their tickets away before gesturing for Gerald and Aiden to keep close as he said, "Alright, let's have a meal before getting some rest. Since the sky's going dark soon, I believe that the street stalls won't open today."

Though the island appeared small, upon entering, Gerald quickly realized that it was probably even bigger than Gong Island. What more, instead of having a modern look, the island honestly felt like an ancient Weston town. Gerald, for one, felt like he had just time-traveled a thousand years back.

Now feeling a bit more curious about the island, Gerald was prompted to ask, "Do people actually live on this island...?"

"From what I know, the organizer only sends people over a month or two-before the auction takes place-to clean the place up. Following that, they'll host all the bidders and once the auction ends, the place will be cleaned up again before the island is sealed off. Speaking of which, there's something that you may find interesting. You see, quite a few people who've attended the auction before have claimed that as they were passing through this area-when the auction wasn't on, the island couldn't be seen at all! It was almost as though the island only appeared whenever an auction was about to be held! Though many already know about this rumor, nobody's been able to crack the code of the vanishing island!" explained Lucian as he continued leading the duo to the place they were going to be staying at, at least

according to the invitation card.

Regardless, upon hearing that, Gerald instantly frowned as he said, "... Come again?"

"Hmm? Did I say something wrong?" asked Lucian as he stopped walking for a while.

"Well... you mentioned the island only being visible whenever an auction is being held, correct?" asked Gerald as he thought about Yearning Island. After dealing with the Crawford cultivators back then, he had learned of Yearning Island's mysterious ability to just vanish, something that this very island they were on was apparently capable of doing as well.

"I did, though I assure you it's only a rumor. Unless you've seen this island before?" replied Lucian as he shook his head.

"Negative. I never even knew that this auction existed before you told me," muttered the frowning Gerald who was already certain that this island was equally as abnormal as Yearning Island.

Knowing Gerald well enough, Aiden-who had thought the same thing as Gerald after hearing Lucian's explanation-was prompted to ask, "Are you thinking about Yearning Island, Gerald?"

"Indeed... If there truly is a relationship between this island and Yearning Island, then if I learn this place's secrets, I may finally be able to figure out how to get to Yearning Island!" declared Gerald with a nod.

"... What exactly is this, Yearning Island...?" asked Lucian, feeling utterly confused.

Chapter 2320

After looking around to make sure that nobody was listening in, Gerald then whispered, "I'll tell you

about it another time. There are more pressing issues at hand now.”

“Hmm..? Like what? Do share. Maybe I can help!” replied Lucian.

“Let’s talk about this once we’re in a more private area. The walls have ears and I’d rather not have others hear this,” muttered Gerald, prompting Lucian to nod before continuing to lead the way following the path on the invitation card.

It was about twenty minutes later when the trio arrived at a wooden, three-story building that was surrounded by food stalls and even two pawn shops that apparently only accepted gold and silver as currency. The scene naturally puzzled Gerald who couldn’t help but wonder how those pawnshops and food stalls had even come here in the first place. Though he was confused, he put the thought aside for now as he headed upstairs.

The organizer had arranged for them to stay in the easternmost room on the third floor, and since the invitation grouped the trio together, they soon found themselves looking at an antique-looking suite with three bedrooms connected by a living room. Though the austere-looking room was well furnished, there wasn’t an electrical appliance in sight, not even a lightbulb! As Gerald was wondering how they’d keep the room lit at night, his question was quickly answered when he saw an unopened pack of candles on the table.

Shaking his head, Gerald then put his luggage down before lighting a cigarette and saying in a monotonous tone, “I’d like to learn the island’s secrets.”

“That’s... going to be a bit difficult. After all, no ordinary island would have rumors about it only reappearing every time there was an event...” muttered Lucian as he shook his head. While past attendees had certainly been curious about all this, they had never seriously attempted to crack the code. After all, everyone knew that the organizer-who had never even shown their face before-was not someone they could afford to mess with.

“Even so, I’m giving it a go. Understanding how this island works is extremely important to me,” replied Gerald with a sigh, knowing full well how powerful the organizer was. Even after squeezing every ounce of his power, it was still probably going to be impossible for him to use his essential qi to blow boats

forward for hours!

“... Is all this related to that Yearning Island you mentioned earlier...?” asked Lucian.

“Indeed. Let’s just say that that island is similar to this one. As for why I’m trying to get there, it’s because my parents and sister are trapped on that island, which explains why uncovering this island’s secrets is so important to me. With any luck, should I manage to learn how this island operates, I may finally get my chance to head to Yearning Island...” muttered Gerald as he looked out the window.

“I see... Still, you should know that the organizer never makes an appearance. With that said, none of us know their true identity!” replied Lucian with a slight nod.

Sensing Lucian’s worry, Gerald simply said, “I believe that that can change. While I won’t do anything too drastic just to crack the code, I’ll still be prying around to see if I can learn anything useful.”

“I’ll help,” replied Lucian as he patted Gerald on the shoulder.

“I appreciate it. Either way, I’ll be getting some rest first. Call me if there’s anything,” said Gerald as he puffed on his cigarette before walking toward one of the bedrooms.