

Chapter 1149

Hearing that, Jasmine turned to look at Gerald rather doubtfully.

It was only a little while later when she realized that the one ruthless and arrogant young lord had now truly surrendered to Gerald.

“I apologize for all the mistakes I’ve made! I truly am sorry!” said Chester as he repeatedly lowered his head till his forehead touched the ground.

While she had initially wanted to kill him, after seeing how miserable he was, Jasmine simply replied, “...There’s no need to apologize any further to me... Instead, you should be apologizing to those who you’ve hurt. After all, while my family has made it through this daunting experience without mishap, that isn’t the case for the other families... Regardless, if it’s punishment you seek, then I’ll let Gerald make the final say! His words will be as good as mine!”

After saying that, Jasmine then turned to look at Gerald.

Women were sometimes like this. While Jasmine had first been uncertain whether she really had fallen for Gerald, when she first began getting rather dependent on him, she was almost certain that she truly was in love with him.

From that moment on, Jasmine had held those feelings for him in her heart.

It really was no mystery why damsels in distress who were saved by heroes usually ended up falling for them. Jasmine realized that she, too, had embodied the role of the damsel after being saved by Gerald so many times when she needed him most. With him constantly carrying her heavy burdens, she naturally grew to have great dependence, admiration, and trust toward Gerald due to how good his impression was to her.

Quickly catching on to the underlying message of Jasmine’s words, Gerald felt his heart skip a beat. After all, he knew he couldn’t return her feelings.

Regardless, upon hearing that, Chester—who realized that he had now cleared all his sins—crawled toward Gerald before kneeling and saying, “Thank you for allowing me to fulfill my wish, Mr. Crawford... I now have no more regrets... You can kill me now...!”

Despite how determined Chester’s voice was when he said that, Gerald simply looked back at the young lord before replying, “I never said I would kill you immediately. Rather, I’d like you to do something for me!”

“Please state your desire, Mr. Crawford!” said Chester as he looked at Gerald gratefully.

“You see, I’m attempting to search for the king of the ocean’s palace, and I’m currently in need of helpers... Since you’re proficient in both the turtle breathing and bone crush technique, I believe that you’ll be a helper who’ll be able to survive under the sea for quite some time... Are you willing to lend a hand?” asked Gerald.

“Of course I’m willing to stay by your side and work for you, Mr. Crawford! At long last, I’ll be able to live like a normal person!” replied the shocked but greatly delighted Chester almost instantaneously.

“Think about it properly before replying... Are you truly sure that you’re willing to give up your identity as the young lord?” asked Gerald again.

“Without a doubt!” replied Chester without the slightest hesitation.

After all, after Gerald had listened to him pour his heart out, he had even helped him resolve the feelings of guilt that had been plaguing his mind for the longest time! While Chester had already been extremely grateful to him because of that, to think that Gerald would even consider sparing his life now!

There was just something special about Gerald that greatly moved Chester, even though he couldn’t quite put his finger on what it was. Regardless, Chester felt that as long as he stayed by Gerald’s side, he would be able to feel that he hadn’t wasted his entire life on this planet up till this point.

“Very well. Then you’ll be coming along to the king of the ocean’s palace with me. Speaking of which, I’d also like you to investigate whether there’s a connection between the woman in white who saved you back then and the person I’m looking for...” said Gerald with a slight nod.

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It was at that moment when Yume led a middle-aged man into the room where Gerald and the other two currently were.

The moment Yume saw that Jasmine—who seemed to be as charming and attractive as Yume was—was standing quite close to Gerald, for some unknown reason, she couldn't help but feel slightly uncomfortable.

Due to that discomfort, however, her tone was slightly harsher as she coldly said, "Here's the person you were looking for, Gerald! Mr. Yarrow here had brought along all the island's relevant information on that year!"

With that, she moved to stand on Gerald's other side. Seeing that, Jasmine herself began carefully sizing up the beauty who was now standing as close to Gerald as she was.

As sparks flew between the two women, the middle-aged man—who was holding onto the information in his hands—greeted, "Mr. Crawford!"

"A pleasure to have you here, Mr. Yarrow. Please, have a seat."

Tim Yarrow was someone from the cultural affairs bureau in Montholm City. According to what people had told Gerald, the man knew all about the development of Montholm City from ancient times till this very day. If one wanted to investigate the origins and history of this place, Tim was the perfect guy to look for.

After exchanging some pleasantries, Tim went straight to the point.

"So I've heard that you're interested in the history of Montholm Island's city construction, Mr. Crawford. With that in mind, I've investigated quite a bit into the subject this afternoon. You see, Montholm City actually began as a small fisherman village by the sea. Back then, there were only a mere hundred families inhabiting the area. As for the island's history, I'm afraid that it originates from about ten thousand years ago... The evidence to back that claim up is the fossils that were successfully excavated on the island a few decades ago..."

“All this sounds very well recorded and I have no doubts about the evidence you speak of. However, Mr. Yarrow, I’d like to know if you’re aware of any legendary but well-founded unofficial historic events?” asked Gerald after hearing all that.

“Unofficial historic events you say? I’ll have you know that there are far too many of those! Forgive my enthusiasm, but researching unofficial historic events and gathering evidence to disprove the official ones has been a personal—and the only—hobby of mine for as long as I’ve lived! If that’s what you wish to ask me about then you can rest assured that you’ve found the right person!” replied Tim with a smile.

With that, he began detailing a few old legends to Gerald.

“Let’s see... It was about twenty years ago when I first started working. Through sheer coincidence, I came across a very ancient book in the cultural bureau’s library at the time! Its contents were simple, yet very ancient words that fascinated the younger me greatly!”

“I had reason to be so excited. After all, the words in that book were vastly different compared to the ancient words that could commonly be recognized and found. Since I had chosen to major in archaeology in university, I was lucky enough that one of my professors had taught me the meanings of a few ancient words. Once I was done deciphering the text, I found that the book was filled with legends and unofficial historic events. To put it in simpler and more modern terms, the person recording the legends seemed to be making memoirs.”

“Regardless, I also found out that the contents in the book had been extracted from a stone tablet. In other words, the story predated even the people who had transferred the memoirs into book format! As for the contents, it described an incident about an old man surviving through luck.”

“In the book, the old man had said that he was lucky enough to have been chosen to participate in a special funeral. The funeral itself was considered to be special since he was tasked with heading there to bury a fairy! As for the burial place, it was a magnificent palace under the sea!”

Hearing that, both Gerald and Yume couldn’t help but exchange glances in dismay.

“Moving on, the book then described how thirty-seven people—including the master—had carried the coffin all the way to Montholm Island. They had apparently made a stop here to rest due to a heavy storm.”

'...Isn't this... the same story from the six stone tablets...? I'm pretty sure it is! With any luck, the book hopefully contained what had happened after they came to the island. After all, I remember the following mural showing that the old beggar only had twenty-seven men with him after stopping by the island. Where had the nine other people disappeared to?' Gerald thought to himself as his eyelids twitched slightly.

'Come to think of it, the contents of the stone tablets seem more and more like an ancient epitaph of one of the nine people who had been left behind on the island... From the looks of it, the words seem to be describing said person's entire life... Could that mean that the nine who were left behind didn't die? What happened then? Why would they decide to stay behind halfway through their journey...?'

"It's then stated in the memoir that after the writer arrived on Montholm island, his entire life was changed due to a scene that he witnessed which he claimed that he would never be able to forget for the rest of his life. To go into detail, the group of men was camping one night when all of a sudden, the heavens seemed to fall while the earth split open! Everyone was sure that calamity was about to befall them and that the whole island was about to sink! However, as they were about to begin escaping, all of them saw an enormous, bronze house that hovered in the air!"

"Not only was the hovering house massive, but there also seemed to be people inside it! After one of the house's inhabitants walked out, the large door of the flying house was slid open. The second that happened, the men—who were still on the island—immediately heard wretched wailing from inside the floating house!"

"Due to that, all of the men were scared half to death, and for good reason too. It's described here that the wailing that those people made sounded like they were all suffering terribly..."

Chapter 1151

'They seemed to have come with a purpose in mind... The master seems to know who they are as well.'

'The master flew up and entered the flying house to discuss something with them... But none of us know what they're talking about...'

'They've negotiated for quite some time... Some time while they were negotiating, the flying house submerged below the waves, bringing master along with it...'

'Night has come... We're all tossing and turning, barely able to sleep... All we can do now is guard the fairy's corpse...'

'It's late at night now, and it's my turn to stand guard... Including me, my group had nine people...'

'...I'm writing this after that terrifying event... The incident that changed my fate forever...'

'While we were standing guard, the fairy suddenly came alive! Standing in front of us, her expression was livid as she coldly asked us where we were taking her to...'

'Not daring to play any games, we truthfully told her all that we knew... Upon hearing our explanation, she was infuriated! I still distinctly remember her saying, "So you still wish to burden me even now...? Thank the stars that I regained my consciousness in time!"'

'Following that, she flew into a deep rage and began attacking us! The moment she made a move, six peoples' lives were ended... She was terrifying...!'

'As I attempted to run, she immediately waved one of her long sleeves and tied it around my neck! Before I knew it, I had been thrown up into the air!'

'If it wasn't for a tree breaking most of the fall, I would've definitely ended up dead from the fall damage alone! I was lucky that I only ended up breaking a leg...'

'It was in my state of semi-consciousness when I realized something frightening. This was all wrong. I was sure that the fairy was still in the coffin... Then who the hell was this mad beauty? At the time, I didn't even know what had happened to the rest of my companions. For all I knew, all of them could have already been dead.'

'Fortunately, the gigantic bronze house flew out of the ocean at that instant, causing an explosive sound! I remember fainting at that exact moment due to all the shock...'

'When I finally awoke, I was in a kind fisherman's house... It was only then when I learned that I was the sole survivor of that group of nine. The others who weren't standing guard, on the other hand, were all saved by the master.'

'Due to that incident, I was now disabled and I could no longer endure the ocean breeze. It was the reason why I remained on Montholm Island. However, the master was kind enough to compensate me with a lot of money...'

Following that, the epitaph described how the survivor had slowly used the money to become even richer in the coming years. In the end, he even ended up becoming a prestigious person on the island, and that was where the memoir on the stone tablet ended.

"People from ancient times had a tendency to exaggerate, especially those who were successful. They just loved adding extraordinary incidents into their epitaphs, you know? Aside from this example, another story I've heard is about a heroic person by the name of Brayden Laban who slaughtered a white snake and created an uprising... Haha! I truly admire the imagination of people back then... It wouldn't surprise me if the bronze flying house was the inspiration for today's science fiction movies!" said Tim as he laughed.

"It does sound slightly ridiculous... However, it also makes the epitaphs sound much more special!" chipped in Yume.

Gerald, however, didn't give any comments on that.

After chatting a little while longer with Tim and more or less getting to know all the facts that he had wanted to investigate, Gerald told someone to send Tim home.

Once he was gone, Gerald casually said, "I'll be returning to my room first... All of you should turn in early since we're going to set off tomorrow!"

Before Gerald could get far, however, Yume stopped him before saying, "Hold it. Why didn't you voice out any of your opinions earlier? In fact, you hardly said anything at all! Is something the matter?"

Being the perceptive woman she was, Yume then added, "I also noticed your eyelids twitching slightly whenever Mr. Yarrow described the flying house earlier... Why was that?"

"Very perceptive of you. Regardless, if I told you that the story that we just heard earlier was true... Would you believe me?" asked Gerald.

"...What? You're not pulling my leg, are you?" replied Yume, flabbergasted by his question.

"Is there any reason for me to lie? Still, this incident seems to be getting much more troublesome than I initially imagined it to be!" said Gerald before returning to his room.

Chapter 1152

Yume herself remained stunned on the spot for quite a while.

It was late at night when Gerald could be seen meditating on his bed, listening to the ocean breeze as he thought about the new discoveries he had made tonight.

According to what the survivor had said, a particularly powerful and wrathful woman had appeared that night, resulting in the death of the other eight people who had been standing guard over the coffin with him.

Who was she? And what did she mean when she said that she had awoken in time?

Whatever the case was, the woman seemed to be filled with immense resentment.

Aside from the woman, the terrible wailing from within the flying house was also something that couldn't easily be forgotten. Could all those who had been captured by the Sun League be in there? Were Mila and his uncle in there?

The mention of all those wretched wails from within the house had definitely shocked Gerald earlier.

As for the woman in white, she had probably surrendered to the mysterious old beggar in the end. After all, Gerald had already seen the continuation of the story back when Master Ghost had shown him the six stone tablets.

From what he remembered, the old beggar and the remaining men had continued on with their journey quite smoothly. After the old man killed an injured dragon, they all buried the dragon's corpse together with the fairy's coffin before making an equally smooth return trip.

After some time, Gerald's eyes flashed a hint of determination as he quietly muttered, "The ocean king's palace..."

It was two days later when Gerald and his family's fleet continued sailing atop the choppy waves. While the extremely high waves from earlier had lessened considerably, the ocean breeze was still very strong.

Looking out at sea, the seemingly endless number of strong waves as far as the eye could see would make anyone feel awe-inspired.

Before Gerald had set off two days ago, he had ordered his bodyguards to send Jasmine and the others to Halimark City first to look for Wagner. Once they were there, they were told to contact the Fendersons to send people over and pick them up.

Once he knew that Jasmine and the others were safe and sound, Gerald could finally rest a bit easier.

While Jasmine herself had initially wanted to head there together with Gerald, it was simply too dangerous. After all, this wasn't a trip, nor was it an ordinary adventure.

In fact, knowing that there could very well be many unknown dangers down there, even with his current strength, Gerald himself wasn't sure if he would be able to make it out in one piece.

It was noon when Chester headed to the deck and stood behind Gerald before respectfully saying, "It's estimated that we aren't too far off from the king of the ocean's palace now, sir!"

"I see. Then the place where you ended up drifting off to that year should be nearby," replied Gerald.

"I'd assume so. I was simply rowing the boat in the direction the ocean breeze was blowing at the time, so the boat was sailing quite fast... While I had prepared food to last me for at least three days back then, I ended up drifting at sea for about ten days... Due to almost a week without food, I remember nearly dying from starvation back then... From the distance we've covered, I'd say we should be getting close," said Chester as he surveyed the area while making estimations in his head.

'In addition to the clues we found before we set off, I suspect that Angelica could very well be the person we're looking for...' Gerald thought to himself.

"Still, I truly think that you'll be able to find the answers you've been seeking once we make it into the king of the ocean's palace," added Chester.

"You and me both, Chester. You and me both..." replied Gerald as he looked out into the horizon.

Even with the map that Gerald had obtained from the Minshalls, they were still having slight trouble looking for the exact location of the palace.

All of a sudden, Chester pointed out at sea before saying, "...Huh? Sir, have a look in that direction! It... seems to be a ship of some sort..."

True to Chester's words, after turning to look at where he was pointing at, Gerald saw a large wooden ship out at sea.

Though its oars seemed to be static, the ship was sailing against the current, and it was headed straight for where Gerald's ship currently was rather quickly!

At that moment, Yume walked over before asking, "Is something wrong?"

However, the moment she saw the ship that was slowly getting closer to them, even she became slightly stunned.

Recognizing the aura surrounding the ship, the stunned Gerald—whose eyes hadn't left the sea-faring vehicle—muttered, "...Could that be... force...?"

Quickly snapping out of it, then coldly ordered, "For now, focus on dodging the incoming ship! I'll be heading aboard that ship to have a look around first!"

Chapter 1153

While both Chester and Yume had already been stunned, their jaws truly dropped the moment they saw Gerald leap toward the other ship!

The moment Gerald's foot touched the wooden ship's surface, it instantly caused a huge wave to form as the ship bobbed up and down due to the impact of Gerald's landing!

Eventually, the ripples slowed down and Gerald took the chance to begin looking around.

From what he could see, it seemed to be an average-sized wooden ship that could accommodate about forty to fifty people. It also seemed to have a bit of history to it.

Stepping into the cabin, there seemed to be an old and torn curtain hanging outside the cabin's windows. As a result, though it was quite sunny outside, the inside of the cabin remained quite dark.

After looking around for a while, Gerald began trying to feel his surroundings. The force he had sensed surrounding the ship earlier was now nowhere to be found... It was odd, to say the least.

With that, Gerald slowly drew the curtains before making his way deeper into the cabin.

With partitions separating the rooms within the cabin, the corridor in the middle led to small guest rooms on either side of it.

All of a sudden, the faint sound of footsteps could be heard coming from the control cabin that was located at the ships' bottom level. Someone was walking upstairs!

With that in mind, Gerald stood motionless, looking around attentively until he finally saw who was making their way up the stairs.

Gerald watched as a white-haired old woman with a stooped posture slowly swayed her body while ascending the steps. Aside from the fact that her clothes were old and torn and her hair was particularly messy, the woman's most defining feature was the many scars that covered her face.

In the dimly lit area, Gerald couldn't help but admit that she seemed rather spooky.

Regardless, he took the initiative by asking, "Good day, madam. May I know your name?"

"Dead Annie!" replied the woman with a subtle smile. Despite her friendly gesture, Gerald found himself growing slightly nervous. After all, anyone who smiled with such a scar-filled face would definitely create slight feelings of unnerve among those who saw it.

"...Come again? You said your name was Dead Annie, madam?" asked Gerald for confirmation.

"Dead Annie! Two petals bloom and each petal represents a world!" replied the old woman in a rather mysterious manner.

Gerald found himself raising a slight brow as he heard her talking about some mysterious plant. A flower that only bloomed two petals... Why did that sound so familiar? Thinking about it, he knew he had come across such a plant before. After all, natural flowers with only two petals were rare, so he would definitely remember if he had seen one before. But where?

The more Gerald stared at the woman, the odder he felt.

At that moment, he heard someone shouting, "Sir! Here you are!"

Turning around to look, Gerald saw that both Chester and Yume had boarded the ship as well.

"Why did both of you come here?" asked Gerald.

“Well, since you’ve been gone for quite some time and we heard nothing from you, we got slightly worried!” replied Chester as he and Yume immediately began scanning the old woman—who was now staring at the end of the corridor—from head to toe.

While Chester immediately let out a frown, Yume began smoothening her hair, though Gerald could tell that her breathing had grown slightly more rapid.

“There’s nothing to worry about. For now, head back first!” ordered Gerald.

Since Gerald still hadn’t been able to see through the extremely weird old woman, he was worried that both Yume and Chester would end up in danger if they remained here for any longer.

The moment she heard him say that, however, the old woman suddenly began laughing coldly. Her laugh sounded almost raven-like, making it all the more frightening.

Already feeling extremely anxious of her laugh, Gerald’s unease peaked the moment he realized that several extremely weird-looking flowers had begun appearing—out of thin air—in the middle of the corridor.

The flowers themselves each only had two petals, with each petal resembling a human’s face!

It was at that moment when Gerald finally remembered where he had seen such flowers before.

He had seen them in a garden back when he was at the Soul Palace!

That garden on his grandfather’s island had been specifically made to plant that breed of flower. Gerald remembered finding the flowers strange, so he had asked Welson more about them.

According to what Welson had told him, the flower bore no name. Seeds of the flower were found in the Western Regions, and they seemed to date back to ancient times. After attempting to plant it, they were successful in making it bloom.

Due to the nameless flowers naturally only blooming to have two petals, Gerald's grandfather had decided to plant them in a garden, treating them as a living work of art.

As it turned out, the flowers were called Dead Annies...

Just as Gerald's thought ended, he realized that fine pollen was starting to emerge from the flowers.

The pollen spread a unique fragrance around, and as soon as Yume and Chester smelled it, they instantly began feeling dizzy. Soon enough, both of them lost consciousness and fell to the floor!

"The pollen's poisonous!"

Chapter 1154

After shouting in astonishment, Gerald immediately turned back to look at the old woman, prepared to launch an attack.

However, before he was even able to take a step forward, Gerald suddenly felt all four of his limbs weaken as a dizzy spell simultaneously swept through him.

'What? But how is this possible?! I've long been immune to all poisons!' Gerald thought to himself as he slowly kneeled to the floor with one knee, his dizziness intensifying.

Seeing that, the old woman smiled wickedly as she slowly began walking toward him while saying, "I can see that your physique is quite different compared to ordinary people... However, do know that the Dead Annies here were initially something different! Let's just say that they're a near-perfect counter against you!"

Feeling that he was going to pass out soon if he didn't do anything quickly, Gerald placed all his remaining focus on using his divine thought to call out, 'Dawnbreaker!'

Following that, the Dawnbreaker instantly shot out from his sleeve!

The old woman truly hadn't anticipated that Gerald would actually have a last resort planned quite literally under his sleeve. By the time she noticed the blade flying right for her, however, she was already too late to react in time.

Unable to dodge the attack, the Dawnbreaker ended up stabbing her right in her left arm, sending the old woman toppling to the floor!

Strangely enough, the moment she fell down, the intense dizziness that Gerald had been experiencing suddenly vanished!

'...So it wasn't poison that was causing my dizzy spell!' Gerald thought to himself as he quickly regained his power.

Thinking about it, Gerald soon deduced that the old woman had launched a mental attack at him instead of using actual poison, and that she had only used the pollen as some sort of medium. To think that his mental power had been controlled by that old woman earlier!

While the old woman certainly appeared surprised, she quickly snapped out of it, getting to her feet and running into a room!

Gerald himself made a dash to the door... Only to be greeted by the sound of shattering glass as the old woman crashed through the room's sole window and jumped into the open sea!

By the time he got to the window, the old woman was nowhere to be seen.

It was around then when both Chester and Yume slowly began regaining consciousness. Not long after, even the Crawford bodyguards began boarding the ship.

Since he had earlier suffered a mental attack, Gerald's face was still slightly pale as he ordered, "Take Chester and Yume back to the ship... Also, begin a search around the area to locate an old woman! She's injured so she'll definitely leave traces behind no matter what!"

Upon hearing that, Gerald's guards immediately obeyed and began their search.

'Still... Who even was she...? It's almost as though she had been waiting for us here deliberately... The fact that we bumped into her so close to where the king of the ocean's palace is, makes her all the more suspicious!' Gerald thought to himself a little while later as he looked out into sea.

'...I wonder if she could have actually been trying to prevent us from entering the king of the ocean's palace... Then there's her weapon of choice as well. While I could already tell that the flower was special back when I saw it at grandpa's place, I would've never guessed that it had such a function...'

As soon as Gerald's thought ended, the alarm in the cabin of one the Crawford family's ships began blaring.

Over ten large Crawford ships had earlier been searching for the old woman around the area. With the blaring of the alarm, it was apparent that they had finally located her.

Seconds later, a bodyguard came running over to Gerald before excitedly saying, "The moment we saw her, that old woman instantly dived deep into the ocean, Mr. Crawford! While we haven't been able to capture her, our sonar detector found that she was quickly swimming toward what seemed to be a large metal building far beneath the waves!"

"I see. Then it's probably a solid hunch to assume that the place she's currently headed to is the king of the ocean's palace. I'm placing you in charge of providing support for us while a few of us head down there to have a look. Speaking of which, are the two of you alright?" asked Gerald as he turned to look at Yume and Chester.

"I'm fine!" replied Chester though Yume simply nodded.

"Very well. Place the water repellent stones in your mouths and follow me below the waves then!"

With that said, all three of them then dived into the sea, swimming into its murky depths.

Since they had specialized electronic equipment with them, they were able to quickly and precisely locate both the palace's and the old woman's location. With the help of the water repellent stones, the trio was able to make their way deeper into the ocean rather quickly.

A short while later, the three people arrived before a dark cave that had a rather small and narrow opening, about half the size of an average adult...

Chapter 1155

Though the gourd-shaped entrance was rather narrow, Gerald swam in just fine and the other two followed swiftly behind him.

After swimming through it, the trio found themselves in an area that felt almost alien. Soon enough, they came to yet another cave entrance, though there was one stark difference to this one.

There was Dead Annie pollen floating around everywhere inside!

“Cover your nostrils and remain focused!” ordered Gerald as he looked at the dashboard of the tracking device. While the old woman was nowhere to be seen on it, she had last been spotted right where they currently were. She was undoubtedly inside.

How absolutely cunning of her... If he had been any less cautious, then he would've definitely fallen straight into her trap!

It was at that moment when both Yume and Chester began feeling slightly uncomfortable. Gerald figured that it was due to the fact that the pollen at the cave's entrance was denser.

Even though he was aware of that and was actively trying to retain control over himself, Gerald still found himself being unable to resist the strong mental impact caused by the Dead Annies.

That old woman must be up to no good!

Soon enough, Chester and Yume ended up blacking out again while Gerald continued persevering through the strongest mental impact yet.

However, at long last, Gerald failed to endure through it. As his surroundings became distorted, Gerald saw a strange and ugly face appearing before him before he finally passed out.

After an unknown period of time, Gerald eventually woke up again.

As he slowly recovered his bearings, Gerald thought about how the pain from the mental assault was no different from the time he had received the memories of that deity or even when he was physically attacked with martial arts skills! In fact, if he had to argue, the mental impact hurt far more than either of those!

Regardless, Gerald was thankful that he had the water repellent stone with him, otherwise, they would've all drowned by now, seeing that they were still underwater.

Turning to his side, Gerald saw that the now extremely pale-faced Chester was still unconscious.

Enduring the pain of his headache, Gerald then turned to his other side to see how Yume was doing.

However, much to his surprise, Yume was nowhere to be found. What could've happened to her?

With Yume's disappearance sobering him up quite a bit, Gerald then supported Chester over his shoulder as he began looking around for her.

However, no matter how much he searched, there was simply no trace of her anywhere!

'Could something have happened to her...?' Gerald thought to himself, feeling slightly guilty. However, he knew that this wasn't the time to be hesitant.

After all, he was still alive and the king of the ocean's palace was now extremely close to them.

As Gerald woke Chester up, he truly hoped that Yume had just gone deeper into the cave where the Dead Annies had once been.

Soon enough, Chester awoke and both of them continued moving forward.

After swimming down the path for quite some time... Both of them were suddenly hit by a massive surge of water that seemed to be pulling both of them forward! As Chester and Gerald attempted to hold their ground, both of them looked at each other, silently agreeing that they were currently caught in a hidden undersea current.

Despite Gerald using all his force to resist being pulled in, he still ended up losing to the immensely strong current. Naturally, Chester failed to resist the current as well.

With their bodies now being flung deeper into the cave, Gerald noticed that it was quickly getting considerably smaller.

“Use Bone crush!” shouted Gerald as the space continued getting smaller and smaller.

Hearing that, both Chester and Gerald immediately began performing the skill to actively adapt their bodies to their environment.

With the cave’s size now getting to the size of a toddler—and rapidly continuing to get even smaller—Gerald knew that if they had performed the bone crush skill any later, even he would’ve ended up getting crushed to death despite having such a frightening physique.

At long last, they flung out of the other end of the cave!

The first thing that Gerald found surprising about where they had just landed was the fact that there was no seawater here. It was a completely dry space.

Regardless, the second he saw how injured Chester looked, Gerald immediately helped him up.

“I-I’m sorry for being so useless, sir!”

— To be Continued... —