

Chapter 1391

It was a little while later when Gerald—who had been riding in the car that Wesson had sent over—suddenly felt the car stop. Watching as the driver lit a cigarette and glanced at his rear-view mirror—displaying a cold grin to Gerald in the process—Gerald then asked, “We’re halfway there at best, aren’t we? Why did you stop the car?”

“Oh, I’m well aware. I’m just a bit tired so I need to rest for a bit!” replied the driver, contempt written all over his face.

“Tired? Please, you haven’t been driving for that long. Look, you can do whatever you please once I’ve reached my destination, but until then, you’d best drive properly!” said Gerald as he shook his head.

Quite honestly, Gerald was unwilling to just kill people if he didn’t need to. After all, all lives were valuable. If that hadn’t been his view on life, then he would’ve spent less time speaking nonsense with such people and just killed them the chance he could.

“Hah! Do you really think you’re some kind of big shot?” sneered the driver as he turned to look at the rear-view mirror again.

This time, however, six ghastly figures could be seen slowly approaching the car.

Noticing the presence of the demon-like people, Gerald then smiled wryly as he shook his head before saying, “So that’s why you’re being so cocky... Did Wesson arrange for you to stop halfway and have me killed?”

“Indeed! Mr. Xanthos planned for all this to happen! While you’re pretty unlucky, I can’t disobey my orders so you’d better get out and get killed already!” sneered the driver as he hopped out of the car before standing a distance away, his arms crossed as he got ready to enjoy Gerald’s misfortune.

Seeing that, Tilar—who had been sitting quietly next to Gerald this entire time—anxiously said, “W-what should we do, Mr. Crawford...? Those people look like demons...!”

“What’s there to be afraid of? Even if they truly are demons, I’ll just be a demon slayer then!” replied Gerald as he smiled before stepping out of the car.

Looking at the six people, Gerald’s smile remained as he asked, “Ladies and gentlemen, could it be that Wesson sent you over to kill me? Do you intend to deal with my friend here too once you’re done with me?”

“You’re correct. It seems that I didn’t have a wrong impression of you! Alas, while it’s a pity to just kill off such a smart young man as yourself, we don’t have a say in this!” said an old man—who appeared to be the leader of the six—as he shook his head.

“With how handsome he is, I have to agree! I wonder if I should pleasure myself with him first before we kill him...” said one of the women in the group as she stuck her tongue out rather lustfully.

“Don’t be naughty, sister. Let’s just hurry up and accomplish our task. Once he’s dead, we’ll head to where the miracle is to slaughter the rest of the people there!” replied the old man from before as he turned to look at the woman in resignation.

At that moment, Gerald curiously asked, “Quite honestly, there’s been something bugging me for a while now. I wonder if you’d be kind enough to resolve my doubts...”

“Oh? Well, since you’re about to die anyway, we’ll give you two minutes to ask any final questions!” replied the old man.

“Well, the thing is, I find it odd that I keep bumping into enemies—like you—who are so certain that you’ll actually be able to kill me. You all just seem so proud of your plans and intelligence... Is there a reason for that?” asked Gerald in a way that suggested that he was asking them for advice.

“If that’s the question, even I can answer that for you. All of them are rightfully confident since not only are they the six most powerful people in the world, but they’re also operating under Mr. Xanthos and his son, both infamously known for how great they are at strategizing! With the location and even time of your death set in stone, why wouldn’t they be proud about it?” scoffed the driver while smiling smugly.

“I see... Mr. Xanthos does seem to be the kind of person who enjoys getting rid of people once they’re useless to him... With that in mind, I’m sure he already has a backup plan should seven of his people end up failing to kill my friend here...”

“...You... What did you just say?” said the driver, his smugness instantly disappearing.

It was also obvious that the six others didn’t take kindly to having their intelligence humiliated. With that, the old man then casually said, “That’s quite enough. Your time is up! Enjoy your life in hell!”

Following that, the old man then waved his hand, intent on creating a blade of air that would fly toward Gerald and destroy all his internal organs!

However, though the old man’s palm was outstretched, he quickly realized—to his surprise—that no blade of air was formed! In fact, it seemed like his inner strength had just disappeared all of a sudden!

His eyes now wide open in disbelief, the old man then muttered, “...How... How is this even possible...?”

Noticing that their leader seemed to be having trouble, the other five instantly made their own moves, only to end up in a similar situation as the old man. None of them were even capable of inflicting any harm on Gerald...

“...You... Who exactly are you...?”

Chapter 1392

Though they were now sneering at him, all six of them found themselves taking a few steps back in their shock.

Gerald himself simply shook his head before saying, “I told you, didn’t I? People just seem to enjoy assuming that they can kill me, and you’re all living proof of that. Look, quite frankly, you’re all just grains of dust to me... And I can’t stand the sight of dust!”

Following that, Gerald flicked his finger at them, creating an explosive sound as a strong wave of air swiftly flew toward the six people!

Dust now flying in all directions—due to how powerful the blast of air was—all six of them instinctively turned around, intent on escaping! After all, they knew for a fact that getting caught in that attack would definitely spell instant death for them. What inhuman strength!

While running was the only thing on their mind now, none of them seemed to be able to even lift their legs! It was almost as though the lower half of their bodies had turned to lead!

Unable to even attempt escape, all six of them suddenly found themselves freezing on the spot as they took turns looking at each other with widened eyes... All of them were sure that they had just felt a breeze pass through their necks...

A second later, their decapitated heads then rolled to the ground!

Upon seeing that, the stupefied driver—who had been standing cross-armed at the side this entire time—found himself thinking, ‘...T-to think that this person would actually be this strong...!’

“D-don’t come any closer...!” shouted the trembling driver the second Gerald turned back to look at him.

When Gerald started walking toward him, the driver instantly fell to his knees as he pleaded, “P-please spare my life, boss...! Forgive me for failing to recognize how strong you were earlier...!”

His forehead now pressed against the ground, the driver felt as Gerald slowly placed his foot atop his head...

Wiping the dirt off his shoe on the driver’s hair, Gerald simply replied, “It’s far too late for that!”

Intensifying the force of his foot without warning, the driver couldn’t even brace himself as his head exploded into pieces! What a terrible way to die!

After witnessing all this, Tilar was barely able to avoid wetting himself again as his eyelids twitched rapidly.

Gerald, himself simply got back into the car before closing his eyes and ordering, “Get in the car and let’s go already!”

By this point, they weren’t all that far from where the miracle was, and Gerald wasn’t going to wait any longer than he needed to.

It was a little while later—inside the gigantic cave—when Peter said, “...This should be the end of the miracle, right, Miss Lockland...? To think that such a magical place even exists on this planet... I wouldn’t have believed it had I not witnessed all this for myself!”

He and the others had been deeply amazed by what they had seen so far in this magical underground world. Not only were there forests and treasures hovering all around them, a massive abyss—that led to who knows where—also laid in the middle of the area. Upon closer inspection, there also seemed to be an enormous platform that hovered high above the dead center of the abyss...

This entire place was simply too mystical...

Though Peter had previously considered himself to be quite knowledgeable and insightful, learning about the existence of such a place was a definite first for him.

Zyla herself appeared slightly surprised, though she was taking all this in much better compared to the others.

“...Indeed! This is the place!” replied Zyla with a nod.

“What...? Could Gerald have something he needs here...?” asked Peter curiously.

Zyla simply responded to his question with a simple nod as Leo said, “Speaking of which, when will Mr. Crawford arrive, Angelica...? Had I known about all this, then I would’ve definitely waited in the hotel to come here together with him!”

“He’s probably rushing over this very moment, so he’ll be here soon!” replied Zyla with a faint smile.

As soon as her sentence ended, terrible cries of pain—from the Xanthos family’s disciples—could be heard outside the cave!

“Speak of the devil...” muttered Zyla.

Chapter 1393

Seconds after she said that, everyone watched as a figure slowly walked toward them from afar... And as soon as he got close enough, Leo's eyes lit up as he declared, "So it really is you, Mr. Crawford!"

Upon realizing Gerald's arrival, Peter found himself smiling subtly as well... Until he got a closer look at Gerald. Widening his previously squinted eyes, the shocked Peter found himself muttering, "...Gerald... What on earth happened to your training...?"

It had just been a few days since he had last met Gerald... How had Gerald obtained such immensely frightening strength within that short period of time...?

'Just as Miss Lockland had said, could it be that Gerald is no longer a regular human being...?'

"Indeed. I inquired about it all the way until I finally managed to catch up to all of you here, sir! Zyla!" replied Gerald as he nodded with a smile before turning to look at the faintly discernible world hovering above him...

After a brief silence to recover from his surprise, Gerald eventually said, "...While I've found many divine artifacts on my way here, I never thought that I'd come across a place like this.... A space—consisting of multiple other spaces—that resembles a new world... How did you even find such a great place? Zyla...?"

"Miss Lockland was the one who found it and led us to this place... According to her, this place is related to you!" replied Monica who had also been present this entire time.

Upon hearing that, Gerald turned to face Zyla before realizing that she had finally left Rosie's body. As it turned out, she had managed to swiftly recover after possessing Rosie's body. With that in mind, Zyla had been living as an independent existence for a while now.

Regardless, Gerald then curiously asked, "It's... related to me...?"

Truth be told, he was still confused about many things. After all, Zyla—and the rest—hadn't had the luxury to sit and talk for long ever since that night. Due to that, Gerald still wasn't able to completely grasp what the Herculean Primordial Spirit even was.

Nodding in response, Zyla then replied, "Indeed. You should be well aware by now that there are a plethora of secrets hidden within you, Gerald... Also, now that we finally have time to talk, I wonder if you realize that though Liemis is a part of you, you aren't a part of him!"

"...Come again? What do you mean by that...?" asked Gerald in astonishment.

"It's a great secret that both Liemis and I found out about thousands of years ago... I've never told anyone else about this, but know that it's the main reason why I came to Earth with Liemis in the first place!" replied Zyla.

"...And that secret is also related to me...?" questioned Gerald as his eyes widened when he saw Zyla nodding in confirmation.

"Correct. In fact, the secret is pretty much directly linked to you. The truth is, while it was true that both Liemis and I had come looking for you back then, we hadn't properly factored in the time needed for us to locate you. Due to that, we bumped into some issues halfway through our journey, resulting in us dying here! Before dying, however, Liemis sacrificed himself in order to allow me to retain a small portion of the thought of my soul..." explained Zyla, her grief evident in her tone.

"That... doesn't answer why you were looking for me in the first place... Also, how would you even have known about my existence, thousands of years before I was even born?" replied the flabbergasted Gerald.

“I’m not quite sure how to explain it to you in detail... But just know that you’ve never truly disappeared. All that’s changed is the way you appear during different time periods!” said Zyla.

“...That is a lot of information to take in... I already have enough questions after saving two of my friends in the Gunter manor... Long story short, I bumped into some mishaps while saving them, and it’s basically how I awakened to the first stage of my potential. During that mishap, the term, ‘Herculean Primordial Spirit’ was also mentioned, a term which I still lack a comprehensive knowledge of... Whatever the case is, that’s the reason how I got so powerful in the past three days. At my current strength, I’m not even sure what realm I’m at anymore!”

Chapter 1394

After hearing Gerald’s explanation, Peter then said, “So that’s how you grew so rapidly in just three days!”

“So that’s the whole story... In the end, I guess that some things will always end up being unearthed no matter how hard we try to hide them... Everything is simply going according to fate... You know, despite being the most powerful person to have ruled over Jaellatra, even Liemis told me that nobody was able to escape such a fate... True to his words, Liemis wasn’t able to deny his fate either! Regardless, the Herculean Primordial Spirit is a power so strong that it’s capable of ruining the ultimate limit!” explained Zyla.

“...Ruining... the ultimate limit...?” muttered both Leo and Peter at the same time.

“Indeed. You see, the ultimate limit is without a start nor an end... It has the ability to remain indefinitely strong, and nobody should ever be able to even get in touch with it! Despite that, legend has it that the Herculean Primordial Spirit is able to ruin it!”

Upon hearing Zyla's explanation, everyone found themselves feeling simultaneously amazed and stupefied, including Gerald.

"...So... Since the King of Judgement Portal keeps wanting to capture me... Does that mean that he's been after the Herculean Primordial Spirit within me this entire time...?" summarized Gerald, finally seeing the bigger picture.

"You're correct, though the King of Judgement Portal is only one of the many people who wish to obtain that mystical power!" explained Zyla.

"...If that's the case, how come I never bumped into any bizarre people or incidents when I was younger?" asked Gerald as he thought about his childhood.

"That's because those people were afraid of accidentally activating your power too early. They feared that you'd begin slaughtering people like crazy once you got a taste of power, and that would surely be a disaster!" replied Zyla.

"...Then... does that confirm that I truly was Liemis in my previous life...?" asked Gerald.

"There certainly exists a possibility of that. Whatever the case is, your appearance marked the inevitable demise of Liemis. For now, just understand that both you and Liemis are two independent individuals. While the two of you are similar in the way that you both owned the Formidable Primordial Spirit, you're clearly different from him since you own the Herculean Primordial Spirit as well! In a way, you hold more prestige than he does!" replied Zyla.

At that moment, Peter—who had been listening closely to the conversation and pondering about it this entire time—found himself asking, "...If that's the case, Miss Lockland, doesn't that suggest that it was the Herculean Primordial Spirit that brought Gerald into existence...?"

"Quite the contrary, in fact. Gerald's the one who attained the Herculean Primordial Spirit!"

His eyes now widened in shock, Peter then said, “Then... Does that mean that Gerald currently bears an immensely strong power?”

“A power that strikes fear into the hearts of many people, yes!” replied Zyla.

“...But... Why did the Herculean Primordial Spirit appear...? Also, while it’s true that I’ve awakened to the first stage of my potential, it isn’t really as strong as you’ve pictured it to be... All that’s changed is that I now rarely ever bump into anyone who’s capable of fighting against me!” said Gerald—who was completely flabbergasted by this point—as he gave a wry smile.

“Well... There are quite a few theories as to how the Herculean Primordial Spirit came to be... While some claimed that it appeared due to the transformation of an immensely powerful person—who owned the Immortal Body—, Liemis rejected that theory. After all, despite thorough investigation, no records about such an incident happening were ever found! However, we did find a very important clue,” replied Zyla as she shook her head.

“See, the clue hinted that we needed to find something called the Mackusion... From what we managed to deduce, activating it would allow us to make more sense about a lot of things! With that in mind, we rushed to earth the first thing we could. We thought that we could use the time—while waiting for you to appear—to look for the Mackusion and hopefully gain some answers that we were seeking. Unfortunately, that didn’t happen. We weren’t able to accomplish a lot at all!”

“Also, you stated that despite awakening to the first stage of your talent, all you were able to feel was a massive increase in your training, correct? That you didn’t feel like your power was as terrifying as I made it sound? Well, I’m not sure who you met up with before you and I first got acquainted, but during our first meeting, I found that your Dehlere Foundation had already been ruined! Due to someone ruining it, you haven’t been able to awaken your Dehlere Foundation!” added Zyla.

“What? Ruined? But how is that even possible? I never even got in touch with any mysterious or powerful people at the time. Who could have ruined my Dehlere Foundation?” replied Gerald, shocked.

Chapter 1395

Following that, he then listened to Zyla's explanation on what the Dehlere Foundation actually was.

Essentially, the Dehlere Foundation was a fundamental part of a cultivator. Putting it into simpler terms, it functioned like a source of water, the most basic of necessities.

If one's Dehlere Foundation was ruined, then even if that person somehow managed to train to a high level by relying on their endeavors, they'd never truly be able to achieve their strongest form.

As for how to awaken one's Dehlere Foundation, apparently one needed to go through the baptism of heaven—of which—Gerald had undergone following Master Ghost's instructions. According to Zyla, Gerald should have awakened both his Dehlere Foundation and his functional yin energy—which he was now able to control—right after completing the baptism of heaven. However, since his Dehlere Foundation had been ruined from the start, there wasn't anything to activate.

That explained why though his strength had greatly increased upon unlocking the first stage of his potential, it was still far from Zyla's expectations.

"What should I do then...? Could I already be close to the limits of my training? Will it be difficult for me to progress any further than this...?" asked Gerald curiously.

"Well, with the aid of both the dragon blood jade pendant as well as the Mackusion, there's a chance of restoring your Dehlere Foundation!" replied Zyla with a subtle smile.

"It's true that the dragon blood jade pendant is very magical... Well, since I already have that, where should I even start looking for the Mackusion...?"

“Honestly, I had thought that we’d need quite a bit of time just to look for it... However, things are different now. Quite frankly, I think we’ve already gained the two most magical items between heaven and earth!” declared Zyla.

“...What? Then... Does that mean you already have the Mackusion with you?” asked Gerald with a smile.

“No, of course not... However, we’re currently where the Mackusion should be!”

“...What?” exclaimed everyone, surprised by Zyla’s sudden claim.

“...So that’s why you earlier said that this was the place... As it turned out, you already knew that the Mackusion was located here!” said Peter

“Exactly! Still, with how smoothly we were able to find this place, I have a feeling that Liemis must have given us his blessings in secret!” replied Zyla, a satisfied expression on her face.

“Then... Does that mean that the mystery that’s been puzzling us for so long will soon finally be resolved...?” asked Gerald.

“That should be the case. Regardless, let’s talk about that after we activate the Mackusion,” replied Zyla as she pointed at the high platform that was hovering in the air.

“Let’s head up there and try to activate it together, Gerald!” added Zyla as her beautiful figure gracefully floated toward the platform.

Gerald himself followed closely behind, and soon enough, both of them set foot atop the platform.

Though it appeared to be a vacant space at first glance, upon closer inspection, Gerald realized that obscure lines could be seen all over the platform... In a way, it resembled a giant hovering compass.

“Those are divine lines, and they’re used to summon the Mackusion. While they’re only able to be activated with an immensely strong force—that neither of us can hope to attain alone—by working together, we’ll surely be able to control the power of the dragon blood jade pendant that’s required to activate it!” explained Zyla.

While Gerald already knew that the dragon blood jade pendant was rather extraordinary from before, he now found it to be even more mysterious. After all, there were lots of powerful functions to the pendant that he had yet to develop and discover.

Whatever the case was, both of them immediately began channeling their energy together in hopes of activating the Mackusion. Soon enough, Gerald watched as the dragon blood jade pendant began giving off a golden glow...

Shortly after, the divine lines—that were quite obscure before this—began emitting a bright, blue light that encroached from the corners of the platform all the way to the center-most point.

It wasn’t long before a gale of wind blew from the center of the platform, and the next thing they knew, a blue crystal—the size of an adult fist—had appeared before them!

Seeing the blue glow that followed after the sudden gust of wind that stemmed from the platform, Peter was barely able to hold his shock as he muttered, “Could... could that be the Mackusion...?”

As for Gerald,—who was standing rather close to it—he found himself feeling rather amazed by the crystal’s aura as well.

Eventually, the Mackusion’s glow slowly dimmed, and Gerald placed his palm under the glowing crystal...

As if on cue, the stone then slowly descended into his hand, emitting a tiny warmth the entire time.

Chapter 1396

“...From the second it rested on my palm, I could already feel how powerful this extraordinary-looking item was... You know, my family has a picture of the sun that is capable of predicting the future... Does the Mackusion have such a power as well?” asked the awe-struck Gerald.

“It does, though that isn’t its only ability. Regardless, go ahead and try using the dragon blood jade pendant as a medium to communicate with it. Ask a question that you truly desire the answer to, and with any luck, it’ll respond to you! This is also the perfect chance for us to see how accurate the legends are when it comes to the Mackusion’s immense magical powers!” replied Zyla.

“Copy that,” replied Gerald as he closed his eyes and did what Zyla suggested.

Not long after, a beam of light shot out from the pendant and entered the Mackusion!

However, even after Gerald reopened his eyes seconds later, nothing seemed to happen... Waiting in silence together with Zyla, both of them watched wide-eyed as the Mackusion—that had previously been resting on Gerald’s palm—slowly rose and began hovering in the air...

Shortly after, the Mackusion suddenly flashed a blindingly blue light that caused Gerald and Zyla to each take a step back!

When they opened their eyes again, they were both shocked to see that the blue light had caused a gigantic screen of sorts to manifest before them... Well, it was less of an actual manifestation and more of an illusion, to be more exact.

Regardless, the greatly shocked Gerald watched as the screen slowly displayed the image of the ocean... Though there was nothing but still water across the horizon, the image simply caused a feeling of unnerve among those who looked at it.

After who knows how long, a large ship slowly began sailing into view... Standing on the deck, two women could be seen chatting with each other as they enjoyed the night view of the sea...

Though the scene portrayed was nothing to write home about, Gerald found himself breathing heavily as hints of tears formed in the corners of his eyes.

One of the women on deck... Was Mila...! This was the ship she was on before her eventual disappearance!

By this point, Gerald was so shocked that he didn't even dare to blink. After all, while he knew that Mila had been kidnapped by the Sun League, he had no idea how the kidnapping process had gone. Hell, he wasn't even sure how powerful the members of the Sun League were yet.

With that in mind, he kept his eyes peeled to make sure he didn't miss any details...

Shortly after, the ocean's waves grew violent without warning. The waves swirled so intensely that soon enough, a massive whirlpool appeared right before the ship! Like a gigantic gluttonous mouth, the whirlpool drew the ship nearer and nearer.

On the screen, Mila could be seen helplessly holding onto her fearful classmate's hands, trying her best to calm her friend as well as herself.

Before either of them could even calm themselves, a massive spaceship—made of bronze—suddenly emerged from the depths of the ocean, sending millions of waves rolling!

All it took was a single glance for Gerald to recognize the large spaceship. It... It was the spaceship belonging to the Sun League...!

Watching as the spaceship swallowed Mila and the rest of her ship up before descending below the waves again, Gerald found himself barely able to hold himself back. He desperately wanted to rush over and save her, even if he knew that there was little chance of that.

Whatever the case was, it appeared that his sudden emotional outburst directly affected the screen.

Noticing how distorted the images on the screen were becoming, Zyla instantly held onto his hand before saying, “Calm yourself, Gerald! All this happened in the past!”

Hearing that, Gerald calmed down slightly, and the screen returned to its initial clarity.

However, the scene was now completely different from before. At the moment, it was now displaying what seemed to be a deserted island...

Chapter 1397

Several mountains could be seen surrounding the rather large island, and odd flowers could be seen growing all over the place.

Regardless, the second Gerald saw the island, he immediately knew what that place was. It was Warhill Island, the place where the pledge of the holy water was being held!

'By this point, I'm sure grandpa and the others have long arrived there...'

Whatever the case was, Gerald now had a rough idea on how to use the Mackusion. Essentially, after communicating with it through one's soul, everything that the communicator thought, missed, or was confused about would instantly reveal themselves on the screen, one after another.

He got to that conclusion since after witnessing what had happened to Mila, the screen was now displaying the place where his grandpa had gone to in order to participate in the pledge of the holy water.

As for why Gerald barely had any doubts that this was Warhill Island, the legendary place where the pledge of the holy water was held, it was because he had seen the upturned—but still dazzling—statue of Angelica as the screen panned closer to the island.

However, Gerald soon realized that even after some time had passed, the screen hadn't revealed a single person!

'...Could it be that grandpa and the others have yet to arrive there...?' wondered Gerald, bewildered.

Pondering about it for a second, Gerald momentarily shook the thought off before pointing at Angelica's fallen statue and asking, "Speaking of which, what exactly is the relationship between you and that statue, Zyla? Why does a statue of you even exist on the island where the pledge of the holy water is held?"

"Well, first off, you should know that the island isn't all that far from the king of the ocean's palace. With that in mind, both the island and the statue worked together as a seal, preventing me from leaving the king of the ocean's palace back then!" replied Zyla rather casually as she looked at the statue of her.

“...I see. While we’re at it, what do you know about the pledge of the holy water...? According to the legends that I’ve heard, only those whose inner strengths have long entered the realm of legends are invited to participate in it. However, I’ve always found it odd that they don’t invite those from cryptic families—like the Gunters—over. Even if those from the Sun League have some sort of scheme in mind, those from cryptic families would most definitely be more exceptional than the people they’ve been inviting throughout the years!” asked Gerald.

“Gerald, I hope you understand that cryptic families aren’t considered orthodox. After all, they rely on external forces to increase their training. Great masters, on the other hand, have true inner strength and rely solely on their training to get to where they are. With that said, the degree of utilization of great masters is much higher compared to those from cryptic families!” explained Zyla.

“Also, the reason it’s called the pledge of the holy water is because of the existence of a holy pool on that island. It’s one of the entrances into Jaellatra!” added Zyla.

“An entrance into Jaellatra you say? If that’s the case, then does that mean that the legend revolving around drinking holy water—at the pledge—to attain immortality is actually achieved by gaining entry into Jaellatra? Then... does that mean that there’s a possibility that those who never returned from the pledge of the holy water may not actually be dead and have simply been brought to Jaellatra?” replied Gerald, feeling enlightened.

“Indeed. Jaellatra occasionally recruits suitable new people in order to maintain its existence and development. In fact, Leo’s one of the younger people who were recruited!” explained Zyla as she turned to look at Leo.

“I see... I am curious though... How does Jaellatra even exist...?” inquired Gerald.

“As I’ve said, Jaellatra isn’t a particularly special place. Not only is it a place that can be found on Earth, but those living there are just as human as we are. If you’re particularly nit-picky, then one of the more major differences between our world and Jaellatra is the fact that Jaellatra is located within earth. In a way, that means that to them, we’re living on the outer layer of earth!”

“While we’re on the topic, I’ll give you a bit of a history lesson on the place. See, many destructive incidents took place between heaven and earth thousands of years ago. Due to all the chaos, numerous civilizations slowly met their end, and the Shunzuog Civilization was no exception to that. With the eventual downfall of the Shunzuog Civilization, several of the civilization’s valuable treasures and its best features ended up disappearing for good. The Shunzuog Civilization truly was at the final phase of the great civilization of antiquity... Thankfully, it was around then when those from that generation discovered a new path that led to an underground land that they later named Jaellatra!”

“Following that, they got isolated from the world for a very long time. Regardless, according to legends, no humans appeared on the surface of the Earth for the longest time after that. In fact, the only living things on earth at the time were a few rare animals—from the Shunzuog Civilization—who managed to survive the catastrophes!”

“Of course, humans slowly reappeared on the surface of the earth again after a very long time, and when that happened, they eventually got into contact with those living in Jaellatra. Following that, the inhabitants of Jaellatra sometimes lent a hand to those training themselves to attain spiritual enlightenment. While they didn’t have Dehlere Foundations within their bodies, they were able to make use of external forces, allowing them to attain similarly high levels of training!” explained Zyla.

Nodding slightly, Gerald then replied, “So... I’m guessing that’s the origin story of cryptic families?”

Smiling as she nodded in return, Zyla then said, “Indeed. Quite honestly, the Judgment Portal group is comparable to a dormant pawn that the King of Judgment Portal prepared ages ago. He’s been waiting for you to appear for a good, long time now!”

Chapter 1398

As Gerald pondered on that statement for a while, he suddenly heard the other women—who had been standing silently at the side this entire time—scream!

Peter himself was now looking immensely worried, and he immediately pointed at the screen before shouting, “Gerald, look there!”

Turning to look at the screen—that was still displaying Warhill Island—Gerald quickly realized that humans were now present. Of course, that wasn’t the reason the girls were screaming.

The reason they were so terrified was because the people being displayed were nothing more than corpses who looked like they had died horrible deaths!

From what Gerald could estimate, there were about a hundred dead great masters—who had probably come from all over the place just to participate in the pledge—at the catastrophic scene.

Looking at the sea of dead bodies, Gerald’s eyelids instantly began twitching rapidly as he thought, ‘Grandpa...!’

He was right to be worried. After all, his grandfather had left for the pledge of the holy water quite recently.

As he scanned through the many corpses—to see if his grandfather was one of them—Gerald soon caught sight of Christopher’s dead body! From the looks of it, his chest seemed to have been broken by the force of a palm... The peculiar thing was, Gerald noticed that Christopher’s mirror was lying right next to his corpse!

Gerald distinctly remembered that he had placed his grandfather in charge of the divine artifact before they left for the pledge. With that in mind, how could it have returned to Christopher’s hands? The most shocking thing, however, was the fact that the artifact had been smashed to pieces!

“A-all of them are dead...!” shouted Peter as he leaped over to where Gerald and Zyla were, an immensely shocked expression on his face.

As Gerald continued scanning through the screen to see if his grandfather's corpse was also present, the scene suddenly switched again...

The screen was now displaying an area underground that Gerald was no stranger to. It was the place where the deity had been buried.

'...What could the Mackusion be trying to tell me...?'

Whatever the case was, there was an unsettling silence in the unchanging scene, prompting Gerald to ponder, 'What on earth are you trying to tell me...? I've already sealed this place, haven't I...?'

As Gerald continued wondering what all this meant, the screen soon switched to another display.

Before Gerald could even say a thing, he suddenly heard Peter shout, "The Crawford Manor?!"

"...Oh? You know where my house is, sir...?" asked Gerald.

Hearing that, Peter simply grunted as he nodded. Following that, he turned to look at the screen again, his eyes squinted and seemingly deep in thought.

Gerald continued looking at the screen as well. In a way, the way the Mackusion was portraying his family's manor resembled the image of the ancient tomb from earlier. In other words, it was filled with an eerie silence and little to no changes could be detected within the Crawford family's spacious manor.

It wasn't long before the image switched yet again, this time displaying a vast and starry sky in the depths of space...

Seemingly wandering aimlessly around, Gerald watched as the massive Sun League spaceship drifted into view... In a way, it almost felt like a ghost wandering around the universe...

Chapter 1399

Shortly after, even that image disappeared, and it was then when the Mackusion's glow slowly retracted before eventually falling back into Gerald's palm.

"...Miss Lockland, have you any idea what the Mackusion was trying to reveal based on what it showed us earlier? Could something terrible have befallen those who participated in the pledge of the holy water...?" asked Gerald rather anxiously.

"I have a feeling that seems to be the case... Regardless, not only did the Mackusion reveal that the journey of the participants of the pledge of the holy water was anything but smooth, it also displayed Liemis's tomb as well as your family's manor. From what I can assume, it's predicting that the two places aren't at peace and something is very likely going to happen soon!" replied Zyla.

"...What? Then there's no time to waste! Let's head over to those places to investigate immediately" said the shocked Gerald immediately.

"Indeed! Speaking of which, now that you have the Mackusion on hand, do take proper care of it, Gerald. Remember, it'll help you heal your Dehlere Foundation! With that in mind, please start relying on it whenever you come face to face with strong enemies, even if you think you're able to go against them without the Mackusion's help!" replied Zyla in concern.

"Don't worry, I already understand that, Zyla. Whatever the case is, the important thing now is for us to head to Liemis's tomb as well as the Crawford Manor. Aside from that, I also wish to head to where the pledge of the holy water is being held to look for my grandpa. Though I tried as best as I could to locate him on the screen earlier, I wasn't able to find his corpse at all! That means he could still be alive!" said Gerald with a slight frown.

Nodding in response, Zyla then replied, "Indeed. Let's head off then!"

Though there was no time to linger there for long, Gerald was well aware that there were still a few divine artifacts in there that he had yet to properly investigate. With that in mind, he was prepared to seal the miracle with a formation—once they got out—so that he could have a better look at those artifacts in the future.

Nearing the tomb's entrance, Gerald saw that night had fallen outside. Just as they were about to step out, however, Gerald suddenly paused before saying, "Speaking of which... Those from the Xanthos family had placed an extremely strong poison right outside the cave while all of you were inside... While I've used a formation to isolate it, you probably won't be able to resist such potent poison..."

Following that, he gently tapped Rosie's, Jasmine's, and Monica's shoulders, effectively sealing their acupuncture points.

With that done, he then safely led them out of the cave.

As was expected, those from the Xanthos family had been lying in wait for them not too far from the mouth of the cave. There were over a hundred of them, and all of them were armed with guns.

Even so, Wesson clearly wasn't expecting them to leave the cave in one piece, and this was made evident by how shocked he looked.

"...You... How could you still be alive...?" muttered Wesson.

Watching as Wesson then took a step back, a gloomy-looking youth donning black clothes—who had been standing at the side this entire time—found his eyelids twitching slightly in his surprise.

“...So you actually managed to walk out of that place alive, even after being poisoned by the Seven Monsters from Snow Mountain... How interesting...! It seems that Mr. Xanthos wasn't kidding when he said that there's more to you people than meets the eye! With that in mind, I guess you've earned the right to die by my hands!” declared the youth as he squinted his eyes slightly.

Shaking her head in resignation, Zyla simply replied, “Do you really think you can kill us...?”

“There's no need to waste your energy trying to talk with these people, Zyla... I've already gotten used to their cockiness by this point... Regardless, while I've never heard of the Seven Monsters from Snow Mountain before, I do know that your six older siblings were all equally ignorant! Though they've all died by my hand, I do acknowledge that it mustn't have been easy for you to get to your current level of training. With that in mind, I hope that you won't continue doing evil... Elsewise, I'm afraid you'll end up dead soon as well! You're still young, so just head back to Snow Mountain to train yourself properly!” advised Gerald with a bitter smile on his face.

Upon hearing that, Sloan instantly laughed aloud before smiling wickedly as he said, “You've gone mad, haven't you? Open your eyes already! Who do you truly think is going to die miserably in this situation?!”

As everyone took aim at Gerald, the youth in black clothes raised his hand slightly.

Narrowing his eyes so much that they almost formed perfectly straight lines, Yvon—the youth in black—then said, “Does that mean you're admitting to killing my six elder siblings...?”

“I am, and quite frankly, I could end your life in a second if I wanted to. Please just give up already and let us pass. I still have things to do and I really don't see the need to slaughter all of you! Now leave while you can!” retorted Gerald who really couldn't be bothered about them.

“Leave...? Hah! I suppose you've never heard about the immense reputation of the Seven Monsters! I'll have you know I'm vastly different from them!” roared Yvon before displaying a malevolent smile that sent chills down the spines of all who saw it.

Monica and the other women even found themselves taking a few steps back in fear...

Chapter 1400

Gerald found himself frowning as well at Yvon's reaction.

From what he could sense, Yvon's training wasn't all that high, and Gerald was pretty sure he could easily finish him off.

Despite knowing that, Yvon's immense confidence was actually enough to cause slight unnerve within Gerald. It made Gerald wonder if he was actually the strongest among the Seven Monsters.

Shaking the thought off, Gerald then coldly replied, "I guess I have no choice but to deal with you first then. I'd rather not have to worry about any trouble you cause in the future!"

Following that, Gerald then flicked his finger slightly at Yvon without actually using any of his inner strength.

Though he was only doing so to prompt the youth to make a move—so that he could analyze Yvon's movements—he was surprised to see Yvon flicking his finger back as well.

As Gerald looked curiously at Yvon, the youth then declared, "I told you, I'm different from the others!"

The second Yvon's sentence ended, his form began to waver... The next thing Gerald knew, Yvon now looked exactly like him!

As he watched as Yvon—who was now a spitting image of him—smiled even more contemptuously than before, Gerald revealed his own smile as he said, “How interesting... I have to say, your disguise is quite concise!”

In response, Yvon simply repeated what Gerald said, word for word. Though even his voice was indiscernible from the real Gerald’s, Yvon’s constant contemptuous gaze reminded everyone that he wasn’t the original.

“So, this is your ability?” asked Gerald as Yvon immediately mimicked what he said.

“You’re getting on my nerves...” replied Gerald, feeling rather annoyed now as Yvon repeated the same phrase, a smug look on his face.

“Mirroring me, aren’t you? I wonder what would happen if I threw a punch at you... Let’s see how capable you are of mimicking my power!” retorted Gerald.

As Yvon—once again—mimicked Gerald’s words, Gerald paid him no attention and instantly punched the air before him!

Though Gerald only used a small portion of his strength, it was enough to cause several shadowy fists to manifest and launch toward Yvon with an explosive sound!

With such outrageous power, dust flew all over the place as the shadowy fists continued flying toward the youth!

Yvon himself still had a contemptuous smile on his face as he watched the fists flying toward him from afar. However, just as he was about to imitate Gerald’s skill, he quickly realized how powerful the force before him actually was as it got dangerously close!

Completely stunned on the spot by the immensely imposing aura of the attack, Yvon found himself staring wide-eyed at the incoming fists, unable to do anything but mutter, “T-too strong...!”

A split second later, the shadowy punches collided against his body, instantly forcing Yvon to revert to his true appearance as he screamed in pain!

By the time his lifeless body hit the ground, Yvon looked less like a human and more of a boiler that had just exploded... Nothing more than a badly mutilated lump of flesh now, it was a death more terrible than anyone could’ve ever anticipated!

While Yvon did feel deeply regretful split seconds before he died, wondering why he hadn’t realized how strong the person standing before him actually was, it was far too late for that...

With Yvon now out of the picture, Gerald simply shook his head before saying, “What’s so different about you? As far as I could tell, all the members of the Seven Monsters are more or less the same!”

Watching as Gerald sneered, Wesson and his son—who had witnessed all that had just happened—could only continue staring wide-eyed at Gerald for the moment, completely stupefied.

Chapter 1401

The person standing before them... He wasn’t human at all...! How insanely powerful...!

As the father and son from the Xanthos family gulped, they recalled how they had first thought that Yvon possessed unique capabilities that would allow him to slaughter just about anyone... Now,

however, all the youth was, was a lump of flesh! And all it had taken for Gerald to end his life was a single punch!

Being an extremely experienced and slick person, Wesson knew that he, his son, and possibly even his entire family was done for if he didn't act fast!

With that in mind, he instantly knelt before begging, "B-boss...! Please spare our lives...! Sloan, hurry and get to your knees! Kneel before the boss and start begging for forgiveness as well!"

Following that, Wesson tugged on his son's arm till he knelt beside him. Sloan himself wasn't about to disagree with his father's actions. Both of them were well aware that they weren't in any position to even dare to further offend this group of people...

"...Very good!" said Gerald with a faint smile.

Upon hearing that, Wesson—who already had a face filled with tears and snot—immediately replied, "Thank you for sparing our lives, boss...!"

"Oh? I never said I'd be sparing your lives, though. I hope you realize that while I've already given you several chances to repent, neither of you took any of them! Just so you know, I once swore that I'd kill whoever tried to kill me first... Naturally, I'd have to kill their entire families as well... With that in mind, I'm not about to break my oath, especially not for you two!" retorted Gerald.

"...W-what...?!" stuttered Wesson, now sweating profusely as he feebly sat on the ground.

'...If only I had previously known how powerful this ferocious demon truly was, I'd never have dared to offend him in the first place...!'

Following that, things proceeded rather simply. After all, it was naturally no problem for Gerald to deal with those small fries.

As the group then began heading toward the ancient tomb, Gerald recalled how he had sealed the tomb with a formation after finding out where Liemis had been hidden. He ended up leaving it back then since there was still a lot he had yet to figure out at the time.

Now, however, several of his previous questions were already resolved. What more, he had even found out a lot more about the Sun League, and he felt that he was much closer to finally cracking the group's secrets.

Still, according to Zyla, the Mackusion should have revealed more information if his Dehlere Foundation hadn't been ruined...

Even so, it still revealed enough for Gerald and the rest to be able to witness a few incidents at several key locations such as the ancient tomb and the Crawford Manor. Worrying that something would happen at those places soon, the group had wasted no time in heading to the ancient tomb.

When the cave leading to the tomb was in sight, Gerald explained, "You know, it was honestly lucky that Christopher had forced me into the underground palace back when he was still pursuing me... Otherwise, I would've never been able to find Liemis! Regardless, I made sure to seal the place up before leaving!"

As they got closer, however, Gerald soon felt his eyelids twitch.

He distinctly remembered sealing off the mouth of the cave with a large stone... However, someone seemed to have smashed that stone into pieces!

With the cave entrance now open to outsiders and chunks of stone scattered messily all over the place, Gerald felt his heart skip a beat as he said, "Something's wrong...!"

Watching as Gerald dashed into the cave, Peter and Zyla couldn't help but turn to look at each other.

Zyla, in particular, was displaying a cocktail of emotions on her face as she attempted to process all that was happening.

Quickly shaking the thoughts off, she then leaped forward until eventually standing by Gerald's side.

Gerald himself was momentarily paralyzed in shock. From what he could see, not only had the entire cave grown much messier than before, but the anaconda—that had been living here for at least thousands of years—was dead as well! With a clean puncture to the snake's head, it was evident that it was killed with only a single move.

Even so, the biggest shock yet was the fact that the eternal coffin had disappeared!

"...L-Liemis... Someone's taken Liemis away...!"

Chapter 1402

Despite her high status, Gerald watched as her eyes grew red and teary. Who could blame her? After all, she had been waiting for this moment for thousands of years... To finally be able to reunite with Liemis... To think that even after going through so many twists and turns, Zyla was still unable to see even his corpse! Who was the one responsible for such cruelty...?

'From what Zyla had told me, Liemis's thought of the soul had ceased to exist around twenty years ago... It was simply something inevitable that came with my birth... Regardless, while his corpse once lay here, even that is gone now...'

Clenching his fists tightly, Gerald then said, “Putting aside the fact that this place is highly secluded, I even sealed this place using a formation in the dragon blood jade pendant... Who could’ve been capable enough to do all this...?”

“...From what I was able to see while we were still outside, your formation wasn’t ruined at all... In fact, it was solved, and rather easily too, from the looks of it! The person who broke in seems to have been very familiar with the topography here as well! They aren’t lacking strength-wise either since they managed to slaughter this giant anaconda!” muttered Peter as he gloomily walked over to the vexed Gerald’s side.

Peter was naturally just as bummed out as the duo were since, in a way, Liemis had indirectly saved his life before this... What more, Zyla had helped him a lot throughout their journey. In the end, not only did he fail to reunite her with Liemis’s corpse, but his corpse wasn’t even present anymore! This only served to increase Peter’s guilt.

As Gerald stood silently at the side in self-reproach, Zyla—who had been standing quite close to the dead anaconda—found herself shedding a tear that rolled down her cheek and onto the giant snake’s corpse...

With a rather clear ‘plop’, Zyla’s teardrop instantly caused a green light to be emitted from the giant snake...!

Eventually forming the shape of a green orb of light, the orb began emitting a somewhat ‘buzzy’ sound, prompting both Zyla and Gerald to curiously walk closer to investigate.

After hearing it make a few more strange noises, they were finally able to discern a few words! The orb of green was trying to communicate with them!

“You’re... back...!” said the rather awkward and unclear voice.

“...Are you the giant anaconda?” asked Gerald in surprise.

While he was glad that they were still able to tell what it was trying to say—albeit a bit slowly—Gerald couldn’t help but feel that the orb of green greatly resembled the thought of the soul of the Gunter family’s ancestor that he had taken out the other day.

“Yes, it’s me... Sadly, I’m only capable of meeting you like this since I’ve died, as you can see... Regardless, I’m only showing myself now since while I was bracing myself for death back then, I had retained my thought of the soul by holding onto the thought that I wouldn’t pass on until I received the tiniest amount of holy strength... Due to the tear, I was able to manifest this form with some effort...!” explained the giant anaconda extremely slowly.

“...I see... What exactly happened here...? And don’t worry, I’ll be finding a suitable body for you to attain rebirth immediately after this! After all, since you’ve managed to manifest the thought of your soul, I’ll just need to use Thunder Eruption to transfer your soul over!” said Gerald who honestly found the giant snake to be quite pitiful.

After all, it had been captured when it was just a tiny snake before being placed in here as a beast to guard the tomb. In other words, it had been locked up in here for thousands of years by now.

Now that its mission was finally complete, Gerald had been planning to get a primary forest for it to live there freely for the rest of its life. Though it was just an animal, Gerald personally felt the need to treat it as a senior. After all, it had helped him back then when he first entered the ancient tomb.

“While I appreciate it, know that your efforts will be useless. It’s taken great effort for me to retain my soul while waiting for your arrival in the past twenty over days... With that said, I’ve had to deplete the primary part of my soul in order to keep this tiny thought of my soul intact for this long. Due to that, once I pass on my message, I’ll sadly be disappearing for good!” replied the giant snake’s soul with a sigh.

Just from the snake’s words alone, Gerald could feel how lonely it was, and how much it yearned to go to the outside world.

“...Don’t say that... There must be a way to save you! I’ve plenty of ideas on how to achieve that!” said Gerald quickly.

Ignoring that statement, the snake then replied in an increasingly weakened voice, “I... Was slaughtered by an extremely powerful masked old man... Be careful if you ever bump into him... After all, not only is he cruel and vicious, but he also seems to know you well... Since he’s snatched the God of Battle’s corpse away, it’s evident that he’s trying to gain something from him...!”

“A... masked old man...?” muttered both Gerald and Zyla as they turned to look at each other...

Chapter 1403

“...Before that, why would you claim that he knows Gerald well...?” asked Zyla as she wiped her tears away while looking at the orb of green.

“It’s because he knew this place a little too well. You see, the formation Gerald used to seal the cave is the formation of the jade pendant, a formation that the God of Battle bestowed upon Gerald... While ordinary people would undoubtedly be unable to ever solve it, that old man had done so with great ease... What more, after slaughtering me, he used several methods to investigate the God of Battle’s corpse, mentioning Gerald’s name multiple times in the process... Aside from that, he also kept repeating the word ‘secret’, so I have a sneaking suspicion that he knows Gerald well!” explained the giant anaconda.

“Regardless, he didn’t seem to attain what he wanted, which prompted him to bring the eternal coffin away... Thankfully, it hadn’t dawned upon him at the time that I had rather strong soul power. It comes with living for over thousands of years. Whatever the case was, though my body perished, my soul remained, which is why I managed to see all this!” added the snake.

Hearing that, Gerald could only frown as he fell deep into thought.

Just as the snake had said, the formation had been embedded into his memories through the jade pendant... Seeing that knowledge of that wasn't solving anything, he then thought about who knew about this place. Aside from Christopher, his grandfather, and the mysterious person who had led him here in the first place, there wasn't anyone else that Gerald could think of. Speaking of that mysterious person, he had yet to appear before Gerald till this very day...

While he knew that something had happened for Christopher to die such a terrible death, Gerald wasn't sure whether his grandfather—and the others who had headed to the pledge of the holy water with him—were still alive. Quite frankly, he didn't even dare think about it. However, that did mean that his grandfather and Christopher were physically unable to be the culprits of this incident...

With that said, the mysterious person was the most likely person to have done all this...

'...The mysterious person... It couldn't be him, right...? It just wouldn't make any sense! After all, he was the one who had led me to the eternal coffin... It must've been done out of goodwill, no...?' Gerald thought to himself, remembering how the mysterious person had left him a clue when he had met a brick wall while investigating the Sun League back then.

With the help of his clue, Gerald was able to progress almost instantaneously that day...

'He had anonymously sent that map—leading to the eternal coffin—to me back then, telling me to head there alone... After grandpa agreed that I should go, I eventually found the coffin, which allowed me to make such rapid progress in my training back then... Following that, I finally took revenge for my family by taking the Moldells out... Regardless, he was also the reason I got so many hints regarding Zyla's incident. Up till this point, he's been helping me this entire time... Could it be that he's just using me...? Is he planning on eventually harming me...? But that doesn't make any sense! At least not for the moment...' Gerald pondered.

“Are you perhaps acquainted with such a secretive and powerful person, Gerald...?” asked Zyla as she looked at him.

After thinking for a short while, Gerald then nodded before saying, “...As a matter of fact, I am! I’ve mentioned him to you before... He’s my master, Finnley, and he’s so strong that even at my current level of training, I’m still not confident of standing against him! Just so you know, while I’ve sparred with him daily—while I was still training under him—not once had he ever found the need to display his true strength!”

Upon hearing that, Zyla’s and Peter’s expressions instantly turned stern. After all, someone who was able to create fear in Gerald—even at his current level of strength—was surely no ordinary powerful person...

“However, I’m indebted to Finnley. After all, not only did he save my life, but he’s also the one who first taught me martial arts! He’s always been kind to me, so I truly see no reason for him to do all this...” added Gerald.

He simply couldn’t figure it out at all. After all, Gerald had even previously reassured himself that Finnley was the mysterious person who had been helping him out in secret, and he had always felt at ease with this conclusion. This was due to how relaxed he had always felt whenever he was around that old man.

“...Still, if he truly is that nice to you, don’t you find it odd that he hasn’t met up with you by this point? Call it a gut feeling, but I feel that your Dehlere Foundation being ruined is directly linked to him!” said Zyla after thinking for a while.

Hearing that, Gerald instantly felt an acute pain in his heart as he shook his head before replying, “That’s simply impossible! I refuse to believe that he’d treat me this way! Even if he really was the cause of that, I still wish to investigate before jumping to any conclusions!”

At that moment, Jasmine—who had been standing close by this entire time—stepped forward and pointed at the orb of green while shouting, “Gerald, look there! The thought of the giant anaconda’s soul is starting to vanish...!”

Turning to face the rapidly fading soul, Gerald put all other thoughts aside for now and instantly used his Thunder Eruption skill to wrap his essential qi around the thought of the soul, desperately hoping to preserve it.

“There’s no need to waste your essential qi on me... I’m already fading and there’s nothing you can do to stop that... Please remember what I said and be careful in everything you do in the future... Live well, Gerald...!”

Chapter 1404

Hearing the giant snake say that, Gerald intensified his force, delivering more essential qi as he shouted, “I’m not letting you die like this...!”

“...Heh... To think that I’d actually be able to make a friend after so long... And such a caring one at that... Thank you...” muttered the now tiny orb of green as it slowly began floating higher...

Almost like fireflies taking flight in the night, the thought of the anaconda’s soul rose higher, and higher, until eventually, it scattered in a sea of glittering sparkles...

As the final sparkles faded, Gerald found himself clenching his fists tightly. While he had only met the giant anaconda once before this, it had previously helped him. What more, the snake had even sacrificed the thought of its soul just to warn him about that masked old man... By that point, Gerald had already considered the snake to be part of his family, and he had sworn that he would never let those by his side get hurt.

In the end, however, he was completely useless in that situation. The soul had completely disappeared, and there was nothing he could have done to prevent it from happening.

The fact that Gerald had even lost Liemis's corpse only served to make him want to beat himself up badly. Quite honestly, he didn't even feel like showing his face to anyone at the moment due to his immense guilt and shame.

"Worry not, I don't blame you for any of this, Gerald... Maybe it's just my fate, and with that in mind, please don't feel guilty over this incident... Whatever the case is, we need to leave for the Crawford Manor, quickly. After all, since the tomb ended up just like how the Mackusion had predicted, I'm truly worried that your family will end up getting attacked as well!" said Zyla.

Hearing that, both Gerald and Peter's gazes instantly turned anxious.

"Remember, the Mackusion had displayed a black light enshrouding the eerily silent ancient tomb back then... And the same atmosphere was present in the Crawford Manor that it showed us! With that in mind, we need to rush to your home right this instant, Gerald...!" added Zyla.

As Peter's eyelids twitched, the worried Gerald knew that all she had just said was right. From what the snake had told him, the murderer knew him very well. With that in mind, it was safe to assume that the masked man also knew about his family...

Now anxious out of his wits, he knew he couldn't allow something similar to happen to his family too...!

Following that, Zyla quickly arranged for Leo to stay back and bury the giant anaconda's carcass. After that, he was to safely escort Jasmine and the other women all the way back to Northbay.

As for Gerald, Zyla, and Peter, the trio immediately headed for the Crawford Manor first.

Given their capabilities, it would only take about a few hours for Gerald and the two others to reach the Crawford Manor in Northbay.

Throughout his journey there, he couldn't help but wonder how Lyra, Queta, and Giya—who had been recuperating in the Crawford Manor the last time he met them—were currently doing.

He also found himself considering the security of the Crawford Manor. While it was true that those from the Soul Palace were currently guarding the place, that masked man had been able to kill that giant anaconda with barely any trouble. With that in mind, Gerald was worried that if the masked old man had any bad intentions toward his family, nobody at the manor would be able to stop him!

Regardless, after flying for a while, Gerald shouted, "The manor's on the island up ahead!"

Since Gerald had slightly higher training than the other two, he was the first to land on the island. However, he was already worried the second he set foot there. After all, despite the island being so massive, there wasn't a single soul around. The entire place was simply devoid of its usual hustle and bustle...

The dead silence was also quite eerie...

Could the Mackusion truly have predicted his family's misfortune as accurately as it had foreseen the events at the ancient tomb...?

Feeling his qi rising as his agitation and anxiousness peaked, his legs now felt like they were made of lead as he slowly stepped past the large entrance doors of the Crawford Manor...

The second he stepped inside, the only thing that greeted Gerald was darkness and silence... Now brimming with fear and worry, he didn't even dare take another step further. He just couldn't bear the thought of witnessing a similar scene as he had back inside the ancient tomb.

Despite his fears, he knew he still had to see the truth of the situation for himself. With that in mind, he slowly proceeded further into the manor...

Used to how lively the Crawford Manor used to be, Gerald couldn't help but get the creeps with how devoid of people the manor now was.

Activating his holy sense,—in order to ease detection of any signs of life—Gerald quickly found that the current area where he was in truly was vacant...

Not wanting to give up that easily, he quickly proceeded to the next area within the manor. With how fast he was, he soon finished searching every nook and cranny in the manor...

By the end of it, his search results made him simultaneously happy and depressed.

While he was devastated that there were zero traces of life within the entire manor, he was glad—at the very least—that the situation here wasn't similar to the conditions on Warhill Island that the Mackusion had displayed. In other words, he was relieved that he hadn't come across any corpses. That meant that there was a chance that his family members were still safe, despite them being missing.

'Still... Where could everyone have gone...?' Gerald thought to himself, disappointed that he hadn't even come across a single person in the manor.

'Is there any hope that they're all still fine...?' Gerald thought to himself as Peter and Zyla rushed in.

Upon seeing how dispirited he looked, they already knew the results of his search without even needing to ask.

Peter himself had earlier looked around the courtyard, and he already had a bad feeling about all this before he even reunited with Gerald.

“I’ve already used my holy sense to locate them, but I haven’t been able to find anyone at all...! They’ve just vanished into thin air...!” muttered Gerald under his breath as he clenched his fists.

“At the very least there haven’t been any corpses! With that in mind, let’s not worry too much! There’s a chance that they’re all still fine!” replied Zyla as she walked over to Gerald and held onto his hand.

‘I do hope so... Still, I wonder if the one responsible for all this is the masked old man as well... If it is, not only has he stolen Liemis’s corpse, but he’s also kidnapped all of my family members!’ Gerald thought to himself with a frown.

The second his thought ended, both Gerald and Peter’s ears perked as they slowly turned to look behind them. There, lay an indoor well that was historically important to the Crawfords.

Exchanging glances with each other, both of them were sure that they had heard a voice coming from within the well...

Giving Gerald a nod, Peter then dashed toward the well, arms outstretched as he fished for whoever was inside!

Upon getting hold of someone, Peter instantly dragged them out of the well... And out came a plump, middle-aged man who was drenched from head to toe!

Now realizing that the man had been staying immersed in the well this entire time, Gerald found himself thinking, 'So he was submerged this entire time... With how chilly the water in there is, no wonder I couldn't detect him despite using my holy sense... '

"...Who are you? And why are you hiding in the well in my house?" asked Gerald with a frown.

With how unfamiliar the person looked, Gerald was certain that he wasn't a Crawford.

"I-I go by the name of Wes Lakely, Mr. Crawford, and I'm a manager from one of the economic areas in Weston...! It's a pleasure to meet you, Mr. Crawford...!" cried out the man as he immediately knelt before Gerald.

"...That doesn't answer my other question, Wes. Why were you hiding in the well?" asked Gerald.

"A-ah... Well, it's because something's happened to the economic area I'm in... While I've contacted those from your family through the headquarters, I couldn't get to them at all, even after quite some time! In the end, things couldn't be delayed any further so I decided to come here in person two days ago to make a report. While I did hear rumors that something happened to the Crawfords, I paid little notice to it till I actually arrived. However, upon arriving, I found it odd that there weren't even any bodyguards at the entrance... Curious, I then stepped in to have a look and see if everything was going alright..." explained Wes before taking in a deep breath.

"...What did you see?" asked Gerald.

"...I... I saw corpses... Many of whom were your family's bodyguards...! Aside from that, I also clearly remember hearing a terrible cry coming from the back... Panic took over me at the time, and the only thing I could think of was to find someplace to hide! It was then when I accidentally fell into the well..."