

## Chapter 1913

“It’s fine if you don’t get it. Whatever the case is, I’m going to be having an out-of-body experience now to check if my theory is correct! With that said, be sure to guard my body well in the meantime!” said Gerald.

“Got it, Mr. Crawford! Do be careful!” replied Rey as Gerald nodded before lying down...

Shortly after, his ghost form shot out from his body before diving downward!

Continuing to dive deeper and deeper, Gerald eventually came across the source of the duo’s plight... True to Gerald’s guess, there really was a giant mechanism underneath them this entire time!

With that mystery solved, Gerald knew that in order for them to escape this hellish loop, they would need to take a literal leap of faith after finding a specific number on the stairs... If they didn’t, they could very well end up living the rest of their lives on these stairs...

Regardless, now that he had learned all this, Gerald bolted back to his physical body... and upon re-entering it, he instantly yelled, “Bingo!”

Since Gerald had made such an abrupt return, it scared the living daylights out of Rey!

Once the youth finally calmed down, he could only look helplessly at Gerald as he muttered between pants, “D-d\*mn it, Mr. Crawford...! You almost gave me a heart attack...! Don’t go shouting so abruptly...!”

To be fair, being all alone in such darkness would make anyone feel utterly terrified...

While even Gerald was momentarily stunned by Rey's reaction, he quickly snapped out of it before saying, "...Got it! Anyway, listen, I think I've found a way to get out of this place!"

"...H-huh? Really? Then what are we waiting for, Mr. Crawford? Lead the way!" replied Rey, instantly forgetting about being scared half to death just seconds earlier. After all, Rey's priority was to leave this place as soon as possible since he felt that he would go mad from anxiety if he had to stay in this place any longer...

Nodding in agreement, Gerald then began leading Rey down the stairs again... and eventually, he found the exact spot they needed to be at.

Seeing that they had stopped, the confused Rey couldn't help but ask, "...Um... Mr. Crawford...? Didn't you say we were leaving...? We've been descending the stairs for quite a while now..."

Hearing that, Gerald turned to face Rey before saying, "This is it. We're jumping down from here!"

"...H-huh?!" replied Rey as his jaw instantly dropped, unsure of whether he had heard right.

Upon seeing how determined Gerald's following nod was, the worried Rey immediately replied in a fearful tone, "P-please don't joke about this, Mr. Crawford... We can't even see the bottom from here! We'll surely die!"

After saying that, Rey couldn't help but gulp as he stared down... The longer he stared at the abyss, the more terrified he got...

Gerald himself simply raised a brow as he said, "...Rey, do you honestly think I'd joke about something

like this?"

While Rey was sure that Gerald wouldn't, his master's order to leap into the abyss was simply mind boggling...

Seeing how hesitant Rey was being, Gerald couldn't help but sigh as he added, "...Fine, I'll be jumping first then. However, if I do end up dying, good luck thinking of other ways to leave!"

Momentarily left stupefied by Gerald's absurd suggestion, Rey could only stare wide-eyed as Gerald leaped off the stairs without even waiting for his reply!

While Rey was left panicking, Gerald himself had made a safe landing atop another set of stairs...

Just as he had thought, the trick to escaping that loop was by hopping off the step with that specific number!

However, Rey wasn't aware that Gerald was still alive. With that in mind, it wasn't a surprise that he soon began calling out, "M-Mr. Crawford...!"

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Hearing how worried the boy was for his safety, Gerald couldn't help but smile subtly as he looked up while shouting, "What are you waiting for, Rey? Jump already!"

Upon hearing Gerald's response, Rey was instantly overjoyed. After all, not only was Gerald still alive, but he had apparently successfully found a way to escape this hellish loop!

Now that he knew this, Rey mustered up his courage... before leaping and plunging straight into the abyss!

Immediately screaming as he plummeted, his utter terror soon turned into confusion when he realized that his feet were already on the ground. The fall had barely even taken a second!

"...Was there really a need to scream that loudly..." grumbled Gerald whose ears were now throbbing due to how loud Rey had been.

While Gerald was left annoyed, Rey himself was so overjoyed—that he was still alive—that he immediately exclaimed, "I-I'm alive! And to think that the jump wasn't even all that long! W-we're finally free from those stairs, Mr. Crawford...!"

Shaking his head in resignation at how childish his disciple was being, Gerald simply patted him on the back before starting to walk toward the light before them...

Now realizing that the exit had been this close this entire time, Rey's eyes widened as he called out, "W-wait for me, Mr. Crawford!"

Quickly catching up to Gerald, the duo soon went past the shining exit... However, what awaited them was nothing short of surprising.

Beyond the exit, lay a worn-down place that looked utterly ravaged...

Staring at the near-endless towering pillars around them, Rey couldn't help but exclaim in awe, "H-holy cr\*p! To think that such a place existed down here...! Everything here looks ancient!"

Though Gerald said nothing, he shared the same sentiments. After all, who wouldn't be amazed and shocked to find ancient ruins out of the blue...

Regardless, Gerald was first to break the silence by saying, "...Come on, let's have a look around!"

Nodding in agreement, Rey then began exploring the wondrous place with Gerald...

However, they had only taken a few steps forward when both of them stopped dead in their tracks.

Strange skittering sounds seemed to be quickly approaching them, and they could immediately tell that something was amiss. Was it danger...?

"...What... is that, Mr. Crawford...?" whispered Rey as he leaned in closer to Gerald.

Instead of replying with a guess, Gerald simply chose to slowly turn around, prompting Rey to do the same... and the second they saw what was coming for them, Rey's eyes immediately widened.

As it turned out, the sounds were coming from a hoard of giant scorpions!

"H-holy cr\*p! Why the hell are those scorpions so massive?!" stuttered the quivering Rey.

“Shut it! And stop moving around so much!” ordered Gerald in a calm tone.

While it was his first time seeing such massive scorpions as well, he wasn't afraid of them at all. After all, he had already seen all kinds of horrifying ghosts, so how scary could scorpions be for him?

Though Gerald wasn't intimidated by the giant scorpions, that wasn't the case for Rey. He was completely frozen in fear as he watched the scorpions quickly encircle them, swaying their pointy stingers from time to time, seemingly prepared to attack them at any moment...

Small scorpion stings were already quite venomous, so Rey didn't even want to begin imagining how potent these large scorpions' stingers were... In fact, from how large and sharp those stingers looked, one would probably die from the stab alone...

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“W-what should we do now, Mr. Crawford...?” whispered Rey, gulping as he stared at all the giant scorpions around them. No matter how hard he tried, he couldn't see an opening for them to escape at all!

“Stay calm! I'm thinking!” replied Gerald as he continued looking around, hoping that it would help him devise an escape plan.

Thankfully, it wasn't long after before Gerald spotted a large door leading out of this area.

With their escape route in his sight, Gerald quickly whispered, “Rey, do you see that large door at your twelve o'clock?”

Turning to look in that direction, Rey then nodded before replying, "I do!"

"Good, now listen up. The plan is simple. You rush over to open that door while I distract the scorpions! Got it?" explained Gerald.

"L-loud and clear!" replied Rey, knowing that that was their best bet of surviving this encounter.

Hearing that, Gerald then drew his Astrabyss Sword before pushing Rey with his other hand while yelling, "Good! Now go!"

As Rey nodded before bolting toward the large door, Gerald himself began channeling his energy into the Astrabyss Sword, allowing it to emit its spiritblade.

Watching as the scorpions backed off a bit—after they saw the spiritblade—, Gerald took that chance to get a bit closer to Rey. He made sure to stick close enough to Rey to ensure that Rey wouldn't get sneak attacked by any hiding scorpions...

Thanks to the duo's teamwork, they were able to get Rey to the large door...

To Rey's dismay, however, no matter how hard he pushed, the door wouldn't budge! Then again, it wasn't really all that surprising. After all, the door was made of stone and it stood over thirty feet tall. There was no way Rey was ever going to be able to open it!

Understanding that, Rey yelled, “Um...! The door’s too heavy for me to open...!”

“Again, stay calm. I’m sure there’s a mechanism to open it!” replied Gerald who currently had his eyes on the giant scorpions that were now charging toward him!

Seeing that, Rey knew that it was all up to him now. If he failed to find the mechanism, then this would be their end... Because of that, failure wasn’t an option!

With that in mind, Rey quickly calmed himself before starting to search for the mechanism... and not long after, he found it!

The mechanism itself resembled a circular door handle, and after Rey pulled it, the large door instantly began shaking!

Taking a few steps back, Rey could only stare wide-eyed as the door finally swung open a few seconds later.

Delighted, Rey then yelled, “M-Mr. Crawford, come quick! The door’s open!”

Hearing that, Gerald instantly turned to charge for the exit... and moments later, both of them found themselves staring at the large scorpions—that had now stopped in their tracks—from the other side of the giant door...

Shortly after, the scorpions began retreating, prompting the confused Rey to ask, “...Huh? They’re... not chasing after us...?”

Staring as they scuttled off, Gerald simply replied, “Indeed... I’m assuming that they’re afraid of



something in here!”

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After saying that, Gerald turned around and began exploring this new place with Rey...

Shortly after, they came across a spring of sorts that had crystal clear water that splashed all over the place...

Naturally, this surprised the duo. To think that there would be a spring here of all places...

“How odd to find a spring out of the blue!” exclaimed Rey as he walked over to the body of flowing water before scooping some up to drink...

Eyes-widening the second he gulped down, Rey couldn’t help but turn to face Gerald as he added, “Holy! The water’s sweet!”

Rey had never tasted such sweet and refreshing spring water in his entire life!

Hearing that, Gerald walked over as well to taste the water... and true to Rey’s words, the water truly was rather sweet.

The fact that a spring with such sweet water was down here in this horrible place truly was mystifying...

Before Rey could take another scoop, the water suddenly began bubbling, causing the youth to freeze in surprise.

It wasn't long after before the entire spring was filled with bubbles, and within seconds, all the water suddenly evaporated!

"...H-huh? The hell? How did all the water suddenly disappear!" exclaimed Rey in an incredulous tone.

Before Gerald could even theorize, however, a crisp 'crack' could be heard from the middle of the dried-out spring...

Fixing their gazes on the source of the sound, the duo simply watched as a slab of stone suddenly began rising from the center of the dried-out spring...

Exchanging glances with each other, Gerald and Rey slowly walked over as the stone slab shifted to the side... revealing what appeared to be a darkened entrance that led downward!

While Rey's first reaction was to stare at Gerald in disbelief, Gerald himself was already shining his flashlight to illuminate the bottom of the hole...

A while later, Gerald wordlessly began descending the hole... Of course, upon seeing that, Rey had no choice but to follow him down...

The hole itself led to a flat path, and the duo walked on until they eventually came across a huge chamber...

Seeing that there was a golden casket in the middle of the chamber, Rey couldn't help but exclaim, "...I-is that what I think it is...? My god! This chamber... it's a tomb!"

As Rey wondered how the hell their expedition ended up becoming a tomb exploration, Gerald himself began walking deeper into the tomb...

It was only a few steps later when the candles in the chamber suddenly let up, instantly brightening the entire tomb...

Now that everything was well lit, Gerald noticed that there was a tombstone within the chamber.

Walking over and seeing that ancient script had been carved onto the tombstone, Gerald turned to look at Rey before asking, "Say, can you read this?"

Gerald knew that Rey was a top student, which was why he felt that Rey had a chance of deciphering the text.

Regardless, Rey quickly jogged over before having a look at the tombstone...

It took him a while, but eventually, Rey replied, "Well... It contains information about this tomb's owner, Mr. Crawford! From what I've gathered, the owner of the tomb goes by Talias Yah, and he was a general in an ancient country called Zaneckh... To think that the tomb of such a great general could be found within Mount Dakriont... How stupefying!"

Upon hearing that, Gerald immediately knew that they couldn't touch anything in here. After all, triggering a trap in such a high-profile tomb would surely spell their doom...

As he was thinking of that, the corner of Gerald's eyes suddenly caught a glimpse of a familiar symbol on the golden casket... Where had he seen that before...

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Looking at Gerald's raised eyebrow, Rey couldn't help but ask, "Is... something wrong, Mr. Crawford...? Did you find something...?"

"...See that symbol there? I feel like I've seen it somewhere before..." muttered Gerald as he continued flipping through his memories...

Sometime later, he suddenly yelled, "I remember now!"

Following that, Gerald fished the map out before quickly scanning through it.

Raising a slight brow, Rey then inched closer to look at the map as well... and when he finally realized that the exact symbol—on the casket—could be found on the map, Rey immediately exclaimed, "...Holy, is that... Then... Instead of going after the treasure, Tye was trying to locate this tomb this entire time...?!"

"I'm guessing so!" replied Gerald with a nod, finally a hundred percent sure that Tye was up to no good. But what was he scheming...?

As Gerald was wondering about that, Tye and his men finally made it to Moonbeam Village...

Despite Gerald taking pity on them and allowing them to live, Tye wasn't about to give up on his goals that easily. Still, without the map, Tye and his men had remained lost in the mountain's forests for ages...

Regardless, upon attempting to step foot into the village, Stanton—who just so happened to see them—immediately rushed over before asking, “And who might all of you be?”

As more of the villagers ran over to stand behind Stanton, they knew why he was being so vigilant. After all, Tye and his men looked incredibly suspicious...

Raising a slight brow, Tye then glared at the old man before replying in an annoyed tone, “That isn't important. Regardless, have you recently come across three individuals dressed like us?”

Stanton was no idiot. From Tye's expression alone, he could already tell that the man wasn't a good person. With that, he simply shook his head as he replied, “...I'm afraid not! It's been ages since anyone from the outside world came to our village! Speaking of the outside world, how did all of you get here?”

Upon hearing that, Tye squinted his eyes at the chief, wondering if the old man was telling the truth...

Unfortunately, at that very moment, a young woman came jogging toward Stanton while yelling, “The meal's ready, chief! Have the three wise men returned yet?”

While Stanton was surprised to hear that statement, Tye and his men immediately frowned.

Now fully aware that Stanton had lied to them, Tye then yelled, “How dare you lie to me, old man!”

Stanton himself was at a loss for words. That young woman truly had arrived at the worst possible time...

Seeing that Stanton wasn't keen on replying, Tye then grabbed the old man by his collar before roaring, "Enough games! Where the hell are those three!"

It was clear by now that Tye's hatred for Gerald was beyond words... Tye himself had even sworn to show Gerald no mercy the next time they bumped into him.

Whatever the case was, Stanton hardly even flinched at Tye's attempt at intimidating him. Instead, the old man simply replied, "How should I know? They simply left without telling us where they were headed to!"

"Are you honestly still lying to me? Don't blame me for being ruthless then!" scowled Tye with a snort, his gut telling him that Gerald and his party were well acquainted with Stanton. After all, why else would the old man lie about something like this?

Following that, Tye ordered his men to gather all the villagers. Once that was done, Tye also instructed them to tie Stanton to the pillar at the village's entrance...

"I'm going to ask one final time... Tell me where they went!" shouted Tye, believing that the old man would finally spill the beans now.

"I've already told you, I don't know!"

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Despite how serious Stanton looked as he scowled back, Tye wasn't buying it.

Now fully enraged, Tye glared at his men before ordering, "Men! Beat this old b\*stard up till he talks!"

Hearing that, two of Tye's men then stepped forward with whips in hand... and without the slightest mercy, they began whipping the poor old man!

Naturally, the other villagers instantly became enraged, and some of the bolder ones even rushed forward to rescue their poor chief!

Seeing that, Tye simply shook his head, glaring at those who dared oppose him as his hand quickly reached out for his pistol...

And with a deafening 'bang', one of the courageous villagers flopped to the ground, dead...

Upon witnessing that horrifying scene, none of the other villagers dared to take another step forward...

Tye himself simply sneered, "Listen, every time you refuse to tell me where they are, I'll just kill another villager! With that in mind, you'd better start fessing up already! Still, I'm glad nobody even knows about your village! Because of that, I can do whatever I want with you!"

"Chief, just give them the information!" called out one of the villagers, not wanting the entire village to get massacred just for the sake of protecting those three wise men.

“Yeah, chief! Our entire village is at stake here!”

“Please, just tell them, chief...!”

One after another, the villagers continued pleading Stanton to share Gerald’s location with them... and eventually, the chief knew he didn’t really have any other choice. After all, he needed to prioritize his village’s safety.

With that, Stanton sighed before declaring, “...Fine. I’ll tell you on one condition! You have to leave us once you get the information! Deal?”

“Deal!” replied Tye without the slightest hesitation.

“They’ve gone deeper into the mountain! To be more specific, they entered a cave with two stone pillars before it!” said Stanton.

Hearing that, Tye’s expression instantly soured. To think that Gerald was able to locate the exact cave Tye himself was trying to look for!

“Hah! Not bad...” replied Tye with a nod, a sinister smile on his face as he slowly aimed his gun at Stanton’s chest... and with the pull of a trigger, a bullet shot through the old man’s chest.

“C-chief...!” cried out the villagers as Stanton spat out a mouthful of blood... before his head drooped and his limbs went completely limp...

After staring for a while at their chief’s fresh corpse, several of the villagers turned to glare at Tye while roaring, “How... How inhumane...! You utter b\*stard...!”



“You promised you’d leave us be! Why did you have to kill our chief?! You demon!”

Upon hearing all those curses, Tye’s frown only worsened as he aimed his pistol at the villagers... and just like that, several more villagers fell to the ground, dead.

Each bullet had hit its mark, and as Tye reloaded his gun, he yelled out, “Kill them all! Make sure you don’t miss anyone!”

Nodding in response, Tye’s men then retrieved their knives... and the massacre soon began.

By the time Tye and his men were done, the entire village population had been wiped out. Moonbeam village was no more...

How absolutely vile...

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Moving back to Gerald and Rey, they had no way of knowing about the massacre that had taken place at Moonbeam Village. Even so, it was pretty much guaranteed that Gerald wouldn’t let Tye and his men off the second he found out about what they had done...

Regardless, since they were both standing before the casket now, Rey was prompted to ask, “Should... we open the casket and have a look inside, Mr. Crawford...?”

“Negative. I truly believe that something terrible will happen if we do,” replied Gerald, instantly causing Rey to give up on his idea.

Even so, he couldn't help but remain curious about the contents of the golden casket. After all, Tye had been trying so hard to search for it. What kind of treasures lay within...?

“...Say, Mr. Crawford? What kinds of treasures do you think are in this tomb for Tye to travel so far just to obtain them...?” asked Rey.

Shaking his head in response, Gerald then said, “I have no idea, though I believe the things he's after lies within that casket!”

Though Gerald knew that the casket was bad news, he also had a pretty good idea that it contained something extremely valuable. After all, Tye was trying so hard to get it.

Whatever the case was, Gerald then began searching high and low around the chamber. After all, he was sick of remaining trapped in here.

Rey started doing the same, and with their combined efforts, the duo eventually managed to find a way out!

Quickly making their way out, the two soon found themselves stepping into a forest of sorts...

Still, Gerald and Rey were much too glad to finally be able to see the sky again to be bothered by that. With how stale the air in the cave had been, the two men couldn't help but feel extremely relaxed now that they could finally take whiffs of fresh air...

Exhaling loudly, Rey then sat on the ground before exclaiming, "Thank god we're finally out of that place, Mr. Crawford...!"

"Indeed! Let's head back now!" replied Gerald.

At that very moment, both of their ears perked as several rustling sounds could be heard in the distance!

Immediately getting vigilant, the duo then hid themselves well before peeking out to see who was making all that noise... and the second they saw the culprits, Gerald and Rey were rightfully surprised.

"Mr. Crawford...! It's Tye and his men!" whispered Rey.

Gerald himself was much too busy wondering how they had found their way here so quickly without the map.

Whatever the case was, Tye and his men appeared to be fully focused on getting to the cave. With that in mind, they were unable to detect Gerald and Rey...

Remembering that the cave wasn't too far off from here, Gerald had a hunch that the group would soon come across it...

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Once the men were out of sight, Rey then turned to look at Gerald as he asked, "So... what now, Mr. Crawford...?"

"Well, we've already got what we wanted so let's just return to the village. As for Tye and his men... I have a pretty good hunch that even if they do manage to find the tomb, they won't be getting out alive!" replied Gerald who had zero interest in the casket.

Gerald had made that bold claim for a reason. After thoroughly investigating the chamber, Gerald had gathered that there were several hidden traps in the tomb. What more, most of the traps appeared to be activated by touching different parts of the golden casket.

With that in mind, if Tye and his men insisted on opening the casket, they would surely end up triggering a deadly trap or ten, dying miserably in the process...

Whatever the case was, Gerald and Rey then began making their way back to Moonbeam Village...

However, the second they got to the village's entrance, both of them froze in their tracks.

Strapped onto one of the village entrance's stone pillars, was Stanton's corpse...! As if that wasn't already terrible enough, from where they stood, the two could already see the many dead bodies littered all over the place...!

Rey was the first to break the silence as he angrily growled, "...Who... Who could have done this...?! What the hell happened here?!"

“...It was definitely Tye and his men. Those... Those utter b\*stards are as inhumane as beasts...!” replied Gerald, clenching his teeth as he tried his hardest to keep his cool.

From what Gerald could guess, Tye must have killed all of the villagers in order to locate him and Rey! Only a beast like Tye could commit such a heinous act...

Seeing that Gerald was clenching his fists so tightly that his veins looked like they were about to pop, Rey lowered his, his eyes fully reddened in rage as he growled, “...What should we do now, Mr. Crawford?”

Upon hearing that, Gerald found himself momentarily at a loss for words. After all, he and Rey were part of the reason why this tragic event happened in the first place, and knowing that brought endless amounts of guilt to Gerald...

After thinking for a bit, Gerald eventually calmed himself enough to say, “...We return to the chamber. We need to avenge everyone here...!”

Rey naturally agreed with that plan, and the duo quickly began retracing their steps...

As they continued making their way to the tomb, Gerald swore that he was going to make Tye and his men pay.

While the earlier Gerald didn't really care if the casket's traps killed that b\*stard and his men, the current Gerald wasn't about to allow that to happen. In order to properly avenge the villagers, he was going to personally end them all...!

Regardless, since they already knew where they were going, their journey back to the cave was much swifter this time...

Moving back to Tye and his men, they had earlier managed to enter the cave. After messing around with the mechanisms on the back of the door, they were able to uncover the same hole that Gerald and Rey had fallen through.

“Score! I’m sure the tomb is down there! Men! Start descending!” ordered Tye as his men obediently began sliding down the hole...

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## Chapter 1921

Since Gerald and Rey had earlier dismantled all the traps leading to the chamber, Tye and his men had little trouble getting to the tomb, and upon seeing the casket for the first time, Tye instantly went giddy with excitement.

Laughing triumphantly, Tye’s eyes glinted greedily as he ran toward the casket while yelling, “I’ve finally found you! After all this time!”

Seeing how delighted Tye was, one of his confused men couldn’t help but ask, “Um... Whose tomb is this, Charman Lamano...?”

“Hmm? This is the tomb of a great general of the ancient country of Zanekh! While there are countless treasures in this tomb, the most priceless one can be found in this very casket! Based on the rumors I’ve heard, there’s a ten-thousand-year-old pearl in there that’s capable of preserving a body for eternity!” explained Tye as his hand caressed the golden casket.

“R-really? That’s one hell of a treasure then!” exclaimed the man who had asked.

“You bet it is! Now enough talk! Hurry and get me the casket-opening tools we brought along!” ordered Tye, prompting his men to do as he instructed.

Tye himself had been very specific when selecting the tools since he wanted the process of opening the casket to be perfect.

Still, Tye couldn’t help but feel surprised that Gerald and Rey had left the casket alone despite successfully making their way here...

Whatever the case was, everything got set up quickly and before long, the casket was finally ready to be opened...!

Before Tye could order for it to be opened, however, a voice suddenly roared out, “Don’t you dare open it!”

As the words echoed across the chamber’s walls, Tye turned to glare at the source of the voice... and of course, the voice belonged to Gerald.

“Gerald Crawford...!” growled Tye, his voice brimming with hatred. After all, he hadn’t forgotten that Gerald had stolen his map!

“Tye Lamano! You’d best not open Talias’s casket! While what you want may be inside, I assure you that you’ll definitely come to regret letting whatever’s in there out!” sneered Gerald.

Despite the clear warning from Gerald, Tye’s hatred and urge to kill Gerald had completely blinded the man.

With that in mind, Tye simply retorted, “Like I care! Also, don’t even dream about leaving this place alive! You’re meeting your maker today if it’s the last thing I do!”

“You dare threaten me after killing everyone in Moonbeam Village? Are you even human anymore, you b\*stard?!” scowled Gerald, his wrath growing by the second.

Laughing mockingly, Tye simply scoffed, “So what if I killed them? Though to be honest, if anyone’s to blame for their deaths, it should be you! Hah!”

Hearing how unremorseful Tye was being, Gerald’s rage skyrocketed as he glared at Tye while yelling, “You... You’ll pay for all this...!”

While Gerald already saw Tye as a dead man, Tye himself simply thought that Gerald was talking big. After all, Tye clearly had the upper hand in terms of manpower.

With that, he chose to ignore Gerald as he declared, “Enough! Men, open the casket!”

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Nobody was going to get in his way of opening the casket, not even Gerald!

“You’re a dead man, Tye!” roared Gerald as he bolted toward the evil man.

“Stop him!” yelled Tye as several of his men quickly stood before Gerald, blocking him from reaching Tye!

However, Gerald wasn’t in the mood to waste time with these buffoons. Swiftly attacking them, all he needed was a single hand to send all of the men flying!

Seeing that, Tye’s other men immediately took action as well.

Tye himself was too busy prying the casket open—along with three other men—to even bother about Gerald. In his mind, getting the casket open was his top priority...

Regardless, Tye’s men were naturally no match against Gerald, and he easily pummelled them to the ground.

Upon hearing his men’s agonized screams, Tye was finally forced to look away from the casket.

Realizing that the rest of his men were too injured to even get up anymore, Tye’s eyes could only widen as Gerald began coming for him next!

Since the only men he had left were the three who were currently helping him open the casket, Tye gritted his teeth as he yelled, “You three! Go stop him!”

Doing as Tye instructed, the three men immediately charged toward Gerald... Only to find themselves getting slapped so hard they were instantly knocked out!

Eyes now fully widened, Tye knew that he wasn't going to be able to take on Gerald alone. With that in mind, he pointed at Gerald before shouting, "You... Don't you dare take a step further! An inch closer and I'll open the casket! We'll surely die together then!"

Hearing that, Gerald stopped in his tracks before glaring back at Tye as he retorted, "Do you honestly think that'll stop me from ending you? I've said it once, and I'll say it again. You're paying the price for massacring all the villagers in Moonbeam Village!"

Once Gerald had his mind set on killing someone, nobody would be able to stop him from doing the deed. Gerald, for one, knew that if he didn't kill Tye today, then the current resentment in his heart would never truly go away. Revenge needed to be taken for Stanton and the villagers...!

"Hah! Had you not stolen my map, I wouldn't have had to kill them in the first place! With that in mind, you're the true reason why they're all dead! Stop putting the blame on me!" yelled Tye without the slightest remorse for his actions.

"Cut the cr\*p! Look, if you let go of the casket's lid, I'll consider granting you a painless death. If you don't, well, I'll make sure you die extremely slowly and painfully!" growled Gerald, knowing full well that speaking with this demonic man was only a waste of breath.

In response to Gerald's threat, Tye simply laughed maniacally. As if he would ever listen to Gerald after what that boy did...

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## Chapter 1923

Regardless, once he was done laughing, Tye used all his strength to lift the lid off the casket!

Though Gerald immediately leaped forward and kicked Tye into the air after seeing that, the deed had been done. With the casket now open, the entire chamber began shaking violently, sending debris—from the ceiling—falling everywhere...!

Even so, Gerald's attention was currently on more worrying things, like the black mist that had just flown out the golden casket! Just as Gerald had predicted, there was something extremely dangerous within that casket!

Whatever the case was, things were looking bad.

With that in mind, Gerald immediately retreated from the chamber and reunited with Rey who had been hiding at a blind spot right outside the chamber.

Upon seeing Gerald, Rey quickly asked, "W-what should we do now, Mr. Crawford...?!"

"Run, of course! We need to get out of here!" yelled Gerald as he grabbed Rey's arm before yanking him toward the exit.

Though escaping this place unscathed was his priority, Gerald made sure to take a few glances behind him as the duo ran on...

While the black mist didn't go after Gerald or Rey, it completely surrounded Tye and his men! From the looks of it, the mist appeared to be rapidly draining Tye's men's life forces! Though that may sound horrible, it was nothing compared to the agony Tye was probably feeling.

After all, in that brief moment Gerald caught sight of Tye, he saw that the black mist had pierced right through the back of Tye's head... and it was currently protruding out of his mouth! What a truly terrifying way to die...

Still, Gerald made sure to remind himself that it was none of his business...

Soon after, Gerald and Rey safely made it out of the exit. Before even thinking of leaving, however, the duo made sure to properly seal the entrance up so that the black mist wouldn't be able to escape...

Once that was out of the way, both of them sat on the ground, exhausted.

Rey himself was panting much heavier than Gerald was. After all, he was still new to witnessing such dangerous chains of events, and all this happening within a tomb certainly didn't help!

Whatever the case was, there was a silver lining to all this. After all, Tye and his men had received the retribution they deserved...

The only regret Gerald had was that he wasn't able to kill that devil of a man with his own hands...

Regardless, after catching their breaths, Gerald turned to look at Rey before saying, "...Alright, now that all this is done, let's return to the village. We need to give the villagers a proper burial!"

After Rey nodded in agreement, the two then began walking back to Moonbeam Village...

Upon arriving, both of them immediately got to work burying Stanton and the rest of the villagers... While they were at it, they made sure to clean up the mess Tye and his men had made as well.

To think that Moonbeam Village would no longer exist from this day onward...

Though it was saddening, Gerald and Rey knew that there was not much else they could do. With that, once they were done with everything, they packed their things up and prepared to leave...

However, just as they were about to leave the village, a black figure suddenly bolted out of the forest and yelled, "It's time to meet your end, Gerald!"

Instantly recognizing Tye's voice, the two were rightfully startled that he was still alive! What more, he appeared much more vicious compared to before!

However, the second Gerald snapped out of it, he couldn't help but raise a slight brow. From the looks of it, Tye's entire body was now covered in unnerving-looking black bumps...

"...So, you're still alive, huh?" replied Gerald as he scanned Tye's new body from head to toe.

Laughing aloud, Tye then sneered, "I bet you didn't expect this, huh? Just so you know, I'm now stronger than ever! After all, the soul of that Zaneke general is now within me! With that in mind, of course I wouldn't die that easily! Regardless, I have big plans to conquer the world and establish my own empire... but before any of that, I'll be starting small by finally ending both of your lives!"

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## Chapter 1924

Following that, Tye glared evilly at the duo as he blasted an orb of black mist toward Gerald and Rey!

The two were able to dodge to the side in time, and seeing that Rey stood no chance here, Gerald immediately instructed, “Find someplace to hide! I’ll deal with him!”

Simply nodding in response, Rey then ran into one of the village houses as Gerald unsheathed the Astrabyss Sword.

Narrowing his eyes as his murderous intent surged, Gerald then yelled, “Since you’re not dead yet, I’ll take this chance to personally finish you off, Tye! The chief and the villagers are going to be avenged no matter what!”

Just as Gerald was finding it fitting that he could still personally avenge the innocents, Tye simply responded with a disdainful laugh. From that alone, it was clear that the current Tye was even less afraid of Gerald than he previously was. To him, Gerald was simply an ant that he could easily crush now.

“Talking big, eh? Fine! Try me!” scoffed Tye as he grinned before charging toward Gerald with inhuman speed!

The black mist had clearly improved his speed and strength, and in the blink of an eye, Tye was already right in front of Gerald, his fist—that was currently covered in black flames—well positioned and ready to strike...!

Gerald, however, didn’t even flinch. Instead, he simply lifted his blade to block the attack!

Since the Astrabyss was such a powerful sword, it easily deflected Tye's attack.

Naturally, this momentarily stunned Tye, and he immediately thought that the sword was the reason Gerald was so powerful.

"...Oh? To think that you had such a good weapon! Allow me to kill you so that I can be its next owner!" scoffed Tye with a malicious grin.

"Hah! Come and get it if you can!" retorted Gerald as he laughed mockingly.

Before Tye could even react, Gerald then channeled his energy into the blade, sending Tye flying backward!

Tye had just gained his new powers. In other words, there was no way he was going to be able to deal with someone well trained with the Astrabyss Sword like Gerald.

Whatever the case was, Gerald wasn't about to allow Tye to recover from that attack. With that, he shot out a powerful spiritblade toward Tye!

Unable to avoid the attack in time, Tye ended up getting hit by the full brunt of the attack!

Now seriously injured by the Astrabyss Sword, Tye finally accepted that he was currently no match against Gerald. He needed to escape!

"...You may win today, Gerald, but we'll see who'll have the last laugh!" yelled Tye as his body quickly dissipated into a black mist before making a speedy escape.

Upon seeing that, Gerald was momentarily stunned. Now that Tye was no longer human, Gerald knew that taking him out wasn't going to be all that easy anymore. Still, that didn't change the fact that he still needed to end Tye if it was the last thing he did...

Regardless, upon realizing that the fight was over, Rey quickly got out from the house he was hiding in and jogged toward Gerald before asking in a worried tone, "...What now, Mr. Crawford...?"

Rey was rightfully worried since Tye, a man who had been a bad egg from the start—and had only grown more powerful—, was now on the loose... Who knew what kind of damage he could now do with all that strength...?

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## Chapter 1925

Gerald was currently at a loss as well, so he simply said, "...We'll think about it once we get back!"

Since this matter needed to be planned carefully, Gerald felt that they had to do it in the safety of their home.

Naturally, Rey agreed, and after traveling for an entire day, the two finally made it back...

Upon entering their living room, the duo saw Juno and Yrsa sitting there watching television.

Realizing that they were home, Juno immediately got off the couch before excitedly walking up to them



while exclaiming, “You’re back!”

Rey himself simply walked past her and dived into the couch before yelling, “Oh god! It feels great to be back...!”

Watching as Rey then sighed loudly, Juno could already tell that this mission hadn’t gone smoothly. With that in mind, she turned to face Gerald before asking, “Is... everything alright, Gerald...?”

Simply shaking his head, Gerald replied, “It’s nothing. We’re just tired!”

That wasn’t a lie either. Gerald was pretty exhausted by this point, and he would rather discuss things after he had a good sleep. Too many things had happened during the trip, and Gerald knew for a fact that he needed the rest.

Despite knowing that, Gerald found it hard to bring Tye out of his mind. After all, he knew that that b\*stard wasn’t about to let them go that easily. Tye would surely return eventually and who knew what kinds of horrible things he would do then?

Forcing that thought out, Gerald then chatted with Juno and Yrsa for a while before dragging Rey back to their respective rooms to get some well-deserved rest...

Looking at the two, Juno couldn’t help but feel slightly distressed. After all, it wasn’t common for Gerald to get this exhausted.

With that in mind, Juno and Yrsa headed out on their own to get some high-quality ingredients. Their

plan was to make a hearty dinner for Gerald and Rey to help replenish their energy...

It was around eight that night when Gerald and Rey finally woke up again. This had been the most comfortable sleep they had had in a while...

To their pleasant surprise, they were immediately greeted by the sight of a feast upon entering the dining room. Anyone would feel touched to see such a grandiose meal prepared for them after a long and hard day, and the two weren't any exceptions. Honestly, it felt like they were married men being served delicious food after returning from work...

Still, Gerald couldn't help but wonder how much longer such nice days could last...

That thought, however, was cut short when Rey—who had already sat by the dining table—yelled, “Holy! Come quick, Mr. Crawford! There's so much good food!”

Smiling when she saw the familiar glint of excitement return to Rey's eyes, Juno then explained, “Consider it to be me and Yrsa's treat! We prepared this for you since you looked like you had a hard and exhausting trip this time around! Now go on and enjoy your well-deserved meal!”

“You're too kind, Miss Zorn! Thank you!” replied Rey who was all smiles.

“Hey, I made some of the dishes too, you know! Where's my thanks?” said Juno with a slight pout.

Chuckling awkwardly in response, Rey then grinned sheepishly as he replied, “Sorry Yrsa! I just got too excited back there!”

Rolling her eyes, Yrsa couldn't help but reveal a subtle smile as she said, “...Humph! Good enough!”

Happy that Yrsa didn't seem to mind anymore, Rey then began digging in...

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## Chapter 1926

While Rey was jovial, Gerald—on the other hand—hadn't even budged from his initial spot, a grave expression on his face...

Seeing that Gerald appeared deep in thought, Juno cleared her throat before asking, "...Is... something wrong, Gerald...? Is the food not to your liking...?"

Upon hearing that, Gerald quickly snapped out of it before replying, "...Huh? Oh, no, I was just thinking about something!"

With that said, Gerald then took a seat by the dining table and began eating as well...

Even so, all Gerald ate was a bowl of rice before getting up and leaving for the living room...

In a typical situation, that would immediately signify that there was going to be a lot of leftovers. However, Rey wasn't a typical person.

His appetite was voracious, and in the end, he finished up most of the dishes without any trouble!

Regardless, now that dinner was over, the trio joined Gerald in the living room to start talking things out.

Juno was the first to break the silence as she asked, "Um... Gerald...? What's bothering you...? You haven't looked great ever since you returned!"

"...I'm worried about Tye. Long story short, he managed to turn into a half-phantom like me, and the worst thing is that I don't even know where he's currently run off to!" explained Gerald.

"...Don't worry, Gerald! I'm sure we'll be able to finish him off soon!" replied Juno, knowing that verbally supporting him was the only way she could help at the moment...

It was at that moment when a black figure descended from the night sky before slipping into the Sun Group's massive building... Of course, who else could it be but Tye Lamano...

After leaving the forest and returning to the city, Tye had waited till night before finally daring to step foot into his company again. After all, he didn't want to risk getting seen by others in broad daylight.

Whatever the case was, after returning to his office, Tye immediately got a bottle of wine from his cabinet before taking a few sips of it...

Shortly after, however, a voice from outside suddenly called out, "Who goes there?"

Before Tye could even turn around, a security guard had already pushed the door open and walked in.

Noticing the black figure, the security guard instantly shone his flashlight at Tye's back while asking in an intimidating tone, "Who are you? Who let you in here?"

From that statement alone, it was evident that the guard had no idea that he was talking to Tye. Not that it mattered to Tye as he slowly turned around to reveal his true face...

Upon realizing who it was, the guard's eyes widened in shock. Before he could even say a word, however, Tye momentarily disappeared before reappearing right in front of him!

Squeezing the guard's neck with a single hand, Tye watched as the guard's face turned increasingly red. Unable to breathe, the guard's eyes soon went white, showing just how much pain he was in.

Regardless, after the guard's flashlight fell to the floor, Tye took the chance to release a black mist from his mouth... that quickly slithered into the guard's mouth!

The second that happened, the guard's body immediately began convulsing violently as his face turned fully pale...! Within seconds, the guard's body moved no more...

Not only had Tye absorbed all of the guard's energy, but he had also consumed his soul!

With that done, the immense damage he had sustained from the Astrabyss Sword was finally cured, allowing Tye to feel refreshed again... As it turned out, Tye was now capable of draining human souls and energy...!

Staring at the flashlight on the ground, Tye stomped it to pieces in a single step...

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Flopping onto the couch before staring at the ceiling, Tye then growled, "Just you wait, Gerald... I'm not letting you off that easily...!"

Whenever he thought about Gerald, the hatred in his heart would simply flare up. No matter what, he was going to make sure Gerald paid the price...!

Fast forward to the next morning, Gerald got up early and silently left the house on his own.

He was off to see Master Snyder in hopes of asking him whether he knew of a way to deal with Tye in his current state...

When he arrived at Master Snyder's home about half an hour later, the door immediately swung open before Gerald could even knock.

"Come in!" called out Master Snyder from inside, making it evident that he had already sensed Gerald's presence.

With that in mind, Gerald then walked in, the door closing behind him on its own...

Stopping once he stood in the middle of the hall, Gerald then called out, "Master Snyder!"

Following that, Gerald felt a swift gust of wind behind him... and just like that, Master Snyder had mysteriously appeared behind the youth!

"I'm assuming you came here looking for answers to that dilemma?" asked Master Snyder, clearly hinting that he already knew what Gerald was here to ask him.

Turning to face Master Snyder, Gerald then replied, "Indeed. I hope you can provide me with a suitable solution to this!"

"Confrontation is the only answer I can see... There's simply no escaping that if you wish to deal with the issue..." replied Master Snyder before giving a heavy sigh.

While Gerald understood that Master Snyder was telling him to face Tye head-on, he couldn't help but say, "But-"

"But he's a half-phantom now, right? While that does make things much harder, it'll be even worse if you wait to confront him. After all, he's getting stronger and stronger by the day! If you didn't already know, Tye is currently possessed by a strong thousand-year-old ghost. With that in mind, he has the capability to drain souls and energy!" explained Master Snyder before Gerald could even finish his question.

"...What? Are you telling me he can drain the souls and energy of people anytime he wants now?" exclaimed the shocked Gerald, suddenly feeling that things had taken a terrible turn.

“Indeed. However, he does have one critical weakness. His powers are considerably weakened during the day! With that in mind, that is the prime time for you to strike! However, do take note that his powers grow once night falls!” replied Master Snyder, knowing that the information could definitely help Gerald.

Upon hearing that, Gerald simply nodded. While it was clear from the start that taking Tye down—in his new form—was never going to be easy, Gerald was unwavering on his decision to kill Tye. That man wasn’t going to bring any more harm to the world if Gerald could help it...!

At that moment, Gerald’s phone began to ring.

Fishing it out, Gerald realized that it was Harold. What more, he seemed to be calling from the Great Council building.

Putting two and two together, Gerald figured that Harold must have encountered another psychic case that he needed help with.

Though Gerald hesitated for a while, he eventually picked up and greeted, “Hello? Mr. Lee?”

“Good day, Mr. Crawford! Sorry to disturb you, but could I know whether you’re currently free?” asked Harold.

“Is something wrong, Mr. Lee?” replied Gerald.

“Essentially, there’s a tricky case I can’t solve alone and I need your help!”

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## Chapter 1928

As Gerald had guessed, Harold was calling to have a mystery solved...

However, knowing that the dangerous Tye was probably already somewhere within the city, Gerald wasn't about to prioritize anything else. Besides, it wasn't as if he needed to help Harold every time he was asked to solve a mystery.

With that in mind, Gerald simply replied, "Unfortunately, Mr. Lee, I'm currently not available... There are some things I still need to take care of..."

"I see... But hear me out first, Mr. Crawford! There's been a murder at the Sun Group building and the victim, a security guard of the company, ended up being sucked dry! This description may be a bit poetic, but it almost seems like his soul had been sucked out!" explained Harold.

"Come again? The Sun Group? A dried-up corpse?!" exclaimed Gerald, instantly recalling that Tye now had the power to drain human souls and energy. To top it all off, the murder had happened in the Sun Group building! The culprit was definitely Tye!

"Indeed, Mr. Crawford! So please, could you-"

"I'm coming over!" replied Gerald before Harold could even finish his sentence.

Immediately hanging up before Harold could say anything else, Gerald then turned to face Master Snyder while saying, "I'll be leave-"

However, Master Snyder was no longer there! Then again, it wasn't as though Gerald hadn't expected that. The man simply enjoyed disappearing and reappearing whenever he liked...

Whatever the case was, Gerald then bowed slightly before respectfully declaring, "Thank you for the advice, Master Snyder! I'll be taking my leave now!"

The second Gerald's sentence ended, the door slowly creaked open, signifying that Master Snyder had heard the comment.

Nodding in response, Gerald then left the house before speeding off...

It was only when Gerald began driving off when Master Snyder reappeared at his bedroom window. Staring at the car as it quickly disappeared in the distance, Master Snyder then sighed heavily as he muttered, "This is all part of the process for you to become an outstanding cultivator, Gerald...!"

With that said, Master Snyder then vanished again...

Fast forward to ten minutes later, Gerald's car came to a screeching halt before the Sun Group building. It was honestly his first time coming here, and he hadn't anticipated the building to be so large up-close.

Regardless, he quickly snapped out of his awe and began walking past all the cars—owned by the Great Council's members—before going over the cordon tape that surrounded the building...

After entering and asking a few inspectors where Harold was, he was directed to the sixteenth floor, the floor where Tye's office was.

With that in mind, Gerald quickly made his way there...

Upon entering the office, Gerald saw that Harold and his subordinates were already busy investigating the area while also discussing what they had found.

“Mr. Lee!” called out Gerald as he began walking toward the man.

The second he saw Gerald, Harold looked like he had just come across his savior. After all, when it came to the supernatural, Harold knew that he could rely on Gerald...

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Not wanting to waste any time, Gerald immediately asked, “So, what’s the situation like?”

“Well, you already know that the victim is a security guard of the Sun Group. From what we’ve gathered, the time of death should be around midnight yesterday, and we’re assuming he must have encountered something paranormal since his body is all dried up! His eyes are milky white as well!” explained Harold as Gerald went ahead to squat beside the security guard’s body...

After properly inspecting it, Gerald was now surer than ever that Tye was the culprit.

Looking around, Gerald couldn’t help but take note of a wine bottle and a single wine glass in one of the cabinets...

Raising a slight brow, Gerald then headed over to investigate... and on the wineglass, he found a stain.

Seeing that, Gerald immediately began thinking of how that stain came to exist there.

From what he could guess, Tye had probably returned to the Sun Group building last night to have a drink of wine. However, he was noticed by a security guard, and as a result, he killed the poor man and absorbed his soul and energy, which eventually led to the current scene...

With that in mind, Gerald then turned to look at Harold before saying, "Could I have a moment with you, Mr. Lee?"

Momentarily surprised by the question, Harold quickly snapped out of it before nodding.

Once the two were in a quiet corner, Harold was first to ask, "Did you find anything strange, Mr. Crawford...?"

"Indeed. It'll come off as surprising, but I assure you that the murderer was none other than Tye Lamano, the chairman of the Sun Group" replied Gerald.

Upon hearing that, Harold was rightfully shocked as he quickly asked in his disbelief, "That's... one bold claim you have there, Mr. Crawford... Do you have any proof of that...?"

No matter how much he trusted Gerald when it came to the occult, he was still an investigator. Bold statements like that definitely needed proof for him to believe it.

Gerald himself wasn't annoyed by Harold's distrust. After all, he was the inspector of the Great Council. There was no way he could make hasty conclusions.

Whatever the case was, Gerald then began detailing his trip to Mount Dakriont to Harold, ending the tale with how Tye transformed into the monster he was today...

With everything now clearly explained, Gerald knew that it was up to Harold now whether to believe him.

Harold himself knew that Gerald wasn't fibbing, given how serious the youth looked as he detailed everything. Besides, Gerald had no reason to joke about such things.

Seeing how hesitant Harold was, Gerald was prompted to say, "Mr. Lee, just so you know, Tye is no longer a human. He's currently a half-phantom, which makes him all the more dangerous. What more, you already know that he has the ability to drain people of their souls and energy. However, do know that he is unable to do much in the day. With that in mind, I'm sure he'll make his appearance once night falls!"

"...I see. But where will we find him?" asked Harold as he raised a slight brow.

If everything that Gerald had told him was true, then Tye was an extremely dangerous individual. They had to capture him as soon as possible so that more murders like this wouldn't occur...!

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Chapter 1930

"About that... I've looked around the office earlier and I'm pretty sure he came here last night just to enjoy some wine. With that in mind, I have reason to believe that he'll return here again tonight to hide.

Due to that, I suggest that we work together to catch him once night falls!" proposed Gerald.

Hearing that, Harold knew better than to say no.

"...Alright, let's go with that! Hopefully it works!" replied Harold in agreement.

With that, Harold left the corpse to his subordinates to take care of as he and Gerald began making arrangements for their plan tonight...

By the time they were done, hidden monitoring equipment had been set up all over the office.

Now, all that was left to do was to wait till nighttime...

Fast forward to late evening, street lamps were already starting to glow as the sky darkened... While more and more lights would eventually get turned on as the night grew darker, the interior of the Sun Group building remained pitch black under Gerald's orders in hopes that this would further encourage Tye to show up.

The plan was simple. Gerald would disguise himself as a security guard and patrol the whole building—till Tye showed up—whereas Harold and his men would remain in their cars to actively monitor the office...

Gerald was pretty sure that he would return here tonight. After all, Tye didn't have anywhere else to hide...

Regardless, after waiting till about eleven—and everyone was already starting to get sleepy—, a black mist could suddenly be seen dashing past the monitoring camera. Following that, the mist slowly formed

the shape of a figure... a figure that undoubtedly belonged to Tye Lamano.

Upon seeing it happen with his very eyes, Harold could only stare in disbelief for a few seconds. To think that Gerald had been telling the truth...! This truly was something one needed to see to believe...

At that moment, Gerald himself was already on the sixteenth floor, and he had noticed Tye's presence. With that in mind, Gerald made his way to the office, aiming his flashlight at Tye as he asked in an altered voice, "Who goes there? What are you doing in the chairman's office?"

Hearing that, bloodlust instantly filled Tye's eyes as he turned around to face Gerald... before momentarily disappearing! The second he reappeared, he was already standing right in front of Gerald, completely ready to attack!

However, before Tye could even do anything, the office's lights were instantly turned on, cueing Gerald—who was now smiling wryly—to shout, "You've been had, Tye!"

Realizing that he had fallen into Gerald's trap, the surprised Tye quickly snapped out of it before yelling, "Gerald...!"

Gritting his teeth, Tye then opened his mouth, releasing more black mist in hopes of hurting Gerald!

Gerald, however, had been expecting this. With that in mind, he easily summoned the Astrabyss Sword to take the attack!

As Tye was staring wide-eyed when he realized that the sword could absorb all the black mist from his attack, Gerald took the chance to yell, "Don't even dream about leaving this place in one piece, Tye!"

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## Chapter 1931

Having said that, a net flew out from one side, heading directly toward Tye.

The net was charged, and it was specially designed to prevent him from escaping.

When Tye was covered by the net, he was electrocuted and instantly lost his consciousness.

Finally, Tye Lamano had been caught with the joint effort of Gerald and Harold.

Hiss!

The net released electric currents continuously into Tye's body.

After keeping Tye under control, Harold immediately ordered his subordinates to bring him back to the Great Council and lock him up.

"Mr. Crawford, thank you very much for this!"

Harold thanked Gerald.



“Hehe. You’re being too polite, Mr. Lee. You don’t have to thank me. It’s good as long as Tye Lamano is caught.”

Gerald replied.

Their purpose was to catch Tye Lamano so that he would not wander around and cause harm to society.

It’s just that Gerald and Harold didn’t know that catching Tye Lamano was not a good thing. On the contrary, it would bring them more disasters.

Late at night, Gerald said goodbye to Harold and returned to his villa.

When Gerald entered the house, he found that Rey and the girls had not gone to bed yet. Instead, they were waiting for him.

They hadn’t seen Gerald for the whole day and did not know where he had gone, so they were very worried.

It was only when they watched the news on the television that they knew something had happened in the Sun Group, and they realized that Gerald must be there.

Regardless, now that they saw that Gerald was back safe and sound, they were relieved.

“Brother Gerald, you’re finally back. You’ve made us worry!”

Rey stood up and said to Gerald.

“Yeah, Gerald, you went out today without saying anything, causing us to be on tenterhooks all the time. We thought that something had happened to you!”

Juno complained.

Gerald smiled subtly when he heard that.

“I’m fine. Mr. Lee called me this morning and asked me to help him solve a case. Since you were still sleeping at that time, I didn’t wake you up. Sorry to make you all worry!”

Gerald apologized to the three of them.

“By the way, Brother Gerald. We heard that a man died in the Sun Group. How was the situation when you got there? Who’s the killer? Don’t tell me it’s Tye Lamano.”

After that, Rey started questioning Gerald.

“Yes, you’re right. It was Tye Lamano. But he’s been caught now and is being held at the Great Council!”

Gerald nodded and replied.

“That sounds so simple. I previously thought that Tye Lamano was very powerful, I didn’t expect him to

be so weak!”

After Rey heard that, he exclaimed immediately in disbelief. His disbelief was clearly shown on his face.

Hearing this, Gerald immediately came to his senses. He suddenly remembered what Master Snyder had told him before.

Master Snyder had told him that Tye would only become powerful during the night. During the night, he would not be easy to deal with.

But now, they had caught Tye so easily. Wasn't it strange?

“D\*mn it!”

Gerald's heart skipped a beat. He felt that something was very wrong.

“Quick, Rey, let's go to the Great Council!”

Gerald immediately reacted and said to Rey right away.

Having said that, Gerald and Rey left the house and drove to the Great Council.

Meanwhile, in the interrogation room in the Great Council.

Tye Lamano was handcuffed, and his body was covered with the net. He was seated on a chair alone in the sealed room. In front of him, there was a large piece of glass. Harold and his subordinate were sitting on the other side of the glass.

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## Chapter 1932

They were sitting in front of the glass, looking at Tye Lamano.

“Tye Lamano, tell me, why did you kill the security guard?”

Harold sat on his chair, looked at Tye, and questioned him.

Tye did not answer Harold’s question. Instead, he slowly raised his head and stared at Harold. A sinister smile appeared on his face, and it made people who saw his smile involuntarily feel horrified.

“I’m asking you a question!”

Harold yelled angrily.

“Hah, did you really think you could catch me so easily?”

Then, Tye blurted out in a very cold tone.

Harold frowned immediately, not understanding what Tye meant.

The next second, Tye released a black fog from his body. The black fog transformed into a sharp spike and directly pierced through the glass in front of him, instantly shattering the glass into pieces.

Harold and his subordinate were flung to the ground in an instant.

As for Tye, he had freed himself from the handcuffs. He morphed into a humanoid figure and appeared in front of Harold and his subordinate.

“You... What do you want?!”

Harold looked at Tye in shock and asked.

Tye smiled wickedly before grabbing the subordinate beside Harold.

Harold held the subordinate before his eyes. Then, he released a cloud of black fog and inserted it directly into the body of the subordinate.

In an instant, the subordinate turned into a lifeless dry corpse.

Seeing this, Harold’s heart was filled with fear. He didn’t expect that Tye could be this terrifying.

Right then, the door of the interrogation room was breached, and a few subordinates ran in, aiming their guns at Tye.

But how could they be Tye's opponents?

Tye waved his hand and sent out another cloud of black fog, hitting them to the ground all at once.

"I told you. Did you really think I was so easy to deal with?"

Tye mocked with a grim smile.

Having said that, Tye grabbed Harold, who was in front of him.

Harold kept struggling, trying to free himself from Tye's hand.

However, Tye's grip was very strong. There was no chance to break free at all.

"Tye Lamano!"

Right then, a loud angry shout was heard.

Right after that, a spiritblade came flying toward Tye.

Seeing this, Tye threw Harold away and formed black fog around his hand to block the spiritblade.

Immediately after, Gerald and Rey appeared at the door.

“Tye, I just knew you wouldn’t be this easy to be caught. You must have another motive!”

Gerald pointed at Tye and bellowed.

“Hahaha!”

Hearing Gerald’s words, Tye burst out laughing.

“Gerald, you are quite clever. Let me tell you. If you hadn’t come, they would all have died today!”

Tye smiled wickedly as he spoke.

“Tye, let me tell you, I will exterminate you and not let you harm the world again!”

Gerald glared at Tye and shouted.

Then, Gerald leaped forward and charged toward Tye. The Astrabyss Sword in his hand was emitting a cold spiritblade, making the surroundings a few degrees cooler immediately.

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Chapter 1933

Although Tye had absorbed the souls and energy of two commoners previously, he had not recovered fully yet. He didn’t dare to fight head-on against the Astrabyss Sword, so he could only go into hiding for the time being.

Harold ran out of the interrogation room and called the other people for backup. Everyone held a gun in their hands.

Those things, however, were of no use to a half-phantom like Tye.

Gerald shouted immediately, "Get everyone out of this building!"

Otherwise, if Tye caught them, he would absorb their souls and energy. With his speed, Gerald would not be able to save everyone in time.

Harold was truly terrified this time. He didn't dare to disobey Gerald, and he commanded his men immediately.

"Everyone, retreat!"

Seeing that all his nourishment had run away, Tye shouted angrily. He morphed into a cloud of black fog and pretended to attack Gerald as he tried to escape.

"Are you trying to escape?" Since the last time he had used this trick to run away, Gerald had been prepared to prevent that from happening again. He chased after him and sent out a spiritblade with the Astrabyss Sword. When the spiritblade cut through the black fog, Tye was affected right away, and he screamed in pain.

"Gerald Crawford, I will never make peace with you!" Tye could not escape, so he could only choose to resist. The black fog morphed into sharp claws and tried to grab Gerald.

The Astrabyss Sword blocked the attack, and Gerald smirked.



“You’re almost done for!”

Tye was extremely frustrated. He was already injured, and the energy of the commoner was simply not enough to compensate for what he had lost. Currently, he could only use half of his power. How could he possibly be Gerald’s match?

After that, no matter which direction he went, Gerald would immediately run toward that direction. In the end, he managed to force Tye into a corner.

“I shall exterminate you today!”

Gerald murmured something under his breath and took out the Phangrottom Rune.

The previous Tye Lamano was considered dead long ago. He had been resurrected because of the soul of the general. So basically, he was just a ghost who had been reborn with the help of his body.

Once the Phangrottom Rune was taken out, Tye felt a shiver in his soul.

Instantly, the soul of the general took over Tye’s body completely. The moment the Phangrottom Rune was taken out, he burst out his strong power and morphed into a black arrow, rushing out of the window with a whoosh.

However, before leaving, a part of his soul was still destroyed by the Phangrottom Rune.

So, it would mean that Tye was not just severely injured, but he had also lost half of his soul. Even if he did not disappear, it would take him years to recover.

Gerald felt that it was a pity because he had nearly succeeded. The soul of the general was indeed very strong. However, for now, there was no need to worry about it. Unless Tye was seeking death, he would not appear in the near future.

When Gerald walked out of the Great Council, Harold, who was outside, quickly walked toward him.

“Mr. Crawford, how was it?”

“It’s settled. He is not completely eradicated yet, but he won’t be able to cause trouble for a while. If there are any more cases like the dry corpse case, inform me immediately.”

Harold finally breathed a sigh of relief. He was horrified by what had happened just now.

It was not something they could solve by using guns at all. Gerald truly lived up to his name!

Rey was also relieved.

“Brother Gerald, you’re so strong. If it were me, I guess I would have become a dry corpse by now.”

“So, you need to learn properly.”

After saying that, Gerald returned to the villa together with Rey.

After such a fierce battle, Gerald was very tired. He slept until the afternoon of the next day before getting up.

After getting up, he took Rey out for lunch. Then, they wandered around to see if Tye had left any traces after escaping.

Just then, the sharp sound of a car braking was heard.

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## Chapter 1934

Gerald looked in the direction of the sound and saw that it was actually a car that had hit a pedestrian on the road. The car stopped for a while but left right after that. The driver showed no intention to help the pedestrian at all.

Gerald rushed over. The pedestrian was a middle-aged woman, and she was badly injured. Her head was bleeding, and she had fainted.

Gerald shouted immediately, "Rey, get a car quickly!"

They hadn't driven today. If they waited for the ambulance, it would be too late.

Rey immediately went to get a car. A few cars passed by, and thankfully, one car pulled over to help.

Gerald felt slightly relieved. Luckily, he was a cultivator. If it wasn't him who helped to cover the wound of the woman just now, she would already have had a stroke, and she would have gone into a vegetative state by the time they got to the hospital.

On the way to the hospital, the woman's mobile phone fell out, vibrating

Gerald took it up and saw that it was her daughter calling. He answered the call and immediately heard the sweet voice of a lady from the other end of the phone.

"Mother, I've been waiting for you for ages. Why are you still not here?"

"Pardon me, but I'm not your mother. Your mother met with a car accident on the road and is now on her way to the hospital."

"What did you say? A car accident?! I'll be there right now!"

When they arrived at the hospital, Raine Taylor was already waiting anxiously at the entrance. When she saw her mother, she jumped toward her mother immediately. "Mother! How's my mother?!"

Gerald said, "Don't worry. It's not serious."

A nurse hurriedly pushed the injured woman, Yollande Waller, into the operating room, and Raine Taylor sat on the bench outside the operating room. She was somewhat in a daze. Suddenly, she raised her head and looked at Gerald, shouting angrily, "Was it you who hit my mother?"

Without waiting for Gerald to speak, Rey spoke first, "Beauty, don't slander people here. Let me tell you, there are monitoring cameras in that area. You can go to the police station to view the footage later.

Besides, we don't even have a car. How could we have hit your mother? We are even kind enough to save your mother!"

Raine apologized quickly, "I'm sorry. I didn't mean to..."

"It's okay." Gerald waved his hand forgivingly and looked at her bag. "Your student card is about to fall out. Are you a student of Schywater University?"

Raine wiped off her tears and said, "Yes."

"What a coincidence. I was a student of Schywater University too. You can address me as your senior. I'm Gerald Crawford."

"Raine Taylor."

They talked about the university for a while, and Raine's mood slowly improved.

A couple of hours later, the light of the operating room went out. Raine rushed over hurriedly and asked, "Doctor, how's my mother?"

The doctor removed his mask and said, "Her injury is not life-threatening. She is indeed very fortunate. The wound was very severe, but it didn't cause internal bleeding in her brain. I've stitched up the wound, but we still need to observe her condition for a period of time. Now, you need to complete the procedures for her hospitalization."

Admission to the hospital...

Raine was about to agree when she suddenly remembered that she hadn't brought her purse out as she had rushed over in a panic.

"Doctor, how much is it?"

"You can pay ten thousand first."

She wanted to take out her mobile phone to call her father, Dexter Taylor, but who would have thought that she had lost her phone. She had probably lost it on the way to the hospital.

Gerald sensed her embarrassment and said, "It's okay. I will pay for it first."

"Thank you so much!" Raine now truly felt that Gerald was indeed a good person.

Only when Yollande Waller was pushed into the ward did she realize that this was actually a luxurious single-room ward!

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Chapter 1935

Raine's face changed slightly.

"How much does this cost?"

Gerald waved his hand and said, "You are my junior. This is just a small favor. You don't have to worry

about it. Besides, a single-room ward is good for Aunt's recovery. When she wakes up, she might have some sequelae. It might take a while to heal."

"How could I trouble you! I cannot accept your favor for nothing." Raine insisted. Then, she borrowed Gerald's phone and called her father.

About an hour later, Dexter Taylor arrived and quickly asked, "Raine, how's your mother?"

"The doctor said that she's fine for now, but she still needs to be hospitalized for observation. Father, this is Senior Gerald Crawford who helped pay for the medical bills."

Dexter wanted to thank him immediately, but after hesitating for a while, he said, "Um, Mr. Crawford, thank you very much for your help. For the medical fees, can I delay it for a few days?"

All their money had been taken out for daily expenses, so they did not have much cash left.

Raine bit her lips. Of course she was aware of her family's financial situation.

"Please don't call me Mr. Crawford. This is just a small favor. As for the medical fees, you don't have to repay me. I hold some shares of this hospital, so the hospital won't charge you. You can stay for as long as you want."

"This..."

Dexter exuded a grateful look and said, "It's so... Thank you very much!"

Gerald still had some matters to settle, so he had to leave. Raine quickly saw him off. Before that, she asked for Gerald's number.

"Senior, I really want to thank you. I will treat you to a meal someday!"

Today, she had to stay in the hospital to take care of her mother.

Two days passed, and Gerald received a call from an unfamiliar number. It was Raine.

"Senior, can you... come to school?"

She spoke in a quavering voice, and Gerald reckoned that she must be being bullied, so he agreed right away.

"Okay, I'm coming over!"

After hanging up the call, Raine looked at Yash Lambo, who was blocking her way. She felt helpless. These rich kids just so happened to like pestering her.

She had made herself clear, but these people still liked to trouble her.

"Yash Lambo, get out of the way!"



Yash Lambo pursed his lips.

“Who did you call just now? Senior? Raine, it’s your honor that my friend likes you. Don’t be ungrateful!”

Yash Lambo had a follower who was very ugly. Moreover, it was rumored that he had all sorts of bad habits such as drinking, whoring, and gambling. Raine would never be together with such a man.

Raine was provoked by his words, and her eyes turned red immediately.

The other students who passed by simply watched, and no one came to help.

Meanwhile, Gerald was not far away from Schywater University, so he drove over immediately.

When he stepped into the campus, he saw Raine being surrounded by a few people. They looked very disrespectful toward Raine.

“Raine!”

“Senior!”

Raine was very happy when she saw her savior.

Yash put on a contemptuous face when he saw Gerald.

“He’s just an old man. Huh, are you sure he can take care of you?”

Gerald's gaze intensified.

"Mind your words!"

"What? This is how I talk. I can beat ten men like you alone! Do you know who I am?"

A follower behind him, Haydn Zaal, said promptly, "Brother Yash is the president of the taekwondo club of Schywater University!"

Taekwondo?

Gerald said nonchalantly, "It's just child's play."

Raine knew that Yash was a good fighter, so she quickly nudged Gerald.

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Chapter 1936

Yash Lambo was completely irritated by his words.

"What did you say? How dare you say that taekwondo is just child's play?! Do you dare to fight with me? Believe it or not, I will punch your shining teeth through the back of your skull!"

Gerald smiled calmly.

“You are not my match.”

“Then let’s have a battle!” Yash shouted fiercely, “Come at me if you’re a man! I’d like to see what you’re capable of to act so arrogantly in front of me!”

The followers behind him shouted, “Let’s have a fight!”

“Rubbish!”

“Brother Yash will teach you how to be a man!”

Raine was a bit nervous. She had asked Gerald to come over because she really didn’t know who to get help from. She had just instinctively thought of this senior who made her feel secure, but she didn’t expect that she had caused him trouble.

“Yash Lambo, you should just deal with me. It has nothing to do with Senior!”

Hearing this, Yash’s face became even uglier. “My friend is pursuing you, but you rejected him. Instead, you’ve fallen for this old man. I shall beat him to the ground later!”

Gerald had finally sorted out what was going on.

“Raine, do they always trouble you?”

“Not always,” Raine said in a grievance, “I always avoid them. It’s just that I wasn’t very lucky today and bumped into them.”

In truth, she was always very careful, but because her mother had had an accident and she had been busy taking care of her, she hadn’t gotten much sleep last night. So, she was not in her right mind today and had met with these people.

Since they were always looking for trouble, it was better to settle it once and for all.

Thus, Gerald agreed to it.

“Okay. I will fight with you. However, let’s make a bet. If you lose, you can’t look for or pester Raine in the future. Otherwise, every time I get to know about it, I’ll beat you up. Do you dare to make that bet?”

Yash smirked and said, “Sure, I agree. Then, if you lose, you will stay far away from Raine. Otherwise, I will beat you up every time I see you!”

Gerald agreed to it, and the group of people headed to the taekwondo studio.

The other students were very curious and followed them to see what was going on. It had been a long time since such things had happened at Schywater University.

Raine was very nervous.

“Senior, are you sure?”

Gerald smiled and said, "Don't worry. Do I look like an impulsive person? You will know later. After this, they won't dare to pester you anymore."

Once in the studio, Yash started jumping in the arena to warm up his body. He seemed to know what he was doing.

But to Gerald, he was showing his weakness everywhere. His physical strength was not good either. Gerald was sure that he could win with just one hand.

There was even a follower feeding him water, and he was truly showing off his identity as a rich kid to the extreme.

The more flamboyant he was, the more so-so he looked.

Gerald shook his head, thinking that the young people now really thought of themselves as kings when they had some skills. However, what they didn't know was that there would always be someone better at something than them.

If it was not because of Raine, he would be too lazy to fight with this kind of person.

Moreover, taekwondo was indeed nothing to him. All the tactics were just flashy moves. Although the moves looked cool, they actually wasted a lot of energy. Moreover, they would expose their weakness easily.

If Gerald wanted to kill Yash, he didn't even have to fight with him. One move was enough to do the job.

He stood still and waved his hand.

“Come on. I’ll let you start first.”

“Arrogant!” Yash barked angrily and lifted his leg fiercely.

His leg was long, and he lifted it up high. When he did a downward kick, it was full of momentum. When Raine saw that his leg had nearly kicked Gerald, she was so scared that she nearly screamed.

“Kick him to death!”

“Long live Brother Yash!”

The people around were waving flags and shouting.

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Chapter 1937

What happened the very next second surprised everyone.

Gerald was not blown away by Yash Lambo’s kick.

Instead, he dodged Yash’s leg easily, causing his flying leg to fall short.

Yash was stunned. He didn’t expect that Gerald could actually dodge his leg.

Gerald took a step backward and stood still, staring at Yash calmly.

Yash frowned and looked at Gerald with a gloomy face.

He had a feeling that Gerald was provoking and mocking him.

It was indeed so since he really didn't get to hit Gerald.

However, Yash did not give up because of this. He launched another attack on Gerald.

This time, his attack was even more fierce. He charged toward Gerald like a tiger that had just come down the hill.

Tye attacked Gerald with a set of rapid movements.

Gerald simply dodged Yash's attacking moves calmly.

Once again, Yash didn't get to hit Gerald on his body.

Not just his body, he didn't even get to touch Gerald's shirt.

Seeing this, Haydn and the rest who were standing around them dropped their jaws and opened their eyes wide. They never expected Gerald to be so powerful.

Any insider would be able to see it clearly.

They would know the gap between Gerald and Yash's abilities.

"You're so lame. You can't even hit me!"

Right then, Gerald showed a belittling smile as he mocked Yash.

Yash became very angry when he heard that. He felt greatly humiliated to be teased by Gerald.

"Hmph, you just know how to dodge! If you had real skills, you would fight with me properly!"

Yash snorted and said with full defiance.

What did it mean to be barefaced?

People like Yash Lambo were barefaced.

It was obvious that he was not Gerald's match, but he still wanted to mock him. He was simply too shameless.

"Tsk, tsk!"



Gerald couldn't help but express his disapproval.

"Fine. Since you want me to make my move, you should be prepared!"

Gerald reminded Yash kindly.

As soon as those words had left his mouth, before Yash could react, Gerald had disappeared before his eyes.

By the time Yash had returned to his senses, Gerald had already reappeared only a few centimeters away from him before his eyes.

Boom!

Gerald hit Yash on his chest with his elbow.

Yash couldn't even defend himself, and he was directly blown away by Gerald.

Cough!

Yash coughed out blood suddenly.

"President!"

As Yash fell heavily on the ground, Haydn and the rest rushed to him and cried out in concern.

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## Chapter 1938

Yash stood up with difficulty with the help of Haydn and the rest. He felt a burning pain in his chest.

“This is just a small lesson for you. Don’t think that you are very strong. To me, you are just a kid.”

Gerald pointed at Yash and warned him.

Having said that, Gerald brought Raine along and left the studio.

Yash and the others did not dare to stop Gerald. They didn’t want to end up like Yash.

Knowing that the president of the taekwondo club was not even Gerald’s match, petty characters like them couldn’t possibly be Gerald’s match. They would only die if they went forward.

Looking at Gerald’s back, Yash felt very gloomy and angry.

However, he couldn’t express his bitterness or vent his anger.

He would not let it go like this. He would not just put up with it. He would make sure that Gerald paid the price. However, his action would drive him to death.

After Gerald left the studio with Raine, they left the campus and went to the hospital.

On the way there, Raine kept staring at Gerald.

“Senior, you are really strong. I didn’t expect that even Yash would not be your match.”

Raine looked at Gerald in awe and praised him.

Yash Lambo was very famous at Schywater University, not just because of his family background, but also his popularity.

Moreover, Yash was the president of the taekwondo club and a Black Belt who had won numerous championships.

But now, this so-called champion had actually been defeated by Gerald in just one move. If this was made known to others, he would become a laughingstock.

“Hehe. It’s nothing. I didn’t expect him to be so weak either!”

Gerald smiled and replied humbly.

If it was someone else, he might not be a match to Yash. However, Gerald was different. He had an unusual power that nobody had.

Amidst their conversation, Gerald and Raine arrived at the public hospital of Schywater City.

After parking his car, Gerald brought Raine to the ward. He brought along some tonics and fruit especially for Raine's mother, Yollande Waller, as well as his good wishes to her.

Seeing Gerald bring so many things, Raine was very touched. She didn't expect Gerald to care so much about her mother and put her mother's condition in his heart.

Soon, they arrived at the first-class nursing ward on the tenth floor.

Dexter Taylor was sitting beside Yollande and chatting with her.

"Dexter, staying in such a high-end place must be very costly, right?"

Yollande had regained her consciousness just recently. After easing up a bit, she looked around the room and asked Dexter.

She had never stayed in such a luxurious ward before, and she knew it had to be very costly.

"Oh, Yollande, don't worry about the money. We'll talk about that after you get well. Besides, we don't have to pay for anything this time. It was Raine's senior who paid the fees. We should thank him properly."

Dexter reassured Yollande and explained to her.

"Raine's senior? How could somebody be so kind and help us?"

Yollande was very surprised when she heard about it. She was worried if her daughter had encountered something dangerous.

“Hey, watch what you’re saying. He is very nice to Raine. He has long graduated and has a good career now. It just so happened that he came to know about this matter. He is an extremely kind man. Don’t misunderstand him.”

Dexter quickly explained to Yollande.

After all, Gerald had helped his family. He couldn’t repay his kindness with a grudge.

Yollande agreed to it after listening to his explanation.

“Yes. Anyway, he saved me. We should thank him properly.”

Yollande agreed with Dexter.

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Chapter 1939

“Yolande, I have an idea. You see, Raine is not that young anymore, and she is graduating soon. If her senior likes her, I feel that it’s not a bad choice. That way, we will also be able to live a good life for the rest of our lives.”

Dexter continued to voice his thoughts to Yollande.

Yollande of course understood what he had in mind.

“Hmm. You’re right, Dexter. But this still depends on Raine. We should respect her choice.”

Yollande reminded Dexter earnestly.

The couple had always respected their daughter’s opinions. They didn’t want to force her into anything. As long as she could live a good and happy life, they would be satisfied.

Dexter nodded in agreement upon hearing that.

Creak!

Right at that moment, the door was pushed open, and Gerald and Raine walked in together.

“Father, is Mother awake?”

Raine asked Dexter as soon as she walked in.

“Raine!”

Seeing her daughter, Yollande immediately smiled and called out to her.

“Mother, how do you feel?”

Raine went to her bedside immediately and asked in concern.

Yollande shook her head gently and said, “I’m fine. Why are you here? Don’t you have class?”

“I don’t have any classes this afternoon. So, I came here to take over for Father.”

Raine explained to Yollande.

“Aunt, Raine and Uncle will be much more relieved when you are alright.”

Then, Gerald smiled at Yollande and comforted her.

Yollande looked at Gerald when she heard him.

“Young man, you must be Raine’s senior, right? You saved me, so you are my life saviour, my family’s life saviour. I don’t know how I should thank you.”

Yollande looked at Gerald and thanked him.

“You’re being too polite, Aunt. Your health is the most important thing. The rest are just small matters.”

Gerald smiled and said humbly.

“Right, Aunt, Uncle, here are some fruits and tonics for you. When you get discharged, you can recover properly.”

Having said that, Gerald handed the things in his hands over to Dexter.

“Oh my, Gerald, come here. Why did you buy so many things? You must have spent a lot.”

Dexter was surprised and nagged at Gerald. However, he felt touched and happy in his heart. Now, he found Gerald even more likeable. In his heart, he had completely acknowledged Gerald as his son-in-law.

When Dexter looked at the tonics in his hand, he was shocked.

He didn't expect Gerald to buy such expensive tonics. They cost at least a few thousand dollars. This made Dexter even more convinced that Gerald was not a simple person.

“Young man, your name is Gerald, right?”

Yollande asked Gerald.

“Yes, I am Gerald Crawford, Raine's senior. I graduated in the class of '07, so I am a few years older than Raine.”

Gerald nodded and explained to Yollande.



Yollande nodded and glanced at her daughter before looking at Gerald again.

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Chapter 1940

“Gerald, I truly owe you a lot these few days. Please take care of Raine in the future.”

Yollande suggested to Gerald.

Gerald was startled when he heard her. Then, he smiled and said, “Of course. Don’t worry, Aunt. Raine’s matters will be my matters, I will help her.”

In truth, Gerald understood what Yollande was trying to say. She was treating him as Raine’s boyfriend.

Gerald spent some more time with Raine’s family before leaving.

Although Raine was reluctant to let Gerald leave, she knew he must have his own matters to deal with. She was already very satisfied when he could come with her.

After seeing Gerald off, Raine returned to the ward.

“Raine, tell me, you like Gerald, don’t you?”

The moment Raine came back and sat down, Yollande looked at her and asked.

When Rained was asked directly, her face turned red immediately out of shyness.

Seeing the changes on her daughter's face, Dexter immediately put on a loving smile on his face.

"Raine, just tell us. No matter what, we will support your decision." Dexter said.

Raine hesitated for a few seconds. Then, she nodded and said slowly, "Yes, Father, Mother, I like him."

Although Raine had only known Gerald for such a short time, she knew what she thought of him in her mind. She felt that Gerald was the good man she had been looking for in this lifetime.

Hearing her answer, Yollande and Dexter exchanged glances.

Then, they smiled.

"Raine, I support you!"

"Yes, Raine. I support you too. Just go for it!"

Dexter and Yollande expressed their support and approval toward Raine's choice.

“Gerald is such a high-quality man. Besides, he is kind and nice to you. He is a good man. Raine, you should take advantage of this chance!”

Dexter reminded Raine.

Raine nodded understandingly, but she did not say anything else.

She didn't know how Gerald felt for her. For now, she dared not say out her feelings as she was worried that he might reject her directly. If that happened, it would be very awkward.

This was because Gerald had rejected her once already yesterday. Although the situation yesterday had been different, at the very least, it showed that Gerald was not a casual man.

“Raine, look at all these tonics Gerald gave us. These cost more than a few thousand, or maybe a few ten thousand. This is not affordable for any ordinary man. So, it means that Gerald's background must be very good. You should not miss out on such a good man.”

Dexter said to Raine.

“By the way, Raine, do you know what Gerald does? Do you know about his family background?”

Yollande looked at Raine and asked.

Raine shook her head and said, “Oh, Father, Mother, I've just gotten to know Gerald for only two days. He simply helped me when I was bullied, so I don't know much about these things.”

Yollande and Dexter came to understand the situation after hearing this.

Anyway, it didn't matter. They could get to know each other better slowly.

At the same time, Gerald had no idea what Raine was talking about with her parents. He drove back to Yonjour Group.

Meanwhile, in a cafe, four young men were sitting there and chatting. One of them was Yash Lambo, who had been beaten up by Gerald earlier.

Yash's face was very gloomy. He sat on the sofa with a dark expression, and his eyebrows were furrowed.

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## Chapter 1941

The three youths sitting before him went by Yong Haas, Jacque Lennox, and Ferdo Bach, and they were none other than the young masters of the prestigious Haas, Lennox, and Bach families of Schwater City.

Since they were three of the Famous Four of Schywater, it was evident that they had complex backgrounds. What more, they were even shareholders of Schywater University, and the only shareholder that could rival them was the Yonjour Group.

Then again, the four families were nothing in the presence of that group...

Whatever the case was, Yong—who was sitting on the couch—couldn't help but ask in a playful tone, "Say... I heard rumors that you got beaten up by someone, Yash! Are the rumors true?"

Upon hearing that, Yash simply looked at Yong without saying a word. Just as he had feared, gossip

about him being beaten up had already spread like wildfire throughout the university... How embarrassing...

“To think that that brazen kid was able to defeat Yash... Where do you think he comes from?” asked Jacque in a curious tone.

“Who even cares about that? Whatever the case is, since he dared to humiliate the Famous Four of Schywater in the first place, we’ll just make him eat his words!” scoffed Ferdo rather disdainfully.

“Indeed... Regardless, I’m not sure if you’ve heard about this, but there’s been some major changes in the university of late. Essentially, the principal and owner of the university have supposedly changed. What more, according to my father, he heard news that the university’s biggest shareholder is now the chairman of the Yonjour group! With that in mind, the Yonjour Group now owns the university!” explained Yong.

“...What? The Yonjour Group has acquired the university? But for what reason?” exclaimed the confused Jacque.

Everyone knew about the Yonjour Group’s power. If the rumors really were true, then the trio knew better than to act hastily...

Whatever the case was, it was noon when Gerald returned to his office.

Shortly after, Natallie walked in before respectfully asking, “Is there anything you’d like me to do, Chairman?”

“Before that, there should still be some villas under the company’s name, right, Natallie?” said Gerald.

“Indeed, Chairman. A few remain,” replied Natallie, much to Gerald’s satisfaction.

Nodding in response, Gerald then ordered, “That’s great to hear. I need you to get me the documents for one of our villas. Can you arrange for that?”

Simply nodding in response, Natallie then walked out of his office without another word...

The truth was, Gerald was asking for the documents on behalf of Raine’s family. After all, that family was currently plagued with demolition problems and needed someplace to move to. With that in mind, Gerald was stepping in to help by allowing them to move into one of his company’s villas.

A little over an hour later, Natallie returned with a document folder.

Handing it to Gerald, she then said, “These are the villa’s documents, chairman. Also, all the necessary procedures for moving into it have been settled.”

Taking the documents, Gerald replied with a simple, “Thank you.”

Hearing that, Natallie was prompted to ask, “Do you need me to come with you, chairman?”

“It’s fine, I’ll head there on my own. You can continue working in the office.”

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## Chapter 1942

With that said, Gerald then got up and left with the documents in hand...

Natallie herself didn't think much of it, knowing full well that Gerald had his own way of doing things. With that in mind, she simply did as she was told...

Regardless, it wasn't too long before Gerald arrived at the hospital. Naturally, he was there to meet Raine and her family.

Either way, the second they saw him, everyone from Raine's family couldn't help but smile.

Dexter himself couldn't help but ask, "Gerald? What are you doing here? Aren't you busy...? Are you sure we aren't taking too much of your time...?"

Simply smiling in response, Gerald then replied, "It's fine, uncle. Regardless, I'm here to discuss something with all of you."

Seeing how confused they were after hearing that, Gerald then looked at the couple before adding, "I heard from Raine that the place you're all currently staying in is about to get demolished. I've also been told that you still haven't found a place to stay yet, is that right?"

Hearing that, Dexter simply heaved a heavy sigh, a helpless expression on his face as he said, "Indeed... The houses nowadays are just so expensive, you know? And we don't really have the money to get a good place to stay... What more, Raine's mother has just undergone surgery! We're in a truly perplexing

situation...”

Seeing how big a problem it was for the three of them, Gerald then replied in a confident tone, “I see... Truth be told, I’m here to help solve that very issue!”

Naturally, this surprised the family of three.

A brief pause later, Dexter was prompted to ask, “Really? Are you really going to help us out, Gerald...?”

After all, if Gerald truly was stepping in, then their most major problem would surely be taken care of.

“I wouldn’t joke about such things, would I?” replied Gerald, a serious expression on his face as he handed the documents over to Dexter.

Following that, he then explained, “Those are the documents of one of my vacant villas. It’s a nice place and you can all move there. I’m sure that aunt will be able to recover faster there too.”

Upon hearing that, all three of them could only widen their eyes in response, too shocked to even say anything for a while.

Eventually, Dexter snapped out of it before exclaiming, “A-a... villa...?!”

To think that Gerald was actually allowing their family to live in one of his villas! None of them had even dreamt of being able to live in a villa before!



“You heard right, uncle. Regardless, all the necessary contracts and procedures have already been dealt with, so you can just move in straight away. Speaking of which, the villa is fully furnished, so you don’t need to get any new furniture!” replied Gerald with a smile.

“T-that... H-how can I even thank you...?” muttered the overwhelmed Dexter, actively fighting the urge to kneel before the youth. After all, without Gerald’s help, they would’ve surely had a rough time on the streets...

“A simple thanks is sufficient, uncle. As I’ve said before, Raine’s matters are my matters, and I’ll help whenever I can,” replied Gerald.

Upon hearing that, Raine couldn’t help but feel touched. Gerald truly was being too nice to her...

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## Chapter 1943

Regardless, it was a few days later when Raine’s mother was finally discharged from the hospital. It was also the day Raine’s family would move into the villa.

With that in mind, Gerald had made sure to remind Raine and Dexter to pack all their clothes and personal belongings before getting Raine’s mother from the hospital. That way, Gerald could immediately drive all of them to the villa once Raine’s mother was discharged.

Then again, there wasn’t much to pack in the first place. After all, as Gerald had previously said, the villa was already fully equipped with furniture and electrical appliances.

Whatever the case was, the second the trio entered the villa, they were instantly left dumbfounded.

It took him a while to snap out of it, but when he finally did, Dexter couldn't help but fumble a few steps forward while exclaiming, "M-my god... This... This is extravagant...!"

Yollande and Raine themselves remained stupefied in silence, unable to believe that they were going to live here from now on.

Turning to face Gerald, Dexter—who was still having trouble accepting all this—then added, "A-are you really sure we can live here, Gerald...?"

Giving a firm nod, Gerald then replied, "As I've said before, I'd never joke about something like this, uncle. Also, since I own this villa, you don't have to worry about trouble from others. I should also mention that you won't have to worry about paying for any of the utilities either."

Hearing that, Dexter was left utterly flabbergasted. What a saint!

After calming down a bit, Dexter gulped before asking, "...Gerald... What... exactly do you do for a living...?"

"I'd like to know as well! Until you tell us, there's no way we could live here! We simply wouldn't dare! After all, this is a massive favor you're doing for us! We don't even know how to repay your kindness yet!" added Yollande.

Seeing how keen all three of them were to find out, Gerald knew that he couldn't hide it from them any

longer.

With that, he truthfully replied, "...Well, if you insist on knowing, I guess there's no point hiding it anymore... You see, I'm actually the chairman of the Yonjour Group! With that in mind, all the other villas in the area belong to my company as well, though my employees are currently living in those. Regardless, since there were still a few vacant villas, I figured that I could help your family's plight by allowing you to live in one of them!"

Upon hearing that, the trio's eyes almost popped out of their skulls.

Raine herself was the most surprised among them. To think that Gerald would actually be the chairman of the Yonjour Group... No wonder he had been able to pay for all those medical expenses in one go...! It explained how he got them such a nice place to move into too! She had truly gotten to know a magnate!

Naturally, all three of them were fully aware of how powerful the Yonjour Group was. To think that not only had they been acquainted with that company's chairman this entire time, but he was even willing to extend his help to them!

Regardless, after eventually snapping out of it, the still rather shocked Dexter gulped before stuttering, "I-I had no idea you were the chairman of the Yonjour Group, Gerald...!"

Shrugging in response, Gerald then said, "Chairman is just a title in the end, uncle. I prefer keeping a low profile rather than flaunting it."

Hearing that, all three of them simply nodded. After all, they knew that it was better for powerful people—like Gerald—to stick low so that they wouldn't accidentally cause any major stirs.

Whatever the case was, it was evening by the time they were done unpacking.

Seeing that Raine and Gerald were now sitting on the living room couch, Dexter took Yollande upstairs to allow their daughter to have some alone time with Gerald.

After a brief silence, Raine couldn't help but say, "...You know, you're really good at hiding secrets, senior... You really surprised me earlier!"

Simply grinning in response, Gerald then chuckled before replying, "Sorry, Raine. Didn't mean to hide it from you!"

"Well, there's no need to apologize... I get why you chose to hide your identity!" replied Raine in an understanding tone.

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## Chapter 1944

"I'm glad you do.... Speaking of which, I've already acquired Schywater University. Just thought you'd like to know," replied Gerald, instantly stunning Raine once more.

Seriously? He had bought the entire university so casually?! This was truly a feat only Gerald could do...

"So, you're the biggest shareholder of Schywater University now... No wonder you weren't afraid of the Famous Four of Schywater!" exclaimed Raine as she put two and two together.

Then again, Raine was only half right about that assumption. Even if Gerald hadn't acquired Schywater University, he would've remained unafraid of the Famous Four. After all, to him, they were simply four playboys who didn't need to be feared or even looked up to.

As long as they didn't trouble him, he wouldn't even bother about them. However, if they did, he would simply destroy them along with their families.

After all, everyone knew that offending the Yonjour Group was never a good idea since the consequences would always be devastating...

Regardless, it was getting rather late when Gerald finally bid farewell to Raine and left the villa...

While he could've stayed for much longer, he didn't since it was the weekend tomorrow and he remembered promising Earla to bring her to an amusement park. With that in mind, he planned to turn in early so that he would be awake by dawn...

Either way, it was about nine when he finally arrived at his villa.

Upon entering, he was greeted by the usual sight of Earla and Natallie sitting on the couch, laughing as they watched television.

When they realized that Gerald had returned, Early quickly hopped off the couch before exclaiming, "You're back, Mr. Crawford!"

Understanding that Earla found him more important than the television, Gerald couldn't help but smile as he replied, "That, I am! After all, we're going to the amusement park tomorrow, aren't we? Early to bed, early to rise!"

Hearing that, Earla instantly cheered before saying, "Yeah! You're the best, uncle Gerald!"

Gerald and Natallie could only smile when they saw how happy Earla was. That child's innocent smile truly could heal even the most tired of souls...

Now feeling all warm and relaxed, Gerald turned to face Natallie before instructing, "Go book three tickets for Happy Amusement Park later. We'll go there together tomorrow!"

Nodding in response, Natallie replied, "Got it, Chairman!"

Giggling with glee, Earla then said, "Say... Could I sleep with you tonight, sister Natallie?"

Momentarily startled to hear that, Natallie quickly snapped out of it before replying with a smile, "Of course you can!"

Cheering once more, Earla then exclaimed, "Yay! Thanks, sister Natallie!"

Gerald and Natallie had made it a point to give Earla all the love and care they could possibly offer. With that in mind, such a simple wish was definitely no problem for Natallie...

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Chapter 1945

After all, the duo knew that they were Earla's only family. If they didn't treat Earla well, who else would?

Whatever the case was, it was rather late at night when Gerald finally parted ways with the two girls, prompting the duo to head to Natallie's room. As promised, Earla slept together with Natallie, and Natallie made sure to hug her tight as they slept comfily...

Gerald himself opened a bottle of wine as soon as he got to his room's balcony. Leaning against his lawn chair as he took a sip of wine, Gerald then stared at the beautiful night sky...

As they said, night truly was the best time for people to think their life through...

Taking another sip of wine, Gerald couldn't help but think about the fact that he was immune to getting drunk. Even so, he still enjoyed the thrill of drinking alcohol, so who cared?

Either way, after taking a few more sips, Gerald couldn't help but start thinking about his father...

Imagining his father's face as he stared at the starry sky, Gerald knew that if his father was still alive, then his family would surely continue leading a happy life... He was also pretty sure that his father would be proud of all his achievements, though this was all simply wishful thinking... After all, the dead couldn't be truly brought back to life.

Regardless, after drinking for quite some time, Gerald finally decided to hit the hay...

It was eight the next morning when he was awoken by the sound of his alarm clock. Feeling refreshed, Gerald then hopped off his bed to get himself cleaned up before eventually having breakfast together with Earla and Natallie.

Once that was done, the trio finally drove off to Happy Amusement Park.

Though the amusement park was located just north of Schywater City, this was Gerald's first time going there. After all, he was pretty much always busy.

With that in mind, this was a good opportunity for him to get a rare moment of relaxation... It was also a chance for him to finally have proper fun with Earla.

Either way, it was about ten minutes later when Gerald finally hit the brakes. They had arrived.

Stepping out of the car, Gerald saw how large the northern area was. It was no wonder why the Happy Amusement Park was established here.

Whatever the case was, after Natallie made sure that she had the tickets on her, the trio then headed into the amusement park...

Upon entering, Earla couldn't help but immediately exclaim, "Wow! This place is so huge and beautiful...!"

This was Earla's first time at an amusement park, so it was understandable why she was so excited. Before this, she had always dreamt of going to one, and now that her dream was finally getting fulfilled, there was no way she was going to be able to contain her joy.

Understanding that, Gerald then turned to look at Earla before saying, "Earla! If there's anything you'd like to play or buy, just tell me! We'll make sure you enjoy yourself to the fullest today!"

Nodding in response, Earla then began guiding Gerald and Natallie toward the rides she wanted to enjoy...



Though Earla had previously seemed like an obsequious girl, she was apparently quite courageous, even more so than Natallie! After all, she was interested in the more thrilling rides in the amusement park like roller coasters!

Had it not been for the minimum height and age restrictions for most of the thrilling rides, Earla would've surely gotten onto each and every one of them!

Regardless, it was true that time flew when one was having fun. After all, two hours had passed in the blink of an eye...

Seeing that it was now noon, Gerald and Natallie decided to lead Earla to one of the amusement park's benches to have a short rest. Even so, Earla looked like she still wanted to continue enjoying herself.

Smiling when he saw that, Gerald was prompted to ask, "So, what do you think of today, Earla? Enjoying yourself?"

Immediately nodding in response, Earla then replied, "I am! If... it isn't too much trouble, could we come here again in the future...?"

"But of course! Just tell me or Miss Moon when you feel the urge to come here again! We'll definitely find the time to bring you here to have fun!" promised Gerald without the slightest hesitation.

"Yay! Thank you, Mr. Crawford! Miss Moon!" exclaimed Earla, all smiles as she nodded with glee...

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Chapter 1946

Following that, she turned to look at Natallie and said, “Um... Could we go to the washroom, Miss Moon...?”

“Sure! Let’s go!” replied Natallie as she immediately led Earla to the washroom...

Gerald himself followed them until he found a bench—that had a flower bed right behind it—within view of the washrooms...

Even from afar, however, the trio had already noticed a long line of ladies waiting to use the bathroom. Then again, this wasn’t really out of the ordinary. The fact that nobody was lining up to use the gents was normal as day as well.

Whatever the case was, Natallie and Earla naturally had to queue as well, and it was about fifteen minutes later before it was finally the duo’s turn to enter...

However, just as they were about to enter, a woman suddenly cut the line and stood before them!

Seeing that, Natallie immediately held onto the woman’s wrist—before she could enter—and said, “Hey, now! Wait your turn!”

Upon hearing that, the woman instantly turned to glare at her before yelling, “Hah! As if I need to listen to you!”

With that said, the woman then snorted before yanking her arm free from Natallie’s grip! Due to the sudden yank, Natallie almost ended up falling! Thankfully, the person behind her was kind enough to support her fall.

Seeing that, the angered Earla then pointed at the woman before yelling, “Hey, we got here first! You’re clearly the one who’s wrong here! Miss Moon, are you alright-”

Before Earla could even finish her sentence, the woman—who was now frowning uglily—gave her a tight slap across her face!

Naturally, this stunned everyone present. To think that this maniacal woman wouldn’t even let this girl off!

Her eyes now fully widened when she saw how red Earla’s swollen cheek was, Natallie immediately exclaimed, “E-Earla...!”

Watching as Natallie then squatted down to check on the crying girl’s cheek, the woman simply snorted as she scoffed, “Hah! Let that be a lesson to you, brat! Don’t meddle in other people’s business!”

Before anyone could even retort back, however, they could only stare in shock when they saw that the woman had been sent flying!

Of course, the one who had done the deed was none other than the furious Gerald who had witnessed everything from the bench.

After seeing how merciless the woman had treated Earla, Gerald no longer had any hesitation about beating her up. That b\*tch deserved it!

Regardless, Gerald then quickly turned to face Earla, inspecting her swollen cheek as he said, “Hold still, Earla, and let me have a quick look!”

As Gerald began transferring the bioelectric current in his body into Earla's face, Natallie and Earla couldn't help but feel relieved. After all, they both knew that with Gerald around, nobody would ever dare to bully them.

Either way, it was only seconds later when Earla's swollen cheek returned to normal...

"Does it still hurt, Earla...?" asked Gerald in a doting tone.

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Chapter 1947

Shaking her head, Earla then said, "Not at all, Mr. Crawford! You're so awesome...!"

While Earla's cheek had stung quite a bit earlier, the second Gerald touched it, the pain simply vanished. It was truly magical...!

Either way, Gerald breathed a sigh of relief upon hearing that.

With that done, Gerald then got up again before staring at the woman from earlier who had just crawled back to her feet.

Glaring at him, the enraged woman then yelled, "You...! How dare you hit me...?! Don't you know who I am?!"

Upon hearing that, Gerald simply squinted his eyes, revealing an icy glare that could pierce a soul... He definitely wasn't letting her off easy now...!

"Like that matters! Titles are only given to humans, and you're clearly an animal for even daring to treat a young girl this way!" retorted Gerald.

"...Yeah, he's right! Besides, she was the one who started it all by cutting the line!"

"I know right? As if she'd react any differently if someone cut her line!"

Hearing all the bystanders—who had watched the whole thing happen—yell at her, the humiliated woman could only blush in shame. It truly was a miserable feeling to be despised by everyone...

"Y-you...! All of you had better shut up! In case you didn't know, I'm the wife of the Zachariah Group's chairman! Who the hell are all of you to even think about teaching me a lesson?!" roared the desperate woman.

The second they knew who she truly was, everyone instantly fell silent. After all, they were well aware that the Zachariah Group was the cream of the crop in Schywater City. With that in mind, that group was undoubtedly powerful...

Even so, that group was pretty much insignificant when compared to Gerald's Yonjour Group. In fact, not even ten Zachariah Groups would come close to rivaling Gerald's group!

Understanding that, Gerald couldn't help but gaze disdainfully at the woman while scoffing, "The Zachariah Group, you say...?"

"Indeed! So if you dare offend me anymore, I'll surely make you suffer! In fact, I'll even kick you out of Schywater City for good!" scowled the woman in an arrogant tone before smiling smugly at them. It was clear that she had no intention of showing any of them any respect...

Whatever the case was, since she was Zachariah Kershaw's wife, Gerald figured that she must be Zuri Lidwell.

Still, just to be sure, Gerald casually asked, "Save the big talk. Regardless, you said your husband is Zachariah Kershaw, right?"

Nodding in response, Zuri then replied, "Oh? So you know my husband's name! I guess you're more sensible than I thought! Regardless, I want you three to grovel and apologize to me! If you do, I'll let the matter slide! If you don't, however... Well, let's just say that a single phone call will ruin all of you!"

Hearing that, Gerald and Natallie couldn't help but snort in their minds. Zuri really was all talk.

Honestly, Gerald was feeling slightly bad for Kershaw. After all, he had gotten married to such an idiot. Women like Zuri would always end up ruining their partners, and the fact that she was now pissing Gerald off was a textbook example of such a situation. She didn't even know what she was getting herself into!

Shaking his head, Gerald simply replied, "Go ahead and call him, then!"

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## Chapter 1948

Upon hearing that, Zuri was stunned. After all, not only was Gerald more fearless than she had anticipated, but he didn't seem to care about her high position at all! Was he not afraid of the Zachariah Group in the least...?

Gerald himself was simply waiting to see if she truly was going to make the call. After all, the second she did, he would no longer hesitate to end the Zachariah Group. By that point, any amount of regret from Zuri would be useless...

Either way, Zuri wasn't about to get outdone and mocked, so she gritted her teeth before yelling, "...Fine! Since you want to get kicked out of the city so much, be my guest!"

Following that, Gerald, Natallie, and Earla simply watched calmly as she began fishing her phone out. Gerald himself couldn't help but think, 'Messing with us, huh? We'll make sure to properly take you on, then!'

Regardless, it was about ten seconds later when the call finally connected. The second it did, Zuri's tone immediately did a one-eighty as she whimpered between crocodile tears, "H-hubby...! I'm getting bullied by others...! Please come back me...!"

"What? You're at the Happy Amusement Park, no? Why would you get bullied out of the blue? Are you sure you didn't start it?" asked Zachariah who knew all too well about his wife's temper.

This wasn't the first time Zuri had gotten into trouble for bullying others first. What more, with how much she flaunted her position as his wife everywhere, who would dare bully her in the first place?

“...What do you mean by that, Zachariah? I really was beaten up by a b\*stard! Look, you’d better help me or I’m going to make things difficult for you once I get back!” scowled the two-faced Zuri. What a defensive and hostile woman...

Whatever the case was, Zachariah knew that all he could do now was give in to her whims...

With that, he could only ask in a helpless tone, “Fine... What exactly do you want me to do...?”

Delighted to hear that, Zuri’s confidence instantly peaked as she replied in a loud voice, “I want you to kick them out of Schywater City!”

It was evident that she had deliberately done so to ensure that the trio heard her.

Upon hearing that, Zachariah could only groan before saying, “...Isn’t it fine if we just teach them a lesson...? Don’t you think you’re causing too much of a scene for such a small matter...?”

Zachariah himself didn’t like using his power and position to bully others. That was Zuri’s thing. In fact, he had advised her time and again to stop being so arrogant, though of course, she never listened.

Unfortunately for Zachariah, she had somehow managed to offend a person who was even more powerful and influential than him, and he would soon come to learn about that...

“Zachariah! Would you listen to yourself?! I’m your wife, aren’t I?! Why aren’t you angry that I got bullied by others?!” scowled the enraged Zuri.

Being the kind of person who just couldn’t stand getting scolded, Zachariah instantly gave in as he replied to the unbearable woman, “Fine! I’ll come over right away, alright...?”



Satisfied to hear that, Zuri then nodded before saying, "That's more like it! Now hurry over!"

Following that, she hung up before glaring at the trio, a smug smile on her face...

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## Chapter 1949

“Listen up! My husband’s coming over soon, so don’t you dare run!”

Upon hearing that, Gerald couldn’t help but reveal a cunning smile as he replied, “Oh, don’t worry! We won’t be going anywhere anytime soon! Let’s just hope you don’t end up getting ruined in the end!”

Of course, Zuri thought he was just talking big, so she paid him no attention.

With that said, Gerald then turned to look at Natallie before saying, “Go ahead and bring Earla to the washroom first.”

Nodding in response, Natallie then did as she was told.

Gerald himself simply returned to the bench from earlier and sat there to wait, fully confident that things would end in his favor.

Thinking about it, Gerald wondered if the duo would try to apologize to him once they realized who he truly was. If they did, he would simply tell them to beg him to let them off. Of course, even if they did, that wouldn’t actually change anything. After all, Zuri had her chance, and she busted it...

Fast forward to about forty minutes later, a suited man could be seen jogging toward Zuri... and it was obvious that it was Zachariah.

As he continued jogging, Zachariah couldn’t help but think about how much he truly loved his wife... After all, why else would he come rushing all the way over despite being quite far away when she called? He had even spent quite a bit on the ticket just to get here!

Regardless, once he stopped before her, he took in a deep breath before asking, "...Alright, I'm here... Where are those people...?"

Watching as his wife simply pointed at the trio—who had been sitting on the bench together—, Zachariah then squinted slightly in their direction... before going wide-eyed.

As Zachariah immediately began walking up to Gerald, Zuri followed closely behind him. She had been waiting for the longest time for him to arrive, and now that he was here, she was more than ready to teach those three a harsh lesson!

Unfortunately, everything was only going to go downhill from here, at least for her.

Either way, once he was close enough, Zachariah's jaw nearly dropped. So he hadn't seen wrong... it really was Gerald!

Realizing that he was now in boiling hot water, Zachariah could only stutter, "C-c-c-chairman Crawford...!"

To think that his wife had managed to offend the chairman of the Yonjour Group!

"Oh? So you recognize me, Chairman Kershaw! Regardless, how are you?" asked Gerald in a playful tone.

"A-as if I'd ever be unable to recognize you, Chairman Crawford...!" replied Zachariah, his tone brimming with respect.

Zachariah had long known about Gerald through financial seminars and auctions that he had previously attended. Even so, he never had the chance to contact him until today...

"I see. Well, even if you do know me, Chairman Kershaw, your wife apparently doesn't..." said Gerald...

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## Chapter 1950

Upon hearing that, Zachariah immediately caught on that Gerald was indirectly saying that he hadn't educated his wife well.

With that in mind, he turned to glare at Zuri before yelling, "You stupid woman...! Hurry over and apologize to Chairman Crawford!"

Upon hearing that, Zuri's heart skipped a beat. After all, it hadn't crossed her mind that the one she had picked a fight with was none other than the chairman of the Yonjour Group...!

Realizing that she had really done it this time, Zuri's arrogance instantly drained as she meekly whimpered in a respectful tone, "I-I apologize, Chairman Crawford...! It was truly blind of me to not recognize who you were...! Please forgive me...!"

Of course, Gerald wasn't about to accept her apology.

In fact, he didn't even look at her, completely ignoring the ignorant woman as he said, "Whatever the case is, the damage has been done and consequences are required. However, since you seem a bit more sensible than that buffoon, I'll give you two choices to deal with this little mishap of ours. Firstly, if you really wish to protect your Zachariah Group, I want you to divorce her. If you choose the second option and refuse to dump her, however, I'll just acquire the Zachariah Group and you know I always get what I want. In case you didn't know, she slapped my nephew earlier, which is why I'm so adamant about doing this."

Truth be told, neither of the choices sounded appealing to him. Even so, Zachariah knew he had to pick one in the end. After all, he of all people knew how powerful Gerald was.

If Gerald obtained his company, then it would truly be all over for him. However, he could avoid that by making a small sacrifice...

Watching in utter horror as her husband turned to look at her, Zuri immediately began begging, "H-hubby...! P-please...! Please don't divorce me...! I-I know now that I've done wrong...! Please don't...!"

Before Zachariah could even say a thing, Zuri then turned to look at Gerald before adding, "I-I've seen the errors in my ways, Chairman Crawford...! So please be the bigger man and forgive me...! I really didn't know better...!"

Despite all her pleading, Gerald simply turned to look away. He wasn't one to tolerate people like Zuri. Since she was an adult, she had to pay for her actions. To Gerald, she was simply getting what she deserved.

Either way, after a short pause, Zachariah eventually made his decision and sighed before saying, "...I understand, Mr. Crawford..."

Turning to face Zuri, Zachariah then added, "...From today onward, I, Zachariah Kershaw, terminate my conjugal relationship with you, Zuri! I'll be telling my lawyer to prepare the divorce papers in a bit."

Hearing that, Zuri was so stupefied that she couldn't even register what she had just heard for a while. It was almost as though she had just been fatally struck by lightning...

Zachariah himself knew that he was only doing this because he had no other choice. After all, he was the one who had established the Zachariah Group from the group up. He couldn't just let his group get acquired by Gerald!

Then again, it wasn't as though Zuri was worth fighting for. Ever since they got married, all she would do was ask for money from him and create trouble. After having to step forward so many times to resolve all of her problematic issues, Zachariah felt that this was the last straw.

Truth be told, Zachariah felt thankful that Gerald stepped in. After all, it had given him the courage to finally file a divorce with Zuri.

"Oh? Please make sure you do that, then!" replied Gerald with a satisfied nod.

Nodding in response, Zachariah then turned to leave, no longer bothering about Zuri...

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Chapter 1951

Seeing that, Zuri immediately began running after Zachariah. While it was true that Zachariah wasn't as rich or powerful as Gerald was, he could at least still give her a wealthy and comfortable life, and she was content with just that.

If he really was dumping her, however, then even all that would be taken away...! She couldn't just let that happen...!

Watching as Zuri continued running after Zachariah, Gerald could only shake his head. What a truly pitiful person...

Regardless of how much wealth and prestige one possessed, as long as one didn't have manners, they'd surely be looked down upon by others...

Gerald himself made sure to always practice what he preached. When dealing with others, he made sure to remain calm and refrained from scheming, at least against those who did honest work. In fact, it was honestly his good mannerisms—when it came to managing the Yonjour Group—that earned him the respect and admiration from many others.

To Gerald, this was the reason why some people were more successful than others...

Whatever the case was, with that event done, the three of them then continued taking a short rest before they resumed having fun in the amusement park.

Thankfully, Earla—who was still a child—easily forgot about those bad incidents since there was so much fun to be had...

It was evening when the trio finally decided to leave...

By that point, Earla—who had grown exhausted after enjoying herself so much—had become so sleepy that she ended up falling asleep in Natallie’s embrace.

Seeing that, Natallie couldn’t help but smile as she whispered, “It appears that Earla had a really good time today, Chairman Crawford...!”

Nodding with a smile, Gerald then said, “Indeed... It’s been quite a while since I’ve last seen Earla this happy...”

True enough, though Earla would always smile and exclaim whenever she met him, today was the first time he saw her laughing this joyously. In other words, Gerald was finally able to see a worry-free Earla today...

“Speaking of which, I have to thank you for bringing me along, Chairman Crawford! To be quite frank, I haven’t had this much fun in ages as well!” replied Natallie.

“Truth be told, I’ve been treating you as family for quite a while now, Natallie. After all, you’ve been by my side this entire time. Without you, I may not even be where I currently am today!” explained Gerald in a sincere tone as he looked at her.

Hearing that, Natallie found his statement so sweet that it almost felt like she had just consumed a jar of honey. The fact that she was this important to Gerald simply made her feel incredibly moved...

While it was true that she harbored feelings for him, she preferred to not say it out. After all, she was happy enough just being able to be by his side...



Regardless, after driving back to the villa, Gerald told Natallie to go ahead and bring Earla back to her room to get some proper rest.

Gerald himself drove off again to Raine's place, hoping to see how Yollande's recovery was going. He also wanted to see if there was anything he could help with.

Quite honestly, Gerald's place wasn't all that far from Raine's villa, which explained why it had only taken him about ten minutes to get to her place.

Seconds after he parked his car, he heard Raine's familiar voice calling out, "Senior!"

Turning to face the source of the voice, Gerald saw that Raine was looking at him from the villa's main entrance.

Surprised to see her there, Gerald then got out and walked toward her before asking, "Raine? What are you standing at the door for?"

Smiling subtly, she then replied, "Oh, I was just throwing the rubbish out! Coincidentally, I saw your car driving by so I waited here!"

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Nodding in response, Gerald then entered the villa together with Raine...

Upon entering, Raine immediately called out, "Mom? Dad? Gerald's here!"

Hearing that, Dexter—who had been sitting on the living room couch together with Yollande—immediately got to his feet before exclaiming, “Oh? What a surprise to see you here, Gerald!”

“Indeed!” added Yollande who turned to face the youth, a wide smile on her face.

Pleased to see how lively they were, Gerald then smiled in response before replying, “Just thought I’d hop by to say hello. So... Gotten used to living here yet?”

“But of course! It’d be impossible for us not to have when you’ve given us such a magnificent villa! You were even considerate enough to stop by just to say hello!” said Yollande, having nothing but praise for the youth.

After all, he was the one who had given their family what they needed most at their lowest. This was the only way they knew how to thank him...

“I’m glad to hear that! Speaking of which, how is your recovery going, madam?” asked Gerald.

“It’s going speedily! I can now get out of bed and walk on my own again!” replied Yollande, instantly causing Gerald to breathe a sigh of relief.

When he turned back to look at Dexter, however, Gerald couldn’t help but notice that Dexter seemed to be thinking about something...

“...Is something weighing your mind, sir...? You don’t look too good... Perhaps you’ve bumped into some kinds of difficulties...? If you have, don’t hesitate to tell me about them. I’ll definitely do my best to help!” said Gerald.

Hearing that, Yollande instantly added, "Dexter, just tell him about it. After all, he's certainly no outsider! Who knows, maybe he could help you!"

Upon hearing that, Dexter couldn't help but feel slightly embarrassed. It looked like he really didn't know how to properly approach the subject...

Seeing how difficult it was for her father to find the right words, Raine stepped in and explained, "Well, the thing is, my dad had to resign from his old job since we moved quite far away from his workplace. He's currently having trouble finding employment, senior!"

And here Gerald thought that it was a major problem. As it turned out, it was simply something this trivial!

Shaking his head, Gerald then asked, "...If you don't mind, what kinds of jobs are you looking for, sir?"

After thinking for a bit, Dexter replied, "Well... I don't really have the academic qualifications for more technical jobs, but I'm willing to bear hardships and work hard! I don't even mind working as a coolie!"

As Dexter had said, he barely had any relevant education or skills for the more high-paying jobs. With that in mind, he knew that his strength was the only way he was going to be able to continue taking care of his family. He really didn't mind doing lower-paying jobs as long as he could earn a living...

Hearing that, Gerald thought about it for a moment before saying, "I see... You know, I have a job vacancy at my place... I wonder if you'd be interested in working with me...?"

Upon hearing that, Dexter's eyes instantly widened with hope. Even Yollande and Raine appeared overjoyed as Dexter immediately exclaimed, "O-of course I'd be willing to work with you! I'm willing to do anything as long as I get the job!"

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## Chapter 1953

Hearing that, Gerald chuckled before explaining, "Don't worry, you won't be doing anything particularly exhausting, sir! All I ask for is that you do some things that require management. The salary itself is a thousand and five hundred dollars per month. How about it?"

"A-a thousand and five hundred dollars?! What high pay! A-are you serious about that, Gerald...?" exclaimed Yollande before Dexter could even say a word.

After all, where else would they be able to find such a high-paying job with Dexter's qualifications?

"But of course, I am! Besides, since you're looking for a job and I'm looking for someone to fill the role anyway, why not just work with me?" said Gerald.

In truth, Gerald wasn't really in need of someone to fill that position. He had only made it up just for the sake of giving Dexter a hand.

"W-well... If you think I'm capable enough, then yes! Please, take me in!" replied Dexter, not wanting to miss the chance to earn a monthly payment of over a thousand dollars...

"I'm glad to hear it! You can come report to the Yonjour Group tomorrow then, sir! I'll get someone to

help you manage the enrollment procedures. Don't worry, I'll make sure to have some people around to show you the ropes!" said Gerald.

"Got it!" replied Dexter extremely enthusiastically as Raine and Yollande squealed in excitement.

After calming down a bit, Yollande turned to look at Gerald before sincerely saying, "T-thank you so much for everything, Gerald...! Not only did you save our lives, but you're even giving my husband such a high-paying job...! We really have troubled you a lot..."

Smiling in response, Gerald simply said, "Now, now, madam, there's no need to be so courteous. This is nothing to me, and again, I just so happened to need an employee for the job!"

Though the trio felt that they now owed the world to Gerald, Gerald himself honestly didn't think that he was doing much. To be quite frank, he was simply happy that he was able to help others, and their joy was all he asked for in return...

Regardless, it was a short while later when Dexter supported Yollande up to their bedroom to get her some rest.

Gerald and Raine themselves remained seated on the living room couch.

To remove the awkward silence between them, Gerald cleared his throat before saying, "Speaking of which, I haven't had my dinner yet. Since I'm already here, would you like to join me for a meal?"

"Of course!" replied Raine without the slightest hesitation.

With that decided, the duo then got into Gerald's car before driving off...

It was honestly a rather awkward drive since neither of them said a thing throughout their journey. Thankfully, the duo soon arrived at the Schywater Night Market.

The market itself was famous for being a 'snack street' since there were so many food stalls there serving all kinds of dishes. With that in mind, the place was usually extremely lively, even after ten at night!

Those who went there were usually office workers who wanted to have fun and entertain themselves after work. Gerald himself had frequented the market in the past due to all the good food there.

However, ever since he was given a higher-ranking identity, he slowly began frequenting high-end bars and clubs instead.

With that in mind, it had been quite a while since he last came here, and he felt compelled to pay it a visit again just to reminisce while having dinner...

Either way, now that they were there, Gerald quickly led Raine to one of the stalls to have their meal.

Upon sitting down, however, Gerald couldn't help but feel that the entire night market had undergone a rather drastic change. Had he really not come here for that long...?

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Chapter 1954

Whatever the case was, the stall Gerald and Raine had chosen to eat at was established by an old couple.

After sitting down, Gerald immediately called out, "Boss!"

Upon hearing that, an old woman quickly walked over to their table, handing both of them menus as she said, "Well, hello there! Come have a look at what you'd like to have!"

Hearing that, the duo began scanning through their menus...

Truth be told, this was Raine's first time eating at a night market. With that in mind, she was rightfully overwhelmed by the immense amount of options the menu had to offer.

Gerald, on the other hand, had been a regular when it came to ordering night market food. Due to that, it didn't take all that long for him to raise his hand before saying, "Boss! I'd like to have twenty mutton kebabs, a plate of fried noodles, one roasted fish, a plate of chicken wings..."

By the time Gerald's list was done, Raine could only stare wide-eyed at him. What a lot of food...!

Turning to look at her, Gerald then asked, "What about you, Raine? Don't worry about the costs, just order whatever you like!"

Shaking her head in response, Raine simply smiled faintly as she replied, "Well... You've already ordered quite a bit, senior... Why don't we finish that first?"

Hearing that, Gerald simply nodded before saying, "Alright, that will be all for now, boss! If we need any more food, we'll tell you!"

“Got it! The food will be served in a while!” replied the old woman with a smile before quickly making her way back to her stall.

To be honest, even though the other stalls appeared to have quite a number of customers, this particular stall was barren aside from Gerald and Raine’s table. With that in mind, it was no wonder why the old couple looked so happy to serve them. After all, they were providing them with business.

Regardless, while waiting for the food, Raine noticed something which prompted her to immediately whisper, “Hey, senior! Look there! I think the one roasting the kebabs is the old woman’s daughter!”

Upon hearing that, Gerald turned to look at where Raine was staring... and true enough, the woman roasting the kebabs—who looked to be around the same age as Raine—seemed to be their daughter.

“To think that she’s already earning money at such a young age,” muttered Raine with a sigh, now feeling that she had it much better compared to her...

Whatever the case was, it was about twenty minutes later when all the dishes were served.

Since the old lady was here anyway, Gerald took the chance to ask, “That your daughter, boss?”

Chuckling in response, the old woman then replied, “She is, actually! My husband and I were around thirty when we conceived her, and we’re just thankful that she’s so responsible and diligent. You know, even though she studies hard, she still makes it a point to come help us after school! We really appreciate it since we’re too old to get things done fast enough...”

Realizing that she had said a bit too much, the old woman then smiled before adding, “...Anyway, do



enjoy your meal! I'll be attending to other things first, but if you need me, don't hesitate to call!"

Watching as the old woman then returned to her stall, the duo shrugged before starting to dig in...

Since Gerald hadn't eaten kebabs in ages, being able to eat them now brought back several joyous memories... What bliss...

However, his moment of peace was cut short when a loud 'crash' suddenly filled the air, followed by someone yelling "Beat it"!

Following that, even more smashing sounds could be heard! What kind of chaos was brewing...?

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## Chapter 1955

Turning to face the source of the noise, Gerald and Raine were immediately greeted by the sight of two groups of people—wielding various kinds of weapons—intimidatingly marching toward each other. It was evident that they were about to engage in a group fight...!

Upon seeing how bad the situation was, the stall owners and customers immediately began packing up to flee, not wanting to get dragged into their fight.

Even the old couple and their daughter were panicking, and they were already halfway through packing their stall up by the time Gerald and Raine turned back to look at them.

Raising a slight brow, Gerald was prompted to ask, “Who are those people, boss?”

Hearing that, the old woman hastily replied, “They’re this area’s gangsters, and once they start fighting, they don’t care about anyone else’s lives! Just so you know, some people got dragged into their mess the last time something like this happened, so you’d better run while you can! Keep the money and consider it to be our treat!”

Naturally, Gerald was surprised to hear that. To think that these gangsters would actually duke it out in such a public area!

Regardless, though the family of three were able to finish packing and were already leaving with their cart, they had barely been able to take a few steps when the hooligans began fighting!

As the old lady had said, these people really didn’t seem to care about the wellbeing of others once they started fighting. After all, they were extremely fierce and fought like there was no tomorrow...

With ‘crashing’ and ‘clanging’ all over the place, it truly was a chaotic sight to behold...

All of a sudden, Gerald and Raine watched as a hulking and intimidating-looking bald man—who seemed to be one of the group leaders—ran over to the old couple’s stall and grabbed a ladle before rushing back to face the opposing group!

Of course, the family of three did nothing to stop him. After all, they were frightened stiff!

At that moment, something incredibly fast bolted past everyone’s view... and a split second later, the

bald man gave out a pained cry!

Upon closer inspection, his arm seemed to have been jabbed by a toothpick of all things!

With blood starting to gush out from the wound, everyone could only stare, stupefied.

While they now knew what the weapon had been, nobody knew who had tossed the toothpick.

Just as they were wondering about that, Gerald stood up before casually yelling, “Hey, now! If you b\*stards want to fight so much, why not find someplace a little more vacant? Choosing such a public place to have a group fight... What’ll happen if you harm others? Huh?”

Upon hearing that, the bald man and his gang members instantly fixed their gazes onto Gerald. To think that this person would actually dare to confront them at a time like this!

Even those from the opposing faction were now looking over, both groups momentarily too stupefied to resume their fight...

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Chapter 1956

Hell, the gangsters weren’t even the only ones shocked. The spectators all had their jaws dropped as

well!

Was Gerald that keen on dying? Why was he meddling in their fight for no good reason?!

While even Raine was shocked silent, she couldn't help but feel that Gerald truly was a good person. After all, everyone else had treated the scene indifferently, none of them daring to even take a step forward to stop those hooligans...

Then again, they couldn't really be blamed. After all, that bald man and the other gangsters were extremely dangerous and intimidating. Nobody wanted to get into their bad books...

Whatever the case was, Gerald wasn't the least afraid of them. After all, they were nothing but ants to him.

Besides, Gerald enjoyed helping others, so who better than him to be a white knight in such a situation?

What more, he wanted to use this opportunity to help out that nice family of three who had even exempted him from his bill. He simply considered this to be his own way of thanking them.

Regardless, before the bald man could even say a word, a youth sporting a ducktail hairstyle walked forward and pointed at Gerald as he retorted, "Hey now, who the hell even are you to meddle in our business?!"

Following that, the youth continued walking closer to Gerald. However, before the boy could even touch him, Gerald had already grabbed onto his finger...

And with a sickening 'snap' it became clear as day what had just happened.

Instantly bending over, the youth quickly scrunched his face, not wanting to scream in agony. After all, having one's finger broken off like that definitely brought unbearable pain...!

Before the youth could even get back up, Gerald simply kicked him right in the stomach, sending him flying...!

Staring wide-eyed at the boy who couldn't even crawl back up due to all the pain he was in, the bald man immediately roared, "Get him!"

Hearing that, all his subordinates immediately began bolting toward Gerald!

Of course, Gerald remained cool as a cucumber as they got dangerously close... And in less than a minute, none of the subordinates were left standing...

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Chapter 1957

Staring wide-eyed, the bald man was left completely stupefied when he saw the terrible state all his men were in. Many of them appeared to have broken limbs, and with how agonizing their cries were, it was evident that none of them were going to be able to continue fighting...

Gerald himself simply began walking up to the bald man whose legs were already trembling in fear. If it wasn't clear enough already, Gerald saw no need to be merciful to such people.

Gulping as though the god of death was swiftly approaching him, the bald man began walking backward as he stuttered, “W-what are you planning to do?!”

Hearing that, Gerald simply smiled sinisterly as he disdainfully replied, “Does it matter? Also, are you retreating? What happened to all that courage from before?”

After witnessing Gerald’s terrifying martial arts skills, as if that bald man would still dare to act all arrogant! There was no way he was ever going to be able to win a fight against Gerald! Even so, he knew for a fact that it was now too late for him to retreat!

Just as the bald man was wondering if there truly was no hope of escaping, he suddenly felt an acute pain on his cheek... and the next thing he knew, he was already in agonizing pain as his face kissed the dirt!

With how hard Gerald’s slap had been, several of his teeth had scattered all over the ground and blood was now dripping from his deformed mouth...

Trembling as he looked at Gerald, the bald man immediately began begging, “P-please, sir... Please leave me be...! I know what I did was wrong now...! I won’t ever dare to do such things again...!”

“Oh? So you do know how to beg for mercy!” scoffed Gerald in a frigid tone.

Still, Gerald wasn’t swayed in the slightest. A person like him didn’t deserve to be sympathized on!

“S-sir, I mean it...! I won’t dare to do such things ever again-”

Before the bald man could even finish his sentence, Gerald cut him short by landing a hard kick right on his stomach!

Once the bald man landed quite a distance away, Gerald took the chance to sneer, "If you dare gather like this just to engage in group fights again, I'll make sure I beat all of you up once more! In fact, I'll teach you a lesson every time I hear someone complain about you bullying random civilians or taking their things, regardless of whether it was by accident or not! You hear me?!"

Immediately crawling to their feet and nodding in response, the bald man and his subordinates immediately nodded before limping away. Even the other group of gangsters fled the second they could! What contemptuous individuals...

Regardless, now that they were gone, a loud round of applause could instantly be heard. Naturally, the people were clapping for Gerald for being such an impressive individual.

Gerald himself simply waved his hands humbly before returning to the family of three.

Smiling as he looked at the old woman, Gerald then said, "Don't worry, it's fine now. They won't ever dare to return here anymore!"

"T-thank you so much...!" cried out the old woman in a gratuitous tone...

Had Gerald not stepped in earlier, who knows what would've become of their stall or family? With that in mind, all three of them saw Gerald as their benefactor, and they were so grateful to him that they had to actively fight the urge to kneel before the youth!

Simply chuckling in response, Gerald then replied, “You’re very welcome! Speaking of which, we’re not quite full yet, so please roast more food for us!”

Upon hearing that, the woman was momentarily stunned though she quickly recovered and nodded before saying, “O-of course! You can eat whatever you want today! Everything’s on the house, just for you two!”

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With that said, Gerald then returned to his seat as the old couple and their daughter began setting up their stall again.

The second Gerald sat down, Raine immediately said in sincere admiration, “You were so awesome earlier, senior!”

Raine, for one, felt that not many could beat up so many people alone and in such a short amount of time, no less.

Laughing in response, Gerald simply replied in a humble tone, “That was nothing. Those hooligans were just too weak!”

Of course, Raine knew he was just being modest. After all, those gangsters were definitely far from weak. Even so, they were unable to even lift a finger against Gerald! Then again, it wasn’t all that surprising. After all, even Yash—a Taekwondo expert—had been unable to take on Gerald!

Regardless, it was about ten minutes later when the old woman served a massive plate of food before



Gerald and Raine...

Smiling as she looked at the duo, the old woman then said, "Order up! Freshly roasted, just for the two of you! Again, if this isn't enough, just give me a call and I'll roast up another plate for you!"

"We'll keep that in mind! Thank you, boss!" replied both Gerald and Raine at the same time.

"Oh please, we should be the ones thanking you! After all, we could've gotten into serious trouble had you not stepped in earlier!" said the old woman as she waved her hand slightly before leaving Gerald and Raine to give them room to enjoy their food...

As time went on, the duo realized that more and more people seemed to come over to have their meals in the old couples' stall. It seemed that the incident truly was a positive turning point in the couples' business luck.

Either way, it was around eleven that night when Gerald and Raine finally finished their meals.

With that, Gerald walked up to the old woman before asking, "How much was all that, boss?"

"...Huh? I told you, it's on the house! After all, you helped us so much tonight! There's simply no way I could take your money!" replied the old woman.

Even so, there was no way she was ever going to be able to persuade Gerald against it. After all, Gerald knew for a fact that the family of three didn't have it easy. What more, he and Raine had eaten quite a bit tonight, and the ingredient costs probably weren't cheap. With that in mind, he was going to pay her no matter what!

“Boss, I know how hard it is for you to make a living, so please accept the money! Otherwise, I’m afraid I wouldn’t dare return here to eat next time!” said Gerald as he fished out several ten-dollar bills from his wallet and gently pushed them into her hands.

“He’s right, boss! Just accept the money!” added Raine—who was now standing beside Gerald—, understanding Gerald’s intent.

Hearing that, the woman could only sigh in defeat as she took the money before saying, “...Alright, I’ll take it! Come by anytime and I’ll give both of you discounts!”

Nodding in response, both of them then replied, “But of course we will!”

Smiling happily at their response, the old woman then watched as Gerald and Raine finally left the area...

As she was about to get back to work, the old woman couldn’t help but notice that her daughter’s eyes were affixed in the direction of the leaving duo.

Knowing that lovestruck gaze anywhere, the old woman was prompted to say, “...Don’t tell me you have a crush on him, Yusra...”

Her daughter’s name was Yusra Zablocki, and she was in her third year of high school.

Whatever the case was, when she heard her mother say that, the charming Yusra couldn’t help but blush...

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“What on earth are you on about, mom...?” muttered Yusra shyly.

As if her mother would buy her bluff! Shaking her head, the woman then looked at her daughter before saying, “I’m sure I don’t have to remind you that your main focus now should be your studies... Even so, I’m not really against you having relationships with others as long as your partner is nice to you...”

Upon hearing that, Yusra simply nodded. She, for one, was well aware that she already had a crush on Gerald. After all, contrary to all the other men she had previously met, Gerald simply oozed a strong sense of security that put her heart at ease...

Honestly, if the chance presented itself, Yusra truly hoped that she would get to meet Gerald again. She’d be pleased just to be able to talk with him one to one...

‘I wonder if such a chance would actually present itself though...’ Yusra thought to herself...

Moving back to Gerald, after sending Raine back to her villa, he returned to his own.

Since it was already rather late, both Natallie and Earla had already hit the hay. With that in mind, Gerald grabbed a bottle of wine and sat in the living room alone, sipping red wine late into the peace of night...

Despite being the last to head to bed, Gerald was first to wake.

After sending Earla to school, Gerald then began heading off to his group together with Natallie.

As he was driving, Natallie reported, "Chairman Crawford, Chairman Kershaw from the Zachariah Group will apparently be coming over to our group today. Would you like to meet him?"

"The Zachariah Group?" asked Gerald as he raised a slight brow.

"Indeed. He called me stating that he wished to personally apologize to you," explained Natallie.

Hearing that, Gerald recalled the incidents of the previous day... He clearly remembered how Zuri had decided to mess with them at the amusement park, eventually leading to her getting divorced with Zachariah...

Whatever the case was, since Zachariah wanted to apologize to him in person, Gerald figured that it was because he really wanted to keep his group under his name.

With all that in mind, Gerald paused for a moment before eventually saying, "...Well, since he's sincere enough to come over to apologize, sure! I'll meet him!"

Gerald wasn't exactly an inconsiderate person. After all, he knew for a fact that the event yesterday had pretty much nothing to do with him. Zacharia's wife had been the true troublemaker. Understanding that, Gerald wasn't about to make things overly difficult for the man...

Regardless, it was about half an hour later when the duo finally arrived at the Yonjour Group building...

Before entering the building, they were both greeted by the sight of a black car that had been parked close to the building's entrance. Of course, the car belonged to none other than Zachariah...

Upon realizing that Gerald and Natallie were here, Zachariah immediately got out of his car before

respectfully greeting, “Chairman Crawford...!”

Smiling as he looked at the man, Gerald then replied in a playful tone, “So we meet again, Chairman Kershaw!”

Hearing that, Zachariah couldn’t help but blush slightly in embarrassment. After all, Zuri had brought nothing but shame to him due to her actions... Thank god he finally divorced her... He had made sure to do it immediately as well. After all, he wouldn’t dare prolong the divorce after promising Gerald—of all people—to do so.

Shaking his head, Zachariah then looked at Gerald with determined eyes as he said, “I truly apologize for yesterday, Chairman Crawford! Just so you know, I’ve divorced Zuri, just as you told me to!”

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Smiling subtly in response, Gerald then said, “Let’s have a chat upstairs...”

Watching as Gerald began walking forward, Zachariah and Natallie quickly followed his lead...

After heading upstairs, the trio soon found themselves in Gerald’s office...

Upon entering, Gerald signaled for Zakariah to take a seat as he said, “Do have a seat first, Chairman Kershaw. Natallie, please serve our guest some tea!”

“Copy that, Chairman Crawford!” replied Natallie with a nod before leaving the room...

Now that they were alone, Gerald cleared his throat before saying, “First of, there’s no need to apologize, Chairman Kershaw. After all, yesterday’s incident had nothing to do with you.”

Hearing that, Zachariah was momentarily stunned. After all, he had no idea what had prompted Gerald to say that.

Starting to panic, Zakariah then said, “C-chairman Crawford... What do you-”

Seeing how panicked the man was, Gerald couldn’t help but laugh, cutting Zachariah’s sentence short.

Looking at the terrified man, Gerald then replied with a smile, “There’s no need to be so nervous, Chairman Kershaw. There’s no hidden meaning behind my words...”

Once he heard that, Zachariah found himself breathing much easier.

Gerald himself could now tell just how much Zachariah feared the thought of his group getting acquired by the Yonjour Group.

Truth be told, Gerald wasn’t even interested in acquiring Zachariah’s group. After all, though the Zachariah Group was incomparable with the Yonjour Group, it was still one of the best leading groups in Schywater City. What more, that group also made several contributions to charity, which gave Gerald even less reason to buy the group off Zachariah.

With that in mind, instead of talking about yesterday’s incident—which wasn’t even Zachariah’s fault—, Gerald wanted to talk about something else.

“Now then, since you’ve calmed down, do hear out my proposal, Chairman Kershaw... I understand that you’re an excellent entrepreneur. After all, you established your group from the ground up! With that in mind, I hope that your group will be willing to cooperate with mine,” explained Gerald who had honestly been thinking about this the second Zuri mentioned Zachariah’s name the day before.

Regardless, upon hearing that, Zachariah instantly expressed a clear look of incredulity! After all, he could’ve never imagined that Gerald would actually ask him to cooperate with the Yonjour Group instead of simply obtaining the Zachariah Group. As it turned out, he really had been overthinking!

Still, that didn’t make him feel any less surprised. With that in mind, Zachariah gulped before asking, “D-do you really mean it, Chairman Crawford...? Are you truly willing to cooperate with my group...?”

“As if I’d joke about something like this!” replied Gerald as he nodded with a smile.

“W-what wonderful news, Chairman Crawford...! I’ve always wanted to cooperate with you!” exclaimed the increasingly excited Zachariah.

For Gerald to actually initiate a talk about cooperating with his group... This was certainly something to be proud of!

“Glad to hear that! Regardless, may I know what aspect your group mainly deals with now?” asked Gerald.

“Ah, well, my group mainly deals with construction—both local and regional—and we’re also involved in the real estate scene!” replied Zachariah who was already thinking about the future of his group.

Being able to cooperate with Gerald's group was definitely going to be his best chance of developing the Zachariah Group.

"I see... What's the biggest project you currently have, Chairman Kershaw?" asked Gerald after nodding.

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Since they were going to collaborate, Gerald was definitely going after the biggest project. After all, what was the point if he didn't?

Hearing that, Zachariah then replied, "You're in luck, Chairman Crawford. I currently have a very good project regarding the development and construction around Schywater City's sea area."

Finding what Zachariah said interesting, Gerald then asked, "Could you perhaps be talking about the development of the commercial area around the city's sea area?"

Nodding in response, Zachariah smiled before replying, "That's the one. I see you've heard about the project, Chairman Crawford!"

"I won't deny that I've been keeping an eye on that place. Hmm... Why don't we do it this way, Chairman Kershaw? For that particular area, I'm planning to have my group participate by occupying a great share and carrying out the construction with your group. With that said, I think it's only fair that all the conditions and designs related to the construction should be handled by the Yonjour Group. What do you think?" asked Gerald after a slight pause.

Though he was momentarily startled to hear that, after snapping out of it, Zachariah immediately said, "Not a problem, Chairman Crawford. I already find it a great honor that you're willing to cooperate with me in the first place! Regardless, I'll be leaving everything to the Yonjour Group then!"



After recovering from his genuine shock earlier, Zachariah—for one—knew better than to negotiate any further with Gerald. After all, it would be bad if he somehow got on Gerald's bad side and ended up losing the chance to cooperate.

In the world of business, knowing how and when to act was crucial. If one didn't grab the opportunity when it appeared, failure would be the only option left...

It was at that moment when Natallie entered the room with Zacharia's tea.

Upon seeing her, Gerald immediately ordered, "Ah, there you are, Natallie. Go draft up a contract for a collaboration and show it to me later."

"Got it, Chairman Crawford," replied Natallie before leaving the room.

Once she was gone, Zachariah couldn't help but ask, "You seem particularly interested in that area, Chairman Crawford... How exactly are you planning to build it?"

The commercial area around Schywater City's sea area was a large and completely new area that was currently under construction. With the area's size in mind, it made many question how to even go about building the area up.

In fact, though it was the Zachariah Group's project, even Zachariah had been wondering how to properly navigate through the project. To think that after being vexed out of his mind—about the project—for so long, Gerald would suddenly come up with the idea of collaborating on that specific project! It truly was something to celebrate about...

After all, the funds needed for the project alone cost nearly a whopping one billion and five hundred million dollars! Even with how rich the Zachariah Group was, it was near impossible for them to take on such a large project alone. Truth be told, Zachariah had already been thinking of collaborating with several other groups—during the later stages—to have the percentage allotment.

Now that the Yonjour Group was stepping in, however, Zachariah knew that their two groups would be more than enough to take on the project. Better yet, it also meant that the project would be exclusively owned by only the Yonjour and Zachariah Groups!

As for Gerald, a billion and five hundred million dollars was nothing to him...

Regardless, it was a little over an hour later when Natallie returned with a contract.

Handing it to Gerald, she then said, "I've drafted up the contract, Chairman Crawford. Do have a look at it."

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"Thank you, Natallie," replied Gerald in an appreciative tone as Natallie smiled back before leaving.

Following that, Gerald began looking through the contract... and once he was done, he handed it to Zachariah.

"Do have a look at the contract, Chairman Kershaw, and tell me if there's anything you find dissatisfactory. I'm open to further conditions or requests as well, if you have any. Since we're collaborating, this project should benefit both our groups," said Gerald in a calm manner.

Gerald, for one, knew that in order for the collaboration to work, he needed to show his sincerity and respect to Zachariah instead of simply putting up an aggressive front. After all, at the end of the day, Zachariah wasn't exactly a small fry. He was a chairman as well, and that earned him the right to have Gerald treat him with respect.

Either way, after carefully reading through the contract, Zachariah nodded before replying, "I see no problem with the contract, Chairman Crawford!"

"I see. Then let's get it signed then!" said Gerald with a nod as both of them got their pens and signed their names on it...

With that done, their collaboration was now official.

Respectfully reaching his hand out for a handshake, Zachariah then declared, "I hope for a great collaboration between us, Chairman Crawford!"

Shaking Zachariah's hand, Gerald politely replied, "But of course! Well said, Chairman Kershaw!"

"Well then... If there isn't anything else, I'll be taking my leave first, Chairman Crawford. If you face any problems, feel free to contact me anytime!" said Zachariah as he got up to leave.

Once he was gone, Natallie walked in before asking in slight bewilderment, "Chairman Crawford... I may be stepping a little out of line, but what made you take the initiative to cooperate with the Zachariah Group...?"

After all, for Natallie, the Yonjour Group could easily have taken on the project without the Zachariah Group's help. Due to the collaboration, they now had to share the profits with the Zachariah Group, which was why Natallie found Gerald's actions to be so confusing.

"You're probably thinking why we have to share the profits with the Zachariah Group instead of just taking the project for ourselves, right?" replied Gerald, reading Natallie like an open book.

Watching as Natallie then nodded, Gerald revealed a subtle smile before saying, "Let's just say I did it to gain an ally. After all, if we keep making enemies, it'll be sure to backfire against us someday... Besides, Zuri was the one who had caused us all that trouble yesterday, not Zachariah."

"You could say that I'm returning good for evil. Through this collaboration, I'll be able to win him over, allowing him to cooperate with us in a sincere way. In the long term, that benefit will surely stick. While we could surely benefit immediately by taking the project all for ourselves, doing so will only cause us to lose a lot more things in the long run."

After hearing Gerald's explanation, Natallie simply nodded in response...

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Shortly after, Natallie then walked out of the office, leaving Gerald all alone in there...

Looking up, Gerald couldn't help but smile faintly, thinking about how much faster his properties were going to develop now. Before long, everything was going to belong to him... Once that happened, he would establish a new business empire for the Crawford Family, and that was his current major goal...

Ever since his family fell into decline, everything that his family used to own ceased to exist. Due to that, Gerald wanted to reclaim everything that had once belonged to his family...

Fast forward to nighttime, Gerald could be seen entering his study in his villa...

Taking a dust-covered box off a high shelf, Gerald couldn't help but stare at it for a while.

He had brought the box back from his family's old home, and it had remained unopened till this very day. As for why he brought it here, he simply wanted to keep it safe. After all, nobody else knew that the box was here since Gerald had been particularly secretive with it.

Regardless, the box contained items belonging to his 'grandfather', and he figured that he had put off opening it for a bit too long. It was finally time to see its contents...

After hesitating slightly, Gerald brushed the dust off the box before carefully removing its lid... and within, he saw an ancient-looking notebook.

Since the box was rather huge, Gerald couldn't help but raise a slight brow in his confusion. Why was such a large box used to keep this ancient-looking notebook...?

Then again, his 'grandfather' didn't do things without a reason. The notebook was definitely something extraordinary since that old man kept it this way. What secrets did it hold...?

Taking the tattered notebook out, Gerald then gently placed it on a table and began carefully flipping through it...

With its cover all deteriorated and the papers inside all frayed and yellow, Gerald could safely assume that the notebook had to be at least several decades old. One flip too hard and the entire notebook could easily crumble to pieces...

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Chapter 1964

After carefully continuing to read through the notebook, Gerald soon realized what it was used for.

As it turned out, his grandfather had used the notebook to record everything that had happened ever since the Crawford family was established. It even included the establishment of the other Crawford family!

Reading on, Gerald couldn't help but grit his teeth when he remembered that his family had been mere puppets, pawns to be manipulated by his grandfather...

In the end, neither of the Crawfords continued to exist...

Everything belonged to Gerald now.

Shaking the thought off, Gerald then continued flipping through the notebook... and it wasn't long after before his eyes widened as he muttered, "...The... Crawford Inheritance Power...! This...!"

Deeply interested in the matter, Gerald immediately began carefully reading through that specific page.

The Crawford Inheritance Power was a secret that his family had kept well-hidden for hundreds of years, and the power itself could only be obtained by someone who was part of the Crawford family bloodline.

As Gerald came to learn, even if that condition was met, it didn't make the power of inheritance easy to obtain. After all, the power existed only in a far-off land known as the Autremonde Realm...

So there was another world called the Autremonde Realm... Thinking about other worlds, Gerald couldn't help but reminisce about the time when he had been in the Leicom Continent, though he quickly shook the thoughts off.

Whatever the case was, the important thing to note was that the Crawford Inheritance Power was located in the Autremonde Realm.

Thinking about it, Gerald wondered if he could make a breakthrough in his strength if he obtained that Aeyegana. If that was the case, then he would truly become the most powerful person within the cultivation realm...

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Chapter 1965

As he thought about that, Gerald eventually shook his head before continuing to read, wondering if there were any records of how to enter the Autremonde Realm...

Thankfully, the exact method of getting to that place was written just a few lines below.

As it turned out, the only way to get there was by locating a well-hidden stone monument at the peak of Mount Kenloux. Even after finding it, only after chanting a specific spell could one get the portal to the Autremonde Realm to open...

The spell itself was a rare one, and only five people have ever been known to have learned it... Naturally,

Gerald's 'grandfather' had been one of them.

Reading on, Gerald found out that three of them—excluding his 'grandfather'—had already died some seventy years ago, which meant that only one remained alive till this very day...

That person apparently went by the name of Christos Hamilton, but as Gerald would come to learn, he had already left Dragonott and moved to Rico for quite a while now...

Even so, Gerald knew that he had to find that man if he ever wanted to obtain the Crawford Inheritance Power in the Autremonde Realm.

Still, Christos should already be nearing a hundred years old by now... Why did he suddenly choose to move to Rico of all places...? Was he trying to avoid something...?

It was a mystery that Gerald was equally as keen on solving...

Whatever the case was, Gerald then fished his mobile phone out and began calling Natallie...

Once she picked up, he immediately said, "Natallie? Book me a flight to Rico, pronto!"

Following that, things went rather smoothly, and it wasn't too long before Gerald was all packed and ready to go to Rico. Naturally, he made sure he had his notebook with him at all times.



While reading through it again, he found that Christos's home address—in Rico—had been jotted down in it, most possibly by the last person who had come looking for the man. Even so, Gerald really wasn't sure if his grandfather was the one who had written it there.

Regardless, everything would be made clear once he arrived in Rico...

On that very same day, Gerald boarded a plane straight to Rico, and after eleven hours, he took his first step into the foreign country...

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Following the address in the notebook, Gerald soon came across a grocery store...

To his surprise, however, the store looked like it had been out of business for years. Even the store's door was tightly closed!

Unsure how to even react to this, Gerald then began knocking on the store's door... but even after a few knocks, not a sound could be heard coming from inside...

There went his hopes that someone was living inside...

Just as Gerald was about to dejectedly leave, he suddenly heard the creaking of an opening door...!

Turning around, Gerald was quick to realize that nobody was standing at the door!

Though he momentarily froze, Gerald wasted no time and quickly entered the grocery store...

It was pitch black inside and strong musty smells emanated from every corner of the store... This place really needed a good cleaning...

Sensing that nobody was going to greet him first, Gerald took the initiative to declare, "Senior Christos Hamilton? Are you there? I'm a descendant of the Crawford family!"

"Come in!" replied a gruff voice from deeper inside the store.

Upon hearing that, Gerald was delighted. As it turned out, he really had found the right place!

With that, he quickly made his way to the room where the voice originated from... and upon arriving at the room's entrance, he was greeted by the sight of several beer bottles scattered around a seated old man who looked like he desperately needed a shower...

The entire room reeked of alcohol, and Gerald couldn't help but shiver slightly as he stared at the messy-haired old man...

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Truth be told, Gerald couldn't believe that the person before him was the actual Christos Hamilton...

After all, according to the notebook, Christos was once one of the top figures in the cultivation world. In fact, he was probably even stronger than his 'grandfather'!

How did such a powerful figure end up in such a state...?

Whatever the case was, Gerald cleared his throat before warily asking, "...I... take it that you're Senior Christos...?"

Hearing that, Christos then slowly raised his head to look at Gerald... Gerald himself wasn't able to get a clear look at the old man's facial features since his messy hair covered over half of his face...

"...A descendant of the Crawfords you say... Tell me, who is Daryl Bodach to you?" asked Christos in a calm tone.

"Daryl... Bodach?" muttered the momentarily confused Gerald, though he quickly realized that Christos was probably talking about his 'grandfather'.

To think that his 'grandfather' had chosen such a name for himself...

"He's my grandfather!" replied Gerald rather unwillingly.

He didn't really like calling that old b\*stard his grandfather anymore, but what other choice did he have if he wanted to get more information about the Autremonde Realm from Christos?

“Hah! He’s your grandfather you say? Daryl has had many children and grandchildren! Why are you the only one who’s come looking for me after all these years? Cut the cr\*p and just tell me what you’re really here for!” scoffed Christos in a disdainful tone.

From the looks of it, Christos really hated Daryl...

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“...Well, for one, my grandfather has died, and the Crawford family no longer exists... With that in mind, I should note that I’m here on my own behalf and not on behalf of my family. As for why I’m here, I’d like to ask you something... Is it true that you know how to access the Autremonde Realm...?” asked Gerald.

Upon hearing that, Christos momentarily went silent. Staring at Gerald for a while, the old man then asked in a cold tone, “...So what if I do?”

“Well, if you do, I’d like to learn more about that place. As for how I found out about the Autremonde Realm in the first place, I learned of its existence after reading about the realm in an old family notebook. The notebook also stated that you’ve been there before!” replied Gerald.

“...Look, I’m sorry but I can’t tell you anything about that place! If there’s nothing else, then just leave already!” yelled Christos, firmly denying any form of help.

Hearing that, Gerald felt rather helpless. Even so, he could tell that Christos must have experienced something bad there... Why else would he be so against talking about the Autremonde Realm?

Still, Gerald knew for a fact that forcing the old man to talk wouldn't do him any good.

With that in mind, since he already knew that doing things the hard way wouldn't get him anywhere, he may as well try using the soft way.

Following that thought, Gerald then left the grocery store... Though he returned soon after with several cans of beer as well as some food.

Hopefully, this would show Christos how sincere he was...

Fingers crossed that the old man would finally be willing to open up a little, Gerald then placed the beer and food before Christos.

Opening one of the beer cans and handing it to the old man, Gerald then said, "I know how powerful you are, senior Christos. With that in mind, I respect you a lot. Do have some beer and food and I hope you'll be willing to at least have a talk with me after that!"

With so many beer bottles lying around, it wasn't hard for Gerald to guess that the old man was pretty fond of drinking. It was probably to help Christos ease his pains...

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Staring at Gerald for a good minute, Christos eventually sighed before taking the beer can that Gerald had handed out to him.

After a few sips, Christos was prompted to say, "...You're very different from Daryl, you know that? You don't look or feel like his grandson at all! Regardless, despite the fact that he's been a calculative person his entire life, it seems that even that couldn't help him escape death!"

Sensing how greatly biased Christos was toward his 'grandfather', Gerald decided to change the topic by asking, "Senior Christos, could... you tell me what you know about the Autremonde Realm...? What kind of place is it...?"

Seemingly already expecting that question to come up again, Christos simply sighed as he replied, "Kid, be frank and tell me why you're so curious about the Autremonde Realm... You can't seriously be thinking of heading there, can you...?"

"That I am, senior Christos! After all, I want to obtain the Crawford Inheritance Power!" declared Gerald, no longer beating around the bush.

"So you really are after that power... You're similar to Daryl in this aspect. After all, he wanted to obtain the inheritance power as well. Regardless, I'll say it right now that the Autremonde Realm isn't as simple as you think it is! It's a place that we humans can't ever reach!" replied Christos, sounding increasingly agitated with each passing word...

Raising a slight brow, Gerald was prompted to ask, "...And why is that...?"

"You said you know how strong I am, right? Well, despite that fact, I almost lost my life there! What more, most of my face got destroyed while I was in the Autremonde Realm!"

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Chapter 1970

After saying that, Christos sighed before moving his hair to the side, revealing his completely burned face...

Save for the narrow slits of his eyes and a tremendously misshapen nose and mouth, everything else was completely charred.

Naturally, this left Gerald shocked. After all, even such a powerful person like Christos ended up getting such terrible injuries in the Autremonde Realm... It seemed that that place truly was extremely dangerous...

Regardless, Christos then added in a serious tone, "Again, I advise you against getting any further information about the Autremonde Realm. Just forget about the inheritance power and live your life well... Otherwise, you'll just end up like me!"

While Gerald knew Christos meant well, he was naturally not going to do as the old man said.

With that, Gerald then knelt before Christos before respectfully pleading, "I understand that you care for my well being, senior Christos... However, I insist that I go there, and in order to do so, I hope you'll help me unlock the stone monument so that I can head to the Autremonde Realm!"

Upon hearing that, Christos could only sigh helplessly.

"...While you don't resemble Daryl, I see you've inherited his stubbornness... Well, since you're so insistent on dying, so be it! Just understand that you're to bear all the consequences of your actions!" said Christos, much to Gerald's delight.

Truth be told, Gerald only needed Christos's help in opening the portal to the Autremonde Realm. Once he was there, he was already expecting to do everything else on his own.

While it was true that he thought that way so that Christos wouldn't have to risk dying again by following him, Gerald was honestly more worried about having to deal with Christos's drinking problems along the way if the old man came along...

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Whatever the case was, it was only seconds later when both Gerald and Christos's expressions turned grave.

Both of them had sensed an immense murderous intent rapidly approaching them from the outside!

"...It seems that you've been followed, kid! You got a lot of enemies or something?" grumbled Christos.

Since Christos had been laying low in here for decades, there was no way the enemy was coming for him. With that in mind, Gerald understood that it only made sense for the murderous people to be after him...

Still, to think that news about him arriving in Rico would spread so quickly... Gerald, for one, hadn't expected others to be coming after him so soon! Had his enemies been observing him this entire time...?

Regardless, Gerald could only lower his head in embarrassment as he said, "I apologize for the trouble, senior Christos...! Allow me to deal with them first!"



Following that, he walked out the grocery store and stood by the door...

By this point, night had already fallen and it was quite dark. Adding that to the fact that not a single soul could be seen walking the streets, the scene was undoubtedly creepy...

It almost felt like danger lurked in every corner...

A split second after Gerald had that thought, several knives began flying toward him!

While Gerald was able to dodge all of them—resulting in the knives getting embedded into the door behind him—, it was too dark to see his assailants.

However, it didn't take long before a few murderous-looking men—all of them donning black suits—emerged from the shadows!

All of them had longswords in hand, and they quickly surrounded the youth...

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Chapter 1972

While the armed men weren't exactly weak, to Gerald, they were nowhere close to being his opponents.

Before anyone—including Gerald—could make a move, however, a blurry figure suddenly bolted out of the grocery store!

Stopping right in front of Gerald, the figure then released a powerful shockwave from his palm, sending all the men in black flying!

By the time they landed, all of them were already dead!

Of course, the one who had done the deed was none other than Christos, and his power was certainly a surprise to Gerald. Then again, Gerald was more startled by the fact that Christos had helped him take those men out in the first place.

Whatever the case was, Christos then looked at Gerald rather disdainfully before saying, "Hey, why are you even wasting time with those morons? You said you needed my help to head to the Autremonde Realm, no? Let's get going then!"

Upon hearing that, Gerald was rightfully embarrassed. After all, while he could've taken those men out just as easily, he hadn't done so immediately just as Christos had...

Regardless, since Christos had dealt with them, he had one less thing to bother about...

Still, Gerald had to hand it to that old man. After all, he still maintained his strength after all these years...

Either way, the two then left for Dragonott...

Once they had boarded their flight, Gerald couldn't help but ask, "Senior Christos... According to the notebook, the stone monument which leads to the Autremonde Realm is located atop Mount Kenloux... Is that true?"

“Bingo. Upon activation, it’ll open a portal to the Autremonde Realm!” replied Christos, prompting Gerald to nod...

Once they got to Dragonott, the duo then got into a car before heading straight for Mount Kenloux...

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Chapter 1973

As the duo made their way to Mount Kenloux, a man dressed fully in black could be seen kneeling in the middle of a room located on the far end of Dragonott.

The man himself was kneeling before another robed man who had a scepter of sorts in hand...

Shortly after, the kneeling man then quickly reported, “From what we’ve heard, Gerald has already left Rico and is now back in Dragonott, chief! Apparently, he’s already well on his way to Mount Kenloux!”

Upon hearing that, the robed man then asked in a frigid tone, “...Mount Kenloux? Why on earth is he headed there?”

“We can’t say for sure yet, but we do have something else that’s noteworthy! There’s an extremely powerful man with Gerald now, and all our men—who were sent out to attack Gerald—were killed in a single attack by that person!” said the kneeling man while shaking his head.

Hearing that, the robed man then snorted before scoffing, “What are you up to this time, Gerald... No

matter. Get me a car now! I'm heading to Mount Kenloux!"

"Loud and clear!" replied the man in black before getting to his feet and walking out the hall...

Moving back to Gerald and Christos, it wasn't long before they both arrived at the foot of the mountain...

Seeing no reason not to start scaling it immediately, the duo did just that.

It took them about three hours, but they eventually arrived at the mountain peak...

Looking around, Gerald soon saw a greenish-white stone monument at the highest point of the mountain... It looked just as Christos and the notebook had described it...

Upon closer inspection, several patterns and undecipherable words seemed to have been carved into the stone monument...

Either way, Christos wasn't about to waste his time waiting for Gerald to finish inspecting the place. With that in mind, he went straight to the point and said, "Here we are, kid. The stone monument that'll get you to the Autremonde Realm... Are you ready?"

"I am, senior Christos! Let's begin!"

Chapter 1974

Watching as Gerald then nodded confidently, Christos began walking over to the stone monument before placing his hand onto it...

As he began chanting a spell, the stone monument quickly began emitting a gentle glow... However, the longer he chanted, the brighter the glow became, until eventually, the entire mountain peak was as bright as a beacon!

Watching wide-eyed as a portal began forming, Gerald snapped out from his amazement when he heard Christos call out, "Everything that happens from this point on will fully be on you, kid! My help ends here, got that?!"

With how serious Christos's tone was, Gerald nodded respectfully before replying, "Loud and clear! Thank you for all your help, senior Christos!"

Following that, Gerald then ran into the portal... and the second he went through it, the portal vanished into thin air!

Rest assured that Gerald had safely made it past the portal, Christos then began descending the mountain through a well-hidden footpath...

His job here was done, and as he had said time and again, it was now all up to Gerald whether he succeeded or not...

Whatever the case was, shortly after Christos left, the robed man arrived at the scene with a few of his men...

Though they immediately began scouring the mountain top, they eventually realized that Gerald was nowhere to be found.

Due to their lack of clues as to where Gerald had gone to, one of the subordinates proposed, "...Chief, remember that beam of light we saw from the foot of the mountain earlier...? It disappeared shortly after and so did Gerald... Do you think...?"

"...Indeed. I don't like how fishy this area is... Regardless, go find that man who came here with Gerald! He should know what happened!" ordered the robed man, his expression grim...

Naturally, Gerald had no idea that all this was happening, and he simply continued walking until eventually, the light from the passage—that had been part of the portal—subsided... Leaving Gerald staring wide-eyed at the sight before him.

From the looks of it, he had successfully entered the Autremonde Realm, and the other end of the portal had led him to a stream in some sort of valley...

Regardless, what truly amazed him was how beautiful the nature in this world looked. From the thriving greenery on the mountains and the crystal-clear water in the stream, this place looked absolutely picturesque...

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To think that his first impression—upon entering the Autremonde Realm—would be how lovely this place's near-pristine nature appeared...

While he would've certainly liked to enjoy the view for a bit longer, Gerald knew he had more important things to do.

With that in mind, he left the stream and began walking till he eventually came across a town of sorts...

Just as he was about to enter the town, however, the familiar glint of a blade's reflection caught his eye.

Realizing that it had come from the nearby jungle, Gerald raised a slight brow before sneaking over to investigate...

Shortly after, he was greeted by the sight of a woman—wearing purple clothes—getting attacked by five men who were dressed wholly in white.

Naturally, this made Gerald incredibly angry. After all, how could so many men go up against a single woman! Had they no dignity?!

Whatever the case was, though the woman—who had a longsword in hand—was clearly outnumbered, Gerald was honestly surprised that she was able to fend the men off quite efficiently. He had to admit that she was quite powerful...

Even so, in the end, there was strength in numbers, and the lady in purple eventually found herself falling to the ground, her sword flung to the side as she coughed out a mouthful of blood...

Snickering when he saw that, one of the five men then walked up to the injured woman before scoffing with a wicked smile on his face, "You're dying by my hand today, Zianne Landis! Since you're going to perish soon anyway, allow me to savor your warm and soft body first!"

"Don't even dare, Johnny Babbs! You're not having your way even if I am to die!" growled Zianne as she glared at the sadistic man.

Hearing that, Johnny simply laughed loudly before sneering, "Oh please, as if you're in any position to say that! Men, grab her! Once I'm done with her body, you'll each have your turns before we kill her!"

Grinning lustfully when they heard that, the four men then began encircling Zianne, inching closer to her with every step...

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With her immense beauty and voluptuous body, most men would grow lustful upon seeing her...

As the four men grew uncomfortably close to her, Zianne roared, "If you dare to even lay a finger on me, my master will surely destroy Whitehaar Abbey, you b\*stard!"

"Hah! As if I'm afraid of him! In fact, I wonder if she even dares to come to our abbey!" scoffed Johnny, completely unfazed by the threat.

Following that, the sinister Johnny was just about to reach out to touch her body... When all of a sudden, a dagger flew out from the bushes and pierced right through his wrist!

Instantly screaming in pain, Johnny watched as blood began dripping out his fresh wound...

Before anyone could even register what was happening, Gerald walked out from the bushes, glaring contemptuously at all five of them as he jeered, "Five men against a single woman... Do you even have the right to call yourselves men?!"



“W-who the hell are you?! Meddling with our business... Are you that keen to die?! Men, finish him!”  
roared the pained Johnny as his men immediately rushed toward Gerald with their longswords in hand!

Despite being outnumbered, Gerald barely even looked fazed.

With a single swipe of his hand, all four of them were sent flying...!

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## **Chapter 1976**

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## **Chapter 1977**

Upon seeing that, Johnny's face immediately went pale. To think that Gerald was this powerful... How unexpected!

"...Who the hell are you?! State your name!" growled Johnny as he glared daggers at Gerald.

"As if you even have a right to know my name!" retorted Gerald, a wry smile on his face. As if he'd reveal his identity so easily when he wasn't even from this world!

Hearing that, Johnny couldn't help but feel disappointed. Still, he knew that he and his men were no match against Gerald. Johnny, for one, was well acquainted with the saying, 'A wise man never continues fighting when the odds are clearly against him.'

With that in mind, Johnny then yelled, "Men! Retreat!"

Hearing that, the four men obeyed and quickly fled the scene with Johnny...

Once they were out of sight, Gerald walked toward Zianne, helping her up as he asked in a concerned tone, "Are you alright...?"

Now that he was standing so close to her, Gerald couldn't help but feel that she looked absolutely beautiful... Even so, he knew better than to have feelings for her. After all, he was already married to Mila, and he would never forgive himself if he cheated...

Either way, Gerald snapped out of it when the blushing Zianne shook her head before saying, "I-I'm fine... Regardless, thank you for saving me, young warrior!"

Nodding in response, Gerald then asked, "So... Why did they assault you?"

What was so special about Zianne that made five grown men want her dead...?

"Well... It's because I'm from the Whitehaar Abbey while they're from the Purplefog Abbey! Their abbey hates mine, which is why they attacked me!" explained Zianne.

Upon hearing that, Gerald began realizing just how complicated things actually were in this realm...

After staring at Gerald for a while, Zianne—who found his appearance and clothing to be quite foreign—couldn't help but ask, "Um... If I may, where do you come from, young warrior...? You don't exactly look like you're from around here..."

Hearing that, Gerald was momentarily at a loss, unsure of how to even reply.

After a brief awkward silence, Gerald came up with an idea, prompting him to say, "I'm... uhh... A traveler from a far-off land! I just happened to be passing by when I saw them attacking you, which is why I stepped in! The name's Gerald Crawford!"

"Zianne Landis!" replied the woman, barely even registering that what Gerald had said was a lie...

Realizing that he had managed to dodge a bullet, Gerald breathed a bit easier as he asked, "Either way... Where are you headed off to now, Miss Landis?"

"Oh, I'm going down the mountain to get some supplies in Heavenstar Town. What about you?" replied Zianne.

Chuckling in response, Gerald then said, "What a coincidence! Me too! Let's head there together!"

Since Zianne was the first person he had gotten to know here, following her around would certainly be convenient. At the very least, he wouldn't end up getting lost.

Either way, upon hearing that, Zianne simply replied, "Sure, why not?"

Following that, both of them began heading to Heavenstar Town...

When they finally arrived, Gerald's attire instantly became the talk of the town. After all, not only were they unfamiliar with this person, but his garments were completely different from theirs! The awkwardness of it all made Gerald consider changing his outfit to blend in better with the locals... After all, who was he to be dressed so differently?

## **Chapter 1978**

After telling Zianne about his plight, she immediately got him some new clothes in town...

Thankfully, after putting them on, Gerald no longer looked out of place among the other inhabitants of the Autremonde Realm.

Now that he could blend in with the crowd, Gerald took the chance to ask, "Speaking of which, what specific supplies are you hoping to get here, Miss Landus?"

"Oh, I'm here to get some medicinal herbs for my master!" replied Zianne with a smile.

Watching as Gerald nodded, Zianne went silent for a while before eventually saying, "Actually... Why don't you follow me back once I'm done with this errand, Warrior Crawford? I still need to thank you properly for saving my life earlier! Who knows what those b\*stards would've done to me had you not stepped in!"

While Gerald knew that she was just trying to be appreciative, he couldn't help but ask in a worried tone, "Are... you sure I won't end up being a bother...? And will your master get mad at you for bringing me over...?"

Gerald, for one, knew for a fact that sects didn't really welcome outsiders. With that in mind, he was worried that Zianne would end up getting chastised if he followed her back. If that truly came to be, then Gerald would surely feel immensely guilty...

"Well, while my master does emphasize all the time that we shouldn't bring outsiders into the abbey, you aren't exactly an outsider. After all, you saved me! Due to that, I believe that my

master will understand me bringing you over. Besides, my master always tells us to repay the kindness of others!” replied Zianne in a sincere tone.

Upon hearing that, Gerald went silent for a moment before finally saying, “I see... Well... alright, then. Since you’ve so graciously invited me, I guess I’ll follow you back! I don’t have any place to be today anyway, so I may as well stay overnight in your abbey!”

Hearing that, Zianne could hardly hide the joy on her face. After all, if Zianne was going to be completely honest, she was slightly attracted to Gerald. It was simply the common trope of ‘the beauty falling for the hero’ in play.

Even so, Zianne knew that she and Gerald would never be able to be together. After all, all disciples of the Purplefog Abbey were prohibited from falling in love. Hell, they couldn’t even hold hands with men or they’d end up getting severely punished or even getting expelled!

Whatever the case was, after Zianne bought the medicinal herbs she was looking for—together with Gerald—the duo left the town and headed straight for the Purplefog Abbey...

The Purplefog Abbey itself was located at the peak of the mountain east of Heavenstar Town. As for why the abbey was called that, it was essentially due to the fact that the mountain it was on was always enshrouded in a magnificent-looking purple mist...

Either way, after about half an hour of ascending the mountain’s many steps—under Zianne’s lead—the Purplefog Abbey could be seen in the distance. By this point, Gerald had realized that the entire area looked quite similar to a place on earth called Mount Skygate...

Regardless, as the duo neared the gates of the Purplefog Abbey, two female disciples—who were standing guard there—instantly shouted, “Eldest sister! You’re back!”

After Zianne nodded with a smile, the two girls—who had noticed Gerald’s presence—couldn’t help but ask, “...Um... Eldest sister...? Who’s that...?”

They were rightfully wary since outsiders couldn’t just enter all willy-nilly. What more, this outsider was a man...!

## **Chapter 1979**

Not even waiting for Ziane to reply, the other disciple quickly added, “Have you already forgotten the rules of our sect? Master has told us time and again that we can’t bring outsiders into our abbey, especially men! With that in mind, what you’re currently doing is clearly against the rules, Eldest sister! You’ll definitely be punished if you bring him in!”

As the chief disciple of the Purplefog Abbey, Zianne had a rather high reputation in the sect. What more, she was also an idol to many of the sect's disciples. With that in mind, the two girls were simply stepping in out of concern.

Understanding that they only meant well, Zianne then calmly explained, "He's no outsider... He's my savior! Just so you two know, without his help, I would've surely perished earlier!"

Upon hearing that, the two girls were instantly caught in a dilemma...

Seeing that, Zianne then added, "Don't worry, you two! I'll explain all this to master, and if anything happens, I'll be sure to take full responsibility! You can both be sure that you won't end up getting into trouble!"

Before either of the girls could reply, Zianne was already leading Gerald into the abbey...

Gerald himself couldn't help but feel that things would only continue getting even more awkward after this. With that in mind, he reached out to grab Zianne's wrist—to stop her from going any further—and said, "I... think I'd better leave first... After all, it'll be bad if I cause you any trouble!"

However, the second his hand touched her's, Zianne instantly froze and her cheeks went beet red. After all, ever since she joined the Purplefog Abbey, she had never been touched by a man!

Only seconds later, several yells could suddenly be heard, saying, "Release our Eldest sister!"

"Unhand her, you b\*stard!"

Before the two knew it, they were already surrounded by at least a dozen female disciples!

Since all of them had swords pointing at him, Gerald quickly realized that he had been rude to touch Zianne out of the blue.

Releasing her hand, Gerald then yelled, "I apologize, I didn't mean to do that!"

Finally snapping out of it, Zianne herself ordered, "Lay down your swords!"

"Don't do as she says!" yelled another voice almost immediately after!

Following that, a woman donning the same purple garments as Zianne walked out from the crowd... Unlike Zianne, however, a veil covered her face, so Gerald couldn't see what she looked like.

Either way, the woman then mocked, “So, not only did you bring back medicine, but also a man! Have you forgotten our master’s words?!”

“What slander! As if I would ever forget master’s teachings! You aren’t even giving me room to explain myself!” retorted Zianne.

The daring woman that had just shown herself was known by the name of Yoona Landis. Within the Purplefog Abbey, she was the second most senior sister, and she was also Zianne’s junior.

Even so, she had always been extremely jealous of Zianne, and had tried time and again to drive her out! After all, with Zianne out, she would finally be able to attain the position of chief disciple!

Since Zianne had made such a blunder today, perhaps it was finally Yoona’s chance to achieve her goal!

With that in mind, Yoona then snorted disdainfully before yelling with a smirk, “Hah! Is there even anything to explain? That man held your hand and we all saw it! To think that you’re still trying to argue after all that!”

Raising a slight brow, Gerald finally decided to step in and say, “I have no idea what your relationship is with your Eldest sister, but I assure you that I’m just her friend. Again, if I’m causing all of you more trouble than needed, I’ll just leave!”

## **Chapter 1980**

“Bullsh\*t! Men can’t be trusted and all of them deserve to die! Also, did you honestly think that we’d just allow you to come and go as you pleased?” retorted Yoona as she glared at him while unsheathing her blade!

Leaping forward extremely quickly, Yoona then aimed her blade straight for Gerald’s chest!

Seeing that, Zianne immediately pushed Gerald to the side while yelling, “Careful!”

Naturally, Gerald could’ve easily dodged Yoona’s attack. After all, she was no match for him. Regardless, since he got pushed to the side, he could only watch as Zianne drew her own sword and clashed it with her junior’s!



Following that, a swordfight commenced between the two girls... However, since Zianne had earlier gotten hurt, she ended up falling to the ground when Yoona kicked her in the stomach!

Watching as Zianne covered her stomach in pain, Yoona took the chance to sneer, "Hah! Since when have you become this weak, Eldest sister? I guess having a man has truly made you lose yourself! No matter! I'll teach you a lesson on behalf of master!"

Just as Yoona was about to launch another attack at Zianne, Gerald bolted toward Zianne, picking her sword up and sending an aurablade straight for Yoona!

Due to the immense force, Yoona was sent flying backward, causing the disciples who were right behind her to topple to the ground as well!

As Yoona fell to the group—spitting a mouthful of blood out in the process—, Zianne herself could only stare wide-eyed at Gerald. To think that he had such terrifying power...! No wonder Johnny and his friends couldn't win against him!

Whatever the case was, Gerald then stabbed the blade into the ground before glaring at Yoona as he growled, "What ignorance! To think that you'd dare to fight your Eldest sister even after I've told you time and again that there's nothing between us!"

At that exact moment, a sword suddenly flew out of one of the houses!

Though it came dangerously close to piercing through Gerald, the youth himself simply turned his body, causing the blade to fly right past his eyes!

Once the sword stopped moving—after stabbing through a door that was in its way—, everyone turned to look at the direction the sword had been thrown from...

Watching as a white-haired woman—donning an equally white robe—walked out the house, everyone except for Gerald immediately knelt before calling out, "Master!"

As it turned out, she was Fayth Quenelle, the matriarch of the Purplefog Abbey...

Glaring at Gerald, Fayth yelled in a furious tone, "No man has ever dared to step foot into the Purplefog Abbey... Who are you? And how dare you come over to cause trouble!"

Hearing that, Zianne quickly replied, "I was the one who brought him over, master! I sincerely apologize!"

Turning to glare at Zianne next, Fayth then retorted, "Zianne, are you not my chief disciple? You, of all people, should know the rules of the sect! How could you commit such a grave sin!"

Bowing low, Zianne then replied, "I'm well aware of my mistake, master!"

Before any of them could say anything else, Gerald took the chance to yell, "Hold it! Just you know, if it wasn't for me, your chief disciple would've died by now!"

### **Chapter 1981**

Momentarily stunned to hear that, Fayth quickly snapped out of it before saying, "...Elaborate."

"As she was heading to Heavenstar Town to get medicinal herbs, she was assaulted by a few men from the Whitehaar Abbey! Had I not stepped in to save her, your sect would've surely received a major loss in the form of your chief disciple!" explained Gerald.

Eyes widened, Fayth then turned to look at Zianne before asking, "Does he speak the truth?"

"He does! The assailants were Johnny and four of his Whitehaar Abbey friends! If you need proof, just have a look at the wounds they inflicted on me! Regardless, it was I who invited Warrior Crawford over to show my appreciation for saving me! Even so, I know I've done wrong, so do punish me if you feel the need to!" replied Zianne.

Hearing that, Fayth immediately calmed down before walking over to Zianne and helping her up...

Turning their backs to Gerald, Fayth then slid Zianne's clothes off—up till her shoulders—before realizing that there really was a bruise there. Zianne had been telling the truth!

Now that she realized this, Fayth instantly growled, "I recognize this bruise pattern... It was caused by a Dark Cloud Palm attack, an attack that's exclusively used by those Whitehaar b\*stards!"

Breathing a sigh of relief now that she knew that her master believed her, Zianne took the chance to hand Fayth the medicinal herbs—that she had stored safely in the inner layer of her clothes—before saying, "Speaking of which... here are the herbs you told me to buy, master!"

Nodding in response, Fayth then replied, "Thank you... Regardless, since you've already suffered enough, there won't be any additional punishments! Come with me... and you as well, kind warrior! We'll have a talk inside!"

Fayth, for one, wasn't an unreasonable person, and she made sure to cast apologetic gazes at both Zianne and Gerald.

After hearing what their master had to say, the other disciples immediately began leaving the scene, though a few stayed to help Yoon a up.

Yoon a herself had a bitter expression on her face. To think that Zianne would escape punishment...!

Whatever the case was, Zianne and Gerald were promptly led into their abbey's great hall...

Once inside, Fayth retrieved a bottle of ointment and handed it to Zianne before saying in a caring tone, "Here, this will help treat your wounds. Apply it for a few days and your wounds will be gone in no time!"

"Thank you, master!" replied Zianne almost instantaneously.

With that done, Fayth then gestured for both of them to sit as she asked, "Alright then... Now that that's settled... May I know your name, young warrior?"

"I go by Gerald Crawford!" replied Gerald.

"A fine name... Regardless, I apologize for misunderstanding you earlier, Warrior Crawford! I hope you'll forgive me for that. Also, thank you for saving my eldest disciple today!" said Fayth in an apologetic tone.

"Don't worry about it, Madam. I was only doing what was right. There was just no way I could ignore the fact that five men were attacking a single woman!" replied Gerald rather modestly.

"Speaking of which, could you perhaps be a foreigner...? After all, from your speech patterns and the way you look, you don't seem to be a local... In fact, it feels like you don't even come from our world! I wonder if I'm right about that..." asked Fayth.

"Well... let's just say that I come from a far-off land!" replied Gerald with a chuckle.

"I see... Whatever the case is, I have to admit that your skills are astounding... Could I know who your master is...?" said Fayth who seemed to be trying to investigate further into his background.

After all, how had such a young man attained such a high level of cultivation?

## Chapter 1982

“...About that... My master told me never to reveal his identity to anyone... Due to that, I apologize in advance, Madam!” replied Gerald as he came up with an excuse on the spot.

After all, there was no way he could tell her that he had come from another world, right? Then again, even if he did tell her, she probably wouldn't have believed him...

“I understand... Regardless, Zianne! Lead Warrior Crawford to one of our rooms so that he can take a rest...” instructed Fayth, no longer trying to pry any further.

Hearing that, Zianne quickly nodded before leading Gerald out of the great hall...

Shortly after, the duo arrived at a small house... This was where Gerald was going to stay the night.

This was the first time a man had ever been allowed to stay the night in the abbey, so the Purplefog disciples were understandably surprised by their master's decision. Still, they knew better than to question her, so they simply went on with their day...

After a good night's rest, Gerald got up early to bid farewell to Zianne and Fayth. After all, he still had an important task to do, and he didn't want to waste any more time here.

Besides, he was the sole male in an abbey full of women, and knowing that made him feel increasingly awkward the longer he stayed there.

Whatever the case was, after leaving the abbey, Gerald soon came across a town known as Heavencloud Town...

It was around then that he realized that he had one major issue. He didn't have any local currency! All he had on him was money that could only be used on earth and a dead phone that was as functional as a brick now... How annoying!

Still, he did recall Zianne paying—for his clothes—yesterday with some blue stones...

Those holy stones were probably this realm's form of currency. But where could he get them? Without any, he couldn't even buy himself breakfast!

Just as Gerald was wondering how to get around this issue, the corner of his eye noticed a thin man—who seemed to be muttering every profanity in the book—getting dragged into an alley by three other men.

This was his ticket to breakfast!

Quickly heading to the alley, Gerald saw that the thin man was already getting beaten up by the trio!

Immediately stepping into the alley, Gerald then shouted, "Halt!"

Hearing that, the men then turned around... But when they saw Gerald, they didn't look afraid at all. In fact, they had scowls on their faces as they yelled, "Huh? Who the hell even are you? Get lost and mind your own business!"

"I'm saying it one final time. Stop all this!" retorted Gerald as he pointed at them.

"...You asking for trouble, kid? Fine then! Let's beat him up!" yelled one of the men, prompting all three of them to charge toward Gerald!

Despite being outnumbered, it didn't change the fact that these men were nothing before Gerald.

It barely took him a second to pummel all three of them to the ground!

To think that Gerald was this strong... If they had known earlier, they wouldn't have provoked him in the first place!

Whatever the case was, once they were done groaning in pain, the leader of the group looked up to Gerald before begging, "P-please spare us, big brother...! We know we've done wrong so please let us go...!"

Scoffing in response, Gerald simply warned, "If I ever catch you three bullying others again, I'll make sure to have your heads!"

"L-loud and clear!" whimpered all three of them as they quickly bolted away...

None of them dared to stay there for a second longer for fear that Gerald would suddenly change his mind...

### **Chapter 1983**

With the trio now gone, Gerald then walked up to the thin man and helped him up.

"T-thank you for saving me, brother...! I, Yale Zachrey, am indebted to you!" said the man.

"Don't worry about it. I just happened to see you getting bullied while passing by, and there was no way I was going to leave without helping! Regardless, if you feel indebted, why don't you just treat me to breakfast and we'll call it even?" replied Gerald with a smile as he patted Yale on the back.

Though he was momentarily surprised by that simple request, Yale quickly snapped out of it before nodding as he said, “Sure thing! Speaking of which, what should I call you, brother?”

“You can just call me Gerald!”

“Got it! I’ll be calling you brother Gerald then! Also... You don’t seem to be a local... Where do you hail from, brother Gerald...?” asked Yale who could already tell that Gerald was no ordinary person. After all, aside from his immense strength, Gerald looked rather different from the others in town as well.

Chuckling in response, Gerald simply replied, “Indeed! Let’s just say I’m a traveler from afar!”

“I see!” said Yale, not doubting Gerald’s statement in the least...

Following that, Yale led Gerald to a food stall—by the street—and ordered him some buns as well as a bowl of noodles...

After quickly finishing his breakfast, Gerald looked at Yale as he asked, “Say... Do you know any ways of earning holy stones quickly?”

“Hmm? You’re in need of them?” replied Yale in slight surprise, not expecting that question.

“Yeah... I ended up spending all of mine, which is why I asked you to treat me to breakfast! While I now have breakfast covered, I’ll still need more holy stones for my following meals!” muttered Gerald, feeling slightly embarrassed.

Though that was mostly a lie, he couldn’t just tell Yale that he was from earth! The secret needed to be maintained...

“I see... Well, there is one place, though I’m not sure if you’ll be willing to go!” mumbled Yale after hesitating for a bit.

“Oh? And what place is that?”

“Well... It’s a casino in town! You can definitely get holy stones quickly there, though it’ll be through gambling... Still, I’ll say it right now that you’ll need quite a bit of skill or you’ll simply end up losing even more holy stones!” explained Yale.

Hearing that, Gerald realized just how similar this place’s casinos were when compared to regular casinos back on earth. Well, aside from the different forms of currency. Still, the way the casinos were run were pretty much the same.

Regardless, he knew that gambling there was his best shot of obtaining lots of holy stones quickly.

With his mind made up, Gerald then said, "...Alright, do lead me there! Speaking of which, could you lend me some holy stones? I'll pay them back to you once I make it big!"

After all, he couldn't gamble without having any holy stones on hand, and he didn't really know anyone else who would be willing to help him either.

Either way, upon hearing Gerald's request, Yale hesitated for a moment before slipping his hand into his pocket and taking out a single holy stone...

"I... don't have too many so I can only lend one to you!" muttered Yale.

"One is plenty!" replied Gerald with a firm nod as he took the holy stone.

Gerald was no stranger to gambling. To be quite honest, he was a rather competent gambler! With that in mind, he had no doubts that he would win big by the end of the day!

#### **Chapter 1984**

Either way, the two soon made it to the extremely crowded casino... As it turned out, gambling was something that many looked forward to, regardless of which world they lived in...

After using quite a bit of effort to squeeze through the crowd, the two eventually managed to inch their way to one of the gambling tables. With that, Gerald quickly began paying attention to how the games were played...

To his surprise, however, he realized that the games were exactly how one would gamble back on earth! Due to that, Gerald knew he could get started right away.

Placing the only holy stone he had on the table, Gerald then silently nodded at the casino owner, prompting the owner to begin shaking the dice in his hands...

To win the game, Gerald had to choose between the high slot and the low one... While he only had one chance, he would surely win big if he chose correctly.

Either way, after the owner stopped shaking the dice, he placed them on the table, prompting the rest of the gamblers at the table to start picking their slots.

While everyone else immediately bet on the high slot, Gerald made no attempt to rush his bet. After all, this was his only shot of winning.

In the end, Gerald ended up betting on the low slot. This was the risk he had chosen...

With that, the dice were revealed... and with the results now out, Gerald and Yale instantly cheered!

Gerald had won the bet!

"My god! You made a fortune with the single shot you got!" exclaimed the excited Yale.

Nodding happily in response, Gerald then quickly slid all the holy stones he had won into his pouch. All in all, the gamble earned him over a hundred of them, and Gerald was sure that that amount would be able to sustain him for quite a while...

"Alright, let's go! I've won enough!" said Gerald, content with all the holy stones he had just earned. He, for one, knew that it was always best to stop gambling once fortune was earned...

Whatever the case was, he then grabbed Yale's arm and began heading toward the casino's exit.

However, leaving a casino was never easy if one had just won money. This proved to be true when a few tough-looking men stopped them from leaving.

Following that, a man—with a scar on his face—walked up to Gerald and Yale before saying in a sinister tone, "Gentlemen! You can't just leave after winning so much!"

Gerald knew that this was just the casino's way of making sure that they always profited from their customers. After all, he had witnessed similar tactics being used when he entered casinos back on earth.

Regardless, Gerald then glared back at the scarred man before replying, "It's only fair that we get to leave whenever we want! Or are you trying to play dirty here?"

"Hah! It's simply the rules of this casino! Look, you've got two simple options. Either you hand us the stones you just won, or you play till you have none!" sneered the scarred man before snorting disdainfully.

Being a timid man, Yale quickly whispered, "Let's just leave the holy stones behind, brother Gerald! These people can't be messed with...!"



Of course, Gerald was never going to agree with that. After all, he had won these holy stones fair and square, and though Yale was frightened of these men, Gerald wasn't.

With that in mind, Gerald then tied the pouch of holy stones around his waist before sneering, "If you want it, come and get it!"

## **Chapter 1985**

Hearing that, the scarred man then signaled his subordinates to grab hold of the duo.

However, before they were even able to get close to him, Gerald took the initiative to attack! Within seconds, all of them were lying on the ground, unable to even get up!

Upon seeing that, the scarred man found himself stunned. To think that Gerald was this powerful!

Following that, Gerald glared at the scarred man, prompting him to immediately gulp before moving to the side. He wasn't about to stop them from leaving after witnessing all that!

With that, the two successfully left the casino...

Eventually stopping by a riverside, Gerald then grabbed a handful of holy stones before handing them to Yale.

"As promised, I'm returning the holy stone I've lent! Consider the other stones as a form of appreciation for putting up with me till now!" said Gerald.

Staring wide-eyed at all the holy stones Gerald was giving him, Yale quickly knelt before excitedly yelling, "B-brother Gerald! Please allow me to be your follower! I'll be subservient to you if my name isn't Yale Zachrey!"

Naturally, this surprised Gerald. He, for one, hadn't expected to take in any subordinates here, especially not Yale. After all, he still needed to return to earth one day.

With that in mind, Gerald took a moment to think about it before calmly replying, "While I'm flattered to hear that, I'll be leaving this place soon. With that in mind, just take the holy stones and live your life well!"

## **Chapter 1986**

"I insist, brother Gerald! After all, I don't have a family to return to and I'm always alone... I've been living aimlessly for the longest time, yet you've managed to reignite my hope in life! With that said, please bring me along...!" begged Yale.

With how pitiful Yale looked, Gerald couldn't help but feel sorry for him...

After thinking for a little while more, Gerald then sighed before saying, "...Fine! You can come along on one condition! You'll have to be more courageous! After all, I have no use for a coward! Do I make myself clear?"

"...L-loud and clear!" exclaimed Yale, absolutely delighted that Gerald changed his mind.

For Yale, changing himself was nothing if it allowed him to become Gerald's follower...

"Then it's settled! With that out of the way, let's find a place to stay first and have a meal while we're at it!" said Gerald, prompting the duo to return to town...

Since they now had so many holy stones, looking for someplace to stay in was naturally what needed to be done next. Thankfully, inns were aplenty back in town.

After checking into a room, both of them then ordered some good food and wine before chatting while enjoying their meal...

To be quite honest, Yale had never been treated so nicely before. Since he was able to enjoy all this now, he felt that he truly had made the right choice in following Gerald.

What more, Gerald was extremely powerful, so with Gerald by his side, he would surely be able to stay safe...

Still, as the saying went, good things never lasted long.

Unfortunately for the duo, the saying turned out to be right this time. After all, the scarred man from before was now actively hunting them down with his gang!

Since Gerald had earlier beaten up his men, there was no way he was going to let Gerald and Yale off that easily. He needed revenge...!

## **Chapter 1987**

It didn't take long for the scarred man to locate the inn that Gerald and Yale were staying in.

Thankfully, upon hearing quite a racket outside their inn, Yale popped his head out of their room's window... and immediately recognized the scarred man!

His face now fully pale in fear, Yale quickly turned to look at Gerald—who was lying on the bed—before whispering, “B-brother Gerald...! It's the gang from the casino...! They're here looking for us...! What should we do...?!”

Hearing that, Gerald headed to the window to have a look... and he was just in time to see the scarred man rushing into the inn with his men!

Frowning slightly, Gerald then turned to look at Yale while ordering, “Come quick!”

Just as Yale was wondering what Gerald meant, his eyes went wide when Gerald began climbing out the window!

Though Gerald then easily leaped onto the roof—from the windowsill—, Yale was far weaker than him. With that in mind, though Yale eventually managed to get to the windowsill, he simply couldn't get up the roof! In the end, Gerald could simply sigh as he yanked the man up... and just in time, too.

After all, the second Yale got beside Gerald, the duo heard their door being kicked open! Of course, the deed was done by the scarred man.

Regardless, after the scarred man and his subordinates entered, they immediately began searching the room... To their surprise and annoyance, the two were nowhere to be found!

Frowning, the scarred man then glared at the innkeeper before growling, “Where the hell are they?”

“H-huh...?! B-but they never left their room! After all, I was downstairs the entire time and I never saw them leave!” exclaimed the astonished innkeeper.

Raising a slight brow, the scarred man noticed—at that moment—that the room's window had been left open. Squinting his eyes, he then headed to the window and looked out...

Meanwhile, Gerald and Yale—who were still hiding on the roof—made sure not to make a single sound... In fact, neither of them even dared to breathe for fear that it would expose their location.

Thankfully, it didn't take long before the duo heard the scarred man shout, “D\*mn it all! They must have escaped through the window! Give chase! We're getting them if it's the last thing we do!”

Following that, the group of angry men then bolted out of the inn...

Seeing that, Gerald then lifted Yale up and brought both of them back into their room...

By that point, the innkeeper was already cleaning the room up... When he saw Gerald and Yale jump in from the window, however, his eyes instantly widened.

Though the innkeeper's first instinct was to yell in surprise, Gerald swiftly covered the innkeeper's mouth before growling, "Hush. Just pretend we aren't here...! Listen, no matter who comes over asking about us, tell them that you don't know anything. If word about us gets out, I'll make sure to end you before they take me away. Got it?!"

Hearing that threat, the innkeeper immediately nodded. After all, he was simply a businessman trying to make a living. He would very much prefer following Gerald's orders rather than losing his life!

Before the innkeeper left, Gerald made sure to say, "Again, if you say even a word about us, you and your inn are vanishing off the surface of the planet! Understand?"

Gulping in response, the innkeeper then replied, "Y-yes! I got it the first time...!"

With that said, the innkeeper then left the room, making sure to properly close the door behind him... For his sake, he knew it was best to just pretend that nothing had happened...

Either way, now that the innkeeper was no longer here, the worried Yale couldn't help but ask, "A-are we going to have to hide here forever, brother Gerald...? Also, are you sure those men won't come back...?"

While Gerald couldn't say for sure, their best bet of losing their trail was to stay here for now. After all, as the saying went, the most dangerous places were usually also the safest....

### **Chapter 1988**

After thinking for a while, Gerald eventually said, "...Don't worry, we'll leave first thing in the morning!"

Hearing that, Yale instantly agreed. To him, the sooner they left the town, the better...

Fast forward to nighttime, Gerald and Yale didn't dare to sleep. After all, there was always the chance of getting attacked in their sleep. Still, Gerald couldn't help but feel that this truly was an ancient place.

After all, once night fell, not a soul could be seen on the streets. The people of the Autremonde Realm didn't really have a nightlife, and he had to admit that the quietness felt rather unusual...

Regardless, the duo instantly set off once dawn broke. The earlier they left, the less likely they were to accidentally bump into the scarred man...

Thankfully, all it took was about an hour for Gerald and Yale to successfully leave the town...

Now that they had made it out safely, Yale was prompted to ask, "So... Where to now, brother Gerald...?"

Yale was naturally curious to know since he was going to be following Gerald around.

Upon hearing that, Gerald couldn't give an immediate response. After all, was new to the Autremonde Realm, and he didn't really know this place well.

With that in mind, Gerald simply replied with his own question, "...Tell me, where can we get to from here? Also, among the options we have, which would you pick?"

"Um... Well, we can get to Shontell if we head east... If we head west, however, we'll arrive in Yahath. As for which I'd personally choose, I'll have to say Shontell!" replied Yale.

Hearing that, Gerald then nodded before declaring, "Hmm... Well, it's decided then! We're heading to Shontell! Lead the way, Yale!"

With that, the duo began their journey to Shontell...

As they journeyed on, Yale made sure to detail everything he knew—about Shontell—to Gerald. After all, it was always good to know what to expect in new places. Regardless, Shontell was apparently a large country in the Autremonde Realm, and it was also the home of Gardale City, a large and prosperous area...

Fast forward to a few hours later, the duo—who had taken a few short rests in between—finally arrived at a small jungle located near Gardale City...

By this point, it was already a little after noon, and since the duo hadn't had their breakfast, they were practically famished by this point. Thankfully, they came across an inn while traversing the jungle. From the looks of it, the inn had been built there specifically for weary travelers who were in dire need of rest...

Whatever the case was, the duo immediately entered and ordered some food.

While they were eagerly waiting for their meals to arrive, both of them couldn't help but notice a horse cart—that was heavily guarded by a group of men—that had just stopped before the inn...

Even from inside, the two could see that the cart was loaded with chests of all sizes, each of them labeled with seals...

Guessing that the chests contained valuable items, Gerald then turned back to look at Yale before asking, "Any idea what they're up to, Yale?"

"Oh! They're just a delivery team, brother Gerald! Since the seals on the chests are labeled, 'Shontell Treasury,' it's only fair to assume that they're from the Shontell Delivery House, and that the chests contain holy stones!" explained Yale as Gerald nodded in response.

As it turned out, the people of the Autremonde Realm were still using delivery services, just like how people—back on earth—used to do in the olden days...

Either way, Gerald and Yale were just about to resume talking about something else when all of a sudden, a dozen men—dressed fully in black—leaped out from the bushes!

Seeing that, Yale's eyes instantly widened as he hid under the table before yelling, "R-robbers!"

## **Chapter 1989**

Gerald himself didn't move an inch, and simply sipped on his tea. By this point, scenes like this were completely normal to him...

Whatever the case was, there appeared to be over a dozen men in black, and all of them looked fully prepared to attack the bodyguards.

From what Gerald could tell, the men in black looked quite strong and skilled. With that in mind, he doubted that the bodyguards would be able to take them on... and after a while, it was made apparent that Gerald's guess was right.

With most of the bodyguards either heavily injured or already dead, one of the middle-aged ones turned to glare at the men in black before growling, "Who are you people?! I'll have you know that I'm Tanner Junas! The head of the Juans' Bodyguard Institute in Shontell! Daring to even attack the bodyguards of Shontell... Do all of you have a death wish or something?!"

"Cut the cr\*p and just hand us the holy stones if you want to live!" scoffed what appeared to be the leader of the men in black.

Upon hearing that, Tanner couldn't help but frown. To think that these men would attack them when they were still pretty close to Shontell! No wonder his men had made it through the rest of the journey without issue! The enemy had been hiding in plain sight!

"F\*ck off! If you haven't already noticed, we're only a few miles away from Shontell now! I'm sure the Armored guards of Shontell will be arriving any second now, so if you don't beat it, you're all going to be dead by the end of the day!" roared Tanner with an unwavering glare.

"Hah! We'll see who dies first!" sneered the leader of the men in black.

Hearing that, the other men in black took that as their cue to begin attacking again! With that, the battle resumed...

Unfortunately, Tanner and his men were already in pretty bad shape. With that in mind, it wasn't long before Tanner ended up having his arm almost getting sliced clean in half!

Seeing his chance to strike the weakened man, the leader of the men in black was just about to deal the finishing blow... when all of a sudden, a figure bolted forward and stood right before him!

Before the leader could even register what was happening, the figure—who was obviously Gerald—launched a force palm attack right into his chest, causing the sinister man to instantly vomit a mouthful of blood as he was sent flying a good distance away!

Watching as their leader then crashed to the ground, dead, the other men in black were prompted to charge toward Gerald next!

Even so, as usual, none of them were anywhere near as strong and capable as Gerald. With that in mind, it only took him a few seconds to finish off the rest of them...

By that point, Tanner and Yale were already staring wide-eyed at all the dead men in black lying all over the ground...

Tanner, for one, hadn't expected someone like Gerald to take on all those powerful men on his own...!

Quickly snapping out of his astonishment, Tanner then walked up to Gerald before respectfully saying, "T-thank you for your help, young man...!"

Hearing that, Gerald simply gave a casual smile as he replied, "Don't worry about it. I'm just doing what's right!"

"Such humility... Please tell me your name, young man!"

“You can just call me Gerald!”

“I see! I go by-”

Before Tanner could finish his sentence, Gerald cut him off with a chuckle before saying, “I heard you declaring it earlier. Tanner Junas, the head of the Juans’ Bodyguard Institute in Shontell, right? It’s an honor to meet you!”

Momentarily stunned to hear that, Tanner then quickly snapped out of it before placing his fists together and praising, “It’s an honor to meet you too, Gerald! Still, to think that a young man like you would be so agile and powerful! It’s simply astonishing!”

### **Chapter 1990**

Simply chuckling in response, Gerald then said, “No need to be so modest, captain Juans! Either way, you should really tend to your wounds first!”

Upon hearing that, Tanner realized that he was still pretty badly injured. With that, he then sat down and began treating his wounds...

Shortly after, a troop of horseback soldiers arrived at the inn. From the looks of it, these were the Armored guards of Shontell that Tanner had previously mentioned about...

Seeing them, Tanner immediately got to his feet and greeted one of the armored men, “General Lucarl!”

General Kay Lucarl was the commander of the Shontell’s Armored guards, and upon seeing how wounded Tanner was, he couldn’t help but say in astonishment, “Captain Juans! That’s a pretty nasty-looking wound there!”

“It’s only a scratch!” replied Tanner with a chuckle.

Instead of laughing along, Kay simply got off his horse and began looking at all the dead bodies on the ground... While he was definitely sure that a fierce battle had been fought here, he couldn’t help but notice that all the enemies were dead.

With that, Kay was prompted to ask, “Did... any of the bandits get away, Captain Junas? And are the holy stones safe?”

“Negative. All the bandits are dead! Also, none of the holy stones got stolen!” replied Tanner.

“What? You managed to kill all of them?” exclaimed the astounded Kay.



“Well, it wouldn’t be fair to claim all the credit. Truth be told, this young man here is the one who took most of them out! If it wasn’t for him, I’m pretty sure I wouldn’t have lived to tell the tale!” explained Tanner as he gestured toward Gerald.

Raising a slight brow as he looked at Gerald, Kay then replied, “You’re... saying that this lad here killed most of these men?”

“Indeed! I witnessed all of it with my very own eyes!” exclaimed Tanner as he nodded.

Naturally, this surprised Kay. After all, how powerful did one need to be in order to single handedly take out so many men? Kay, for one, knew that not many in Shontell were this capable...

After a brief pause, Kay shook his head before ordering, “...Men! Go through their bodies and see if we can identify them!”

Doing as they were instructed, it was only a short while later when one of the soldiers returned to Kay’s side before reporting, “General! Those men in black seem to be from Mount Tygress!”

“Mount Tygress? So, it’s them again...!” growled Kay.

Mount Tygress was the name of a group of bandits that had been terrorizing Shontell for ages. They specialized in robbing escort cars and due to the fact that all of their members were extremely capable, not only had they successfully robbed several escort cars before, but Shontell’s army was unable to permanently shut them down. It definitely didn’t help that the path to the bandits’ lair was so winded and windy...

Thinking about it for a while, Kay then walked up to Gerald—who was currently enjoying his tea—before saying, “...I heard from Captain Juans that you took all these people out... If I may, who exactly are you, and where did you come from?”

Hearing that, Gerald then calmly replied, “I’m merely a vagabond who just so happened to be here when all this was happening. As for why I helped, isn’t it common courtesy to help those in need?”

Gerald’s response simply made Kay more and more curious. In all honesty, he still hadn’t gotten over the fact that Gerald had taken out all those strong men—from Mount Tygress—on his own...

## Chapter 1991

Still, just from the way Gerald looked and talked, Kay knew better than to doubt him.

Whatever the case was, seeing that Kay was about to escort them back to Shontell—to ensure that the holy stones wouldn't get stolen by other bandits—Tanner took the chance to walk up to Gerald and say, "Speaking of which, are you headed for Shontell, Mr. Crawford?"

"Indeed, we are!" replied Gerald with a nod.

"I see! Then... Why don't you come with us? After all, I still need to properly thank you for saving us!" suggested Tanner in a sincere tone.

Chuckling in response, Gerald then said, "You're being way too cordial, Captain Juans! Regardless, I'd rather not get in the way of your work! Don't worry about us, we'll head there later on our own!"

"Well... Alright then, but if you need anything or require any assistance in Shontell, you know who to look for!" replied Tanner in a slightly disheartened tone. Still, he wasn't going to force Gerald to go along with his plan.

With that, Kay, Tanner, and the rest of their men left the scene...

Gerald and Yale themselves only decided to set off once they were done with their meal.

While making their way to Shontell, Yale couldn't help but ask, "...Um... Why didn't you accept Captain Juans's invitation earlier?"

Yale, for one, felt that Gerald should've definitely accepted it. After all, he deserved the reward, and anyone else would've surely been overjoyed—to receive the invitation—and gone along with Tanner's plan.

Simply laughing in response, Gerald then said, "Didn't you see the look on General Lucarl's face just now? He clearly has trouble believing that I was the one who took all of those scoundrels out! With that in mind, it's best if we just go our separate ways to avoid any misunderstandings."

Though Yale now understood Gerald's point of view, he still couldn't help but feel that it was a pity that he had declined. After all, Gerald had let go of what could have potentially been a major favor from an influential person!

Now, if Tanner had asked him instead, Yale would've surely allowed Tanner to properly thank him! Dreaming about the scenario, Yale felt that Tanner's appreciation could've very well been at least a thousand holy stones!

While Yale was only thinking about riches and fame, the thoughts had barely even crossed Gerald's mind. He simply wasn't that kind of person...

Either way, after walking for a few miles, the two of them finally made it past the city gates of Shontell...

As it turned out, Shontell was just as large as Yale had previously described. The people here definitely lived prosperously as well, judging from how well-dressed everyone on the street was...

Regardless, as they walked on, Yale suddenly began tugging Gerald's arm toward a notice board of sorts while saying, "Brother Gerald! Look there!"

Raising a slight brow, Gerald then looked at the board to see what all the fuss was about... and soon enough, he saw what Yale was so excited about.

Of the many announcements on the notice board, one of them wrote, 'Come join the Shontell Martial Arts Competition! The grand prize is a hundred thousand holy stones!'

Naturally, Gerald knew for a fact that Yale was just after the holy stones. With that in mind, he turned to look at the skinny man before asking, "A martial arts competition, huh? What, are you interested in joining, Yale?"

"As if! Jokes aside, you should definitely join, brother Gerald! After all, there's a hundred thousand holy stones up for grabs!" replied Yale excitedly.

Still, as if someone like him would ever participate in such a competition! Being so proficient in martial arts, did Gerald even need to ask? Whatever the case was, if Gerald participated, he would definitely get the grand prize!

To Yale's dismay, however, Gerald simply said, "Sorry, not interested!"

"But... But why? With a hundred thousand holy stones on hand, we won't have to worry about not having enough ever again!"

## Chapter 1992

Looking at how disheartened Yale was, Gerald could only sigh as he thought about it for a moment before replying, "...Fine, I'll participate!"

Naturally, the second he heard that, Yale instantly broke into a smile.

Regardless, the duo then began heading toward the arena where the martial arts competition was being held...

Upon arriving, they were slightly surprised to see how crowded it was. At the time, a woman and man were competing against each other, and each move they dealt gained loud cheers from the audience.

Shortly after, the woman landed a kick right in the man's chest, sending him flying out of the arena!

Following more loud cheers, what appeared to be the judge then stood up before declaring, "And Miss Yalinda Juans scores another victory! Is there anyone else who wishes to challenge her? Remember, if you win, a hundred thousand holy stones will be yours!"

Despite the promise of so many holy stones, the crowd instantly went silent. After all, they had all seen how powerful Yalinda was, so none of them even dared to dream about challenging her!

Seeing that nobody was stepping up, the judge then cleared his throat before saying, "Nobody at all? Well, I guess it's high time we announce the winner then! Now, without further ado, the champion of the martial arts competition is—"

"Hold it!" yelled out a voice from the crowd at the very last minute.

Surprised to hear that, everyone then turned to face the source of the voice... and standing there, was none other than Gerald.

Making his way through the crowd before leaping into the arena, Gerald then looked at the judge before saying, "I'll up for a challenge!"

Hearing that, the crowd instantly went into an uproar! As many of the audience members began discussing who this person was, the judge himself was momentarily stunned speechless, clearly not expecting anyone else to challenge her.

Whatever the case was, Yalinda herself simply scanned Gerald from head to toe before disdainfully scoffing, "Look, just give up and save yourself the embarrassment! I assure you that you're nowhere near capable of beating me!"

Raising a slight brow, Gerald simply replied, "Well someone sounds sure of herself..."

Before Yalinda could say anything else, the judge—who had finally snapped out of it—walked over to Gerald before asking, "Um... Are you ready, mister?"

Once Gerald nodded, the judge nodded as well before declaring, "Well... Without further ado, let the next battle begin!"

The second the declaration was made, Yalinda wasted no time and launched herself toward Gerald, aiming a punch straight for his chest!

While Yalinda was undoubtedly fast, she was nowhere near as fast as Gerald.

With that in mind, Gerald easily dodged her attack... though instead of moving away, he instead grabbed her by the wrist before using her attack's momentum to toss her into the air!

Of course, Gerald made sure to catch her before she fell to the ground. After all, he of all people knew how painful landing from such a height could get...

Regardless, as Gerald allowed Yalinda to get to her feet again, he soon realized that the entire arena had gone silent.

Then again, it wasn't all that surprising. After all, who wouldn't be stupefied to see the great Yalinda getting taken out with only a single move? It was simply unheard of!

Yalinda herself had her eyes wide open. To think that Gerald was this powerful... There was no way she was going to be able to defeat him!

Shaking his head, Gerald then turned to look back at her before saying, "Well... it's my win!"

Upon hearing that, Yalinda instantly frowned. She wasn't about to let him attain victory so easily! With that, she then yelled, "...That...! That didn't count! We start another round!"

Squinting his eyes slightly, Gerald then growled, "I beg your pardon? Didn't count? How exactly did that fail to count?"

## Chapter 1993

Gerald, for one, really hated sore losers, and Yalinda had very clearly lost the match.

That fact was only made even more apparent by how the audience didn't step in to defend her. After all, anyone with the most basic common sense would be able to see the massive difference between their power.

Whatever the case was, after hearing Gerald declare that in the presence of so many people, she finally realized that she had messed up.

With that in mind, she stomped her foot before fuming as she growled, "You...! Fine! You win! Big deal! Just you wait and see...!"

Following that, everyone then watched as the girl turned to quickly leave...

Instead of cheering for Gerald, however, for some reason, the crowd now seemed to be more worried for him if anything. After all, all of them knew that in Shontell, Yalinda wasn't someone to be trifled with...

The judge himself quickly walked up to Gerald and handed him the holy stones before shaking his head. Following a sigh, the man then said, "It's best that you take the holy stones and leave Shontell while you can, mister! Miss Juans really isn't someone you want to pick a fight with..."

Before Gerald could even reply, the judge had already hurried off. The audience members themselves left shortly after, none of them daring to stay in his presence.

In no time flat, Yale was the only one left standing before Gerald in the arena...

Naturally, this left Gerald extremely bewildered. After all, he had won such a big competition fair and square! Why was he being given such cold shoulders?

Despite what Gerald was feeling, Yale himself seemed completely oblivious to everything that had just taken place, and he simply cheered, "You did it, brother Gerald! You were so awesome earlier!"

Hearing that, Gerald simply sighed in resignation as he walked over to Yale and handed him all the holy stones.

After staring at the skinny man for a while, Gerald then grumbled, "Seriously, what's so good about having so many holy stones? If you see any more of these competitions, you're on your own!"

Gerald was rightfully grumpy. After all, winning a competition was supposed to be a joyous event! Despite that, everyone had simply ignored him... How couldn't he feel gloomy?

Still, Gerald had to admit that having all those holy stones would surely make their coming days much more comfortable...

Regardless, moving back to fuming mad Yalinda, she had just gotten home when she bumped into her father.

Had Gerald been there with her, he would've surely recognized him. After all, Yalinda's father was none other than Captain Juans!

Seeing that his daughter was back, Tanner took the chance to ask, "Hmm? Ah, Yalinda, you're back! How was the competition? Did you win?"

Watching as she simply snorted in response before walking off, Tanner could already tell that his daughter must have lost. Still, he wanted to make sure of that, so he followed her to her bedroom before adding, "...I'm assuming you lost?"

"...I did... I could've won, you know...? But some random b\*stard just showed up at the very last minute and took me down with a single move! I... I've never lost in such a humiliating way...! Did you have any idea how embarrassing it was...?" muttered Yalinda as her eyes began to tear.

"...Oh? Such a powerful person participated?" replied Tanner in surprise.

He, of all people, knew how powerful his daughter was, even among those in Shontell. With that in mind, to think that someone could defeat his daughter in only a single move! That person was definitely exceedingly powerful...

Regardless, the fact remained that his daughter had lost, and he wasn't about to be a sore loser about it...

## Chapter 1994

"...Either way, there's no helping it. That person won fair and square, and we just have to accept that!" replied Tanner as he consoled his daughter, knowing full well that in the world of martial arts competitions, nobody could remain at the top forever...

Though Yalinda looked like she wanted to refute, she finally realized that there was a terrible scar on Tanner's arm! With that in mind, she quickly asked, "Huh? When did you get injured, dad? What happened?"

Hearing that, Tanner simply chuckled indifferently as he waved his good hand and said, "It's just a scratch! Regardless, I got the wound from some of Mount Tygress's bandits on my way back!"

"Those bandits? They're really getting more and more chaotic by the day! Either way, do consider increasing the number of men with you while you're out delivering things! If you don't, I swear I'm going to start coming with you as extra protection!" mumbled Yalinda after a short pause.

Simply patting his daughter's head in response, Tanner then dotingly said, "It's alright. Besides, I'd rather my daughter remained safe!"

At that moment, a guard's voice could be heard anxiously calling out from outside, "C-captain Juans!"

Raising a slight brow, Tanner then walked out before asking, "Yes? What's all the commotion about?"

"T-there are two men out there who wish to meet you! Though they claimed that they saved your life earlier, I wanted to make sure with you first before letting them in!" replied the guard.

"...Oh? Where are they now? Lead me to them!" ordered the surprised Tanner.

Nodding in response, the guard then began jogging over to the door, with Tanner following closely behind. Curious, Yalinda tailed along as well. After all, what kind of person was capable enough to save her father?

Either way, once they arrived at the door, Tanner's eyes immediately widened. As it turned out, Gerald and Yale truly were standing—with their backs facing him—at his front door!

"Mr. Crawford! What a pleasure!" declared the excited Tanner.

Tanner, for one, had earlier assumed that Gerald would never come over, causing him to be rather bummed out by that. It certainly explained why he was so glad to see Gerald at his doorstep.

Hearing his voice, the duo then turned around... and the second their faces were in view, Yalinda was so shocked that she couldn't help but point at Gerald while exclaiming, "I-it's you!"

Gerald himself was quick to point back as he incredulously yelled, "So it's you again!"

Seeing this exchange, the confused Tanner was prompted to ask, "You... know Mr. Crawford, Yalinda...?"

"Yeah! He... He's the one who defeated me earlier!" yelled Yalinda, her voice getting increasingly angry.

Upon hearing that, Tanner immediately laughed out loud.

As it turned out, the one who had taken her out was Gerald! It all made sense now! After all, Gerald had ungodly strength!



Whatever the case was, Tanner quickly cleared his throat before saying in a serious tone, "...Now, now, Yalinda, let's not be rude! Remember, Mr. Crawford is still the one who saved my life! Had it not been for him, I would've perished by now!"

When she heard that, Yalinda simply snorted angrily before leaving the scene, not wanting to see Gerald any longer than she needed to.

Worried that Gerald would get displeased by his daughter's behavior, Tanner then turned to look at the youth before saying, "Please don't take her words and actions to heart, Mr. Crawford... My daughter's just like that!"

"Don't worry about it, Captain Juans... She's only behaving that way since I defeated her, so I hope you'll forgive me for that!" replied Gerald with a subtle smile, feeling slightly embarrassed...

## Chapter 1995

"Ah, don't worry about that, Mr. Crawford! It's normal to lose in a competition!" replied Tanner with a smile before inviting Gerald and Yale into his home...

Since the Martial Arts family was merged with the Juans Delivery House, it only made sense for Tanner and his daughter to live in the delivery house

Regardless, Tanner and Yalinda were both quite famous in Shontell. After all, the Juans Delivery House provided reliable service, and many of Shontell's residents tended to look for them whenever they needed holy stones or other goods delivered.

Due to their good name, it really was no wonder why those who used their service treated Tanner and Yalinda so politely. In fact, the Juans Delivery House even had several parties backing them up in Shontell.

Whatever the case was, once they sat down together in the lobby, Tanner found himself asking, "So... What are your plans now, Mr. Crawford?"

"First off, Gerald's fine... Calling me Mr. Crawford is a bit awkward..." replied Gerald with a subtle smile.

"Well, Gerald it is! Regardless, I'm assuming you don't really have a place to stay yet since you did say you were vagabonds before this. With that in mind, why don't you stay with us

first? Don't worry, I'll be sure to treat you well!" suggested Tanner after thinking about it for a bit.

"...Well, if you insist! Thanks for having us!" replied Gerald, feeling that staying here wasn't a bad idea. Besides, it wasn't as if they had found someplace else to stay in yet...

Fast forward to nighttime, Gerald, Yale, Tanner, and his daughter found themselves having their dinner together in the lobby...

Since Gerald and Yale hadn't eaten anything for most of the day, the second the food arrived, they immediately began munching down like there was no tomorrow.

Yalinda herself could only glare at Gerald in her annoyance. After all, she still couldn't get over the fact that Gerald was actually the person who had saved her father's life! While she was thankful about that, the fact that he had defeated her so humiliatingly made it much harder for her to just treat him nicely.

Despite his daughter's annoyance, Tanner was in a jovial mood, and he couldn't help but laugh as he said, "Slow down, the food's not going anywhere! If you need more, just say the word!"

Upon hearing that, Yalinda took the chance to scowl, "He's right! What are you two, pigs?"

Hearing her statement, Yale immediately stopped eating, now feeling rather awkward.

Tanner, on the other hand, raised a slight brow as he grunted, "Yalinda! Where are your manners?"

Seeing that Yalinda then promptly fell silent, Gerald cleared his throat before saying, "...Miss Juans, I hope you don't take this morning's events to heart. After all, had I known that you were Captain Juans's daughter, I wouldn't have challenged you in the first place! With that in mind, please forgive my insolence and let's move on from it!"

Watching as Gerald then held up his wine glass, Yalinda—who had noticed how intense her father's glare was—knew she had no choice but to have a toast with Gerald...

Once their glasses met with a 'clink,' Yalinda finished her wine in a single gulp before placing it down and declaring, "Let's have another match right after this meal!"

This, of course, caught Gerald by surprise. To think that this girl would still want to compete with him!

Sighing as he shook his head, Gerald then replied, "Look, don't you think having another competition is rather unnecessary-"

“No, it’s not. Unless... Could it be that you’re afraid that I’ll win this time?”

## Chapter 1996

With his sentence cut short by Yalinda’s prideful and taunting tone, there was no way Gerald was going to say no now. If she wanted a fight, she was getting one, and he was going to make sure she never challenged him again!

“Fine, I accept! However, I have one condition!” replied Gerald.

“State it!”

“If I win again, you’ll have to start addressing me as brother Gerald. Needless to say, I hope you’ll start treating me less coldly by that point! Seriously... Do you have to keep glaring at me like I owe you all the money in the world?” declared Gerald.

Understanding how much of a sore loser Yalinda was, Gerald knew that he had to set clear rules or Yalinda would simply challenge him again in the future.

Whatever the case was, Yalinda immediately replied, “Deal!”

“Glad to hear it! Also, I’m sure you heard all that clearly, right, Captain Juan?” said Gerald as he turned to look at Tanner. With her father bearing witness to all this, Gerald was pretty sure Yalinda wouldn’t have the guts to be a sore loser once she lost.

Tanner seemed to catch Gerald’s drift as well, and he simply nodded...

Once dinner was over—and after a short rest—the group of four then headed to the garden together...

Momentarily staring at Gerald as he stood opposite of her, Yalinda took in a deep breath before growling, “Ready?”

“As ready as you are!” replied Gerald in a casual tone.

Hearing that, Yalinda immediately bolted toward him, using all of her strength to attack straight off the bat!

Even though Yalinda was clearly using all that she had, to Gerald, she was still lightyears away from his level. In terms of strength, she couldn't even come close to comparing!

With that in mind, Gerald calmly took a step back as Yalinda's kick flew right past him... and with a swift grab, Gerald held Yalinda's leg in hand! As Gerald then yanked it downward, Yalinda quickly made a split, hoping to avoid getting hurt.

Unfortunately for her, Gerald's immediate reaction to that was to pin her legs to the ground! Since she was now incapacitated, Gerald smiled faintly before saying, "Well, looks like it's my win!"

Upon hearing that, Yalinda's eyes instantly widened as she went red in embarrassment. To think that she had lost so easily again!

"I-"

"There's nothing else to say, Yalinda! You lost, so it's only fair that you accept it!" declared Tanner—who had been watching everything from the side—, not even giving his daughter a chance to refute.

Tanner, for one, could tell that his daughter was never going to be a match for Gerald. Aside from that, he was also well aware that Gerald had gone easy on her.

Whatever the case was, after hearing Tanner's words, Gerald then released Yalinda before adding with a subtle smile, "Your father's right, Miss Juans! Best not be a sore loser again!"

"H-humph! Who's being a sore loser? I admit that I lost!" scoffed Yalinda before running off, clearly having a temper.

'...Is this girl serious...? Ahh... To hell with all this!' Gerald thought to himself in resignation. What the hell happened to that deal where she wouldn't remain angry at him if she lost? As if that wasn't enough, she was even victimizing herself despite being the bully!

## Chapter 1997

Shaking his head as he watched his daughter walk off, Tanner could only smile rather awkwardly as he turned to face Gerald before saying, "...Please don't take her childishness to heart, Gerald!"

Naturally, Gerald wasn't going to. After all, had he truly wanted to pick a fight with her earlier, he wouldn't have gone easy in the first place. As the saying went, 'true gentlemen didn't fight with women,' and Gerald fully agreed with that.

Regardless, he wasn't even going to bother further arguing with Yalinda.

Either way, with that done, Tanner got Gerald and Yale a rather spacious room to stay the night in...

It was later that night when Yale sat on his bed before saying with a wink, "Say, what do you think of Miss Juans, brother Gerald?"

Turning to look at Yale with a slightly raised brow, Gerald then replied, "What? Do you have a crush on her or something? If you do, go ahead and woo her without involving me!"

"A-as if I'd even consider such a thing! Besides, she'd never fall for someone like me! Regardless, I'm asking this for you! After all, with your immense strength, you'll definitely be able to win the heart of a woman like her!" exclaimed Yale.

Upon hearing that, Gerald simply rolled his eyes. After all, he knew for a fact that Yalinda was as stubborn as a mule when she put her mind to something. Feeling a headache coming the more he thought about her, Gerald simply sighed before saying, "Look, I'm not someone like her!"

Gerald wasn't kidding about that either. Not wanting to continue the pointless conversation, Gerald then laid in bed, looking at the ceiling for a while before eventually closing his eyes...

Dozing off shortly after, it was only the next morning when he awoke again due to the sounds of vigorous knocking...

Still slightly dazed, Yale—who had also awoken due to all the noise—was prompted to ask, "Who is it...?"

"It's Yalinda! Open up!" called out Yalinda from behind the door.

Hearing that, Yale got out of bed and quickly ran to the door...

The second it was opened, Yalinda rushed toward Gerald, leaving Yale—who was still standing at the door—completely at a loss.

Naturally, Gerald was surprised as well. After all, it was still extremely early.

'Could she be looking for trouble again...?' Gerald thought to himself as he turned to look at her.

"...So... why exactly are you here this early in the morning, Miss Juans? Are you hoping to duel with me again...?" asked Gerald in a helpless tone.

Upon hearing that, Yalinda didn't reply. Instead, she immediately knelt before Gerald! Cupping her hands together, Yalinda then respectfully said, "Please take me as your disciple...!"

Of course, Gerald was instantly stunned to hear that. Who could've guessed that she, of all people, would want him to be her master!

It took him a while, but once he snapped out of his confusion, Gerald—who had no idea what was going through her head—was prompted to ask, "...And why me specifically?"

"Because you're much more powerful than me!" replied Yalinda causing Gerald to go speechless.

What kind of reasoning even was that? Then again, her words did make slight sense... After all, powerful people were always looked up to and even worshiped by others.

Still, that would signify that Yalinda was a simple and crude person, and Gerald knew for a fact that she wasn't someone who liked fawning on others.

With that in mind, Gerald paused for a moment before eventually saying, "...Even so, I'm not looking to take in any disciples!"

"I'll keep asking till you accept me then!" declared Yalinda, her determination unwavering.

Realizing that she was just going to continue annoying him, Gerald sighed before saying, "...Just... give me some time to consider it at least!"

## Chapter 1998

Seeing how hesitant Gerald was, Yalinda then proposed, "...Look, to prove how serious I am about this, please allow me to treat you two to breakfast! Just so you know, there's a particular bakery in Shontell that serves the most scrumptious bread on the planet! I'll treat you to a meal there, and after that, you'll take me as your disciple! How's that?"

Before Gerald could even reply, Yale—who hadn't moved from the door—nodded excitedly before saying, "I agree with her! After all, we haven't had breakfast yet, brother Gerald!"

Raising a slight brow, Gerald then paused for a moment before reluctantly saying, "...Fine! I can't deny that I'm a little hungry too! We'll talk more about this once we're done with breakfast!"

Following that, the trio began heading to the bakery Yalinda was talking about... Upon arriving, Gerald and Yale could immediately tell that Yalinda hadn't been exaggerating. After all, the entire place was crowded!

Regardless, upon noticing Yalinda's presence, the owner of the bakery immediately led the three upstairs and arranged a table for them. The owner then walked off for a while before returning with a plate of freshly baked bread...

Seeing that, Gerald and Yale began enjoying their breakfast...

Realizing that Yalinda wasn't eating, Gerald was prompted to ask, "Not having any?"

"I've already eaten! Either way, if there isn't enough bread, I can always order for more!" replied Yalinda.

"This is the most delicious bread I've ever tasted! Please order two more plates, Miss Juans! I just can't have enough of this!" exclaimed Yale, smiling like a kid the entire time.

Nodding in response, Yalinda then yelled, "Boss! Two more plates of bread please!"

"Coming right up!" replied a voice from downstairs almost instantaneously.

Soon enough, two more plates of pleasant-smelling bread were placed before Gerald and Yale...

Watching as Yale continued digging in, Yalinda couldn't help but look at Gerald as she asked, "So... is he your disciple too, master...?"

Upon hearing that, Gerald was momentarily at a loss of how to reply. After all, he only saw Yale as a subordinate.

"Not at all! I'm just brother Gerald's subordinate! I make a living with him!" replied Yale almost a bit too proudly...

Turning to face Yale next, Yalinda then asked, "Oh? Then I'm assuming you're proficient in martial arts as well?"

"...Nope! I... don't even have the basics down..." muttered Yale, now feeling slightly embarrassed.

"What? You don't know martial arts? Then why are you even by master's side? What were you thinking when you accepted him, master?" asked the now wide-eyed Yalinda. After all, if all that Yale had said was true, then Gerald had just accepted this random nobody into his party!

Ignoring Yalinda's question, Gerald instead asked back, "...Either way, what's the real reason you're so persistent on getting me to be your master? Just so you know, I don't have much to teach!"

"As I've said before, it's simply because you're much more powerful than me! That alone is enough to make me want you to be my master!" replied Yalinda determinedly.

Hearing that, Gerald simply nodded with a sigh before saying, "...Fine! I'll be your master under two conditions!"

"Please state them, master! I promise to do all that you say...!" exclaimed Yalinda as she nodded excitedly, glad that Gerald was finally willing to take her under his wing...

## Chapter 1999

To Yalinda, as long as Gerald was willing to be her master, any conditions he stated would be fair. After all, she had never met a more powerful person than he was in Shontell. With his help, she would definitely stand a better chance in achieving her true goal...

And that goal was to participate in the competition between cultivators! With his tutoring, she would most definitely stand a better chance of winning in the competition...

Whatever the case was, Gerald then declared, "First of all, you can't tell others that I'm your master! Secondly, you can't have another master other than me! Can you do those?"

"Definitely!" replied Yalinda without a second thought.

"Very well, then! From today onward, you'll be my disciple!" said Gerald with a satisfied nod.

Gerald, for one, understood that Yalinda wasn't someone minor in Shontell. Aside from the fact that she had the Juans Delivery House on her side, Captain Juans was also her father. Now that he was her master—which would most definitely improve his relationship with her and her father—, his position in the Autremonde Realm would surely become more secure...

Fast forward to noon, Gerald could be seen resting alone in the garden when Yale—who appeared to be holding onto a piece of paper—suddenly came running toward him while yelling, "B-brother Gerald...!"



Raising a slight brow, Gerald was prompted to ask, "What's wrong, Yale? Why so anxious?"

Handing the paper to Gerald, Yale then explained, "J-just look at this pamphlet I received! It's about a competition between cultivators that's going to be held here soon, and Miss Juans's name is on it!"

Scrolling through the list of participants on the pamphlet, Gerald soon realized that Yale was right.

Putting two and two together, Gerald finally understood why Yalinda wanted him to be her master so much. As it turned out, she was probably thinking of learning a few new martial arts skills from him to secure the win in the competition!

It was at that moment when Yalinda came walking into the garden...

Upon seeing her, Gerald hid the pamphlet behind him and looked at her as he asked, "Yalinda... Are you hiding anything from me?"

Though she was momentarily stunned to hear that, she quickly smiled as she replied, "Nothing at all, master!"

Seeing that she had no intention of fessing up, Gerald then presented the pamphlet to her before saying, "Then care to explain this? Since your name is already on this pamphlet, I'm assuming you became my disciple to learn a few moves before the competition?"

Surprised that Gerald had managed to get his hands on the pamphlet, Yalinda lowered her head before awkwardly replying, "That... Where... did you get that, master...?"

"I gave it to him! They were making an announcement about the competition a bit earlier, and I just so happened to be there! After receiving a pamphlet and seeing your name there, I rushed back to tell brother Gerald about it! Regardless, why didn't you tell us you were participating in this? Brother Gerald and I would surely have come along to watch!" explained Yale.

Hearing that, Yalinda couldn't help but glare furiously at Yale. After all, she was sure that she had done a pretty good job concealing that fact from Gerald. To think that Yale would find out instead and even show the pamphlet to her master...!

## Chapter 2000

Knowing that Gerald would definitely be angry at her now for lying to him, Yalinda immediately bowed before declaring, "I apologize for hiding it from you, master!"

“Yalinda, I get why you’re doing all this, but I’m slightly disappointed that you planned on participating in that competition without notifying me about it! After all, there’s no reason for you to hide it! I’d have helped all the same!” replied Gerald while shaking his head.

“I-I understand master! I truly apologize for not telling you about it! I swear on my life that I’ll share everything with you from this moment onward, master!” declared Yalinda with a nod.

“That’s what I like to hear! Regardless, since you’re participating in that competition, I’ll make sure that the first prize is yours to take!” replied Gerald, seeing no reason to be mad at her anymore.

“R-really? How wonderful!” exclaimed Yalinda excitedly.

“Indeed. Regardless, is the registration period for the competition between cultivators over?” asked Gerald.

“Nope, though it’ll be ending this evening!” replied Yalinda.

“Lead me there!” instructed Gerald, prompting Yalinda to immediately lead the duo to the registration area...

The three of them soon found themselves at the large entrance of Gardale City, and sitting there, was Jaymes Sudberg, the counselor responsible for the competition’s registration process.

Upon being told that Jaymes was the one he needed to talk to, Gerald walked over to him and declared, “Good day, I’d like to register for the competition!”

“Register? Which sect are you even from? Do you have any references?” asked James in a casual tone as he scanned Gerald from head to toe...

“Not that I know of-”

“Actually, he’s with the Juans Delivery House!” replied Yalinda with a faint smile before Gerald could even finish his sentence.

“The Juans Delivery House? Aren’t you the sole representative of the delivery house, Miss Juans? Why’s there a second person?” asked Jaymes as he raised a slight brow.

“Please make an exception for him, councilor Sudberg! The truth is, he’s my master...” replied Yalinda as she took a holy stone out from her pocket and sneakily handed it to Jaymes.

Realizing what she had just done, Jaymes quickly nodded before saying, "...Fine! What's your name?"

"Gerald Crawford!" replied Gerald, prompting Jaymes to write Gerald's name on a wooden token of sorts...

After handing it to Gerald, Jaymes then said, "Here, take this and keep it safe. It's proof that you've registered and you won't be able to participate if you fail to show up with it! Got it...?"

It was three days later when the opening ceremony for the competition between cultivators commenced...

While there were quite a number of participants, Gerald's attention was only caught when the announcer declared, "Next up, Yudele Mullington, the chief disciple of the Thundering Cloud Sect!"

Following a cheer, everyone watched as a woman with a longsword in hand—donning white, goddess-like clothing—walked past the city's gates...

Walking behind her, were two other women who had their faces covered with veils, and they were clearly her attendants...