

The Almighty Dragon General Chapter 1491

Chapter 1491

“It’s not just overseas.”

Delainey chimed in, “I just received news from my father this morning. Last night, many ancient martial families in Sol were annihilated. The elderly were murdered, while the youngsters disappeared without a trace.”

As Thea was the Sect Leader of the Celestial Sect, she knew about what was going on. Many smaller sects among the ones annihilated had submitted themselves to the Celestial Sect. However, she feigned ignorance.

“Are the sources accurate?” Maxine looked at Delainey.

Although the Cadens were one of the Ancient Four and possessed great authority in the ancient martial world, she had yet to receive any intelligence on the matter.

“Very accurate.”

Delainey nodded and said, “The intelligence web of the Mount Thunder Sect is spread all across Sol. That was why I was able to receive information so soon.”

Upon hearing this, James’ expression turned grim.

It seemed that the Gu Sect made a move last night. However, they acted not in the Capital but in the ancient martial world.

What was the Gu Sect up to?

‘The elderly were murdered, while the youngsters were abducted... Could it be?’ James was reminded of the Emperor’s wicked deeds. The Emperor once abducted people and experimented on them.

If his hypothesis was correct, it meant those experiments had yielded their desired outcome. Hence, now, the Gu Sect was abducting martial artists to inject a certain kind of virus into their bodies. The virus would strengthen the martial artists while also giving the Gu Sect control over them.

A storm was brewing on the horizon.

After long contemplation, he looked at Delainey and asked, “Can you find out where those people were abducted to?”

Delainey said, “My father is currently investigating the matter.”

James nodded. “I see... Inform me once you find out.”

Thea remained silent while listening intently. Though she did not utter a single word, she was ruminating over her next course of action. At the moment, she had to prevent Lucjan from going rogue. She had to find out where those people were abducted to and resolve this matter as soon as possible so James could devote his attention wholeheartedly to rectifying the chaos in the Capital.

At that moment, Maxine's phone rang, and she answered the call. Upon hanging up the phone, she stood up and said grimly, "Something happened in the Cadens' household. I have to return at once."

James stood up and asked, "Why? What's wrong?"

"Tobias has returned to the Cadens. He wishes to assume the leadership role of the family. I have to go back right now." Maxine was wearing an anxious expression.

She had finally secured her position as the family head, It would be bad for Tobias to return at such a critical moment and foil her plans.

"Tobias?"

James froze.

He had only met Tobias, who promised he would lend him a helping hand, this morning. Why would he suddenly head over to the Cadens' and assume control of the household? James could not allow this to happen on his watch.

After brief contemplation, James said, "I'll go with you."

Maxine nodded. "Mhm."

Saying that, she turned to leave.

James followed close behind.

"Be careful, Darling," Thea chased after them and said.

James turned around and flashed her a smile, saying, "Don't worry. I know what I'm doing."

Saying that, he turned to leave.

Meanwhile, Thea walked over to the courtyard and pulled her phone out. Then, she gave a call. "I want you to investigate the whereabouts of the abducted martial artists. Give me an answer in three days."

After hanging up, she deleted the call history from her phone.

Wearing a solemn expression on her face, she sat in the gazebo of the courtyard and murmured, "A storm is coming."

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Hearing that Tobias had returned to the Cadens' household, Maxine hurriedly headed back. James followed close behind.

Soon, they arrived.

Many high-ranking members of the household gathered in the foyer of the Cadens' residence. Tobias was sitting in the lead, a place reserved for the family head.

In the foyer, a crippled elderly man sat in a wheelchair. He was Lorenzo Caden, son of Bennett and father of Tobias and Thomas. Apart from Thea, it was only with his assistance that Maxine managed to secure her position as the family head.

Silence filled the foyer.

"What's going on?"

A voice came from outside. Then, Maxine walked in with James following close behind.

Upon entering the foyer, Maxine saw Tobias, who was sitting in her seat. At that moment, her eyes turned cloudy. It was Tobias who took her in and nurtured her into the person she was today.

"T-Tobias..."

After momentarily freezing, Maxine's face darkened, and she said coldly, "You traitor! Why have you returned? That's the seat of the family head. And you, a traitor, have no right to be there. Get lost."

Faced against Tobias, Maxine chose to be assertive. Otherwise, she would lose everything she had so painstakingly gained.

Many important members of the family gathered in the foyer. However, none of them dared utter a single word. They all sat by the sidelines and watched the situation silently.

Upon seeing Maxine, a mischievous grin crept up on Tobias' face. He praised, "Not bad, Maxine. You managed to become the family head in such a short period of time. You certainly deserve my praise. However, from this day onward, you will no longer be the family head. After all, I believe I'm more qualified than you."

"Tobias..."

Maxine pointed at Tobias and said coldly, "You traitorous man! How dare you injure Grand Patriarch Bennett and seize the Spirit Turtle's core that he obtained? How dare you even show yourself now? Aren't you afraid of the Grand Patriarch's vengeance?"

"Hahaha..."

Tobias burst into a roar of laughter.

Then, he said coldly, “Preposterous! When did I injure Grandfather? When did I seize the Spirit Turtle’s core from him? Grandfather knew he wouldn’t live long even if he refined the core. And so, he gifted it to me.”

“Nonsense,” Maxine refuted. “That’s your side of the story. You don’t have any evidence to support your

claims!”

Tobias squinted his eyes and questioned her, “In that case, do you have any evidence I harmed Grandfather?”

“That day, I saw a pool of blood when you brought me to the underground basement. You, on the other

hand, fled in panic. After injuring the Grand Patriarch, you summoned me to help you clean up your mess. However, you never expected the Grand Patriarch to still be alive and moreover, to have made his escape.”

“Hmph!”

Tobias smirked coldly.

His expression darkened.

“How dare you, Maxine?! I was wondering how and why Grandfather went missing... So, it was you who ambushed him! Men, tie her up!”

Tobias roared.

However, no one obeyed his orders.

Even Lorenzo remained silent. He simply sat in the wheelchair and silently observed the situation.

“Does no one here obey my command anymore?”

Tobias slowly stood up, and a powerful aura burst forth from his body.

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Under the crushing weight of the pressure, everyone struggled to breathe. Only James could resist Tobias’ suffocating aura.

Maxine, however, could not withstand the pressure. She could feel her knees giving way.

Thump!

Unable to resist the pressure any longer, her knees fell to the ground. The impact damaged even the floor.

Maxine's face paled, and sweat beaded on her forehead. She uttered her words with great difficulty, "Wh- What do you think you're doing, Tobias? Do you think you can subdue us through sheer violence alone? The Cadens will never yield to the likes of you!"

"Hmph!"

Tobias smirked. "I'm the family head of the Cadens. Why would I subdue my own family? I guess I was wrong about you, Maxine. Though I treated you well, you harmed Grandfather and concocted such a lie while I was in closed-door meditation. You even shifted the blame on me so you could become the family head. Do you admit your sins?"

He pointed at Maxine, who was kneeling.

"Grand Patriarch Lorenzo, tell them it was you who made me the family head."

Seeing that no one spoke up for her, she slightly panicked.

She knew Tobias well. If she could not win over the important members of the Cadens' household and remove Tobias from his position, she would lose her life.

Everyone's gaze was fixed on Lorenzo. They all awaited his response.

Meanwhile, James stood behind Maxine and remained silent. Although he was a Caden, he had no authority in this household.

Lorenzo looked at Tobias and uttered word by word, "It was I who made Maxine the family head."

"How foolish of you, Father," Tobias chastised him. "She's a traitor to the Cadens. Even if the others were deceived by falsehood, how could you of all people be possibly misled? You have grown senile, I'm afraid. You should no longer intervene in the internal affairs of the household. Men, send Father back to his room."

At that moment, James stood up and helped Maxine, who was on her ground, up.

"What do you think you're doing, James? This is the Cadens' household. You have no authority here," Tobias said coldly.

"Tobias, you're no longer the family head. The position now belongs to Maxine. Return to being the commander-in-chief of the Phantom Army and never return." James said coldly.

"How dare you?" Tobias roared.

"What? Are you going to resort to violence?"

James clenched the Blade of Justice in his hand and slowly pulled out the sword. Pointing it at Tobias, he said coldly, "In that case, let's have a match. Let me see what your Thirteen Heavenly Swords are made of."

"How impudent!"

Tobias roared, and his aura boomed.

Unable to withstand the terrifying aura, the Cadens in the foyer staggered backward and fell, groaning and writhing on the ground in agony.

Meanwhile, Lorenzo only sighed in frustration and said, "Tobias, it's not too late to turn back."

"Cut the crap, Father. Stay out of this. Otherwise, don't blame me for what happens next."

Tobias only returned after surmising that Bennett was dead. Now, Lance was dead, and the Elysian Congress had seized control of Orient Commerce. Tobias' current objective was to dominate the entire ancient martial world. To control the ancient martial world, however, he would first need to gain control of the Cadens' household by securing the position of the family head. Then, he would join forces with the Ancient Four and annihilate the Mount Thunder Sect, the Blithe family, and the Elysian Congress.

After doing so, he would become the supreme being of this world. No one would be able to stop him, not even his own father. Tobias was already too far gone. Looking at Lorenzo with bloodshot eyes, he uttered word by word, "Last chance... Return at once."

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Tobias had the intention to kill. He would eradicate anyone who stood in his way, even his own father. Although he was now slightly deranged, he had yet to lose his rationality. He warned Lorenzo against interfering in the household's affairs.

"I won't be compromising, I'm afraid."

Lorenzo was not intimidated at all. He sat in his wheelchair and pointed at Maxine, saying, "I named Maxine the family head, hence she'll be the family head. Tobias, you've been expelled from the family. You're no longer a Caden. Get out of my sight this instant."

"I warned you..."

In the blink of an eye, Tobias appeared before Lorenzo.

However, at that moment, a figure appeared by the door. Upon seeing the figure, Tobias' face paled as if he had seen a ghost. Staggering backward, he stammered, "Y-You...! H-How can this be?"

Tobias could not believe his eyes.

An elderly man slowly walked in. He was none other than Bennett, the person with the greatest authority in the household and an eighth-rank grandmaster.

“Father...”

Upon seeing Bennett, Lorenzo greeted him respectfully.

“G-Grand Patriarch...” Maxine was stunned. She did not expect Bennett to show up. His arrival filled her with hope.

“A-Aren’t you dead?” Tobias glared at Bennett.

Nearly three months had passed, and Bennett was still nowhere to be seen. That was why Tobias judged him to be dead and decided to act today.

After ambushing Bennett at such a close distance, there was no way he would still be alive. Tobias only dared show himself after believing that he was dead.

“Very good, Tobias.” Bennett walked over to him with a furious expression on his face.

He never expected Tobias to ambush him. He trusted him completely and even nurtured him as the family head, who went on to take the helm of the Cadens’ household for thirty years. For the past three decades, though Tobias did not perform any major meritorious services, he managed the household in an orderly manner. However, he then tried to kill Bennett over a Spirit Turtle’s core.

Saying that, Bennett roared in laughter.

After the initial shock, Tobias swiftly recollected himself. So what if Bennett was still alive? He had reached the middle stage of the eighth rank. His strength was now comparable to his grandfather.

After calming down, a smile crept up on his face, and he said, “Grandfather, you came at just the right time. Tell us, was it Maxine who ambushed you?”

Though he was smiling, his eyes were cold.

“Grandfather, you should think twice before saying anything. May I remind you that many important household members are here?” Tobias said threateningly.

James looked at Bennett and asked, “What’s going on, Grand Patriarch? Was it Tobias who ambushed you that day?”

Bennett nodded slightly and said, “It was him, alright. I was gravely injured after he ambushed me. As my life was hanging by a thread, I feigned death in the hopes of fooling him. After he left, I hurriedly made my escape.”

“I knew he’d be afraid. After he left with the core, I was worried about infighting among the Cadens. And so, I instructed Lorenzo to stabilize the situation by making you the family head. However, as you had no interest whatsoever in the position, we could only make Maxine the family head.”

Bennett narrated the chain of events to James.

James finally understood that Bennett had been the one pulling the strings behind the scenes all along. Maxine was able to secure her position as the family head thanks to Bennett and not Lorenzo.

“Hahaha...”

Upon hearing this, Tobias cackled and pointed at Bennett, saying, “That’s right. So what if I was the one who ambushed you? You are past your prime, old man. Even if you refined the core and boosted your strength, how long more could you live? Perhaps a decade or two? I, on the other hand, am a whole different story. I’m still young. By boosting my strength, I can lead the family to glory and make us the most powerful family in the world.”

Bennett roared, “Preposterous! Today, I shall rid the family of a vermin like you!”

“I’m afraid you aren’t capable of doing that.”

Tobias brandished his sword, and shapeless Sword Energy reverberated throughout the building. In an instant, the building collapsed into rubble.

James managed to escape in time with Maxine just before the building collapsed.

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Meanwhile, Lorenzo’s wheelchair levitated in the air.

Bennett began fighting against Tobias.

“Hahaha... What a show!”

At that moment, a voice boomed, and an elderly man appeared at the topmost point of the Cadens’ courtyard.

It was Thomas Caden.

At that moment, his white hair was gone, and he now looked much more youthful. His looks seemed to have reverted to when he was young.

Thomas sat on the topmost point of the Cadens’ courtyard and watched the battle between Tobias and Bennett, saying, “I thought they would have better behaved now that they’re all grown-up. Why do they have to resort to violence? Can’t they sit down and discuss things in a civilized manner?”

“Grandpa!”

Upon seeing Thomas, a smile crept up on James’ face.

His grandfather was nowhere to be seen all this while. He appeared once when they were in Durandal. However, he hurriedly left after making a brief appearance.

“Are you guys still going at it?”

Seeing that the battle continued to rage on, Thomas shouted. Then, in the blink of an eye, he appeared in

the middle of the battlefield.

At that moment, Tobias and Bennett slashed their swords. Thomas, who was in the middle of the battlefield, raised his arms, and powerful energy gathered in his palm, blocking their attacks.

Looking at both of them, he said, “Stop right now.”

Then, he yelled, and powerful True Energy struck them.

Faced with overwhelming strength, Bennett and Tobias staggered backward.

After staggering backward, Tobias felt the Blood Energy inside his body churn. Unable to suppress them in time, he vomited a mouthful of blood.

A shiver ran down his spine.

He was a middle-stage eighth-rank grandmaster. In the midst of his battle against Bennett, Thomas was able to block both of their attacks. Not only was he completely unscathed, but he even sent both of them staggering backward.

He could not begin to comprehend Thomas’ current strength. He only knew that Thomas was so powerful that he stood no chance against him. At that moment, he lost all will to fight. Dragging his injured body, he hurriedly made his escape.

As Thomas watched the fleeing Tobias, his expression turned grim.

Bennett walked over to him and chided him, “Why didn’t you give chase? You could’ve killed him easily!”

Thomas turned and looked Bennett in the eye. Then, ignoring his remarks, he simply walked over to James.

James greeted him respectfully, “Grandpa.”

Thomas waved lightly.

“Grandpa, your strength...”

James was utterly stunned by Thomas’ strength. Not only was Thomas able to deflect the attacks of two eighth-rank grandmasters, but he was also able to send the two staggering backward. He could not imagine just how insanely powerful Thomas was at the moment.

“Cough! Cough!”

Thomas coughed a few times and staggered backward. James hurriedly ran over to him and asked, “What’s wrong, Grandpa? Are you alright?”

Thomas vomited a mouthful of blood. Pulling a white handkerchief out of his pocket, he wiped off the blood trace on his lips, waving his hand lightly. “Don’t worry, I’m fine. A slight problem occurred while I was cultivating.”

“Huh?”

Upon hearing this, James asked anxiously, “What happened?”

Thomas said, “The Spirit Turtle’s bile is too domineering. I suffered internal injuries while I was forcibly absorbing its power. Besides, the bile is making me more hot-tempered. By forcibly suppressing my temper, I’m only aggravating my injuries. So, I can’t use my True Energy recklessly. Otherwise, I might go out of control.”

“Grandpa, which stair of the Skyward Stairway are you at now?”

Thomas smiled slightly and said, “Keep the questions to yourself. Since things are done here, I’ll be taking my leave.”

As he said that, he disappeared without a trace.

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Before James could ask Thomas any questions, he was gone without a trace.

After Thomas left, Bennett walked over to James and looked where Thomas had just been while murmuring silently, “He has grown even stronger now.”

Bennett was an eighth-rank grandmaster. Despite using his full strength, Thomas easily deflected his attack. He found it hard to imagine just how strong Thomas currently was.

“It seems that the rumors are true. Thomas got the most out of the Spirit Turtle.”

James shrugged.

He really was speechless when it came to his grandfather who would briefly show himself before leaving in a hurry.

“Thank goodness for Thomas.” Maxine sighed. “If not for him arriving in the nick of time, the Cadens’ residence would’ve been wiped off the map.”

James looked at Bennett and asked, “Are you alright, Grand Patriarch?”

Bennett waved his hand slightly and said, "My Blood Energy churned a little just now. But, I should be fine. I just need a little rest."

Maxine began ordering the Cadens to clean up the battlefield and reconstruct the damaged buildings. The turmoil at the Cadens had come to an end for the time being.

However, as the Cadens were the leader of the Ancient Four, they were the target of many spies and informants. Soon, news of the disturbance spread.

"Have you heard? Tobias has returned to the Cadens."

"Yes, I have. Reliable sources said that over two months ago, he ambushed Bennett and seized his Spirit Turtle's core. Since he showed up at the Cadens' out of the blue, Bennett had no choice but to reveal himself. The two brandished their swords and fought with all their might. I heard that the Cadens' residence was utterly destroyed and is now in the process of reconstruction."

"I even heard that Thomas appeared and deflected the attacks of both Tobias and Bennett, two eighth- rank grandmasters. Tobias hurriedly escaped because he was afraid of defeat. Otherwise, the Capital would've been utterly destroyed had they gone all-out."

Rumors of the battle began spreading, with each more exaggerated than the next. News of Tobias ambushing Bennett and Thomas' appearance spread all across the Capital.

"I heard that Thomas has crossed into the ninth rank. That would make him the first to do so in a millennium."

"He's insanely powerful. As I live near the Cadens, I saw him blocking Tobias and Bennett's attacks by himself with my own eyes. Not only was he completely unscathed, but he even sent the two flying."

The news spread like wildfire.

Meanwhile, seeing that everything was alright at the Cadens', James breathed a sigh of relief. After saying goodbye to Bennett, he returned home.

Upon arriving home, Thea asked, "What happened, Darling?"

James narrated the chain of events that unfolded.

"What?"

Stunned, Thea exclaimed, "Is Sir Caden that powerful? Did he seriously block the attacks of two people and force them back?"

"Yes."

James still could not believe his eyes. There was no way he would have accomplished such a feat.

“However, Grandpa seems to be injured. He told me that he suffered some internal injuries while refining the Spirit Turtle’s bile. So, he can’t use True Energy as he pleases. Otherwise, his injuries would be aggravated. I wanted to inspect his condition, but he left before I could propose such a suggestion.”

After long contemplation, Thea said, “Sir Caden’s strength is truly terrifying. If I’m guessing correctly, he should now be the most powerful person in the ancient martial world.”

“Perhaps...” James nodded slightly.

“What should we do next?” Thea asked.

James said, “Let’s wait and see if the Mount Thunder Sect can investigate the current whereabouts of the abducted ancient martial artists. As for the Capital, I plan to elevate a few uncorrupted individuals to positions of authority to take over the courthouse.”

“Mhm.”

Thea nodded.

For the time being, James remained at home. Though he did not wander outside, he instructed the Red Flame Army to investigate all serving officials in the Capital. He wanted to find uncorrupted and patriotic individuals, elevate them to positions of authority, and make preparations for the judgment of many powerful figures.

In the underground basement of the Lees’ courtyard...

Xavi Lee, the Grand Patriarch of the Lee family, was busy cultivating.

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Levitating while constantly rotating in mid-air, he exuded a terrifying aura.

Meanwhile, there was also a glamorous-looking woman in the underground basement. She was Yasmine Lee, the current family head of the Lees.

She had been waiting for him for quite some time. However, Xavi continued minding his own business and showed no signs of noticing her. Hence, she could only stand there and wait silently.

After approximately half an hour, the energy enveloping Xavi dissipated, and he slowly descended to the ground. At that moment, he seemed much more youthful than he had been during the Mount Thunder Conference.

Opening his eyes, he stood up and looked at Yasmine before him, saying, “I told you not to interrupt me unless the situation’s dire while I’m in closed-door meditation.”

“Grand Patriarch...”

Yasmine hung her head.

“The situation is indeed dire. As I’m currently at a loss, I came here to seek your advice.”

“Speak.”

Yasmine narrated the chain of events that unfolded to him. She especially mentioned the Cadens.

“Grand Patriarch, the Cadens have grown too strong. Putting aside Tobias who had turned a traitor, they now have three eighth-rank grandmasters-Bennett, James, and Thomas. Thomas, in particular, is terrifying. I just received news today that he deflected the attacks of both Bennett and Tobias at the same time and sent them flying.

“Grand Patriarch, the time has come for the Lees to choose a side. If we choose the wrong camp, we might share the same fate as the Gu Sect a century ago.”

Upon hearing this, Xavi’s expression turned grim.

The situation was indeed dire.

After long contemplation, he said, “We shouldn’t act recklessly at the moment. Spread my word. Dump all family businesses in the outside world and retreat from the Capital.”

“But, Grand Patriarch...”

Yasmine was stunned.

A slight grin crept up on Xavi’s face, and he said, “Now that I’ve refined the Spirit Turtle’s core, my strength is greatly boosted, and my Dragon Siddhi is two levels away from maxing out. We should bide our time for now. Once the situation stabilizes in Sol and my Dragon Siddhi reaches the twelfth level, I will be invincible.”

As Xavi was confident of his strength, he would not choose a side. Now, the only thing he could do was lie low and bide his time. He would only appear once the opportune moment presented itself and after his Dragon Siddhi reached the twelfth level. By then, he would be invincible.

“Spread my word.”

“Understood.”

Although Yasmine was the family head, she did not dare go against Xavi’s orders.

As she turned to leave, she weighed the pros and cons. She believed that James was influential, and his supporters were many. If nothing went wrong, he would be the one to emerge victorious. Since the Lees were going to dump their businesses, why not curry favor with Maxine by transferring them to her? That way, the Cadens would not make a move against the Lees.

Then, she swiftly made the necessary arrangements.

In the underground basement...

Xavi was sitting in a lotus position on the ground.

The Dragon Siddhi was a secret martial arts heirloom passed down by the Lees' ancestors. There were twelve levels in total, with each more difficult than the one before. According to the ancient book of the family, the highest level his ancestors reached was ten.

No one had been able to reach the eleventh level. Now, he had reached the tenth.

"The Dragon Siddhi becomes increasingly difficult to cultivate with each level. Based on my current cultivation speed, I would only reach the eleventh level in ten years and the twelfth in fifty years."

He was anxious.

Although his vitality had increased after refining the Spirit Turtle's core, there was no guarantee he would live for an additional fifty years.

He wanted to be the most powerful individual in the world. However, he could not wait for another fifty years.

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Being recognized as the most powerful individual in the world was meaningless. However, since antiquity, countless risked their lives for this vanity title.

Xavi wanted to become the best in the world. He wanted to stand at the very top and look down on others. However, there were too many powerful martial artists out there. Hence, he could only keep a low profile and bide his time for now.

Meanwhile, after receiving Xavi's orders, Yasmine swiftly went about making the necessary arrangements. She immediately contacted Maxine and told her that the Lees intended to sell all of their businesses in the outside world.

"What?! You're dumping everything?"

Upon hearing this, Maxine was stunned.

The Lee family was one of the Ancient Four. Over the past century, they had accumulated a great fortune through their lucrative businesses. Besides, the backbone of Sol's economy was in the hands of Orient Commerce, which was dominated by the Lees.

"Mhm." Yasmine nodded and said, "A storm is brewing on the horizon. The Lees do not intend to get involved in the power struggle. That's why we plan to forfeit all businesses in the outside world, leave the Capital, and find a secluded spot to live out the remainder of our lives."

After long contemplation, Maxine said, "I'm afraid the Cadens are unable to completely take over all of the Lees' businesses. Let me give James a call."

"Mhm."

Yasmine nodded.

Since she would be selling off the businesses, she might as well sell them to Maxine to curry favor with her. Meanwhile, since Maxine was working closely with James, she could even get James involved too.

"How about this, Yasmine? I'll discuss things with James for now. Why don't we meet up some other day to talk about the specifics?"

Yasmine nodded. "Sure."

"Alright, see you then."

Maxine did not linger for long. She simply stood up and turned to leave. After she left, she headed straight to Thea's house.

"Coming!"

Thea answered the door.

"Is James here?" Maxine asked straight away.

Thea did not allow her passage into the courtyard. Instead, she crossed her arms and said coldly, "Tell me more about it. If it's something personal, there's no need for you to meet him."

"I'm on official business."

Maxine ignored her and walked right in, saying, "The Lees intend to sell off all of their businesses in the outside world. As the Cadens are unable to completely take over all of them, I came here to discuss things with James. Since he's currently trying to form a Chamber of Commerce, this should be good news to him."

Upon hearing this, Thea said, "I'll go and call for him."

Then, she brought Maxine to the living room. After that, she returned to her room.

It was already evening.

James was levitating in a lotus position in the room. His skin was bronze in color, and a glimmering bronze halo enveloped him. Though the halo was dimly lit, it was dazzling.

"Darling, Maxine is here."

Upon hearing this, James stopped his cultivation, and his body returned to normal. Then, he slowly descended and landed steadily on the floor.

Looking at Thea by the door, he asked, "Why is she here? Is something the matter?"

"She told me that the Lees intend to sell off all of their businesses in the outside world."

"Is that so?"

Upon hearing this, James walked out of the room wearing a bright smile.

When he arrived in the living room, he saw Delilah serving Maxine tea.

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"James..."

Upon seeing James, Delilah greeted him sweetly and asked, "What would you like to drink? Coffee or tea?"

"A glass of water, please."

James took a seat.

Maxine simply cut to the chase and said, "Just a moment ago, Yasmine Lee, family head of the Lees, came looking for me. She told me that the Lee family intends to sell all of their businesses to the Cadens. Also, they plan to leave the Capital and find a secluded spot to live off the remainder of their lives."

James asked puzzledly, "What? They're going into seclusion at such a time?"

Maxine said, "I think they're afraid of getting involved in the power struggle. They're a big family with hundreds of members, after all. If they chose the wrong side, the consequences would be disastrous. They might even be annihilated. That's why they plan to leave the Capital."

James asked, "What kind of businesses do the Lees have?"

Maxine said, "Though I don't know the specifics, I heard that the Lees have a commercial bank and many other businesses.

Their total assets should amount to five trillion dollars in value, and their annual profits are approximately three hundred billion dollars."

"Are they selling them in a bundle?"

"Yes, that's what Yasmine told me." Maxine straightened her back and looked James in the eye.

"James, I know you're currently trying to establish a Chamber of Commerce. It would greatly benefit you to control the Lees' businesses. When that happens, many companies and conglomerates will willingly submit to you."

James sighed and said, "But, where would I get the money to buy their businesses?"

Maxine thought hard about it and said, "Sometimes, money isn't the only currency. Anything is negotiable: You can simply

exchange them for something equal in value. As the Lees are an ancient martial family, money is insignificant to them. For them, martial arts and secret manuals are what's important."

A smile crept up on James' face, and he said, "Sure. I'd like to meet the family head of the Lees in person.

Help me make the necessary arrangements."

"Got it."

Maxine nodded. Then, she pulled her phone out and called Yasmine. She relayed everything to her.

Soon, they set up a time and place.

"James, you'll meet her at 8 p.m. in the Lees' residence."

James looked at the time. It was already 6 p.m.

He immediately pulled his phone out and called Quincy.

"Are you free, Quincy?"

"I'm currently at a business auction."

"Return immediately and head to the Lees' residence with me. We have big business coming our way."

"Sure."

Quincy immediately agreed.

She hung up her phone. After greeting the organizer of the auction, she hurriedly left.

Soon, Quincy arrived in a red evening dress. Her hair was tied up, and her sexy, red lips only accentuated her charisma.

After entering the house, she took a seat, looked at James opposite her, and asked, "What kind of business are we talking about here?"

"We'll talk about it on the way."

James immediately stood up and left. Quincy and Maxine followed close behind.

Thea knew she should not follow along. Although Maxine and Quincy-women who had had intimate relationships with James were accompanying James, she had grown more mature after all that she had experienced. There were things she knew she should turn a blind eye to.

However, she was still irritated upon seeing James leave with two beautiful women. After they left, her face darkened, and she

muttered silently under her breath while clenching her fists, "James is mine. I won't allow anyone to snatch him away from me."

On the way to the Lees' residence, Maxine narrated the chain of events that unfolded to them.

"Really?"

Upon hearing this, Quincy asked delightedly, "The Lees of Orient Commerce and the Ancient Four?"

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"That's them, alright," Maxine nodded and said.

"That's great!" Quincy was exhilarated.

As she had been interacting with many influential figures in the Capital, she knew about Orient Commerce and the authority it wielded. The backbone of the Solean economy was in the hands of Orient Commerce which the Lee family dominated.

"James, you have to take over the Lees' businesses no matter the cost!"

Quincy said excitedly, "Now that the Chamber of Commerce has been established, the Dawn family of the north and many other businesses have joined us. However, as the founder, we have to demonstrate strength. If we can take over the Lees' businesses, our reputation and prestige will spread far and wide Quincy began weighing the pros and cons.

James knew little about this. He was in deep contemplation over how to successfully take over the Lees businesses.

Soon, they arrived.

A twenty-year-old-looking woman answered the door. As she was in the comfort of her own home, she was dressed in casual attire and wearing a pair of slippers.

"Maxine."

The woman greeted Maxine.

Then, she looked at James and said with a smile, "James, your reputation precedes you. My name is Xiomara Lee."

The woman extended her arm.

Maxine smiled. "Don't you underestimate her, James. She's the one in charge of all the Lees' businesses in the outside world. She's also quite well known in the Capital's aristocratic circle. Known as a commercial genius, she manages the Lees' businesses in an orderly manner despite her young age." Xiomara returned her smile. "You flatter me, Maxine. Though I'm slightly older than you, you're already the family head of the Cadens. Oh my, look at the time! Sorry for taking up your time. Please, come in."

Xiomara beckoned them in.

Upon arriving in the living room, a servant of the Lees walked over to them and served them some desserts.

"Please make yourself comfortable. I'll inform the family head of your arrival."

After saying that, she left.

After she left, Quincy said, "I've heard of Xiomara before. She's rather well known in the Capital's aristocratic circle. I wanted to get acquainted with her too. However, despite my connections, I couldn't get the chance to meet her. I didn't expect to bump into her at the Lees' residence."

"Is she that impressive, though?" James scratched his nose.

"She definitely is. After all, she manages trillions of dollars worth of assets." Quincy spoke highly of Xiomara.

They conversed briefly.

After some time, Xiomara appeared alongside Yasmine.

Yasmine took a seat and looked at James. She said with a smile, "We meet again, James."

James nodded slightly and cut to the chase. "I heard from Maxine that the Lees intend to sell all their businesses in the outside world."

"Yes."

Yasmine nodded and said, "A storm is brewing on the horizon. The Lees have no plans of getting pulled into the conflict and intend to leave the Capital. That's why we're selling all of our family businesses." James said, "Though I wish to purchase them, I understand that money is meaningless to the Lee family. How about this? I'll give you something of equal value. If there's anything you require of me, feel free to speak your mind. I'll do my best to fulfill your needs."

"Indeed."

Yasmine said, "Money is worthless to us. However, that being said, the Lees do not lack anything."

Yasmine was lost in contemplation. She wondered what could she get in exchange for giving away the lucrative businesses of her family. After some contemplation, she thought of one thing-the secret of the four paintings left behind by the Prince of Orchid Mountain.

"How about this, James? I'll ask the Grand Patriarch for his opinion on this matter. How does that sound to you?"