

Chapter 1601

The second Gerald's sentence ended, a crisp 'crack' could be heard. Following that, Yesirn's screams of pain filled the air!

Gerald had just crushed one of Yesirn's arms, and the excruciating pain that the young master was feeling was evident in his expression.

Seeing that, Henrick's fury knew no bounds as he glared at Gerald while shouting, "You...!"

"Look, you old b*stard! Your son's in my hands, and if you want him alive by the end of all this, you'd better hand over my sister! I'm sure you know what'll happen to him if you don't comply!" retorted Gerald straightforwardly, not wanting to waste any more time than he needed to with Henrick.

It was clearly a proposal that Henrick couldn't reject unless he didn't care about his son, and everyone there knew that.

In response, however, Henrick simply continued pointing at Gerald as he yelled, "Listen here, if my son dies neither you nor your sister will be able to leave Jaellatra alive as well!"

'You're really asking for it, aren't you?' Gerald thought to himself. Rather than feeling afraid, the more Henrick threatened him, the more annoyed he got.

With that, more cracking sounds could be heard, followed by another ear-piercing scream from Yesirn!

"P-please... dad...! Pro- promise him that you'll return her...! I... I don't want to die...!" pleaded the agonized young master.

Seeing his son being tortured so much, Henrick gave it some thought, gritting his teeth the entire time before eventually growling, "...Fine! You have my word that I'll return Jessica to you!"

Understanding that the priority was to keep his son alive, Henrick then turned to face one of his servants before ordering, "Go bring Jessica over!"

Hearing that, the servant instantly rushed back to the Quartermain family manor to retrieve Gerald's sister.

Before Henrick could say another thing, however, he heard Gerald shout, "You'd better not be playing any tricks on me, you old b*stard! If even the slightest harm comes to my sister, I guarantee that your family will have a bloody price to pay!"

Though Henrick remained silent, he was now more enraged than ever.

To think that he, the mighty and magnificent master of the Quartermain family, would actually be threatened by this inexperienced young man! If word about this got out, he'd surely drown in humiliation!

However, he wasn't too worried about that scenario happening. After all, the second his son was out of danger, he could just kill both Gerald and his sister on the spot! Even if he failed to do so immediately, he was definitely not letting them leave Bario city unscathed.

It was around ten minutes later when Jessica was led into the pavilion under the guide of two servants...

Upon realizing Gerald's presence, her eyes instantly teared up as she cried out, "Gerald...!"

She knew her younger brother would definitely come save her ...!

"Don't worry, sister! Both of us will surely leave this place safely!" consoled Gerald.

Looking at all the scars and injuries Jessica had suffered, her pitiful state only served to fuel Gerald with an even greater wrath. He really wanted to chop all the Quartermains into pieces right now!

Even so, he refrained, knowing very well that the priority was to rescue his sister first. He wasn't going to allow her to sustain any further injuries.

Regardless, upon hearing Gerald's words, Jessica simply nodded slightly. She believed in Gerald, and she knew that they were going to make it out of all this.

Unwilling to further watch the heart-warming scene between the two siblings, Henrick then demanded, “Look, I’ve brought your sister here, Gerald! Now release my son!”

“Humph! Impatient, aren’t we? Release my sister first if you want him back!” sneered Gerald as he glared at Henrick.

Chapter 1602

“You...! Listen here, your sister’s still in my grasp! Don’t you even dare consider playing any tricks, you hear?!” retorted Henrick as he angrily grabbed Jessica by her neck.

“You old b*stard! One wrong move on my sister and your son will be dead! If you think I’m just joking around, then try me!” roared Gerald as he instantly lifted Yesirn by his neck as well.

When Henrick saw that his son’s eyes were already rolling back on his reddened face, the master of the Quartermain family knew that his threats meant nothing to Gerald.

Rather reluctantly, Henrick then released Jessica’s neck before replying, “...Fine! Let’s exchange our hostages at the same time then!”

Hearing that, Gerald knew that he had to play along. Releasing Yesirn's neck as well, both Gerald and Henrick began slowly walking toward each other, making sure to have a firm grasp on their hostages' backs.

Once they were close enough, the two men released their grasps at the same time, allowing Yesirn and Jessica to begin walking toward the other party...

However, the second the two passed each other, Henrick made a dash toward Jessica! Since his palm was already charged with essential qi, it was obvious that Henrick had planned to do this from the very beginning!

However, Gerald had naturally read Henrick's mind long before this exchange. With that in mind, Gerald was able to instantaneously respond by dragging Jessica over and launching his own palm attack!

What followed was an explosive sound that shook the entire Featherlight Pavilion!

With dust and debris flying all over the place, Gerald used that chance to successfully flee the pavilion together with his sister!

By the time the dust had settled, Henrick realized that he had been outwitted!

His anger was cut short when he heard his servants shouting, “Young master...!”

Turning around, Henrick watched as his servants quickly ran over to his son’s side... However, Yesirn... He was lying motionless atop a pool of his own blood!

Momentarily frozen in place, Henrick finally snapped out of it when one of his servants turned to look at him before crying out, “Master...! Young master, he’s... He’s dead!”

Upon hearing that, Henrick felt as though he had just been fatally struck by lightning.

“Yesirn...!” shouted Henrick as he ran toward his son’s corpse.

Though blood was still flowing endlessly out of Yesirn’s gaping neck, it was evident that the boy was no longer among the living.

As to how that gash had got there, during the earlier moments of chaos, Gerald had ordered Jade Infused Blade—who had been within Gerald’s body this entire time—to momentarily reveal himself and slice Yesirn’s neck! Since nobody there knew about Jade Infused Blade, the deed managed to be done rather stealthily.

Regardless, the now deeply pained Henrick then howled in rage, “I’m tearing off all your skin once I get my hands on you, Gerald...! I’m breaking every single tendon of yours too, and once I’m done, I’ll drink every last drop of your blood...!”

Meanwhile, Gerald was already rushing out of the city with immense speed.

“They... Won’t pursue us, right...?” asked a worried Jessica as she continued clinging onto Gerald’s back.

“Even if they do, I’ll protect you, sister! There’s no need to worry!” reassured Gerald who had already thought about his next move.

Soon enough, both of them arrived at the mouth of the Underworld Valley...

Even from afar, Jessica had already noticed a graceful but nervous-looking woman sitting under a large tree near the mouth of the valley. The person in question was Nori!

After Jade Infused Blade got the Primocorose for Gerald, both of them had decided to momentarily part ways with Nori. Before heading off to Bario city, however, Gerald had told her to wait here for him since he still needed her help with something.

Regardless, upon seeing that Gerald had made a safe return, Nori instantly got to her feet before shouting, "Gerald...!"

Gerald himself wasted no time in handing his sister over to Nori.

"Nori, I still have to deal with those people so I'll be leaving my sister in your care for the moment. Make sure to leave immediately! Also, take this sound talisman. Once I'm done dealing with them, I'll contact you before meeting up again!" instructed Gerald as he took a talisman out from his pocket before handing it to Nori.

Chapter 1603

“Please be careful, alright, Gerald...?” muttered Jessica before her brother parted ways.

She knew how much trouble Gerald had gotten himself into just to save her. With that in mind, she was rather reluctant to see him put himself in danger again now that they had made it out in one piece. If anything terrible happened to him because of her, Jessica was well aware that she would remain guilty about that for the rest of her life...

In response, Gerald simply revealed an understanding smile before saying, “You don’t have to worry about me, sister!”

With that, the youth turned around and instantly left...

Not too far away, Henrick was leading several of his men in pursuit of Gerald. Since Henrick had already entered the Sage Realm, his speed was near unimaginable.

Regardless, when Henrick finally saw Gerald—who appeared to be silently standing in place, waiting for his arrival—the master of the Quartermain family found himself roaring, “You’re dying today if it’s the last thing I do, Gerald...!”

Following that, several powerful-looking people leaped out from behind Henrick! From the looks of it, all of them appeared to be either Eighth or Ninth-rank Chakra Kings...

While Gerald wouldn't have been able to deal with them in the past, things were much different now. After all, he was currently already nearing the end stages of the Ninth-rank of the Rune Realm. With that in mind, Gerald wasn't afraid of facing those people at all.

What more, he had the exceptional Jade Infused Blade—who was also a Ninth-rank Chakra King—inside his body. Due to that, Gerald was technically not fighting alone this time.

Just as he was thinking about that, a spectral figure flew out of Gerald's body! With a single swipe of his aurablade, Jade Infused Blade easily decapitated all of Henrick's men before swiftly returning into Gerald's body! Nobody else was even able to sense Jade Infused Blade's presence!

Regardless, upon watching his men's heads hit the ground—before slowly rolling to the side like bowling balls—, Henrick couldn't help but shiver slightly in fright. They were all Eighth and Ninth-rank Chakra Kings...! Despite that, Gerald had barely even needed a few seconds to take all of them out!

“...Humph! So, you’ve already entered the Ninth-rank of the Rune Realm! It appears that I’ve truly looked down on you! However, know that that rank is useless before me! After all, I’ve already entered the Sage Realm a long time ago! You, of all people, should know how vastly different that places both you and me! With that said, I can easily just crush your skull!” snorted Henrick rather confidently as he glared at Gerald.

Henrick honestly found it rather unfortunate to have to kill Gerald. After all, the fact that Gerald had managed to enter the Rune Realm at such a young age definitely signified how talented the youth was. In the end, however, Gerald was his enemy and there was nothing he could do to change that.

“Oh? Is that so? You’re free to try and do so then, you old b*stard!” retorted Gerald without the slightest hint of fear in his voice.

While Gerald was fully aware that he hadn’t entered the Sage realm yet, he believed that Henrick wasn’t capable enough to kill him. Due to that, he wasn’t afraid of the Quartermain master.

“You... How arrogant!” shouted Henrick as he dashed forward with inhuman speed! This was how strong someone who had breached the Sage Realm was!

In the blink of an eye, he was already directly in front of Gerald!
Aiming for Gerald's chest, Henrick then struck out his palm!

Of course, Gerald wasn't about to allow Henrick to do as he pleased.
With that, Gerald struck out his own palm in retaliation!

Upon collision, an explosive sound was heard, followed by the
ground beneath them forming a rather deep sinkhole from the
immense pressure!

As dust and dirt flew in all directions, Henrick couldn't help but feel
surprised. He never thought that Gerald would actually be able to
fight against him!

While Gerald would've definitely not been a match against Henrick
in a one-on-one battle, he actually had Jade Infused Blade on his
side. With that in mind, these two individuals—who had both
entered the Ninth-rank of the Rune Realm—were just enough to
take on Henrick.

Naturally, Henrick was clueless about all this...

Chapter 1604

“So you managed to take my first blow! Very well, then! Let’s see if you can take another!” snorted Henrick as he took two steps back.

Following that, Henrick waved his hands slightly before shouting, “Holy Flaring Fist!”

Immediately after, his right fist was set ablaze! Wasting no time, the master of the Quartermains then began charging toward Gerald!

Seeing that, Gerald quickly yelled, “Herculean Armor!”

Sneering at the shield that Gerald had just put up, Henrick then mocked, “Just give it up! There’s no way you’ll be able to stop this attack!”

A split second later, a thunderous sound ensued as a blazing fire collided against Gerald’s shield!

Since the flames were able to bypass Gerald’s Herculean Armor, Gerald instantly felt the pain of his skin being burnt! He hadn’t expected Henrick’s attack to be this powerful! Had Gerald’s body not possessed such ample amounts of essential qi, Gerald knew for a fact that the attack could’ve very easily turned him into nothing but ash!

Regardless, after ten excruciating seconds, the flames finally subsided. By this point, Gerald's clothes were nothing more than thin strips of burnt cloth!

"...How... How is this even possible...?!" shouted the now wide-eyed Henrick in utter disbelief. How was Gerald still alive?!

Smiling contemptuously in response, Gerald then glared daggers at Henrick before retorting, "Is that the best you can do, you old b*stard? What else do you have? Come on, show me!"

Unable to take any more of Gerald's mockery, Henrick decided that it was high time he took Gerald out with an extremely strong attack!

With his mind made up, Henrick then stomped both his feet onto the ground, causing yet another sinkhole to form around him! His body now engulfed within a raging fire, Henrick then snorted before arrogantly declaring, "You'll be nothing but ashes once this blow lands, Gerald!"

Pushing his arms forward, Henrick then sent five flaming dragons flying in Gerald's direction!

“Master, this is bad! That attack is called the Five Blazing Dragons! You won’t be able to withstand it!” warned Jade Infused Blade the second he realized what was happening.

The Five Blazing Dragons was one of the fiery arts in Jaellatra. Once the technique was performed, each following fire dragon would be more powerful than the previous one. With that said, those who bore the same rank as the attacker would most definitely fail to withstand the attack.

Despite the warning, Gerald didn’t buy Jade Infused Blade’s words. After all, the Herculean Primordial Spirit was inside his body!

With that, the five dragons then rapidly flew toward Gerald!

Due to Gerald’s immense speed, he was able to easily dodge the first dragon. Watching as that particular serpent collided against a large tree that was behind him, Gerald found himself frowning slightly when the entire tree turned into nothing but ashes within seconds!

Leaping to avoid the second dragon, Gerald watched as it crashed into a stone wall, resulting in the stones catching fire as the entire wall came crumbling down!

After easily dodging the third and fourth dragon as well, however, Gerald was unable to avoid getting hit by the final one!

Since the fifth fiery dragon was stronger than all the previous ones, Gerald instantly found himself unable to move a muscle the second it collided into him!

Now in immense pain, Gerald—who had been flung high into the air from the impact—slowly began falling into the Underworld Valley’s abyss...

Knowing very well that Gerald definitely wouldn’t be able to survive such a fall, Henrick found himself breathing a sigh of relief. He had finally avenged his son...

Just to make sure, however, Henrick took a few glances at the bottom of the abyss... Sensing nothing, the Quartermain master then turned to leave, never looking back...

...It was quite some time later when Gerald’s fingers began to twitch. Despite falling all the way to the bottom of the Underground Valley’s abyss—into what seemed like a meadow of sorts—, Gerald had survived! Even so, the terribly injured youth was still unconscious at the moment...

Chapter 1605

“...Master... Master, please, wake up...!” called out Jade Infused Blade.

He had earlier exited Gerald’s body, and after sitting quietly beside the youth for a while, Jade Infused Blade decided to at least try to wake Gerald up.

Watching as the heavily injured youth—whose body was now filled with scars—continued breathing shallowly, Jade Infused Blade could only sigh.

With even Gerald’s barrier of essential qi now ruined, it was honestly a miracle that Gerald was still alive. Had it not been for the Herculean Primordial Spirit in his body, Gerald would’ve perished ages ago...

At that moment, Jade Infused Blade’s ears twitched slightly. Following that, he quickly re-entered Gerald’s body. Someone was here!

Seconds later, several tree branches began stretching out toward Gerald... Once he was all wrapped up, the branches gently dragged him into a tree hole...

It was about a day later when Gerald's eyes finally opened again... Upon attempting to get up, Gerald instantly began coughing rather violently!

"Hey now, don't go moving around seconds after you've just woken up! Your injuries aren't healed yet! With that said, just lie down and recuperate for the moment!" shouted a deep and almost godly-sounding voice from somewhere...

Upon hearing that, Gerald instantly turned vigilant out of habit. Even after looking around, however, he couldn't seem to detect where that voice had come from.

"...Who's there...?" asked Gerald with a slight frown.

After chuckling heartily, the voice then replied, "I'm a tree spirit that resides in the Underworld Valley! I'm the one who saved you, you know? Regardless, the tree hole you're currently in... It's actually my body! With that said, in a way, you're now inside me!"

Hearing that, Gerald then instantly said, "I see...! Thank you for saving me, senior...!"

Before he could further express his gratitude, however, Gerald found himself coughing vigorously again.

The moment Gerald realized that there was even blood in his mouth, the tree spirit simply advised, “Look, you’re terribly injured at the moment. Go lie down and stop moving about! Understand that your body’s barrier of essential qi is slowly recovering! It needs time to fully heal!”

Understanding that the tree spirit’s advice was sound, Gerald could only obey his words. After lying down again, Gerald began thinking about how powerful the Five Blazing Dragons attack was. From what he could now tell, the only way he was going to be able to beat Henrick was by breaching the Sage Realm...

“Alright, now that you’ve settled down a bit and I’m pretty sure that you have nowhere else to go, tell me, how did you suffer such serious injuries?” asked the tree spirit, clearly trying to ease the tension.

“...Well, I had a battle against Henrick, the master of the Quartermain family! After being hit by his Five Blazing Dragons attack, I ended up getting hit by the final dragon! As a result, I fell into the bottom of the abyss...” replied Gerald in a rather shameful tone.

In the end, Gerald was a mighty person who was at the level of a Ninth-rank Chakra King. Despite that, he still ended up getting terribly beaten up and he even fell right into the Underworld Valley's abyss! With that in mind, Gerald truly felt humiliated by this defeat...

Much to Gerald's displeasure, however, the second his sentence ended, the tree spirit instantly broke into a roar of laughter!

"The Five Blazing Dragons? You can't be serious!" scoffed the spirit as it continued laughing for quite a while.

Not expecting the senior to laugh at him like that, the now frowning Gerald then muttered, "Is my loss that funny to you, senior...?"

"Hmm? Oh no, I'm not laughing about you! I'm laughing about Henrick!" replied the tree spirit as he quickly explained himself to avoid any misunderstandings.

Chapter 1606

"Oh? Why is that?" asked Gerald rather curiously

“Well, you see, Henrick hasn’t completed his training on the Five Blazing Dragons attack! He’s still one level short! With that in mind, the only reason you ended up getting this seriously hurt is because he’s already entered the Sage Realm! Though I can see that you’re already nearing the end of the Rune Realm, I don’t think I have to remind you that a Ninth-rank Chakra King and a Sage’s power is still vastly different!” explained the tree spirit.

“...So... that attack wasn’t what hurt me? I only got all these injuries due to our strength difference?” asked Gerald rather quickly.

“That’s right! If you need further proof, being hurt by a fully mastered Five Blazing Dragons attack would’ve definitely reduced you to nothing but dust! The fact that you’re still in one piece says a lot about that!” replied the tree spirit.

“...I see. Still, you appear to know quite a bit about the attack and even Henrick... Who exactly are you, if you don’t mind me asking...?” asked Gerald, sensing that something was amiss.

After all, it was a wonder why a tree spirit would know so much about outside affairs...

“Hmm? Well of course I’d know him well! Henrick’s my junior!” replied the tree spirit with a chuckle.

Upon hearing that, Gerald was instantly stunned.

“What? He’s your junior? But aren’t you...?”

“Ah, just to clarify, I wasn’t always a tree spirit! Back then, I had fought a great battle with Henrick in the Underworld Valley as well! However, due to my carelessness, Henrick found a chance to launch a completely avoidable sneak attack on me! As a result, I lost the battle... After being tossed into the valley’s abyss, my soul somehow got integrated with a tree spirit within this deep valley. With that said, I’ll be staying here for a while! However, know that my resentment toward Henrick hasn’t diminished in the slightest!” detailed the tree spirit who clearly despised Henrick with a passion.

Quickly putting two and two together, Gerald then asked, “From what you’ve told me, both you and Henrick share a master, correct? Why did you end up fighting each other? What exactly did Henrick have his eyes on...? Could it be that...”

“I have to say that you’re really smart, mister! As you may already have guessed, Henrick was after my Five Blazing Dragons attack! I say ‘my’ since at the time, I was the only one capable of using it after master imparted it to me. The fact that he wasn’t chosen naturally fuelled his jealousy, and since then, he would constantly attempt to

obtain the secret scroll of the Five Blazing Dragons—that I kept within me—in order to train for it.”

“While he did succeed in the end, I had one last trick up my sleeve! I made sure to hide the last part of the scroll in the deepest parts of my body, which was why Henrick only managed to get his hands on an incomplete scroll!” sneered the tree spirit as he thought about it.

After hearing all that, it explained why the tree spirit knew so much about Henrick and the Five Blazing Dragons. As it turned out, Henrick was the original heir to the attack!

“Again, since he hasn’t been able to complete his training for the Five Blazing Dragons attack, I assure you that you were only hurt due to his strength!” added the tree spirit.

“...Understood! Speaking of which, could I have your name...?” asked Gerald, curious about the tree spirit’s real name after hearing all that.

“Of course! It’s Roman Freeman!”

“It’s a pleasure to meet you, Mr. Freeman! I’m Gerald!” introduced Gerald.

“Hahaha! I have a feeling that fate had a role in our meeting, mister! With that said, I’m willing to impart the complete Five Blazing Dragons attack to you on one condition! What do you say?” replied Roman with a subtle smile.

“Go on, Mr. Freeman! I’ll definitely try my best to fulfill it!” replied Gerald, overjoyed that Roman was willing to teach the technique to him in the first place.

Aside from the fact that he was going to master an attack that would surely be able to take Henrick out with ease, Gerald’s enthusiastic reply also stemmed from the fact that he wanted to repay Roman’s kindness for saving him. With that in mind, he was fully ready to agree to any of Roman’s conditions.

Chapter 1607

With Roman’s help, it only took half a day for Gerald’s injuries to be completely healed.

Following that, not only did Roman begin imparting the Five Blazing Dragons skill into Gerald, but the tree spirit also taught Gerald many other martial arts that he had learned throughout his lifetime.

With that in mind, it was obvious that Gerald had agreed with Roman's terms. As for what the condition itself was, what Roman wanted was quite straightforward, and it was honestly something that Gerald had already been planning to do anyway. In short, Roman wanted Gerald to end Henrick's life.

Regardless, it wasn't long before Gerald was able to completely master the Five Blazing Dragons attack. Since the knowledge was imparted into Gerald, Gerald didn't even need to undergo any training to master the skill. What more, he could now use all the skills that Roman had previously learned!

Now that he had imparted all his skills, Roman's voice boomed one final time in the tree hole as he said, "I've imparted everything that I know into you, Gerald! Now that I've successfully done my part, I can finally retire! I'll be leaving everything to you now!"

And just like that, Roman was gone. Just as his surname implied, Roman Freeman was now finally able to rest in peace, free from everything that had previously held him back...

With that in mind, Gerald knew that his next step was to get rid of Henrick. After all, the sooner he fulfilled Roman's final wish, the better.

Stepping outside the tree hole, Gerald then turned around to look at the towering tree before him... With determination in his eyes, Gerald had a serious expression on his face as he declared, “I definitely won’t disappoint you, Mr. Freeman...!”

After giving the tree a deep bow, he then turned to leave...

Not long after, Jade Infused Blade—who had been inside Gerald’s body this entire time—said, “Congratulations, master! You’ve finally entered the Sage Realm!”

As a result of attaining Roman’s skills, the Herculean Primordial Spirit within Gerald’s body underwent a rapid improvement, allowing the youth to finally breach the Sage Realm.

For a person who had achieved this level of strength, leaping onto roofs and vaulting over walls was nothing. With that in mind, Gerald easily scaled a stone wall before using the top of the wall to propel himself into the air!

Though Gerald wanted to immediately deal with Henrick, he knew that he had to at least meet up with Nori and Jessica first.

If everything had gone to plan, Nori should have brought Jessica to a small town—not too far from the Underworld Valley—to recuperate for a while, while waiting for Gerald. Hoping that that was the case, Gerald arrived at the small town just a few minutes later.

Seeing that Gerald had returned safe and sound, both Nori and Jessica were instantly relieved. After all, they had been waiting for him for almost an entire day by this point, and both girls had been worried sick throughout that period.

“I’m so glad that you’ve returned safely, Gerald...!” cried out Jessica as she hugged him tightly.

Patting her back, Gerald then consoled, “You, of all people, should know how capable my martial arts skills are, sister... With that in mind, I’d surely return fine no matter what!”

“As much as I’d love to believe that, accidents can happen, you know? If something happens to you, how am I to even answer to our parents...” mumbled Jessica while pouting like a child.

If something bad ever happened to Gerald, Jessica didn’t even know whether she’d still have the will to live or not...

As she thought about that, Gerald turned to face Nori, a gratuitous smile on his face as he said, "Also, thank you for taking care of my sister, Nori!"

"No problem! Though... How do you plan to repay my kindness?" teased Nori in return, a rather interesting smile on her face.

Upon hearing that, Gerald instantly felt slightly awkward. That awkwardness, however, didn't stem from her beauty. After all, he was a married man and he already had an exceptionally beautiful woman as his wife.

Regardless, Gerald knew that he still owed her one, so he simply suggested, "...Well, let's just say that I'm indebted to you! How would you like me to repay your kindness? Give it some thought and once you've made up your mind, I'll agree to one of your requests!"

"Deal! Remember, you were the one who suggested that, so you'd better not go back on your words!"

Chapter 1608

The way Nori had said it, it was almost as though she was afraid that Gerald would end up going back on his word.

Sensing that, Gerald looked at her with determined eyes before saying, “Don’t worry, I always keep my word! After all, a person who lies is nothing but a coward!”

Following that, Gerald alternated his gaze between his sister and Nori before adding, “Alright, there’s still something I need to settle. With that said, I’m going to have to need both of you to continue waiting for me here for a little while. Don’t worry, once I return, we’ll leave this place together! Also, remember not to go out all willy-nilly and if needed, you can contact me with the sound talisman. The second it’s activated I’ll rush back immediately!”

“...What? You’re heading off again, Gerald? But where to?” asked Jessica in a worried tone. After all, to think that they had to part ways again so quickly after reuniting!

“Don’t worry, sister! I’ll definitely make a safe return! Just know that there are still some issues I need to resolve!” replied Gerald as he looked straight into Jessica’s eyes.

Upon hearing that, his sister simply nodded slowly... She, for one, knew that there was no use trying to persuade her brother against it. With that in mind, she could only pray that he would return unscathed.

With that, Gerald then made a massive leap before flying back to Bario City at immense speeds...

There was going to be bloodshed tonight, and Gerald was going to make sure that none of the Quartermains would remain...

Meanwhile, the Quartermain family manor was brightly lit, with sheets of white cloth hung everywhere. Adding that to the many death wreaths placed all over the place, it was clear that the Quartermains were holding a funeral for Yesirn.

Henrick himself was standing before Yesirn's memorial tablet. After wrapping white strips of cloth over his son's corpse, the teary-eyed Henrick then said, "I've taken revenge for you, son... Gerald's dead now, so you can rest in peace...!"

Upon hearing that, the rest of the Quartermains present began weeping as well. After all, watching one's child die before their very eyes was most definitely one of the saddest things to witness...

Unbeknownst to them, however, the Quartermains were going to reunite with Yesirn very, very, soon.

At that moment, a booming and rather familiar voice suddenly shouted, "Hey now, you old b*stard! Instead of grieving for him, why don't I just send you to hell so that both of you can get reunited!"

Shocked, everyone turned to look at the source of the voice... And there Gerald was, casually standing with his arms crossed atop the Quartermain manor's roof!

The second Henrick saw the youth, he was instantly hit by immense wrath and shock. Gerald had been hit by the Five Blazing Dragons attack, had he not? How was he still alive?! In fact, how did he even remain so perfectly fine?!

"You... You're alive...?!" growled Henrick as he glared at Gerald.

Snorting contemptuously, Gerald then sneered, "Aren't you a bit too confident with yourself, Henrick? You weren't even able to completely master that attack! With that said, there's no way I would've died to that!"

Furrowing his brows, Henrick then gloomily replied, "...How do you even know about that?"

To think that Gerald was aware that he hadn't perfected the Five Blazing Dragons attack... But how? Nobody else—who was alive—should even know about that!

“There's no need to know about that. After all, you're going to be dead soon anyway. As I've promised myself, I'm exterminating the Quartermains if it's the last thing I do!” retorted Gerald in a frigid tone.

Hearing that, Henrick simply snorted disdainfully as he yelled, “You sound rather sure of yourself! If I could defeat you back then what makes you think you'll win this time?! Now stop talking trash and just die already!”

Following that, the Quartermain master leaped toward Gerald, intent on attacking the youth!

Unfortunately for him, Henrick looking down on Gerald was a truly fatal mistake...

Chapter 1609

Despite seeing that Henrick was launching an attack at him, Gerald hardly even looked anxious.

In response, he simply shouted, “Weakening Strike, the first move of Judge Swift Sword Technique!”

The second his sentence ended, Jade Infused blade exited Gerald’s body before transforming into a sword! Upon unsheathing the blade from its scabbard, a blindingly white light then flashed, followed by loud ripping sounds that filled the air!

Now feeling increasingly intimidated, Henrick quickly used his essential qi to block the attack!

As an explosive sound followed, Henrick quickly realized that though he had managed to stop the main attack, the force of it alone still sent Henrick flying toward the ground! Upon collision, the Quartermain head instantly vomited a mouthful of blood...

Coughing as he stared at Gerald in sheer disbelief, Henrick then yelled, “You...! How... How are you even able to perform the Judge Swift Sword Technique?!”

As far as Henrick knew, there was only one person who had successfully mastered that technique... And that person was none other than his old senior, Roman!

Created by Roman himself, the Judge Swift Sword Technique was the other skill that his senior had prided himself in, aside from the Five Blazing Dragons technique.

The sword technique itself consisted of three separate moves, with the first being Weakening Strike, the second called Glistening Star Strike, and the final one named the Judge Swift Strike!

Regardless, by right, the Judge Swift Sword Technique should have disappeared together with Roman... After all, Henrick had made sure to finish off his senior before tossing him into the Underworld Valley's abyss.

With that in mind, the fact that the technique still existed was a great shock to Henrick.

"How, you ask? Well, let's just say that I'm fully aware that you're vicious enough to not even spare your senior! With that said, I'm going to be executing the principles of your sect on behalf of Roman today!" sneered Gerald contemptuously as he casually pointed the sword at Henrick.

At that moment, Henrick swore that he could almost see his senior standing where Gerald was...

“...To think that you had been alive this entire time, senior...! You even imparted all your skills into this person! Still, I hope you realize that I’m much stronger than I was back then!” grumbled Henrick as he quickly got to his feet.

Following that, Henrick spread both his hands out... and seconds later, his entire body was set ablaze! With a fiery dragon now wrapped around his body, it was clear that Henrick was about to use the Five Blazing Dragons technique!

Gerald, however, simply replied, “Just saying, but you haven’t really mastered that technique yet. You know, in case you’ve forgotten.”

“So what of it? Allow me to remind you that the secret scroll of the Five Blazing Dragons is still with me! With that said, this incomplete attack is still sufficient in ridding you for good!” scoffed Henrick confidently, clearly unaware that Gerald had not only mastered that very attack, but had also entered the Sage Realm!

“I see... Well, since you’re holding onto that incomplete attack so obstinately, I’ll show you how it’s really done before you die!” replied Gerald who couldn’t be bothered with any more of Henrick’s nonsense.

With that, Gerald then did the same gestures as Henrick had... Just like his opponent, Gerald's entire body was then engulfed within flames! However, unlike Henrick, Gerald's flames were golden! Following that, two dragons appeared, one made of fire and the other made of golden light! Coiling around each other, both individual dragons were more dazzling than what Henrick's dragons could ever achieve.

"What?!" yelled the deeply astonished Henrick as his eyes widened. This... This was the fully mastered Five Blazing Dragons technique...!

"Take a good, long look at what the fully mastered Five Blazing Dragons technique looks like, Henrick!"

Chapter 1610

After Gerald declared that, a furious roar could be heard as the youth summoned five fiery dragons, each shining in blindingly golden light! However, Gerald wasn't done.

Following that, all five dragons merged to form a blast of fire and light that then shot out toward Henrick!

Unable to avoid the attack, Henrick was instantly turned to ashes the second the flames engulfed him!

Though the rest of the Quartermains were instantly terror-stricken, they barely had any time to react as the attack began aiming for them as well! Soon enough, the entire manor was set ablaze, and all that remained of the Quartermains were their ashes...

This was the true power of the finalized Five Blazing Dragons... Everything within thirty feet of it would simply crumble!

Regardless, now that the Quartermains had been completely eliminated, Gerald began making his way out of Bario City.

While he was glad to have helped Roman fulfill his dying wish, Gerald was well aware that news of the Quartermain's extermination would surely spread like wildfire throughout Jaellatra.

With the public in chaos, it definitely wouldn't take long for the forces who had initially been backing the Quartermains up to have their revenge.

Though Gerald had already entered the Sage Realm, Gerald understood that there were many other exceptional people within Jaellatra. With that in mind, staying there for any longer would

surely spell trouble. Due to that, Gerald knew that he had to leave with Jessica as soon as possible.

With the plan all set, Gerald then left Jaellatra with Jessica early the next morning.

While Nori chose to return to Earth Capital on her own, she made sure to remind Gerald that he owed her one before he left. She also added that when a suitable time came, she would surely call for his help.

Regardless, true to what Gerald had predicted, chaos ensued all across Jaellatra not long after he and Jessica made their escape.

After all, the Quartermains were a greatly famous and reputable family in Jaellatra. They were also known to be extremely strong. With that in mind, the fact that they had been taken out in a single night was definitely stupefying...

It was sometime later when a person wearing a phoenix robe and a golden crown could be seen sitting atop a throne within the God Temple of Jaellatra... Holding a scepter with dragon carvings all over it, the person went by the name of Apollo, and he was the king of the God Temple. Apollo was also the ruler of all of Jaellatra, and he had attained the Seventh-soul-rank within the Sage Realm...

At that moment, a man donning a black cape ran in before respectfully saying, “God Lord, the Quartermains have been completely eliminated! Due to that, I believe that a few of Jaellatra’s forces will begin causing trouble in their attempt to snatch the previous turfs that the Quartermains owned!”

The person speaking—who had attained the Second-soul-rank in the Sage Realm—went by the name of Hisham, and he was one of God Lord’s followers.

“I see... Do we have the culprit?” asked Apollo in a slow but deep voice. His commanding tone alone was enough to send shivers down one’s spine...

“We do! The one responsible for all this is a youth by the name of Gerald! According to what I’ve gathered, he appears to be from Earth!” replied Hisham.

“From Earth, you say... Very well. From this moment onward, you’re tasked with heading there and testing that person’s strength out! Once you’ve done sufficient tests, come back and report the results to me!” ordered Apollo before closing both his eyes.

“Yes, God Lord!” replied Hisham as he cupped his hands in obeisance before leaving immediately.

Not even bothering to open his eyes again, it appeared that Apollo had little interest in Gerald...

Regardless, it didn't take long for all the Quartermain family's turfs to be snatched and divided among the other families in Jaellatra, leaving the Quartermains nothing but a distant memory...

By that point, Gerald and his sister had already made their safe return to Earth...

Upon reuniting her with their family, Gerald's parents—and Yoel—were instantly overjoyed to find out that both of them had returned in one piece. Their family was finally together again!

While the occasion was certainly joyous, Gerald knew that things were far from over. After all, though the Quartermains in Jaellatra were no more, the Quartermains in Sunniva City—the Quantocks—were still alive, and Gerald was well aware that both families were connected by the same sect and bloodline...

Truth be told, this entire incident began from the actions of the Quantocks, and they were also responsible for sending his sister to the Quartermains. With that in mind, Gerald definitely had to take out the Quantocks next...

Chapter 1611

It was late that night—within a secret manor in Yanam—when Gerald and his family could be seen cheerfully eating while talking with each other.

Even Yoel—whom Gerald's mother was currently supporting—found himself smiling due to how joyous the reunion was. It truly had been ages since they had last gotten together like this...

Even so, Gerald couldn't seem to feel truly happy about all this. After all, in the end, poor Yoel still had his eyes gouged out and his tongue snipped! His parents no longer had functioning legs either, and as for his sister... He couldn't even imagine all the suffering she had gone through while waiting for him...

To Gerald, all this had only happened due to him not doing his best to keep his family protected. With that in mind, he blamed himself for all their suffering, and all that guilt prevented him from enjoying himself at the moment...

If only he had made a few more precautions, Yoel would've surely been able to live both normally and happily like any regular person... However, Yoel had actively tried to defend his family, and as a result, he ended up in such a pitiful state... It truly made Gerald feel like he had failed his brother...

With all these thoughts plaguing his mind, Gerald knew that he would only be able to rest easy once he took down the Quantocks. That was the only way Gerald was going to be able to fully avenge his family...

Gerald's train of thought was cut short when his smiling mother turned to look at him before saying, "Gerald... You seem a little quiet tonight..."

"She's right! Our family's finally reunited again, you know? Be a bit more joyous!" added Dylan.

Upon hearing that, Gerald instantly forced a smile to hide his troubles.

A short while later, however, he took in a deep breath before turning to look at his family with determined eyes...

“...Mom, Dad, Jessica, and Yoel... From today onward, I’ll never allow any of you to suffer any more pain...! I’ll protect each and every one of you no matter the costs!”

“Well said! We believe in you, Gerald!” replied Dylan as he nodded with a smile.

With that said, the laughing and talking continued late into the night...

Eventually, Gerald’s parents and Yoel headed off first to retire for the night. Watching as his parents led Yoel away, Gerald then sat in the garden with Jessica to continue talking for a bit.

“I wonder if you remember the time when you first realized that you were a rich heir, Gerald...” asked Jessica with a smile as she stared at the shining stars in the night sky.

Smiling subtly, Gerald then replied, "Of course I do! Thinking back, all of you were truly experts at hiding all that from me! Do you even have any idea how long I suffered from how poor I was?"

"We did all that for a reason though! By making you experience all that, we had hoped that it would make you strong enough to eventually be able to continue carrying our family's torch! And lo and behold, look at you now! With you to rely on, dad can finally retire from being our family's backbone... Honestly, by this point, I don't really care that much about you making a huge impact on society... Instead, I just wish that our family can live together cozily!" said Jessica with words that came from her heart.

Turning to look at his sister, Gerald then lowered his head before replying in an apologetic tone, "...You must have suffered terribly while you were captured, sister... I'm sorry for being so careless! Had I made more precautions, neither of you would have ended up in such pitiful states!"

Upon hearing that, Jessica gently patted Gerald's head before saying, "None of us blame you for all this, Gerald... After all, you couldn't have possibly anticipated all this to happen! I understand that you badly wish to protect us since we kept protecting you back then, but understand that you're already doing a good job! After all, we're all together again now, aren't we? With that said, let bygones be bygones and let's enjoy our time together as a family to the fullest!"

“...I understand, sister...” muttered Gerald as he nodded in response...

At that very moment, a dark silhouette suddenly dashed past the forest right outside the manor...

Chapter 1612

Though the silhouette was extremely quick, Gerald was still able to see it through the corner of his eye... Realizing that they weren't alone, Gerald had a gut feeling that the person or thing dashing about was up to no good.

Not wanting Jessica or his parents to know about the figure's presence—and potentially get worried or scared—, Gerald then quickly said, “You know, it's getting a bit late, wouldn't you say? You should go ahead and get some rest first, sis!”

“I guess... Don’t stay up for too much longer yourself, Gerald!” replied Jessica as she smiled warmly before returning into the manor.

Once he was sure that she had entered, Gerald instantly leaped out of the manor and headed to the spot where he had last been able to sense the shadowy figure’s presence. Upon arriving at the spot, Gerald stopped in his tracks before activating his holy sense to scan the area...

After standing there in silence for a while, Gerald eventually looked up at the trees surrounding him before shouting, “Come out already! I know you’re close by!”

Almost immediately after, the rapid rustling of leaves could be heard as the silhouette from before dashed out from one of the trees!

Noticing that it was charging toward him with a blade that glinted coldly in the moonlight, Gerald instantly stepped aside to dodge the attack before attacking his assailant with his right palm!

By the end of it all, both of them managed to successfully launch their attacks, though neither of them got hurt...

“Who are you?” asked Gerald in a frigid tone.

“To think that someone at your age would be able to enter the Sage realm... What a promising future you show! Regardless, at the rate of how fast your strength is growing, I have little doubt that you’ll be able to destroy the Quantocks with ease!” replied the slightly surprised person in a rather devilish tone.

Squinting his eyes, Gerald then glared at the man in black as he said, “Again, who are you? If you’re worthy enough then you should identify yourself as well as your intentions outright!”

“Hah! The truth is, you’re the one who isn’t worthy enough to know my identity yet! Regardless, I’ll at least let you know that I was sent here under the orders of God Lord!” replied the man with a snicker.

Before Gerald could even ask him about any more details, the man in black bolted off! And just like that, his presence was completely undetectable, gone in the dark of night...

Shortly after, Gerald heard Jade Infused Blade say from within his body, “Master, that man was strong...! He had to at least have entered the Second-soul-rank of the Sage Realm!”

“...I see. Tell me, Jade Infused Blade, do you have any idea who that ‘God Lord’ that mysterious man mentioned is...?” asked Gerald rather curiously.

“I haven’t heard of him before, though from what I can guess, he must be from Jaellatra!”

So, it was just as Gerald had predicted... Quite a stir must have taken place following the death of the Quartermains... The fact that this man had come all the way from Jaellatra to meet him was already a clear sign that more trouble was imminent.

“Still, I could sense that that man wasn’t trying to fight you, master... From what I could see, it seemed like he was just trying to test your abilities!” added Jade Infused Blade.

Gerald had assumed that as well. After all, the man hadn’t tried to do anything particularly fatal to him.

Understanding that there was a possibility that he was simply being tested, Gerald had made sure not to show too much of his capabilities earlier. Due to that, hopefully the man didn't manage to gather too much data.

“Well, if I want to know more about this, I guess I'll just have to look for this 'God Lord' and ask him myself!” muttered Gerald to himself as he casually looked in the direction where the man in black had run off to...

Chapter 1613

Meanwhile, the sound of a cup shattering to pieces could be heard within a manor in the far-off city of Sunniva...

The one who had furiously done the deed was Zaki Quantock, the head of the Quantock family...

Despite there being several other Quantocks who had witnessed the scene, all of them simply lowered their heads, not even daring to say a word or look Zaki in the eye out of fear that he would take his anger out on them...

“That utter b*stard...! I’ll definitely shred you to pieces, Gerald Crawford...!” roared the enraged Zaki, immense fury reflected in his eyes.

The extermination of the Quartermains in Jaellatra had caused a massive stir among his family here. To think that Gerald would actually be bold enough to do such a thing!

“...Father, what... should we do now...?” asked Shawn Quantock—a middle-aged man who was Zaki’s eldest son—in a careful tone as he walked up to Zaki.

“Come again? What do you mean what should we do? We’re definitely making Gerald pay for all he’s done!” retorted Zaki, his eyes glinting icily. From his look alone, it was obvious that he already had something in mind to deal with Gerald...

It was sometime later in the dead of night when Zaki could be seen discussing something with three elders who were all donning grey suits.

Standing within the hall, Zaki turned to look at one of the elders before saying in a heavy tone, “Yamazon, I’m sure you realize that the Quartermains being wiped off the face of the earth is something

extremely serious. With that said, I have no choice but to ask for your help to avenge the Quantocks!”

Yamazon was from the holy mountain of Jaellatra, and he was strong enough to have attained the Second-soul-rank in the Sage Realm. With that in mind, it was no wonder why he was given the title of second master of the holy mountain. Aside from that, he was also the main backbone of the Quartermains. Due to that, he was definitely involved with the protection of the Quantocks as well.

“Indeed, leader Quantock. It shames me that the Quartermains were eliminated despite being under my holy mountain’s protection within Jaellatra. With that said, I’ll surely avenge them!” replied Yamazon in a casual but domineering tone.

“I’m glad to hear that! With the help of all three of you, that b*stard will surely end up dead in no time!” declared Zaki, a satisfied smile on his face. Gerald would surely die this time!

After all, the other two elders—who went by the names of Xander Yonda and Jones Curie—were also guardians of the holy mountain, and both of them had managed to enter the First-soul-rank of the Sage Realm.

With masters who had attained the first and second soul ranks within the Sage Realm, Zaki was confident that Gerald would be no match against them...

Following that, Zaki told the trio where to find Gerald. Upon getting that information, all three of them nodded before leaping at the same time, disappearing into thin air as they readied themselves to finish Gerald off, once and for all!

Fast forward to the next morning, Gerald could be seen meditating in the garden. Waking early and meditating had become a habit for Gerald since it allowed him to better concentrate on the power of the Herculean Primordial Spirit, hence allowing his control over it to become stronger as the days went by.

However, it wasn't long after Gerald began his daily meditation when he suddenly sensed murderous intent in the vicinity! He could also sense that it was now rapidly approaching him with such power that it couldn't be underestimated.

As the sword that had come flying toward him grew dangerously close, Gerald opened his eyes before quickly extending his essential qi-filled palm toward the weapon's direction!

With a simple gesture, the sword—that had momentarily frozen in place mid-air—snapped right in two!

After it clattered to the ground, three figures instantly flew in from outside the manor! Landing quite a distance before Gerald, the three people were—as expected—Yamazon and the other two elders.

Staring at the trio with a raised brow and a darkened expression for a while, Gerald then casually asked, “I’m assuming the Quantocks sent you here?”

Chapter 1614

Sneering at Gerald’s casual response, Yamazon then retorted, “Even if the Quantocks themselves don’t come for you after you destroyed the Quartermains, we sure as hell will! Cutting straight to the chase, we’re here today to end your life as revenge for the extermination of the Quartermain family!”

Yamazon’s tone was frigid, and the furious aura he released was nothing short of pressuring.

“...What? Are only three of you here to do the deed?” asked Gerald rather disdainfully as he alternated his gaze among the three.

“You’re no prize, lad! The three of us are more than enough to finish you off!” retorted Yamazon with a snicker before the murderous man made his move!

It barely took a split second for Yamazon—who had been quite a distance away—to appear right in front of Gerald! This was how powerful someone from the Sage Realm could get!

Even so, Gerald had already entered the Sage Realm as well, so he wasn’t going to get caught by Yamazon that easily. Still, he knew he had to distract the trio away from the manor first to avoid his family getting hurt.

With that in mind, he decided to lead the trip to a more spacious area to fight.

“Heh, big deal! Let’s see if you can even catch up to me first, old man!” scoffed Gerald as he leaped out of the manor.

Seeing that, Yamazon and the other two guardians immediately began chasing after him. They weren’t about to let him escape!

Gerald himself—who was now quite far from the mansion—snuck a few glances back and was relieved when he saw that the trio were taking the bait. He could at least ensure that his family would be safe now.

It wasn't long after before all of them arrived at a spacious area. Thankfully, Gerald managed to find someplace remote so that outsiders wouldn't be able to bump into them mid-fight and accidentally get hurt.

“That's quite enough running around, you brat! Not like you can outrun us for long! After all, I've attained the strength of a Second-soul-rank master in the Sage Realm!” scoffed Yamazon as the trio surrounded Gerald.

Laughing in response, Gerald then stared at Yamazon before casually replying, “Outrun? Look, I only came all the way out here so that you wouldn't ruin my house! After all, you won't be able to compensate me once you're dead!”

“How arrogant...! I'm crushing you to bits if it's the last thing I do!” roared Yamazon as he charged straight for Gerald, his mind only filled with thoughts of murdering the youth!

“I’ll just break all your bones before you can do so, then!” retorted Gerald, not wanting to show any signs of weakness.

Upon hearing that, Yamazon was so enraged that he made sure to intensify his force as he got dangerously close to Gerald!

To the old man’s shock, however, Gerald easily countered his attack with a single kick! As Yamazon found himself momentarily soaring in the air, the elder eventually crashed onto the ground, prompting his entire body to produce several sickening sounds of bone snapping...

And just like that, with every single bone in his body broken, Yamazon was dead.

“To think you’d even dare to seek revenge on me when you’re that weak! What a joke!” scoffed Gerald as he pointed at the fresh corpse...

Chapter 1615

After taking the other two out as well, Gerald began thinking of his next step.

From this encounter alone, Gerald knew that he had to head off to Sunniva City as soon as possible to destroy the Quantocks...

After thinking about it a bit more, Gerald then fished his phone out and dialed the number of Hubert Younger from the Dragon Squad... Whatever his next move was, he still needed someone to deal with these corpses first.

Hubert definitely didn't have any objections to Gerald's request, and about half an hour later, Hubert's men arrived to take the bodies away...

With that out of the way, Gerald couldn't help but sigh rather unhappily. After all, he had been enjoying a rather good morning before Yamazon and his goons came along... Still, his family remained safe, so it wasn't all that bad.

Regardless, now that the issue was settled, Gerald hurried back to the manor...

Upon arriving, Gerald realized that his family members were already awake. Since there were already plenty of designated servants to take care of all the necessary tasks within the manor, his family members were pretty much just sitting around idly in his parents' room.

Understanding that this was a chance as good as any to discuss things with them, Gerald looked at each of them before saying, "Dad, mom, sis, and Yoel! There's something important I need to talk to you about and I was wondering if I could hear your opinions on it!"

Smiling back at his son, Dylan then replied, "We're all family, Gerald! Speak your mind!"

"Alright, so essentially, I'm thinking of arranging for all of you to stay in Sacrasolis Palace. Not only is that place much safer than out here, but Mila will also be there to take care of you!" explained Gerald.

While this place was much quieter, the fact that Yamazon and his men were still able to locate them made Gerald increasingly worried about his family's safety. After a bit of thought, Gerald eventually concluded that the Sacrasolis Palace truly was the safest place for them to live in. Mila would be there to take care of their needs as well.

Either way, neither of them had any objections with the idea, so Dylan simply replied, "That sounds good, Gerald! Let's go with that!"

Naturally, all of them understood that they were merely sitting ducks in the eyes of Gerald's enemies. With that in mind, as long as

they could make Gerald worry less, they had no problem with following whatever Gerald arranged for them. Besides, it would also ensure that their family would at least remain together no matter what.

“I’m glad to hear that! I’ll be transferring all of you to the Sacrasolis Palace later then!” said Gerald with a nod.

At noon, all of them set off in a car for Sacrasolis Palace.

On the way there, Gerald thought about Master Ghost and all the other members of the Dragon Squad that had been posted at Sacrasolis Palace. As long as nobody from the Sage Realm tried to trespass into his base, he believed that his family would remain relatively safe from harm... People who hadn’t entered the sage realm wouldn’t be stupid enough to invade his base anyway.

Regardless, upon returning, Mila instantly embraced her husband, overjoyed to see him back in one piece. Her joy was warranted since every time Gerald headed off, Mila would get worried sick and constantly pray for Gerald’s safe return.

Either way, after things settled down a bit, Gerald turned to hand a few sound talismans to Mila before saying, “I’ll be leaving Yoel and my parents in your care for the moment, Mila. I still have some

things to attend to, and it may take a while before I return. With that said, use these sound talismans if there's anything you need to tell me!"

Knowing how heavy Gerald's responsibilities were, Mila simply nodded. Though she couldn't help him directly, she could at least fulfill any requests he asked from her. In order to prevent Gerald from bearing any more worries than he had to, Mila understood that she had to be the strongest woman that she could be in front of him.

With that said, Gerald then quickly left for Jaellatra again with two things in mind...

Chapter 1616

The first reason he was returning there was to find out more about the God Lord that the man in black had previously mentioned...

Secondly, he wanted to buy a few secret technique talismans.

While secret technique talismans were common in Jaellatra, they were all generally rather pricey. It definitely didn't help that the ones Gerald wanted were of the rarer variants...

Quite honestly, Gerald had previously thought about learning how to make talismans. In doing so, he would surely be able to save up quite a bit.

Even so, Gerald was aware that talisman making was a very challenging skill to master. With barely any time or energy to spare for that, Gerald simply put the thought aside for now.

Regardless, after flying for about an hour, Gerald arrived at Jaellatra without a hitch. Now that this was his second time here, Gerald no longer found the place to be unfamiliar. In fact, he was able to gather his bearings rather easily, and he could get to the places he wanted to—within the city—quite comfortably.

Either way, it didn't take long for Gerald to arrive at the Zahn family's residence. Naturally, he was here to look for Nori Zahn.

Nori had the Zahn family as her backer in Jaellatra, and the Zahns were a considerably prestigious family here. As for why he came looking for it, it was only the natural choice since Nori was the only person he knew in Jaellatra.

Regardless, Gerald was promptly stopped by two guards—who were standing guard in front of the Zahn manor—when they saw him approaching the Zahn family manor's gates.

“Good day, may I know who you’re looking for?” asked one of the guards.

“Good day. I’m a friend of your eldest young lady and I’ve come over to visit! If she’s home, could you tell her that Gerald Crawford is here to meet her?” replied Gerald with a cheerful smile.

“Apologies, but the young lady has gone out!” said the same guard from before.

“Gone out? Do you have any idea where she went...?” asked Gerald.

“I’m afraid not, and the same probably goes for him... In the end, we’re just guards of the family! We have no right to know the affairs of the young lady!”

Upon hearing that, Gerald simply nodded. There was no reason for the guards to lie to him, so he may as well just head off into the city to try looking for her. With any luck, he’d manage to bump into her...

Still, this girl truly had the worst of timing... To think that she wouldn’t be home when he finally found the time to come meet her again!

Either way, Gerald soon found himself walking along the busy streets of Earth Capital alone...

While looking around, Gerald had to admit that this place was far more magnificent compared to any place on earth. With that said, it really was no mystery why Jaellatra was so much richer than earth.

Regardless, Gerald's train of thought was cut short when he suddenly heard someone saying, "Please, Nori! I'm being sincere here, so please just accept me!"

Turning to face the source of the voice, Gerald watched as a man donning a white suit walked out of a luxurious restaurant while desperately pleading to an unimpressed woman who was trying to walk away from him.

It was evident that the woman wasn't interested in him at all, and after closer inspection, Gerald was able to discern that she truly was the Nori that he was looking for! To think that he would actually manage to locate her!

Since she looked like she was currently in a pickle now, Gerald hesitated for a moment before calling out, "Nori!"

Upon hearing that familiar voice, Nori instantly turned to see if it really was him... Upon realizing that it really was Gerald, her eyes instantly glinted with joy as she exclaimed, "Gerald!"

Following that, she quickly ran toward him before embracing him tightly!

Gerald was completely caught off guard by this. After all, this was the last thing that he could have expected Nori to do! Whatever the case was, he was still a married man...

Chapter 1617

With that in mind, Gerald quickly got the girl off him.

In response, the surprised Nori then asked, "Why have you returned, Gerald? And why didn't you tell me that you were coming back in advance?"

"I did try to look for you, but your guards told me that you had gone out! Due to that, I came over here to see if I would have any luck finding you!" explained Gerald.

Upon hearing that, Nori was instantly overjoyed. After all, she had missed Gerald dearly ever since they parted ways. She had also been bored out of her mind since then.

Regardless, upon seeing how intimate Nori was being with Gerald, the young man in white furiously stomped over to them before asking, "Who is he, Nori?"

Glaring back at the man in white, Nori then said in a cold tone, "He's my boyfriend, Johnie Lager! With that said, you'd best stop pestering me or he'll teach you a good lesson!"

Gerald himself could only frown when he heard Nori's claim. This woman was far too proficient in using others as her shield...

"...Sorry, but I'm not her boyfriend!" denied Gerald, not wanting to be taken advantage of that easily.

Hearing that, Nori turned to glare at Gerald next, annoyed by his insensitivity. After all, wasn't it obvious that she was just trying to rid herself of Johnie?

Either way, the angered young man went by the name of Johnie Lager, and he had been pursuing Nori for the longest time. To his dismay, Nori didn't seem to like him at all, and she seemed reluctant to even look at him! Though it made him deeply upset, her actions only served to fuel his need to make her his.

Ignoring Nori's glares, Gerald—who very much preferred not to cause any unnecessary misunderstandings—then added, “Whatever the case is, it appears that you have some things to attend to at the moment, Nori. With that in mind, we can find someplace to sit and talk once you're done settling things!”

Just as Gerald was about to walk away, however, the now nervous Nori instantly reached out to wrap her arms around Gerald's!

As if she was going to let him off that easily when he had come with the specific intent to meet her! Besides, he still owed her one!

Making sure to press her bosom against Gerald's arm, Nori then whispered, “Don't forget that you still owe me a favor, Gerald! Look, this man is extremely troublesome! If you pretend to be my boyfriend and help me get rid of him, I'll consider that favor to be accomplished!”

When she put it that way, Gerald could only silently agree. After all, he was a man of his words.

Understanding that Gerald's silence signified his approval, Nori then turned to face Johnie before putting on a stern expression as she warned, "Look, Johnie, I'm busy at the moment, so please stop pestering me! I already have a boyfriend, as you can see, so know that you and I won't ever be a thing! Now, goodbye!"

Upon hearing that, Johnie instantly felt humiliated. He was the young master of the Lager family... The fact that the woman he loved was being snatched away from him right before his eyes was nothing short of disgraceful!

After a short pause, Johnie pointed at Gerald before growling, "...You there! What's your name? I'm challenging you to a duel!"

Raising a brow in response, Gerald couldn't help but feel that Johnie was rather ignorant. After all, he was still unwilling to let go of Nori even though she had explicitly rejected him.

Snorting disdainfully, Nori simply glared daggers at Johnie as she retorted, "Are you seriously challenging my boyfriend to a duel, Johnie? With how weak you are, a single pinch from him is enough to kill you!"

Hearing that, Johnie was instantly infuriated! Wasn't Nori looking down on him too much? In the end, he was still a Ninth-rank Chakra King!

"Listen here, kid! If you don't accept my challenge today, I definitely won't be allowing you to leave this place alive...!"

Chapter 1618

Now already seeing Gerald as his target, Johnie no longer cared about Nori's humiliating words.

While Gerald hadn't really wanted to get too involved with this man in the first place, after hearing Johnie's threats, Gerald found that this was as good a time as any to teach the youth a lesson.

'So, he appears to be a fearless lad who won't cry till he sees his own coffin! Well, since he probably won't back down till he achieves his goal anyway...'

"Are you really sure you wish to fight me alone?" asked Gerald in a cold voice as he turned to glare at Johnie.

“Stop talking crap and accept the duel already! Know that if I win, you’ll have to leave Earth Capital by crawling all the way out!” scoffed Johnie as he glared back at Gerald.

“That’s fine by me, but what if you lose?” asked Gerald as he flashed a wry smile.

“Humph! As if I’d ever lose to someone like you!” scoffed Johnie confidently. He had assumed that Gerald was simply no match against him, which was why he was being so disrespectful toward him.

“That doesn’t answer my question. Regardless, if you lose, you’ll give me a hundred million dollars. Is that acceptable?” asked Gerald after thinking for a bit.

Naturally, Gerald wanted to use his winnings on the talismans he was planning on buying. After all, why use his own money when he could use Johnie’s? Spending other peoples’ money was much more fun anyway.

“Fine by me!” replied Johnie without the slightest hesitation. He came from a wealthy family, after all, so that amount was nothing extraordinary to him.

Regardless, Nori wasn't about to stop Gerald from doing whatever he wanted to. After all, she knew his capabilities well, and she was more than certain that Johnie was going to end up losing and paying Gerald all that money.

Whatever the case was, both of them eventually found a wide space to duel in. Upon arriving there, Johnie took his jacket off before stretching his neck and starting to warm up.

Gerald himself simply stood there, watching Johnie calmly.

While Gerald was honestly glad that this man was giving him easy money, he was getting rather impatient with the youth's antics.

"...I don't have all day, you know? How much longer are you planning to warm up?"

Upon hearing that, Johnie's eyes flared up with rage!

With an immense urge to pound Gerald into a pulp, Johnie then roared, "I'm done! With that said, enjoy getting pummelled into fine dust!"

Following that, the youth leaped into the sky... Before rapidly descending down on Gerald, his fist aimed for Gerald's face!

Gerald himself simply stared back at Johnie without even the slightest intention of dodging the hit. After all, from what he could see, Johnie was as slow as a snail.

With that said, before Johnie could even lay a finger on Gerald, Gerald quickly retaliated with a kick, sending the shocked Johnie flying backward!

Upon falling onto the ground, the impact from all that was so great that a circular depression instantly formed around Johnie's now limp body!

Though only thirty percent of Gerald's power had been used in that kick, that was all he needed to completely overpower Johnie. Fights against such people were best ended in a single strike anyway.

Barely even able to stand up again, the horrified Johnie stared wide-eyed at the monstrous youth...

To think that Gerald was able to completely defeat him in just a single strike! The thought of it alone struck a massive fear within his heart...

Chapter 1619

Regardless, the terrified Johnie could only stare as Gerald slowly walked over to him... before squatting right before him and outstretching his right hand.

Looking at Johnie right in the eye, Gerald then said, "Well, as you've promised, a hundred million dollars for losing, please!"

Upon hearing that, Johnie—who had already closed his eyes, expecting the worst to happen—instantly found himself heaving a sigh of relief... As it turned out, Gerald was particularly trying to teach him a lesson...

Either way, Johnie understood that it was his total defeat, so he simply handed the hundred million dollars over to Gerald. Money would always come and go, so that amount was nothing much to Johnie.

However, though he didn't particularly care about losing the money, he did care about losing his pride. His dignity as the young master of the Lager family had been shattered, and Johnie simply couldn't stand that...

Whatever the case was, after taking the money, Gerald then left with Nori, leaving the depressed youth lying on the ground... It truly appeared that Gerald didn't care about Johnie at all...

After quite a while, Johnie finally got to his feet before slowly limping away...

This... This wasn't over yet...!

By that point, Gerald and Nori had just found a suitable café to chat in.

The second she sat down, Nori immediately displayed an enthusiastic expression as she asked, "So, why did you come looking for me, Gerald? Could it be that you missed me?"

Raising a slight brow, Gerald wondered if the girl had fallen for him to even ask such a question...

“...I simply came over to ask you about something!” replied Gerald with a serious face.

“...Oh, come on...! You could’ve given me a more interesting reply, you know? What a boring man!” pouted Nori rather adorably.

Gerald was a rather eloquent person and he knew it, but he was also well aware that he was already a married man. With that said, he needed to be serious when talking with other women so that they wouldn’t get the wrong idea. With that said, the fact that he had pretended to be Nori’s boyfriend earlier was already a rather big exception on his part.

Truth be told, if he wasn’t already a thing with Mila, who knows, maybe he would’ve actually had feelings for Nori. Then again, it was pointless to think of such scenarios when he already had such a perfect wife.

Regardless, Gerald ignored Nori’s pouting and simply asked, “So... Tell me, do you know anyone by the name of God Lord, Nori?”

“Not at all!” grumbled Nori as she turned to face her side.

Seeing her reaction, Gerald could only sigh in resignation. Girls in this era were simply too difficult to deal with!

No longer a person who entertained the whims of others, Gerald then stood up before saying, "Very well, then. You can just forget about it. I'll be taking my leave now, and sorry to have bothered you!"

Seeing that Gerald really was getting ready to leave, Nori instantly started to panic. If Gerald really left now, then all her previous actions would've been meaningless!!

Gerald, for one, was well aware that Nori wasn't really angry with him. She was simply pretending to pout so that he would care a bit more about her. Unfortunately for her, Gerald was no bootlicker, so he wasn't about to fall for her bait anytime soon.

"Fine, fine! I won't tease you anymore! You really are an insensitive person, you know?" grumbled Nori as she quickly pulled him back to his seat.

Hearing that, Gerald obliged before turning to look at Nori, keenly awaiting her answer.

Chapter 1620

“You were asking about God Lord, right? His real name is Apollo and he’s the supreme ruler of Jaellatra! He lives in the God Temple!” explained Nori.

Hearing that, Gerald now realized that his actions must’ve already caught the attention of Jaellatra’s supreme ruler...

“Actually, why the sudden interest in him, Gerald? Just so you know, God Lord isn’t as simple as you may think he is. According to rumors, he’s already trained enough to attain the Seventh-soul-rank in the Sage Realm! With that said, he truly is a terrifying individual!” added Nori.

Even though Nori was clueless as to why Gerald was asking about the God Lord, it was clear that she was warning him against trying to mess with Apollo.

After finding out that Apollo had possibly already entered the Seventh-soul-rank in the Sage Realm, Gerald felt a shiver run down his spine... If that was really the case, then Apollo was surely someone with monstrous strength...

Since Gerald was now only nearing the Second-soul-rank within the Sage Realm, the gap between him and Apollo was almost astronomical... If he were to anger Apollo at his current strength, Gerald would no doubt be killed in seconds, completely unable to even defend himself...

“...I see. Then... Do you know of a man donning black robes who acts as a follower of the God Lord?” asked Gerald.

After thinking for a while, Nori then replied, “I... do recall such a man, yes... I think his name was Hisham... Regardless, he’s one of God Lord’s henchmen, and he mostly aids Apollo in managing matters around Jaellatra. Since the God Lord himself hardly ever shows up in public, Hisham is the one who usually does all that needs to be done.”

Hearing that, Gerald found that it all matched up. Based on Nori’s description of him, Gerald was now pretty sure that Hisham was the person who had tried to test him back then.

Still, Gerald had a hunch that Apollo wasn’t particularly going after him yet. After all, Hisham had left almost immediately after testing Gerald’s capabilities.

“Don’t... tell me that you’ve already offended the God Lord, Gerald...” mumbled Nori as she looked at Gerald, concern in her eyes.

Shaking his head, Gerald then replied, “Don’t worry, I’m not stupid enough to piss off someone who’s attained the Seventh-soul-rank in the Sage Realm!”

Relieved to hear that, Nori then said, “I’m glad to hear that... Speaking of which, why did you ask for so much money from Johnie? Are you short of money or something?”

Though a hundred million dollars wasn’t that much to Nori either, it was still a sum that would be able to sustain an ordinary person for life.

Chuckling in response, Gerald simply replied, “Putting it bluntly, it’s much more fun spending someone else’s money when shopping! Speaking of shipping, I’ve heard that Jaellatra is famous for its secret technique talismans... Could you bring me over to the place that sells them? I’ve been itching to get my hands on some!”

Upon hearing that, Nori now understood that Gerald had returned to Jaellatra to obtain some secret technique talismans. It also explained why he had asked for so much money from Johnie.

“Of course! Though... Are you sure that a hundred million dollars is enough...?” asked Nori rather doubtfully.

After all, secret technique talismans were rather rare, even in Jaellatra. With that said, they were exceptionally pricey, with even the most common of talismans costing around a few thousand dollars. With that in mind, the more advanced secret technique talismans were undoubtedly priced much, much higher than that...

“I believe that the earnings I got off Johnie should be sufficient. Even if it isn’t, I have my own money as well. Regardless, let’s go have a look at the talismans first before anything else!” replied Gerald with a calm smile. After all, money had never really been an issue for him, and he wasn’t about to start worrying about not having enough.

Regardless, with all that out of the way, the duo then quickly finished their coffee before heading off to the largest secret technique talisman sales center in Jaellatra, Talisman Hall.

All the secret technique talismans in Jaellatra were made there, and the one responsible for crafting the more advanced ones went by the name of Boshier, the Great Talisman Master. Either way, upon completion, the talismans would then be placed in the Talisman hall where they would then be either auctioned or sold...

Chapter 1621

As they approached the Talisman hall, Gerald saw that the entire building was plated in gold. There also appeared to be a huge stone tablet carved into the shape of a secret technique talisman in front of the building.

Since it was located near the entrance, it was only fair to assume that the tablet was the symbol of the Talisman Hall...

Not many people came to the Talisman Hall in general, and those who did were usually dressed in luxurious clothing. That didn't really come as a surprise, however, since this place was even fancier than even the most expensive of locations within Jaellatra.

Regardless, upon arriving at the main entrance, Gerald and Nori were greeted by the sight of a man donning a robe that looked similar to a court robe.

Naturally, one needed to fulfill certain conditions to even be able to enter the building, and the man acted as the doorkeeper of the Talisman Hall.

After looking at a charm that Nori fished out from her pocket, the doorkeeper's eyes instantly lit up as he smiled before respectfully saying, "Welcome, Miss Zahn!"

The charm was an identity charm, and such charms were used to symbolize one's status within Jaellatra. Since Nori was the eldest young lady of the Zahn family—a rather prestigious family within Earth Capital—the doorkeeper naturally knew who Nori was.

Either way, after nodding in response at the doorkeeper, Nori then asked, “He’s my friend, so he should be allowed to enter a well, correct?”

“Yes, by all means! Please, come in!” replied the doorkeeper respectfully as he opened the door of the Talisman Hall before gesturing for them to enter.

“Thank you!” replied Nori with a polite tone before leading Gerald into the Talisman Hall’s main lobby.

Once they were inside, Gerald was immediately flabbergasted by the number of exquisite secret technique talismans displayed within the hall.

“The secret technique talismans within the lobby are the most unique ones in all of Jaellatra. After all, there’s only one of each talisman! With that said, they’re all extremely rare and precious! Do note, however, that since all these talismans are of perfect quality, they aren’t ever going to be sold or auctioned off!” explained Nori as she pointed at the talismans displayed in the lobby.

“Now, you may or may not know this, but secret technique talismans are divided into six main categories, them being basic, common, middle, high, rare, and perfect! As I said earlier, apart from the few talismans within this hall’s lobby, no other perfect talismans exist!” added Nori who was starting to sound more and more like a tour guide.

“Aren’t the most skillful advanced secret technique talisman crafters able to produce talismans of perfect quality?” asked Gerald.

Shaking her head with a slightly bitter smile, Nori then replied, “Even though Boshier is already a great master in making secret technique talismans, he’s only capable of producing ones of the rare quality. He hasn’t been able to improve his skills enough to create a talisman of perfect quality!”

“The perfect ones you see in the lobby were created a few decades ago by the first secret technique talisman crafter, Master Kyzer. Throughout history, nobody’s been able to surpass Master Kyzer’s skill, and nobody has any idea how he even managed to make such perfect talismans! It’s been an ongoing mystery, you know?”

After hearing all that, Gerald’s interest in secret technique talismans slowly grew. Eventually, he couldn’t help but ask, “I do wonder if there’s a way for one to learn how to make talismans...”

“Of course, there is! Essentially, one has to first join the Talisman Union, and there also needs to be a special tutor willing to accept that person as their student. Without those two, it’s near impossible to learn anything about talisman making,” replied Nori.

So, he first needed to get himself a tutor before he could even begin learning how to make talismans... This was going to be a challenge for Gerald. After all, the only person he knew in Jaellatra was Nori.

Forget tutors, he didn’t even know a single teacher here! With that in mind, it was certainly going to be difficult for him to learn how to make secret technique talismans...

Chapter 1622

“Still, why are you suddenly asking me about this? Could you be interested in learning how to craft secret technique talismans?” asked Nori as she smiled at him.

Seeing that she seemed to have caught on, Gerald didn't deny it and simply nodded slowly.

“...Well, if you truly are interested in learning, I could introduce you to someone I know. He's a Second-rank Talisman Master within the Talisman Union, and his name is Chace Hunt. He's an old friend of my father!” suggested Nori.

“Is that possible? I mean, I'm not even a local to Jaellatra. Am I qualified to learn how to craft secret technique talismans...?” asked Gerald, knowing full well about the prejudice many people from Jaellatra had against those from earth. There was simply too massive a difference between the people from the two lands.

“Don't worry, Master Hunt is a nice person, so I'm sure he won't mind! Besides, my father isn't one to ostracize those from outside Jaellatra!” replied Nori, convincing him not to worry too much about it.

“...Well, alright then. However, I still have some matters to attend to, so I won’t be able to start learning just yet. I’d appreciate it if I could start learning when I return here again!” said Gerald after thinking about it for a moment.

“No problem!” replied Nori as both of them finally made their way into the hall where the talismans were sold.

Noticing their arrival, a sales staff smiled brightly as she quickly walked over to the duo before respectfully saying, “Welcome! How may I help you?”

People who were able to enter the Talisman Hall weren’t ordinary folk, so the sales staff was well aware that he had to be on his best behavior in front of them.

“My friend’s here to buy some talismans!” replied Nori.

“Ah, I see! Please, come this way, then! I’ll first be showing you the new talismans made by Great Talisman Master Boshier first!” replied the staff as he led them to a display counter decorated with gold. Within it, a row of talismans could be seen...

“These are the latest rare quality talismans that Master Boshier made. There are attack spell talismans, defense spell talismans, stratagem spell talismans, as well as space spell talismans,” explained the staff in great detail.

Upon seeing them, Gerald couldn't help but feel overwhelmed. While the talismans were nothing short of marveling, each of their price labels—which were displayed at the bottom of each talisman—started with units that began in the millions! No wonder Nori had earlier asked him whether he was sure if he had enough with him! As it turned out, the hundred million dollars that he had obtained from Johnie was only sufficient to buy two talismans at most!

Judging from the expression on Gerald's face, Nori was immediately able to tell that he didn't have enough on him. With that in mind, she then leaned a bit closer to Gerald before whispering, “Is there anything you fancy, Gerald...?”

Upon hearing that, Gerald simply shook his head before turning to look at the staff again and asking, “Are there any other talismans here apart from these?”

Since this place was so huge, it was only fair to assume that much cheaper talismans were also sold here.

Chapter 1623

“But of course! Please, follow me!” replied the staff as he led Gerald and Nori into another hall.

Upon entering, a multitude of talismans could be seen hung dazzlingly on the walls. With all of them seeming to have varying levels of quality, Gerald quickly began browsing to see which ones he needed.

Thankfully, the ones inside this hall were much affordable, ranging only from prices between a few thousand to several million dollars.

It took him about an hour, but by the time Gerald was finally done, he had bought a few hundred middle and high-quality talismans. He got himself a few dozen rare quality ones as well.

In total, the final sum amounted to a whopping hundred and thirty million dollars! Naturally, Gerald had used his own money to cover the extra costs. Still, Gerald now knew how pricey these talismans could get!

Even so, they were a necessary purchase. After all, he wanted to have them ready for self-defense and also in case of emergencies.

The best thing about talismans was that not only did they have varying functionalities and powers, but they were also easily carried around and used.

Regardless, now that he was done shopping for talismans, both Nori and Gerald left the Talisman Hall.

Now that they were out, Nori turned to look at Gerald before asking, "So... What do you intend to do next?"

Not seeing the need to hide anything, Gerald then replied, "I'm heading to Sunniva City on earth!"

"Oh? Why?" asked Nori in a curious tone.

"Well, there are still a few Quartermains I haven't taken out yet... More specifically, I haven't exterminated those from the second clan of the Quartermains, the Quantocks of Sunniva City!" explained Gerald.

Upon hearing that, Nori understood what Gerald had earlier meant when he said he still had business to attend to. Sure enough, if he didn't take care of the Quantocks as soon as possible, they would surely cause him future troubles.

“...I see! Well, please be careful, alright? And if you need any help, you can just contact me and I’ll try my best to lend you my aid!” replied Nori.

“I’ll keep that in mind!” said Gerald with a smile before rapidly leaping away...

Staring at his quickly disappearing back, Nori wondered whether he would one day accept her...

Meanwhile, Johnie had finally managed to limp all the way home in his wretched state. With his hair messy and his usual temperament—as the young master of the Lager family—completely gone, Johnie now looked more like a beggar than anything...

Upon noticing Johnie’s return, a man—who honestly looked quite similar to Johnie—found himself surprised as he asked, “Johnie? What happened to you? How did you end up like this?”

“I... I was beaten up by someone, brother...!” replied Johnie as he looked at Jonas Lager with a defeated expression.

Jonas was Johnie's eldest brother, and he had entered the First-soul-rank of the Sage Realm.

With such great strength, Jonas was also a member of the Fury Squad, one of the more well-hidden underground forces in Jaellatra. The Fury Squad's members consisted of a group of assassins as well as strong cultivators. Together, their job was to accomplish missions given to them.

"What? To think that someone would actually dare to beat you up! Tell me who that man is so that I can avenge you!" roared Jonas.

"I... I don't know him very well... I only know that he seems to be Nori's boyfriend!" replied Johnie in a bitter tone, feeling both angered and pained every time he thought about Gerald.

After all, for the young master of the Lager family to be beaten up by some brat... It truly was a disgrace to the Lagers!

"So, the Zahns are involved! It appears that they're getting more and more arrogant as time goes on...! How dare they go against our family...!"

Chapter 1624

Jonas's expression seemed to darken exponentially as he howled in rage.

Truth be told, both the Zahns and the Lagers were equally powerful in Jaellatra. Since neither family was weaker than the other, both families made sure never to offend each other.

Due to Gerald's involvement in Nori's matters this time, however, it appeared that the two families were finally going to have a dispute...

"Don't worry, Johnie, I'll definitely help you out with this matter. In fact, I'm telling father about this! Let's see what the Zahns are truly capable of!" growled Jonas as he narrowed his eyes before supporting his brother back to his room to get some rest...

Fast forward to that night, the Quantock family manor could be seen brightly lit and servants of that family seemed to be standing guard all over the place.

Zaki himself was standing in the lobby, looking at everyone before him rather anxiously. After all, the three elders had been gone for almost an entire day now! Despite that, they hadn't reported back at all...

Seeing how worried his father was, Shawn then said, “Don’t worry, father! The three elders are exceedingly strong, remember? They’ll surely be able to get rid of Gerald!”

“I can only hope so!” replied Zaki, his brows tightly furrowed.

Just as Zaki’s sentence ended, however, Gerald’s voice could suddenly be heard shouting, “Tough luck! Instead of hoping for the impossible, why don’t you start thinking how you’re going to explain your deaths to the rest of the Quartermains?”

Hearing Gerald’s voice echo throughout the manor, Zaki and the rest of his family instantly fell into panic, desperately trying to see where Gerald was hiding.

However, the very next second, Gerald appeared right behind Zaki and lifted the man with a single hand!

Squeezing onto Zaki’s neck, Gerald then added in a frigid tone, “You’re a stubborn old thing, Zaki! Did you really have to force me to come to Sunniva City so soon?”

His face now reddened, Zaki could only flail feebly as he tried to break free from Gerald’s grasps. Naturally, there was no way that

was happening, and Zaki was now finding it exceedingly difficult to even breathe.

“Release my father, Gerald!” roared Shawn as he glared at Gerald.

Ignoring Shawn’s words, Gerald simply ordered, “Kneel! All of you!”

Upon hearing that, all the Quantocks simply exchanged glances with each other. In the end, not one of them was willing to obey Gerald’s orders.

“I see how it is! Well, since nobody took my advice, enjoy your trip to hell!” scoffed Gerald as he tightened his grasp around Zaki’s neck...

With a sickening ‘snap’ Zaki was no longer among the living.

“F-father...!”

“Master...!”

Upon realizing that Gerald had really done the deed, Shawn and the other Quantocks could only shriek in terror!

Unable to hold back his rage, Shawn then charged toward Gerald while roaring, "You b*stard...! I'll kill you...!"

Sadly, his efforts were completely useless. Gerald had come to Sunniva City specifically to eliminate the Quantocks. Just like how he had exterminated the Quartermains, he wasn't about to spare anyone in this family.

'To be soft to the enemy is to be cruel to oneself,' was a saying that Gerald came to learn as he matured...

And just like that, both the Quartermains and the Quantocks ceased to exist.

With his job now done, Gerald then quickly left Sunniva City to return to Jaellatra.

Chapter 1625

It was the next morning when a few luxurious cars could be seen parked before the Zahn family's manor. Notably, each of the cars'

license plates began with the word 'Lager', making it clear who was paying the Zahns a visit.

After the beat-up Johnie returned home yesterday, Jonas had reported the incident to his father—who was also the head of the Lager family—, Augustus Lager.

Upon hearing that someone had hurt his second son, Augustus was rightfully enraged. It certainly didn't help that he was a man who was very protective of his children.

Unable to stand the fact that his beloved son was injured, he was here today to argue about this with the Zahns.

“Master Zahn, if you weren't aware, your daughter's boyfriend beat up my son! How do you plan to settle this? I won't leave till you give me an acceptable answer!” shouted Augustus who was currently sitting cross-legged in front of the leader of the Zahn family, Yoshua Zahn.

Before Yoshua could even reply, Nori—who had been standing by his side—retorted, “The answer is simple! Your son's been endlessly pestering me so he got what he deserved!”

“Quiet, Nori!” shouted her father.

Upon hearing that, Nori didn’t dare utter another word and simply stood meekly by his side.

Following that, Yoshua turned to look at the Lagers. While Augustus appeared to be rather gloomy, Jonas—who was standing beside his father—had a frigid expression on his face.

Sensing how powerful Jonas’s aura was, Yosha could instantly tell how strong the boy was. With that in mind, Jonas was definitely not someone to mess with.

Regardless, after a slight pause, Yoshua said in a monotonous tone, “The way I see it, both of us are responsible for this matter, Master Lager. While I’ll certainly apologize to your son on behalf of my daughter, as Nori said, it was your son who started all this. With that said, once my apology is made, I hope your son doesn’t pester my daughter any further!”

As the leader of the Zahns, Yoshua was well aware that he couldn’t compromise too much with the Lagers.

“Cut the crap, Yoshua. Look, your daughter had better apologize to my son in person today! Fail to do that and I’ll destroy your family!” threatened Augustus as he slammed his hands against the table.

Hearing that, Yoshua instantly frowned. To think that Augustus would be arrogant enough to claim to want to destroy his family! He truly didn’t appear to respect the Zahns at all!

“Getting a bit too arrogant, aren’t we, Master Lager? I hope you remember that my family’s already managed to gain a foothold in Jaellatra! With that said, we won’t be an easy target!” retorted Yoshua icily.

“Oh really? I’d like to see you try defending yourselves against us!” scoffed Augustus with a disdainful snort before waving a hand.

A split second later, over ten strong-looking men in black rushed in, instantly alarming the Zahns!

“How imprudent! This is the Zahn family manor! Do you really think that this is a place for you to do as you please?!” yelled Nori as she glared at Augustus and his men before moving for the door, unable to stand being in the presence of the Lagers anymore.

However, her path was easily blocked by Jonus who—while glaring daggers at her—then threatened, “I’m sure you’re well aware that my brother likes you, Nori. Look, if you accompany my brother for an entire day, I’ll consider sparing the Zahns. Fail to comply, however, and I’ll make sure you pay dearly! What do you say?”

“What exactly do you have in mind when you say, ‘pay dearly?’” scoffed Nori, barely intimidated by Jonas’s threats.

“It’s simple really... It simply means that I won’t show you any more mercy!” roared Jonas as his pressuring aura immediately intensified!

“Lay a finger on her and I guarantee that you won’t be leaving this place alive!”

Chapter 1626

The second Jonas’s sentence ended, Gerald’s voice could suddenly be heard!

Recognizing that voice anywhere, Nori then exclaimed, “Gerald!”

Following that, Gerald walked in rather casually with his hands in his pockets.

While Gerald's surprising arrival made Nori's heart race, Jonas and Augustus's faces instantly turned red in rage!

"So, are you the one who hurt my son?" growled Augustus as he glared at Gerald.

Turning to look at him, Gerald then snorted before scoffing, "That's right! After all, your arrogant son was the one who challenged me to a duel! What? Is he now trying to get others to take revenge for his sake after he lost? How pathetic can he be?"

Hearing that instantly sent Augustus's blood boiling! For a brat, Gerald really knew how to pinpoint his weakness!

As Gerald had said, Johnie would surely be a laughing stock should people come to realize that he got his family to take revenge for him after losing to a duel that he started!

"Whatever the case is, you still beat up my brother! I can't just let this pass! With that said, I'm challenging you to a duel now!" growled Jonas as he walked toward Gerald.

“What makes you think you’ll be my match when your brother couldn’t even lay a finger on me?” retorted Gerald as he looked at Jonas with disdainful eyes.

Upon hearing that, Jonas was so enraged that he ended up clenching his fists so tightly that his veins bulged hideously on his arms!

“That doesn’t answer my question. Or are you chickening out now?” provoked Jonas who couldn’t wait to tear Gerald into pieces!

Gerald, for one, could instantly tell what was on Jonas’s mind. Gerald hadn’t been afraid of the man in the first place, and since Jonas was asking for his doom, Gerald had no problem with granting his wish.

“Oh, I accept the challenge alright, on one condition. If you lose, you and the rest of the Lagers must stop pestering Nori. Sound good?” replied Gerald.

“Deal! However, what if you lose?”

“You can do whatever you want with me if that comes to be!” said Gerald rather nonchalantly. After all, from what Gerald could tell, Jonas wasn’t anywhere near his match.

With the conditions agreed upon, both men then began walking out to begin their duel.

As the others quickly followed along, Nori ran over to Gerald's side before whispering, "Gerald, his brother isn't as weak as Johnie is... Are you sure about this...?"

Smiling in return, Gerald simply replied, "Don't worry, he's barely even a match for me!"

Seeing how confident Gerald's smile was, Nori could instantly rest assured. After all, she knew that Gerald was the kind of person who would only say such a thing if he was absolutely sure of his victory.

Now outside, Jonas then glared at Gerald before yelling, "I hope you enjoy watching me crush your bones!"

"Talk is cheap!" sneered Gerald.

Jonas was honestly severely underestimating Gerald's capabilities. After all, though his brother had failed to take Gerald out, Jonas knew for a fact that the gap between Johnie's and his strength was extremely vast. With that in mind, Jonas was confident that he could defeat Gerald easily.

“Bring it on!” roared the infuriated Jonas as his aura flared up! Following that, the man began charging at Gerald with immense speed!

Chapter 1627

His fist aimed at Gerald’s head, Jonas was sure that upon collision, Gerald’s skull would instantly split open!

However, he was a fool if he thought that Gerald was going to grant that chance to him. With great ease, Gerald simply stepped to the side to dodge the attack!

Even so, as Jonas’s fist flew right past Gerald’s face, Gerald could feel the immense power in the punch... As someone who had entered the First-soul-rank of the Sage Realm, Jonas was undoubtedly a strong one...

Unfortunately for him, his opponent was Gerald.

Realizing that his attack had actually missed, Jonas was left slightly shocked. To think that Gerald was actually this fast!

Quickly recovering his wits, Jonas then swiftly turned around to launch a lethal kick at Gerald!

However, once again, Gerald dodged the attack without any trouble.

From that alone, the difference in the duo's capabilities was made clear as day. In the world of martial arts, the speedier one always had the advantage, and this was clearly illustrated by the fact that Jonas hadn't been able to land a single hit on Gerald. Gerald was just so much faster than him!

With that in mind, the winner of this battle had already been decided....

Though he knew that, Jonas refused to admit defeat! After all, he had sworn to himself that he would avenge his brother by defeating Gerald!

"Humph! Are you only capable of dodging?" taunted Jonas with a snort.

Though he said that, Jonas was honestly feeling greatly humiliated. After all, it seemed like Gerald wasn't taking him seriously at all!

Even so, he now accepted that Gerald wasn't any weaker than he was. After all, none of his attacks had landed!

"I'm just worried that you'll get knocked out from a single attack!" retorted Gerald with a contemptuous smile on his face.

Upon hearing that, Jonas's fury spiked as he clenched his teeth. How prideful!

"You arrogant brat...!" roared Jonas as he charged up all his power before attacking Gerald with all his might!

Of course, Gerald easily avoided it, though the second Jonas's attack missed, Gerald calmly stood in place. Since Jonas wanted him to attack so much, Gerald would gladly oblige!

It only took a split second for Gerald to kick Jonas right in the stomach. Gerald's movements were so rapid that Jonas couldn't even react in time!

Momentarily finding himself soaring, it was a second later when his entire body crashed to the ground!

Seeing that his son—who was now coughing out blood—was barely even able to take a single kick from Gerald, August's face instantly paled. He hadn't thought that his son would actually lose to Gerald!

Staring at the injured man, Gerald then called out in a monotonous tone, "You've lost!"

Though Jonas clearly appeared unwilling to admit to that, Gerald was right. Understanding that, Jonas could only choose to accept his defeat. After all, choosing otherwise would surely make him a laughing stock to the public...

Chapter 1628

Following that, Augustus quickly led Jonas into one of their cars before leaving immediately.

Seeing that the Lagers had left, Nori joyously cheered, "You did it, Gerald! You're so strong that even Jonas wasn't your opponent!"

As Nori continued praising Gerald, Yoshua the other Zahns could only continue staring at the youth, still surprised by the outcome of that battle.

Noticing that her family was speechless, Nori then took the chance to introduce Gerald to her father.

“Father, this is the person I was talking about earlier! His name is Gerald Crawford!”

Hearing that, Yoshua simply nodded before signaling them to return to the hall for now...

Once seated, Gerald took the initiative to greet, “It’s a pleasure to meet you, Master Zahn!”

“The pleasure is mine. You know, Nori’s been telling me how powerful you were for a while now... After witnessing the events of today, I can safely say that I agree with her!” replied Yoshua, looking at Gerald with a satisfied expression.

“You flatter me, Master Zahn. Since I’m good friends with Nori, her troubles are mine as well. Regardless, it was my impulsiveness that started all this trouble in the first place. With that said, I hope you accept my apology!” declared Gerald in an apologetic tone.

After all, had he not beaten Johnie up, the Lagers wouldn’t have come over to confront them in the first place.

“There’s no way this is your fault, Gerald! I’m clearly the one wrong here for using you as my shield!” said Nori as she took a step forward to defend him.

“Alright, that’s enough blaming yourselves. I never liked that Lager kid in the first place. It’s honestly not the first time I’ve heard of him pestering Nori either. With that said, you did a good job, Gerald! With your help, Johnie will hopefully come to realize that not everyone in the world is afraid of him! Hell, who even are the Lagers? They’re still lightyears away from being capable enough to harm our family!” declared Yoshua.

Truth be told Yoshua wasn’t afraid of the Lagers at all. However, if they really ended up becoming enemies, Yoshua knew that both families would suffer great losses. Even so, Yoshua would’ve been willing to battle it out for the sake of his daughter...

At that moment, Nori appeared to suddenly remember something. With that, she quickly turned to face her father before asking, “Father, you’re an old friend of Master Hunt, right? From the Talisman Union? I need your help with something!”

“...Hmm? Are you thinking of joining the union?” asked Yoshua rather curiously.

“Not at all! I’m just asking on Gerald’s behalf! He’s interested in learning how to make secret technique talismans!” replied Nori as she shook her head before turning to look at Gerald.

From that, Yoshua easily caught on that his daughter must have fallen for Gerald. Though she had earlier said that she had only used Gerald as a shield, Yoshua was well aware that his daughter liked Gerald.

Regardless, Gerald then smiled at Yoshua before respectfully saying, “She’s right, Master Zahn. If it isn’t too much trouble, I’d like to ask for your aid in this!”

Yoshua, for one, already had a rather good impression of Gerald. After all, not only was he already this powerful at his age, but the youth was also close friends with his daughter! With that in mind, there was no way Yoshua would refuse to help.

“Don’t worry, the most it’ll cost me is a few words. How about this? I’ll contact Master Hunt and invite him over so that both of you can meet first. If he’s willing to accept you as his disciple, I congratulate you. However, if he declines, I won’t attempt to force him either. How’s that?” asked Yoshua as he proposed the best arrangement he could think of.

“I’ll gladly accept your arrangements! Thank you for your efforts, Master Zahn!” replied Gerald without even thinking twice about it.

After all, the fact that Yoshua—whom Gerald wasn’t even well acquainted with yet—was willing to help was already a pleasant surprise to him. In the end, all this was thanks to Nori...

Chapter 1629

It wasn’t long after before an old man donning long robes entered the Zahn family manor.

With a gold badge pinned near his chest, the individual was none other than Master Chace Hunt himself, a Second-rank Talisman Master in the Talisman Union...

“Ah, you’re here, Chace!” said Yoshua as he quickly walked over to greet the old man when he saw him.

“So, what exactly did you want to meet me for, Yoshua?” asked Chace without beating around the bush.

With how casually they were talking to each other, it appeared that both of them were old friends.

“Well, I’d like to introduce you to someone who has interest in learning how to craft secret technique talismans. I figured the details could be sorted out better face to face, which is why I invited you over!” replied Yoshua with a smile.

Slightly startled when he heard that, Chace then joked, “Don’t tell me you’re trying to make your precious daughter my disciple!”

Instantly laughing in response, Yoshua then replied, “I’d be overjoyed if she actually had interest in talisman making at all! However, she has her own plans. Regardless, he’s the person I’d like to introduce you to!”

Following that, Yoshua then positioned a hand toward Gerald’s direction.

As Chace stared at Gerald, Yoshua then added, “Gerald, this is Master Chace Hunt, a Second-rank Talisman Master in the Talisman Union!”

Upon hearing that, Gerald instantly greeted Chace in a polite tone, “It’s a pleasure to meet you, Master Hunt! I go by Gerald Crawford,

and I've heard many tales of your great achievements in the craftsmanship of secret technique talismans! With that said, I hope you'll accept me as your disciple and teach me the ways of making secret technique talismans!"

Raising a slight eyebrow after hearing that, Chace then turned to look at Yoshua before saying, "I'm sure you recall that I don't just take anyone as my disciple, Yoshua..."

To be completely honest, Chace wasn't too interested in taking Gerald under his wing. Now, if it was Nori who wanted to learn from him, Chace would have agreed to do so without a second thought. After all, she was Yoshua's daughter, and he, for one, would certainly give face to Yoshua.

Gerald, however, was a complete stranger to him, which was why Chace was already slightly reluctant to accept him.

"I remember, however, do know that he isn't an ordinary person... He's quite talented and extremely strong! He's also Nori's best friend, so..." muttered Yoshua as he nodded at the old man.

"So, you're telling me to make an exception and take him as my disciple, right? Hmm... How about this, I'll give him a test, and if he passes it, I'll accept him. How does that sound?" suggested Chace.

Being an old friend of Yoshua's, Chace knew he still had to give him some face. With that in mind, he figured that testing Gerald would be the fairest way to decide things.

Upon hearing that, Yoshua then turned to look at Gerald to see his response.

Naturally, Gerald barely hesitated as he said, "I agree! And if I don't pass the test, I, Gerald Crawford, swear not to bother Master Hunt anymore!"

Hearing that, Chace then waved his hand, prompting a brush and blank talisman to manifest before both him and Gerald.

"Very well, then! My test is simple. If you truly are as talented as Yoshua says, then you'll be able to copy my talisman. If you pass, I'll take you as my disciple!" explained Chace.

Following that, Chace held onto his brush before quickly drawing on his talisman...

Chapter 1630

A few seconds later, Chace lowered his brush before tossing the talisman into the sky... And just like that, the talisman transformed into a golden phoenix that then soared away!

“This talisman is called the Soaring Golden Phoenix!” explained Chace as he signaled for Gerald to begin.

Getting the hint, Gerald then closed his eyes before carefully recalling each of Chace’s previous brush strokes.

Seeing that Gerald wasn’t writing anything after a while, Chace then said, “You know, you can just give up if you can’t do it!”

‘Give up...?’ Gerald thought to himself, feeling slightly upset. When did he ever admit defeat? Giving up just wasn’t in his dictionary!

After a few more seconds, Gerald suddenly opened his eyes wide before reaching out for the brush and beginning to draw a talisman similar to Chace’s. With how fluid his movements were, it almost felt like Gerald was guiding water down a river as he drew.

It was so fluid, in fact, that Chace found his initial disdain quickly changing into surprise. He couldn't help but admit that Gerald was actually quite talented in the crafting of secret technique talismans...

What more, Gerald had managed to memorize the strokes and patterns of the talisman in such a short amount of time! Naturally, Gerald wasn't able to draw the talisman as fast as Chace could since this was his first time doing this. Even so, his performance was still beyond satisfactory for Chace.

After around ten seconds, Chace saw that Gerald had managed to make an exact copy of his talisman!

Following that, everyone watched as Gerald tossed the talisman into the air... and a crisp shriek of a phoenix followed!

A split second later, a golden phoenix materialized and began encircling everyone in the air... With such majestic wings, the soaring phoenix looked truly marveling...

Regardless, Gerald had succeeded!

Clapping his hands, Chace had a bright and satisfied smile on his face as he said, "Not bad! Yoshua really wasn't kidding when he said you

were talented! Fine, then! I'll be taking you as my disciple as we agreed!"

Hearing that, Gerald instantly thanked Chace in a respectful tone, "I appreciate the compliments, Master!"

Even Nori and Yoshua were pleased to see this. Nori in particular was especially happy for Gerald. She truly hadn't expected Gerald to be able to replicate Master Hunt's talisman so perfectly!

"Since I've now taken you under my wing, there are two strict rules you need to abide by!" said Chace with a sudden stern expression on his face.

"Do state them, Master! I'll obey anything you say!"

"Nicely said! First of all, you must use any of the secret technique talismans within Jaellatra. Secondly, you must never teach others how to make the talismans!" said Chace.

Both rules were the commandments of the Talisman Union, and nobody was allowed to break them. Once broken, the rule breaker would instantly be expelled from the union and lose their status as a member!

Though Gerald easily memorized the rules, he found the first rule to be slightly confusing.

He mustn't use any of the secret technique talismans within Jaellatra? Did that mean he could still use them back on earth...?

Regardless, after telling him the rules, Chace then said, "Right, then. I'll now bring you to the Talisman Union for registration. After that's done, you'll be an official member of the union and my chief disciple!"

As Gerald and Chace left the Zahn family manor to head to the Talisman Union, Chace made sure to tell Gerald that the process of making talismans wasn't easy. He also took the time to tell Gerald that the Talisman Union was extremely prestigious within Jaellatra. With that in mind, those who were part of the union had statuses comparable to those of nobility within Jaellatra.

Chapter 1631

Once they arrived at the Talisman Union, Chace brought Gerald into the main hall.

A man wearing the same outfit as Chace came to greet them, and a young man was accompanying him.

“Master Hunt, it looks like you have finally gotten yourself a disciple!”

The man greeted Chace with a bright smile.

“Master Griffin, where are you going?”

His name was Llyod Griffin. Like Chace, he was also a Two-rank Talisman Master in the Talisman Union. So, it could be said that they were fellow brothers.

However, Lloyd started taking disciples much earlier than Chace.

“Haha, Master Griffin, where are you going?”

Chace smiled subtly and replied to Llyod.

“Master Griffin, my disciple has produced a middle-quality talisman. I’m bringing him to meet the Great Master to ask him to grant him the title of a One-rank Talisman Scribe!”

Lloyd told Chace rather proudly.

The hierarchical structure of the Talisman Union was divided into four levels, which were, from the bottom to the top, Talisman Scribe, Talisman Scholar, Talisman Master, and Talisman Great Master.

Only when the disciple was acknowledged by his tutor would he be able to receive the title of a Talisman Scribe. After getting the title, it would mean that he had garnered himself a place in the Talisman Union. It was a symbol of his identity.

This was why Llyod Griffin was so excited.

For so long, Lloyd had already started taking disciples, but Chace hadn’t been able to find a candidate he liked. So naturally, he had been lagging behind a little.

Now, Lloyd's disciple was getting the title of a One-rank Talisman Scribe, but Chace was just getting himself a disciple. This somehow made Llyod look down on Chace, thinking that Chace was very far behind him already.

"Then, I shall congratulate you, Master Griffin. However, my disciple is also getting the title of One-rank Talisman Scribe soon!"

Chace, not wanting to lose, replied to Griffin confidently as he was very confident in Gerald.

In Chace's opinion, Gerald was far more talented than Llyod's disciple, and he was definitely going to surpass him.

"Great! I shall wait for that. When the time comes, we can have a match to see whose disciple is more powerful!"

Llyod challenged Chace in advance.

"Why not?"

Chace accepted the challenge immediately without fear.

After that, Llyod left with his disciple.

After Llyod had left, Gerald looked at Chace with a curious face. He asked, “Master, why are you so confident in me?”

Chace laughed heartily and explained, “Because I know you can do it. You are very talented. You will definitely become a very powerful Talisman Master!”

Hearing his praise, Gerald felt a little embarrassed.

He hadn't even started learning, but Chace was already having so much expectation and confidence in him. Therefore, he had to work very hard and not let Chace down. Otherwise, he would make Chace lose face in the Talisman Union. He had to surpass Llyod's disciple!

Later, Chace helped Gerald with the registration to join the Talisman Union and got his membership badge. Then, Chace pinned it on Gerald's chest himself.

Chapter 1632

Looking at the shiny badge, Gerald was overwhelmed.

He had finally become a member of the Talisman Union as well as a disciple of Master Chace Hunt. Now, he could learn how to make secret technique talismans.

“Gerald, you will be staying with me for these few days. I’ll teach you some basic knowledge about secret technique talismans and the ways of drawing the strokes. Although you are very talented, there are things that you still need to learn to master the skills. Talent is an inborn advantage, but you still need to learn a lot of things. Don’t be too proud, understand?”

Master Hunt looked at Gerald and advised him sincerely.

“Yes, Master Hunt. I understand. I will do as you say and work hard in learning how to make the secret technique talismans. I will not embarrass you!”

Gerald looked at Chace with great determination and nodded.

Master Hunt had such high expectations for him, of course he would not let him down.

Having said that, Chace brought Gerald to his residence, and they started the journey of teaching and learning right away.

Time passed quickly. A few days had already passed.

During Gerald's stay in Chace's house, Nori came to visit a few times, but she merely came to see how Gerald was coping.

Today, Gerald was practicing alone in the garden.

After learning for a few days, Gerald had fully grasped the basics of the making of the secret technique talismans as well as the stroke patterns.

Chace was very satisfied with Gerald's performance. He was sure that he had not chosen the wrong person. Gerald's talent was extremely high. In just a few days, he was already able to produce a

middle-quality talisman easily. Moreover, those talismans were of high grade in that category, and Chace found it rather surprising.

Thinking about his days back then, he did not have Gerald's talent when he was learning how to make talismans. So, he was only able to make middle-grade middle-quality talismans.

As the saying went, talent works, genius creates.

Gerald was the genius. With just a little guidance, he was able to grasp it immediately and then create surprisingly amazing things.

At the moment, Gerald was drawing on the talisman in front of him swiftly. It was a golden dragon. Gerald had seen this golden dragon pattern in an old book. He reckoned it was mysterious and challenging, so he decided to give it a try.

That old book had been given to him by Chace for his learning. Apart from those patterns that were used to make perfect quality talismans, Gerald had basically learnt all the other patterns. This golden dragon was one of the patterns used in perfect quality talismans.

Gerald had long heard that the perfect quality talismans were very difficult to be produced as they required skills and the strokes were extremely detailed and unusual. Hence, nobody was able to produce a perfect quality talisman until now.

However, Gerald did not want to buy it. He thought that there was nothing insurmountable in this world. The only problem was that the way to do so had not been discovered yet.

Ding!

At the end of his first experiment, Gerald threw the talisman in his hand into the sky.

The talisman immediately turned into a golden ray and disappeared.

The first trial was a failure!

“No. It must be the wrong strokes. I want to keep trying!”

Gerald did not give up and started his analysis. Then, he started drawing again.

A few minutes later, after he had finished his drawing, he threw the talisman into the sky for the second time.

Again, the talisman turned into a golden ray and disappeared. But this time, the ray was brighter with a hint of silver. It seemed he had improved a bit.

Seeing this, Gerald's confidence heightened. He felt that he was improving. So if he kept on working he would eventually succeed. Thinking of this, Gerald started his third trial.

Chapter 1633

On his third attempt, Gerald changed the way he did the strokes.

Honestly speaking, this golden dragon pattern was unusual. Starting the strokes at different spots would bring about different outcomes. Only when he found the right spot to start the strokes would he be able to produce the perfect quality talisman.

A few minutes later, Gerald had finished the drawing for the third time.

This time, he had improved a lot.

Although he wasn't able to produce a perfect quality talisman, he had successfully produced a rare quality talisman.

A shiny silver dragon surrounded by golden light gushed out from the talisman and circled Gerald.

"Gerald, how's your practice?"

Just then, Chace came back from work, and he walked into the garden as he asked Gerald.

The next second, Chace opened his eyes wide, and his face changed drastically. He put on a surprised look on his face.

"A rare quality talisman!"

Chace strode forward and shouted as he looked at the silver dragon.

Just as he said that, the silver dragon disappeared before Gerald. The talisman had expired.

Every talisman could only last for a few tens of seconds, one or two minutes at most. Once the time was up, the effect of the talisman would be gone.

“This... Gerald, did you make this?!”

After quite a while, when Chace was finally able to react, he asked Gerald.

Gerald nodded gently and said, “Yes, Master. I made this!”

“How did you manage to produce a rare quality talisman?! Do you already know the strokes used for making rare quality talismans?”

Chace asked Gerald in confusion.

It was impossible for a novice to learn the strokes for making rare quality talismans in such a short time, let alone produce one. He had to learn it step by step in order to reach this stage.

Yet now, Gerald had already produced a rare quality talisman successfully. It was simply mind-blowing.

“Master, I was just practicing here by myself. I kept changing the way I did the strokes, and then I succeeded!”

Gerald explained to Chace calmly.

Chace looked at the wasted talisman papers on the floor. He knew Gerald was not talking big. This was the result of his hard work and practice.

“Come with me to the Great Master Hall. I will take you to meet the Talisman Great Master!”

Chace could no longer bear it and grabbed Gerald’s arm as he spoke. The tutor and disciple left the house quickly and headed toward the Great Master Hall.

The Great Master Hall was the residence of the chairman of the Talisman Union, the Talisman Great Master of the Talisman Hall, Chadrick Gibson.

Chace had to report such shocking news to the Talisman Great Master, Chadrick Gibson, and let him grant Gerald the title of One-rank Talisman Scribe.

Soon after, Chace had already arrived at the Great Master Hall with Gerald.

Coincidentally, they met Llyod and his disciple, Nolan Jacobs, at the door.

“Yo, Master Hunt. Are you looking for Talisman Great Master, too?”

Seeing Chace’s arrival, Llyod sneered.

“Master Griffin, why are you here as well? Didn’t your disciple already get the title of a One-rank Talisman Scribe?”

Chace asked calmly. He wondered why he kept bumping into this man wherever he went.

Chapter 1634

Chace would have a headache every time he met with Llyod because this fellow always liked to annoy him, and he would occasionally mock him. Conversely, he would brag about himself. That was just so annoying.

“The Talisman Great Master has gone into seclusion since a few days ago. That’s why my disciple hasn’t gotten his title yet. I heard he was coming out today, so I quickly came to see him. Master Hunt, are you bringing your disciple to get a title as well?”

Lloyd explained to Chace before he asked suspiciously.

“That’s right! My disciple is very talented. He improves very quickly, so I brought him here to get his title!”

Chase replied with high confidence.

Lloyd was a little taken aback when he heard him. He knew that Chace had just accepted a disciple a few days ago, but now, the disciple was already going to get a title. This was a little too fast in his opinion as his disciple had spent almost two months learning before he was qualified to get a title.

“Master Hunt, getting a title is not a trivial matter. You cannot joke around with it. Are you sure your disciple is qualified for that already?”

Lloyd reminded him, looking at Chace in disbelief.

Of course, Chace knew what Llyod meant. Lloyd clearly did not believe what he had said.

‘Are you kidding me? Gerald has successfully produced a rare quality talisman, and it is worth mentioning that he did it without any guidance. He learned it all by himself! With such talent and ability, how could he not be qualified?’

But of course, Chace would not tell him the truth about Gerald.

“Haha! Of course I know that. Still, I believe that my disciple will not disappoint me!”

Chace chuckled and replied to Llyod.

After listening to his reply, Lloyd sneered silently in his mind. He wanted to see how Chace embarrassed himself later. He wouldn’t believe that Chace’s disciple could have succeeded in making a talisman in such a short time.

After a while, the door of the Great Master Hall opened. Chace and Llyod quickly brought their respective disciples into the hall.

An old man wearing a golden silk dragon robe was seated in the hall. He was the Talisman Great Master of the Talisman Hall, Chadrick Gibson.

“Chace, Lloyd, why are you here?”

Seeing them, Chadrick asked slowly.

“Great Master, I brought my disciple to report to you about his success and to get the title of One-rank Talisman Scribe for him!”

Without waiting for Chace to open his mouth, Lloyd grabbed the chance to speak to Chadrick first.

“Oh? What kind of talisman has your disciple managed to produce?” Chadrick asked again.

To get the rank of a Talisman Scribe, one must get recognition from the Talisman Great Master first.

“Great Master, my disciple, Nolan Jacobs, is able to produce high-grade middle-quality secret technique talisman!” Lloyd replied immediately, his face full of unconcealable pride.

“Hmm. High-grade middle-quality talisman. Not bad. He is indeed talented. Alright, I agree to grant your disciple the title of a One-rank Talisman Scribe. You can go to the hall now and proceed with the registration.”

Upon hearing that, Chadrick nodded in satisfaction and said.

Frankly speaking, a One-rank Talisman Scribe was only able to produce a high-grade middle-quality talisman at most.

“Thank you, Great Master!”

Lloyd and his disciple, Nolan, immediately thanked the Talisman Great Master.

“Chace, what about you? Are you here to get a title for your disciple as well?”

Chadrick then looked at Chace and asked.

“Yes, Great Master. My disciple is called Gerald Crawford. He is already able to produce a high-quality secret technique talisman!”

Chace told Chadrick right away.

Chapter 1635

Hearing this, Lloyd and his disciple, who was leaving, stopped in their tracks.

Lloyd turned around quickly and stared at Chace in great disbelief.

“What are you saying? Your disciple can produce a high quality talisman?!” Lloyd asked suspiciously. He did not believe in Chace’s words.

From what he knew, Chace’s disciple had only studied for a few days. How could it be possible that he was able to produce a high quality secret technique talisman? In fact, his disciple was only able to produce a middle-quality talisman after studying for almost two months.

Nevertheless, just because his disciple couldn’t do it, it didn’t mean that Gerald couldn’t do it either.

“Chace, how long has your disciple been following you?” Chadrick asked.

“Five days, Great Master.”

Chace answered honestly.

“Impossible!”

“Great Master, this is absolutely impossible. Chace must be lying to you. How is it possible that his disciple can produce a high quality talisman after learning for just five days?!”

Before Chadrick could say anything, Lloyd was already shouting angrily at Chadrick. He did not believe it at all.

Chace couldn't help but frown. His face darkened, and he turned to Lloyd.

“Master Griffin, just because your disciple cannot do it, it doesn't mean that my disciple cannot do it too. I told you before that my disciple is very talented!”

Lloyd's doubt of Gerald was similar to doubting his own ability, so Chace would not just let Lloyd criticize Gerald.

Besides, Gerald indeed had the ability to do so. He had witnessed it himself. Otherwise, he wouldn't have come to see the Talisman Great Master. Was he that free?

"Lloyd, be quiet!"

Chadrick's face darkened, and he ordered Lloyd sternly.

Lloyd did not dare to make a sound anymore, and he quieted down immediately, shutting his mouth tightly.

"Chace, are you aware of the consequences that you will have to face if you are lying?"

Chadrick then reminded Chace. This was no laughing matter, so he hoped that Chace would think about it before making a decision. It was still not too late for him to take back his words.

"Great Master, I, Chace Hunt, would never lie. My disciple certainly has the talent!"

Chace replied firmly to Chadrick.

“Well, since that’s the case, I shall test him myself. If he truly is what you claim him to be, I shall grant him the title of a One-rank Talisman Master!”

Chadrick proposed to Chace after hearing what he had said.

Chace turned around and looked at Gerald, who was standing behind him.

Gerald was calm, not nervous at all.

“Gerald, are you ready?” asked Chace.

Gerald nodded, indicating his agreement to the test.

Seeing Gerald agree to the test, Chace was reassured. He knew Gerald would be able to do it.

Then, Chace, Lloyd, and Nolan stood aside, and Chadrick prepared a brush and talisman paper for Gerald. He put them in front of Gerald.

“My test is very simple. If you can produce a high quality talisman on the spot, you will pass the test! If you fail, it will mean that your tutor is bluffing, and he will be expelled from the Talisman Union. You will both lose your memberships of the Talisman Union!”

Chadrick explained the rules of the test briefly and reminded him about the consequences.

“I understand, Great Master. I shall prove it to you!”

Gerald agreed to it without a second thought.

Chapter 1636

“Alright, let’s begin!”

Chadrick nodded and signaled for him to start.

Once he had said that, Gerald quickly took the brush and started drawing on the talisman paper.

Gerald drew the patterns from his memory. He had decided to give a hard slap to the faces of Lloyd and Nolan so that he could make his tutor proud.

Therefore, Gerald did not plan to produce a high quality secret technique talisman. In fact, he planned to produce a higher quality one, that was, a rare quality secret technique talisman, which was none other than the golden dragon talisman that he had succeeded in doing today.

However, there was one concern he had. He had only succeeded in drawing the golden dragon talisman after practicing a few times. He wasn't sure if he would be successful this time.

So, Gerald knew that he had to take a chance.

Honestly speaking, producing a high-quality secret technique talisman was not a problem at all to Gerald. He could draw the patterns easily. However, he knew he could not prove his ability too easily. Since he wanted to prove his ability, he had to amaze them.

A few minutes later, Gerald finished drawing the talisman and threw it into the sky.

The talisman turned into a golden ray and disappeared.

It was a failure!

Seeing this, Chace was dumbfounded.

Chadrick cocked his eyebrows, his face darkening, and Lloyd didn't waste the chance to worsen the situation.

"Just as I have told you earlier, Great Master. Chace and his disciple were bluffing!" Lloyd shouted at Chadrick.

Gerald looked very grave. He knew what consequences he would bring to Chace if he failed.

"Great Master, I was too nervous and accidentally made a mistake. Please give me one more chance!"

Gerald begged.

“If you can’t do it, you just can’t, even if you are given a second chance. Great Master, you must punish Chace and his disciple severely!”

When Lloyd heard it, he barked at Gerald angrily and suggested this to Chadrick.

Chadrick fell into deep thought. In truth, he had somehow guessed what Gerald was drawing on the talisman paper based on his strokes and the pattern, and he had thought that the golden ray was unusual.

“Okay, I will give you one more chance!”

After quite some time, Chadrick agreed to give Gerald another chance.

Gerald and Chace were delighted when they heard that. On the other hand, Lloyd was very irritated and wondered why Chadrick would make such a decision.

Gerald started drawing a talisman for the second time.

This time, he knew he had to succeed, or he would be done for.

Gerald closed his eyes tightly. He was not in a rush to start drawing, but he was searching in his mind on how he had drawn the pattern this morning.

“Just forget it if you can’t do it. Don’t waste time anymore!”

Seeing Gerald hesitate to move his brush, Lloyd sneered at him again.

Gerald opened his eyes wide suddenly and started drawing on the talisman paper like the wind.

Every stroke Gerald drew on the talisman paper looked very strange.

Meanwhile, Chadrick, who was watching the way Gerald did his strokes from above, was shocked at what he was seeing.

“This is...”

Chadrick couldn't help but feel that the strokes and patterns Gerald was drawing seemed very familiar.

The next second, Gerald finished drawing the talisman. The moment he put down his brush, he threw the talisman into the air.

A brilliant golden ray emanated from the talisman, instantly illuminating the whole Great Master Hall, and a golden dragon surged out from the golden light and surrounded Gerald.

Chapter 1637

“A talisman of perfect quality!”

Chace exclaimed in great surprise when he saw this.

The golden light was shining brightly with the purple qi drifting from the east, and the white mist surrounded them. It was a magnificent scene.

That's right. Gerald had actually produced a perfect quality secret technique talisman!

“This. How could this be possible?!”

Lloyd, who was standing on the side, could not believe what he was seeing. He shouted with his eyes wide open.

Although he did not believe it, it did not change the fact that it was right before his eyes.

At the same time, Chadrick was equally flabbergasted. He didn't expect that Gerald would actually produce a perfect quality secret technique talisman as he knew perfectly well that even he himself was unable to do so.

"You. How did you do it?"

Chadrick asked Gerald immediately.

"Great Master, I just kept practicing and exploring. Before I came here, I had already produced a rare-quality talisman successfully!"
Gerald answered right away.

Hearing his answer, Chadrick nodded in satisfaction.

“Chace, your disciple is indeed extremely talented. From now on, he will be a One-rank Talisman Master in the Talisman Hall!”

Then, he praised Chace and granted Gerald the title.

A One-rank Talisman Master. This meant that Gerald was now enjoying the same status as a tutor, and this honorable status was very precious. When he received the title as a One-rank Talisman Master from the Talisman Hall, it would also mean that his status would be very high in the whole of Jaellatra.

“Great Master, you...”

Lloyd was naturally the first person who was unwilling to accept this. He approached Chadrick immediately as if wanting to say something.

Chadrick knew what was going through Lloyd’s mind. Without waiting for him to say anything, he stopped him first. “Lloyd, I know what you want to say, but this matter is settled. Alright, off you go now. I still have things to do!”

Lloyd felt helpless, but he could only swallow his anger and leave with his disciple.

As for Chace and Gerald, the tutor and the disciple were overjoyed, thinking that Lloyd was shooting himself in the foot.

After leaving the Talisman Hall, Chace smiled at Gerald and praised him. "Gerald, you are now a tutor in the Talisman Hall! Your future depends on yourself now."

"Master, even though I have become a tutor, you are still my teacher!"

Gerald looked at Chace with an unwavering gaze as he spoke.

As the saying went, once a teacher, always a teacher.

If it wasn't for Chace being willing to accept him as his disciple, how could he have achieved such an accomplishment?

Hearing Gerald's words, Chace felt warm in his heart. He had indeed chosen the right disciple.

Very soon, Chace brought Gerald to report to the Talisman Hall to retrieve the badge of a One-rank Talisman Master. Gerald had indeed become a tutor in the Talisman Hall!

Once everything had been settled, Gerald went to the residence of the Zahn family.

Gerald hadn't seen Nori since the last time she had come, so he wondered what she had been doing over these few days.

Now, Gerald was already a familiar guest of the Zahn family, so no one would stop him from entering and leaving anymore.

When he reached the hall, he saw Yoshua talking to his butler.

“Master Zahn!”

Gerald entered the lobby and greeted Yoshua politely.

“Gerald, you are here. Quick, come and have a seat. How're your studies at Master Hunt's place?”

When Yoshua saw Gerald, his face lit up, and he asked Gerald with concern immediately.

Chapter 1638

“Wow, this is the badge of a One-rank Talisman Master. So, you have become a tutor?”

Before Gerald could even reply, Yoshua had already noticed the One-rank Talisman Master on his chest and cheered in surprise.

Yoshua could easily recognize the badge because Chace Hunt had a Two-rank Talisman Master badge.

“Yes, Master Zahn. However, I must thank you a lot for this. It was you who gave me such a good opportunity to become the disciple of Master Hunt and get to where I am today!”

Gerald was an appreciative person. It was only natural that he would be grateful to Yoshua.

“Ha! Ha!”

“It’s not a big deal at all. It’s the result of your hard work!”

Yoshua waved his hand at Gerald as he laughed.

Seeing Gerald successful made Yoshua happy. At least it made him feel that he had not helped the wrong person.

“Oh right, Master Zahn. Why don’t I see Nori anywhere?”

Gerald then asked Yoshua in confusion.

Nori had always stayed by Yoshua’s side. However, she was not with him today, which made Gerald feel very strange.

“Now that you’ve mentioned Nori, she’s been out these few days, saying that she was going to join an expedition to the holy mountain to search for a thousand-year-old panax ginseng.

Yoshua answered Gerald’s query.

“A thousand-year-old panax ginseng? What is that?”

Gerald was confused.

“It’s an ancient herb that only grows once every one thousand years. It’s more precious than ginseng!” Yoshua explained.

This triggered Gerald’s curiosity. But why hadn’t Nori told him about this? Moreover, why was she interested in this ancient herb? There had to be some unknown secrets in this matter.

“Master! Master!”

Right at that moment, a servant came running from the door hurriedly as he shouted for Yoshua anxiously.

“What happened? Why are you so anxious?”

Yoshua frowned and asked.

“The young lady... It’s about Young Lady and the rest! They met with an accident in the holy mountain! I just heard that there was an avalanche in the holy mountain recently, and a lot of snow fell down the mountainside. The situation is very worrying!”

The servant quickly told Yoshua the news he had just received.

Yoshua was stunned after hearing the news.

“You... You can’t possibly be joking around with this matter?!”

Yoshua questioned him in disbelief. His daughter had left just two days ago, and now, he was already receiving such horrible news. It was truly hard for him to accept it.

Just as he said that, a group of armored men entered through the door.

These men crowded into the house quickly. Among them, there was a leader, and he was wearing a black military uniform.

“Hello, Master Zahn. I’m the captain of the army of Jaellatra, Patrick Wang. I’m here today regarding the matter of the young lady of your family and her expedition team in the holy mountain!”

Patrick stood before Yoshua and told him with a serious face.

Now, Yoshua knew that it was not fake news, but something had truly happened to them.

Yoshua's legs gave out. Luckily, his butler and servant, who were standing behind him, quickly supported him and prevented him from falling.

On the other hand, Gerald was also very worried. He turned around and left the house immediately. He knew he had to go to the holy mountain and save Nori himself.

Once he had left the residence of the Zahn family, Gerald headed to the main city of Earth Capital. He had to buy some supplies and equipment before heading to the holy mountain. Otherwise, going there alone unprepared was no different than asking for his own death.

Chapter 1639

After preparing for almost two hours, Gerald was fully equipped.

He returned to the residence of the Zahn family once again, and he saw Yoshua and Patrick, who were just about to leave for the army camp nearest to the holy mountain.

Seeing Gerald come back made Yoshua very surprised.

He had previously thought that Gerald did not want to bother about this matter. But now, seeing that he was fully equipped, he knew that the latter had gone to make preparations just now.

“Master Zahn, I hope I can go save Nori as well!”

Gerald looked at Yoshua and said righteously.

Although Gerald and Nori were not romantically involved with each other, he saw Nori as his best friend.

Now that Nori was in a very dangerous situation, Gerald could not just sit still. He had to go and save her.

“Gerald.”

“Master Zahn, Nori is my best friend. I cannot just leave her alone!”

Yoshua wanted to say something, but Gerald interrupted immediately.

Hearing Gerald's words, Yoshua felt warmth in his heart, thinking that his daughter had made a good friend.

Since Gerald had the intention to do so, he would naturally choose to say yes.

"Captain Wang, can he join the rescue mission?"

Yoshua then looked at Patrick, who was standing beside him, and requested.

Patrick glanced at Gerald. After hesitating for a few seconds, he nodded. "Yes, he can!"

"Thank you very much, Captain Wang!"

Gerald thanked Patrick as well. He had initially thought that Patrick would not agree to it, but now, it looked like it wasn't the case.

Soon, they arrived at the temporary camp a few miles away from the holy mountain.

Since the weather and condition of the holy mountain were very harsh right now, the rescue team was not able to get close to it. For the sake of safety, they could only build a temporary camp a few miles away from the mountain.

When they arrived at the camp, a group of men was already gathering around a table, discussing the rescue plan.

“Come, let me introduce you. He is a polar expedition expert, Quest Leane. This is a medical expert, Kaleb Wallor. And this is a geologist, Malcolm Laige.”

Once Patrick walked into the camp, he introduced the three who were already there to Gerald.

“This is Gerald Crawford. He will be one of the members of the rescue team this time!”

Gerald greeted them briefly.

“What’s your expertise, Brother Crawford? The trip to the holy mountain this time is not a simple one!”

Quest asked Gerald right away.

“I don’t know anything!”

Gerald replied calmly.

Hearing this, the three immediately cocked their eyebrows and put on a displeased look on their faces.

“Brother Crawford, if you know nothing, I think you should not join the rescue mission this time. We don’t have the extra energy to take care of you!”

Quest proposed to Gerald with a disapproving tone.

The members of the rescue team were mostly experts in some areas, so they certainly did not want someone who knew nothing to join them.

Hearing this, Gerald couldn't help but frown. He didn't expect that these people would look down upon him.

"Don't worry. I don't need your care nor your help. You should better take care of yourselves!"

Not wanting to be outdone, Gerald refuted.

After that, Gerald turned around and walked out of the tent. He walked to an open space and sat down, packing and checking his equipment.

Quest and the rest did not want to bother about Gerald. It was for the best that Gerald had said that, so they did not need to care about Gerald's life or death.

Chapter 1640

The holy mountain was a few thousand meters above sea level. The higher up the mountain, the lower the temperature and atmospheric pressure would be. Moreover, the condition on the mountain was very harsh now. The wind was fierce, and the snow was heavy. It was very dangerous.

Hence, it could be said that the rescue mission to the holy mountain this time was very risky.

“Everyone, since there will be a Force 6 wind as well as a snowstorm tonight, we have decided to set the departure time at seven o’clock tomorrow morning. I hope that everyone can rest well tonight to conserve your energy!”

Soon, Patrick came and informed Gerald and the rest.

Tonight was going to be a sleepless night.

As the night was getting old, Gerald leaned on his backpack alone and closed his eyes for a short rest.

Just then, he heard something.

Gerald opened his eyes immediately and looked in the direction of the camp Quest and the other two were staying. He saw two figures sneaking out of the tent, and they were acting very cautiously.

Through the darkness, Gerald could see the faces of these two men.

They were none other than Kaleb Wallor and Malcolm Laige.

Seeing this, Gerald couldn't help but chuckle in silence. He didn't expect the two people who had been mocking him this afternoon to be attempting to escape. This was indeed too shameful.

After thinking for a while, Gerald got up and quietly approached the two of them.

“Where are you two going?”

At the next moment, Gerald asked as he appeared behind Kaleb and Malcolm.

Gerald's appearance almost scared them to death. They were so shocked that they fell to the ground.

“You... Why aren't you asleep seeing as it's the middle of the night but instead, you're scaring people here?!”

Kaleb glared at Gerald and shouted with a trembling voice.

“Hah! If I were asleep, how would I be able to see you two escaping?”

Gerald smirked and sneered.

“You... Don’t slander people here. We were just checking the weather!”

At Gerald’s words, Malcolm and Kaleb exchanged glances and refuted, pointing their fingers at Gerald.

“You still don’t want to admit it. How shameless.”

Click!

Right at that moment, the lights came on.

Patrick, Quest, and the rest came out of the tents immediately. They had been awakened by the noise outside.

“What’s wrong?”

Patrick approached them and asked.

“Captain Wang, it looks like you didn’t arrange your men to keep watch at night. These two were in the middle of escaping, and I happened to catch them red-handed!”

Gerald would not hide it for them, and he told Patrick this playfully.

Once Patrick heard him, his face darkened.

Swish!

A figure rushed forward, grabbing the collars of Kaleb and Malcolm’s shirts.

It was Quest Leane. He glared at them angrily.

“You cowards! How dare you escape?! I shall teach you a good lesson!”

Quest roared angrily and wanted to beat them up.

Luckily, Patrick and the other men stopped him in time. Otherwise, Kaleb and Malcolm would have been torn apart by Quest. Nobody would have expected this to happen.

“You two, tell me honestly. What is really going on?”

Patrick stopped Quest and asked as he looked at them coldly.

Chapter 1641

“Captain Wang, we... Both of us are just ordinary people! W-we’re afraid of dying too, you know...?!” stammered Kaleb as he lowered his head, not even daring to look into Patrick’s eyes.

“You...!” growled Quest, growing more infuriated by the second.

“So... Let me get this straight. Both of you are trying to secretly escape just because you’re afraid of dying?” said Gerald as he added more fuel to the fire. After all, he didn’t really have much of a good impression on the duo.

Regardless, upon hearing Gerald’s words, Kaleb and Malcolm were so embarrassed that they could only further lower their heads.

Boiling mad, Quest then suggested, “People like these two... They should be captured, Captain Wang!”

Upon hearing that, Patrick paused for a moment. Turning back to look at Quest, he then casually said, “...Just... forget it... It’s not a crime to fear death!”

Capturing them was a bit unnecessary. After all, the duo hadn’t really done anything illegal to warrant Quest’s suggestion.

Either way, Patrick didn’t really want to force the duo to come along with them so he simply turned back to look at them before saying in a frigid tone, “Whatever the case is, if you’re that afraid of dying, then just leave!”

With that said, Patrick then began leading the others way, leaving Kaleb and Malcolm—who were now free to leave—behind.

To Patrick, having them leave early was way better than allowing the timid and terrified men to stay in the long run. By getting the

burdens out of the way early, future unnecessary trouble could definitely be avoided.

Regardless, upon realizing that Patrick was granting them permission to leave, both the delighted men then kowtowed—while facing him—before shouting, “Thank you, Captain Wang...! Thank you!”

Hearing that, Quest made a brief glare at them before sneering and returning to the tent.

Gerald himself couldn't be bothered with the two, so he simply carried his backpack before entering the same tent that Quest had.

Noticing Gerald's presence, Quest—who was still angry with the turn of events—then scowled, “How absolutely infuriating...! I truly hadn't expected them to be this afraid of dying!”

Chuckling in response, Gerald then replied, “Well, it's not like I don't get where they're coming from. After all, the duo has little to no experience in adventuring! With that in mind, it's no mystery why they'd be so terrified of undergoing such dangerous affairs!”

“...Hmm? You say that, but aren’t you the same as them? Why didn’t you run with them?” asked Quest rather curiously. After all, Quest had initially thought that Gerald was similar to people like Kaleb and Malcolm. As it turned out, however, he had been wrong.

“I’m nothing like them! After all, I’m someone who’s training to attain spiritual enlightenment!” replied Gerald in a confident tone.

Upon hearing that, Quest instantly got to his feet before staring at Gerald in surprise. After a few seconds, he then said, “...No wonder you didn’t leave! To think that you’re actually training to attain spiritual enlightenment!”

“Indeed. Regardless, know that since I have a good friend in the adventure team, I’m heading there to save her no matter the costs! Even if I have to risk my life!” explained Gerald as he looked at Quest determinedly.

Hearing that, Quest nodded in satisfaction before stretching out his hand toward Gerald.

Chapter 1642

“I apologize for my earlier bad attitude. With that said, I hope we can cooperate throughout this rescue mission!” said Quest.

Not one to fuss over such small matters, Gerald was starting to feel that Quest was actually a rather nice person. What more, Quest was a professional adventurer with great courage and an adventurous spirit.

With that in mind, Gerald found himself smiling as he returned Quest’s handshake while saying, “Likewise. Regardless, allow me to formally introduce myself. Gerald Crawford!”

“Quest Leane!” replied Quest with his own smile.

Following that, both of them then began chatting rather cheerfully till they eventually drifted off to sleep at around three in the morning...

By seven the next morning, all fifteen of the rescue team members had already assembled and were ready to set off for the holy mountain.

Being the pioneer of the group, Quest was the first in line, followed by Gerald, Patrick, then the other members of the team.

Fortunately, the weather was rather good, so the rescue team's journey up the mountain proceeded rather smoothly. Even so, the higher they went, the colder it got. Aside from that, the air pressure was also gradually intensifying.

Sensing that, Patrick and the others quickly made sure to put on oxygen masks. Naturally, Patrick offered one to Gerald as well.

In response, however, Gerald simply said, "It's fine, Captain Wang. I don't need one!"

Such air pressure was nothing to Gerald, and it was evidently nothing to Quest as well since he refused to wear an oxygen mask too. Quest, for one, was a seasoned adventurer, and he was already used to dealing with pressures like these.

Still, he couldn't help but feel slightly concerned over Gerald's safety, so he turned around to ask, "Are you sure you don't want to put one

on, Gerald? The pressure's only going to get lower the higher we get, and air will become much scarcer then..."

Hearing that, Gerald simply shook his head before replying, "Don't worry about me. I don't need to wear one!"

Gerald meant every word that he had said. After all, the essential qi in his body actively cushioned the negative effects of the pressure. Due to that, not only was Gerald unaffected by the freezing temperatures, but Gerald was also able to continually maintain his breathing.

With how sure Gerald sounded, Quest didn't say anything else. Even so, he now had a new outlook on Gerald, thinking that the youth was rather different from the others.

Regardless, the rescue team finally arrived at a resting spot after hiking for a little over three hours.

While taking their temporary rest, Patrick double-checked their location before saying, "Alright, we're currently at an altitude of three thousand feet up the holy mountain. From what we've previously gathered, the other adventure team disappeared at around nine thousand and eight hundred feet. With that said, we're only at a third of our journey to where we need to get to!"

“I suggest we try to reach our target location before the weather gets too bad, Captain Wang. After all, the weather conditions up here appear to be much worse than what we had initially anticipated! With that said, even the slightest change in weather will hinder our progress up the mountain!” said Quest as he looked at Patrick.

While—the remaining—six thousand and eight hundred feet may not sound too bad a hike on paper, it was, in fact, extremely far from where they currently were.

What more, while it had taken the group about only three hours to get to three thousand feet high, the terrain they had to walk through earlier wasn't as bad as what was to come. After all, the higher they went, the more uneven the holy mountain's terrain was going to get. Steep cliffs, for one, would certainly become more frequent, and if they weren't careful, slipping off one wasn't completely out of the question...

With that in mind, the rescue team then set off again after completing their brief rest.

It wasn't long after before the rescue team met with a predicament.

There was no further road to speak of where they currently were! Essentially, that meant that the only way to head forward was to climb a steep cliff before them...

Looking down into the three-hundred-foot deep abyss below him, Gerald could tell that many would definitely feel terror-stricken just from seeing how deep the fall was.

Even so, it wasn't as if the others had any other choice. After all, it would definitely take way too much time and energy for them to head back and attempt to find another road. With that in mind, the steep cliff truly seemed like their only way of progressing.

Thankfully, this wasn't Quest's first rodeo. Quest had scaled cliffs like this before, so it honestly wasn't anything too difficult for him.

With that in mind, everyone then watched as Quest took a rope—with a hook attached to it—before flinging it toward a rock atop the cliff.

After testing how firm the hook had lodged itself into the rock, Quest then easily climbed up the rope...

Chapter 1643

Naturally, scaling the cliff wasn't an issue for Gerald either.

After taking a few steps back, Gerald dashed forward before making a giant leap! Seconds later, the youth then landed right beside Quest!

Upon seeing that, Quest and the others all felt their jaws drop. What immense jumping capabilities! He truly was a person who was training to attain spiritual enlightenment!

Eventually shaking their shock off, the others then quickly began climbing up the rope as well...

It was when most of them had already made their way up the cliff when a sudden roar of thunder could be heard!

Following that, the weather began changing rather rapidly, and soon enough, dark clouds had covered every inch of the sky...

Understanding that the weather was only going to get nastier, Patrick—who was adamant about getting up the cliff last— anxiously instructed, “Everyone, hurry!”

Once everyone had made it to the top, Patrick quickly began climbing the rope as well...

Of course, trouble always came unannounced. The others had considerably worn the rope down, so halfway up, it ended up snapping!

Watching in utter horror as Patrick began falling into the abyss, the other team members instantly began shouting, "Captain Wang!"

Gerald himself quickly untied the rope around his waist before tossing it toward Patrick! Upon coming into contact with the falling man, the rope instantly wrapped itself around him!

Realizing what Gerald had just done, Quest then rushed over to him while shouting to the rest, "Hurry and help him!"

Hearing that, the rest of the team members quickly snapped out of it and began grabbing the rope as well. After a bit of effort, all of them were successfully able to pull Patrick back up...

Thanks to Gerald's quick thinking and actions, Patrick was able to avoid a truly horrible fate...

Though he was now safe, Patrick—who was drenched in cold sweat—still found himself shivering slightly. After all, he had thought that it was all over for him just seconds ago. Panting as he walked over to a rock, Patrick then sat on it to slowly recover his cool.

Seeing that, Gerald then walked over to him before squatting by Patrick's side and asking in a concerned tone, "Are you alright, Captain Wang?"

Still quivering slightly in fear, Patrick then shook his head as he replied, "I... I'm fine... Regardless, thank you, Gerald...! If it wasn't for you, I'd be dead by now!"

In response, Gerald simply smiled subtly before humbly replying, "There's no need to thank me. It's my duty to help a teammate out!"

Despite the touching moment, it was then when snow began falling heavily.

With how frigid the winds were getting, Quest then yelled, "...Things are looking bad. We need to find someplace to settle down first!"

Attempting to scale the mountain in such weather was practically suicide and everyone understood that. While it was true that they were undergoing a rescue mission, it wasn't big enough an emergency for all of them to risk their lives for. With that in mind, the best they could do at the moment was to seek shelter and wait the snowstorm out.

After looking around for a bit, Quest managed to locate a spacious area underneath a steep cliff.

As all of them quickly—and gladly—entered the area to take refuge, everyone heard as Quest suddenly shouted, “...Hey, look there! There are signs that others have stayed here before!”

Upon hearing that, Gerald and Patrick quickly ran over to Quest's side.

True to his words, a pile of burned charcoal could be seen there... It was evident that others had made a fire here before.

“The adventure team could have stayed here before in order to avoid a snowstorm!”

Chapter 1644

After squatting to inspect the pile of burnt charcoal for a brief moment, Patrick then said, "...This is still relatively new. The ones who lit the fire should have stayed here around two days ago!"

Hearing that, Gerald and Quest turned to look at each other. This was good news! After all, it at least proved that the adventure team was still alive two days ago!

"...Alright, let's just take refuge here for the moment. We'll continue our journey once the snowstorm is over!" said Quest as he laid down his backpack before sitting to conserve energy.

While the rest did the same, Gerald chose to continue inspecting the surrounding cliff area instead. After a while, Gerald called Quest and Patrick over.

"Mr. Leane and Captain Wang, I've scouted the surrounding area for a bit and I've found that there aren't any other paths to proceed to. The only way to ascend the mountain from this point on is by climbing. To support that statement, just have a look there. If you squint a little, you can see friction marks! I'm assuming that's where the people from that adventure team hung their rope!" explained Gerald as he pointed at the traces.

After hearing all that, both Quest and Patrick agreed with Gerald's analysis.

"Hmm... Tell me, Gerald, how do you say we should proceed with this?" asked Patrick as he turned to look at Gerald.

"Well, from how I see it, our best option right now would be for me and Mr. Leane to head up to scout ahead. You and the others can wait here for us. Once we've located the adventure team, we'll then reunite with all of you! How's that sound?" replied Gerald.

It was a very steep climb, about thirty feet high. With that in mind, Gerald was afraid that a precarious situation—similar to what Patrick had earlier faced—would repeat itself if too many people went scouting.

Regardless, after hearing that, Patrick then turned to look at Quest before asking, "What do you say to that, Mr. Leane?"

"I'll have to agree with Gerald. We'll be scouting ahead then!" replied Quest in agreement.

"Very well, then! Since there aren't any objections, let's just go with that!" said Patrick.

Following that, both Quest and Gerald immediately began getting themselves ready. After packing all the necessary equipment into their backpacks, they returned to the thirty feet high cliff...

Looking up, Quest found himself frowning slightly as he asked, “A bit too high for my tastes... How do you reckon we get up there?”

Quest’s concern was warranted since not only was the cliff extremely high, but there also seemed to be very little that looked sturdy enough to be used as leverage. Of course, while Quest found it to be a rather hopeless situation, it wasn’t a problem for Gerald.

“Just leave it to me, Mr. Leane!” replied Gerald with a confident smile as he took out a piece of talisman paper as well as a pen.

“...Hmm? Could... it be that you know how to craft secret technique talismans?” asked Patrick—who had followed them there together with the rest of the team to see them off—in a surprised tone.

As a person from Jaellatra, Patrick definitely knew about talismans, and though Gerald didn’t reply, Patrick got his answer when the youth began drawing on the talisman paper!

A few seconds later, Gerald tossed his complete talisman into the air... and just like that, the talisman materialized a golden ladder out of thin air!

“After you, Mr. Leane!” said Gerald as he turned to look at the shocked Quest.

Upon hearing his name, Quest quickly snapped out of his shock and began climbing the golden ladder.

Patrick, on the other hand, still had his jaw gaping wide. He hadn't expected Gerald to actually be a Talisman Master who knew how to make his own secret technique talismans! It made Patrick admire Gerald greatly. What more, it explained why Gerald had been so confident in rescuing those people.

Thinking about it, Gerald's presence was definitely an honor to the rescue team. If he hadn't decided to come along, they would've surely faced much more trouble and possibly even fatalities...

Chapter 1645

After bidding farewell to Patrick and the others, Gerald and Quest then began scaling the rest of the holy mountain.

Though it was still snowing rather heavily—with occasional freezing gusts of wind—Gerald and Quest managed to find a cliffside to proceed under. In other words, they had minimal contact with the actual snowstorm.

As they walked on, Quest found himself asking, “What would you say are the survival odds of the adventure team, Gerald?”

“I can’t say for sure, but I think they should still be alive. I’m assuming they’re currently trapped someplace on this mountain!” replied Gerald with a hopeful tone.

Gerald, for one, certainly hoped that they were still alive. He couldn’t bear the thought of Nori dying in this snowstorm.

Shaking the thoughts off, Gerald then asked, “Regardless, how much progress have we made, Mr. Leane?”

“From what I can gather, we should now be at an altitude of seven thousand and five hundred feet. If that’s the case, then we should be two thousand feet from where the adventure team disappeared! Judging from our current progression speed, we’ll need about two more hours to reach that place!” replied Quest as he read out the information that his smartwatch was showing.

While they were certainly much closer to the area now, the journey there was still far from over...

At that moment, an ear-piercing roar of thunder could be heard! The sound was so loud that the entire mountain instantly began shaking slightly!

Realizing what was happening, Quest quickly said, "This... This could be the sign of an avalanche!"

Hearing that, Gerald instantly began looking around to survey the area... But to his dismay, there was nothing to shield them against an incoming avalanche! Sandwiched between two stone walls, both of them knew that if they didn't think quickly, they were going to be hit by the avalanche and subsequently thrown into the abyss at the end of the valley! By that point, they'd surely be in pieces!

"There doesn't seem like there's anywhere to hide, Gerald...! What should we do...?!" asked Quest rather anxiously.

Despite being a person with abundant adventuring experience, Quest was now feeling slightly terrified in this seemingly hopeless situation.

After a few seconds, Gerald then quickly retrieved his talisman-making kit before saying, “Don’t worry, I have an idea!”

With that said, Gerald rapidly began drawing on the talisman! The second he was done, Gerald then threw it forward, prompting a golden ray of light to envelop both of them!

A shield of light formed just in time as the avalanche came crashing down on them! Thankfully, the golden shield was sufficient in guiding the avalanche away from them, keeping Gerald and Quest safe!

After what seemed to be an eternity, no further sounds could be heard. Still safe underneath a layer of snow, Gerald then cleared out the snow above them... They were safe!

Once Quest climbed out with a huff, Gerald then followed after.

Sighing in relief, Quest—who was honestly still quivering a little—then said, “Thank god you’re here with me, Gerald... Otherwise, I’d surely be doomed!”

Smiling back at him, Gerald simply shook his head in silence before resuming the journey up the mountain together with Quest. It was about an hour and a half later when they finally reached the spot...

Arriving half an hour earlier than anticipated, the area they were in was at an altitude of nine thousand and eight hundred feet. Now much nearer to the mountain's peak, Gerald and Quest began scanning the area below them. Unfortunately, thick, misty clouds—that were everywhere below them—covered most of their view. Due to that, neither of them was able to find any hints of what could have happened to the adventure team...

After a while, Quest walked over to Gerald before asking with a deep frown on his face, "...There doesn't seem to be any traces of them being here at all... Could it be that nothing really happened to them here...?"

Chapter 1646

Hearing that, Gerald simply closed his eyes in silence, spreading his divine sense out to scan through the rest of the mountain top...

Sadly, the range of his divine sense was rather limited, so he was only able to scan up to a few hundred feet. Though that wasn't a small range by any means, Gerald still wasn't able to find any traces of the adventure team after quite some time.

Eventually, Quest found himself asking, “...Say... Do you think that the adventure team isn’t here because... they’ve headed further up the mountain...?”

Upon hearing that, Gerald turned to look at Quest. Though the suggestion sounded rather preposterous, it wasn’t completely out of the question either. After all, since there were zero traces of the adventure team here, the only other way they could’ve headed to—without bumping into the rescue team on their way up—was further up the mountain...

“...That could be the case. Since we’re already here anyway, let’s proceed further up the mountain to check!” replied Gerald in agreement.

With that, both of them then continued scaling the mountain...

Since he could’ve very well died earlier without Gerald’s intervention, Quest now had total trust in Gerald. He felt that as long as he remained close to Gerald, he would surely make it out safely...

Regardless, after walking for a while—with gentle breezes and snowflakes caressing their cheeks the entire time—the duo eventually arrived eleven thousand feet above sea level...

Upon arrival, they were immediately greeted by the sight of a cave. With how pitch dark it was inside, Gerald and Quest found themselves instantly wary of it.

Standing at the mouth of the cave, Quest found himself saying, "How odd... A cave in the middle of nowhere!"

"Indeed... Well, let's go in and have a look around!" replied Gerald as he began walking into the cave.

After a few steps in, both of them took out their glow sticks before activating them. Now having a light source each, the duo then proceeded further into the cave...

Though the cave was quiet, it was also quite damp. With that said, occasional drops of water could be heard every once in a while as they walked on.

Eventually, both of them came to a sudden halt when they saw a faint orange glow from within the cave... It appeared to be the light of a campfire, and the duo could see flickering shadows from time to time.

Looking at each other, Gerald and Quest felt that they must have finally located the adventure team.

After swiftly making their way toward the light source, the duo was greeted by the sight of several sleeping people lying against the cave's stone walls.

Just as they had thought, they had finally located the adventure team! Gerald was made extra sure of this when—after scanning through the people—he saw that Nori was among them!

“Nori!” shouted Gerald.

Hearing that sudden shout, everyone jolted awake, and this included Nori.

Upon realizing who had called out to her, Nori instantly teared up as she cried out, “G-Gerald...!”

Quickly getting to her feet, the girl then ran over before embracing Gerald tightly...

It took her a while to calm down, but once she did, Nori looked at him in surprise as she asked, “But... what are you even doing here, Gerald...?”

Realizing that she hadn't anticipated him to come over, Gerald then explained, “Well, after finding out that something had happened to you and your adventure team, I came over with a rescue team that was tasked with locating your group!”

“...Does... that mean that you came over just to save me...?” asked Nori as she stared straight into Gerald's eyes expectantly.

In response, Gerald simply revealed a gentle smile and nodded, not seeing any reason to deny it.

Chapter 1647

Upon hearing that, Nori was instantly overjoyed. After all, the fact that Gerald had come all the way here just to save her meant that he still cared about her.

Still, she truly hadn't expected him to come here in the first place since Nori was sure that she had never even mentioned her trip to the holy mountain to him.

With that in mind, Nori then curiously asked, "...Speaking of which, how did you even know I was here?"

"Well, I found out when I headed to your manor and your father told me about it," replied Gerald.

"I see... But hold on, doesn't the fact that you came here mean that your talisman crafting training with Master Hunt got disrupted?" asked Nori in a slightly worried tone.

After all, it wasn't easy for Gerald to get accepted to be his disciple in the first place. With that in mind, Nori truly hoped that she wouldn't be the reason Gerald lost his chance to continue being Master Hunt's disciple.

To her surprise, however, Gerald simply chuckled before gently patting Nori on the head.

Revealing his First-rank Talisman Master badge—which had been tucked in the inside of his jacket—Gerald then said, "Worry not, I've already become a master! This here is proof!"

“A First-rank Talisman Master Badge?! It’s barely been half a month! You really are something else, Gerald!” exclaimed Nori in her disbelief as her eyes lit up.

To think that he was able to attain that rank so quickly... That just showed how capable and powerful he truly was! How admirable!

“Speaking of which, I heard from your father that you came over to look for some ancient herb. The thousand-year-old panax ginseng, if I remember correctly,” asked Gerald as he looked at Nori with a curious gaze.

Nodding in response, Nori then said, “That’s the one! It’s an ancient herb that only grows every few thousand years. Aside from that, it can only be found on this mountain! With that in mind, I followed the others here after hearing that it was about time it grew again! Unfortunately, we met with an avalanche before we were even able to locate it! It’s almost as if we were destined to never be able to find it!”

Watching as Nori sighed in resignation, Gerald then thought for a while before replying, “Your lives are much more important! Still, do you have any idea what the ginseng herb looks like?”

“But of course I do!” replied Nori as she fished out a photograph from her backpack before showing it to Gerald.

Looking at it, Gerald was greeted by the sight of a white and pristine flower that had petals that resembled ice crystals. The sight of it alone was enough to make anyone feel that it was something extremely precious. No wonder Nori and the others had been so keen on looking for it...

“What does the herb do?” asked Gerald, feeling that such a rare and valuable-looking herb must have had great practical use.

“Well, it’s said that the thousand-year-old panax ginseng can be used to make a kind of pellet known as the rejuvenating pellet! The pellet itself is said to be capable of bringing the dead back to life!” whispered Nori.

“Really?” asked Gerald in slight disbelief.

Though he was a person who was still training to attain spiritual enlightenment, Gerald understood there was still a lot he didn’t know about this mysterious world... Even so, a pellet that was capable of bringing back the dead? That was a little too farfetched, even for him. After all, even people as strong as he was weren’t able to bring the dead back to life.

Shrugging, Nori then said that it was strictly just a rumor. Even she wasn't sure how authentic that claim was.

At that moment, Quest walked over to the duo before reporting, "After some checking around, I've found that only a few of the team members have suffered minor injuries. The rest are thankfully fine. With that said, we can pretty much pack up and begin leaving this place!"

Chapter 1648

"That's great to hear! And I agree, the sooner we leave, the better!" replied Gerald.

Now that they had found the adventure team in one piece, they needed to begin hiking down the same way they had come up with in order to reunite with the rest of the rescue team. Once that was done, they'd begin descending the mountain...

While Gerald was still rather curious about the thousand-year-old panax ginseng, he didn't want to risk everyone's lives just to look for it. Besides, it wasn't even a proven fact that it was really able to revive the dead. With that in mind, the adventure team then began making their way down the mountain.

As the saying went, descending a mountain was always easier than ascending one. Adding that to the fact that Gerald and Quest were providing their aid, the journey downward became much easier to bear. With that in mind, it took the group only half an hour to descend halfway down the mountain.

Ten minutes before they could reunite with Patrick's group, however, a few white mountain wolves suddenly made an appearance!

"W-wolves?!" shouted several of the people from the adventure team as they immediately began bolting down the mountain in fear!

Gerald himself turned to face Quest before instructing, "Quest! Lead the others away first! I'll deal with these wolves!"

Hearing that, Quest then replied, "Alright, but be careful! Make sure you return in one piece!"

With that, Quest instantly began overseeing that the rest made it down safely. Once most of them were at a safe distance, Quest turned back to look at how Gerald was doing... Only to see all the wolves charging toward the youth!

At that moment, Quest—and Nori who had turned back to check on Gerald—could only stare wide-eyed as Gerald and the wolves plunged down the valley together!

“G-Gerald...!” cried out Nori, her heart filled with excruciating pain as she watched him disappear from sight.

Though Quest was just as shocked by the turn of events, he quickly began dragging Nori by her arm to regroup with the others from the adventure team.

“L-let go...! I need to go look for Gerald...!” yelled Nori as Quest quickly began leading the others back to where Patrick was.

Though Nori tried her hardest to pry free from Quest’s grip, Quest was definitely not about to allow her to put herself in danger. With that in mind, he momentarily tied her wrists with a rope to ease leading her down with the rest.

Despite that, the now teary-eyed Nori still attempted to struggle free of her constraints as she wailed, “Please...! He’s definitely still alive...! Please, let me go look for him...!”

Ignoring her wails, everyone eventually made it back to where the rescue team was...

Upon seeing how depressed Nori looked and realizing that Gerald wasn't present, Patrick found himself asking, "...What's wrong? Where's Gerald?"

Lowering his head, Quest took a moment before replying, "...While descending the mountain, we bumped into a few white wolves... Gerald fought against them to give us room to escape... However, at the very last seconds, all the wolves simultaneously charged at him, and all of them fell into the valley...!"

"...W-what...?" muttered Patrick who was so shocked that he wasn't even able to say anything else for a moment. After all, who could've anticipated for such an accident to happen...?

Even so, the adventure team was successfully rescued. In other words, the mission was a success.

With that in mind, Patrick quickly shook his shock off before declaring, "...Let's descend the mountain first. Once we get everyone to safety, we'll form another rescue team to start looking for Gerald!"

Hearing that, everyone was forced to agree. After all, they were all well aware that they weren't out of danger just yet. What more, there just wasn't enough human resources to launch an immediate search party. With that in mind, the best move at the moment was for them to return to the bottom of the mountain before deciding their next step.

Nobody even knew whether Gerald was still among the living...

As the group began descending the mountain, Gerald himself could be seen lying silently atop some thickets in the deepest parts of the holy mountain...

Chapter 1649

Scattered around him, were the carcasses of the white wolves from before that had died upon impact.

With how tough Gerald's body was, it was no wonder why he had not only survived, but he barely suffered any injuries! Due to that, it wasn't long after before he slowly awoke...

Checking to see if he had suffered any injuries, Gerald was delighted to find out that his body was a-okay.

After hopping off the thickets, Gerald then retrieved his small knife and began slicing the meat off the white wolves. Since he didn't know how much longer he was going to remain stuck here, Gerald knew that he had to stock up on food while he could.

Once he had gathered enough, Gerald began walking around to gather his bearings.

What he was able to witness soon after, however, was nothing short of a utopia. Staring in amazement, it was the first time Gerald had ever seen such a beautiful place. It was so beautiful, in fact, that Gerald simply knew that such a place couldn't exist anyplace else.

As he continued walking around the fairyland-like place, Gerald was surprised to suddenly hear a gentle and almost ethereal female voice saying, "Who's there?"

Turning to face the source of the voice, Gerald was immediately greeted by the sight of a woman—who had a white, muslin dress on and a long sword in hand—hovering out from the forest...

Stopping close to Gerald, he then watched as she pointed the sword toward him.

Rather than being afraid, Gerald was more stunned than anything. To think that such a flawless-looking woman with such pure temperament would actually be in this place!

After staring at her for a while longer, Gerald eventually snapped out of it before replying, "...I... fell from the holy mountain and somehow wound up here!"

Upon hearing that, the charming woman raised a slight brow. Looking at him rather doubtfully, she then asked, "And... you're telling me falling all the way down here didn't hurt you at all?"

She was right to feel doubtful. After all, Gerald looked perfectly fine despite his claims!

"There's a reason for that! You see, I'm a person who's training to attain spiritual enlightenment! Due to that, such heights aren't really a big deal to me!" explained Gerald.

"...Are you really someone who's training to attain spiritual enlightenment...?" asked the woman, almost as though she wanted to be absolutely sure of his claim...

After seeing how determinedly Gerald nodded in response, the woman felt that he was probably telling the truth. Deciding to believe him for now, she then lowered her sword before sheathing it...

Seeing that she was now being less vigilant toward him, Gerald took the chance to ask, "...If I may, could I know who you are? Also, why are you here? And what even is this place...?"

"...My name is June Lovelybite, and I'm the guardian of Magic Land, the place you're currently in!" replied June in a casual tone.

"...I beg your pardon, Magic Land...?" muttered Gerald, feeling utterly bewildered. To think that such a place existed within Jaellatra!

It appeared that Jaellatra still had many secrets that had yet to be discovered... Jaellatra truly was a mysterious place...

Regardless, June then prompted Gerald to follow her. After flying together for a bit, they eventually arrived at a secluded house...

"That's where I live. I'll allow you to rest here for a night. Once dawn comes, I'll lead you out of this place!" said June.

“How... long have you even been living here, June...?” asked Gerald.

From what he had been able to gather, June simply didn't feel like a human who belonged to the real world. If he was going to be honest, she seemed more like some ancient fairy...

“Two thousand years or so.”

Chapter 1650

The second he heard that, Gerald's eyes immediately widened. Though he thought that he had heard wrong, he quickly realized that that wasn't the case.

Two thousand years... To think that this young-looking woman was at least two thousand years old...! How terrifying! And to think that she had stayed here—remaining completely undiscovered—throughout that period! What kind of person even was June...?

Had he not fallen into the valley, Gerald could've very well have missed her as well...

Seeing that Gerald had no further questions, June took the chance to ask, “Now then... enough about me. Why did you come to the holy mountain?”

Upon hearing that, Gerald recalled why Nori and the others had hiked up the mountain in the first place. With that in mind, Gerald then replied, “I came here to look for an ancient herb known as the thousand-year-old panax ginseng!”

“You... came here looking for that herb...? What do you need it for? Are you trying to create a rejuvenating pellet?” asked June as she frowned slightly while looking at Gerald.

“Oh? Do you know anything about it?” asked Gerald who was now sure that June knew more about the herb than he did.

“The thousand-year-old panax ginseng is an extremely valuable herb in Magic Land... After all, it only grows once every thousand years. With that in mind, it’s currently about time it grew again!” replied June.

Hearing that, Gerald found it almost inconceivable! To think that the herb Nori was looking so hard for was in Magic Land all along! No wonder they weren’t able to find it on holy mountain!

“...Truth be told, what I said was only partially true. You see, I came here on a rescue mission to save a friend who found herself in danger while looking for that herb... I don't really know much about that herb, and I just happened to get to where I am by chance!” said Gerald, not wanting June to continue misunderstanding his reason for being here.

While Gerald could tell that June had only entered the First-soul-rank in the Sage Realm—which meant that there was no way she was ever going to be able to defeat him—Gerald wasn't a vicious person. With that in mind, there was no way he was going to attack June over that herb.

Whatever the case was, after hearing what Gerald had to say, June gave him a long stare before turning around while stating, “...Come with me!”

Doing as she instructed, both of them soon arrived at a rather large garden... and within it, several flowers that had petals resembling ice crystals could be seen...

His eyes now widened, Gerald realized that the garden was filled with thousand-year-old panax ginsengs!

“Those are the herbs you seek!” declared June as Gerald continued staring at the beautiful flowers that looked exactly like the one that Nori had showed him in her photo.

After a while, Gerald turned to look at June before asking, “...Could you tell me what the herb is specifically used for...? Why is it so valuable in the first place?”

Laughing in response, June then revealed a faint smile before explaining, “As I said before, it’s used to make rejuvenating pellets, and they can be used to bring the dead back to life! With that said, you tell me if they’re valuable or not!”

Hearing that, Gerald now realized that the rumors Nori had heard weren’t exaggerated in the least. By refining thousand-year-old panax ginsengs, rejuvenating pellets could truly be made!

“Then... has a rejuvenating pellet ever been made...?” asked Gerald.

Giving no verbal reply, June instead took out a scroll from one of her sleeves before handing it to Gerald.

Curious, Gerald opened the scroll and slowly began scanning through it... only to find himself getting increasingly stunned the more he read!

The scroll recorded every single time rejuvenating pellets had been created as well as where they were made... Despite there only being three pellets to have ever been made, every time one was brought into existence, major disasters were always imminent! With that in mind, rejuvenating pellets were definitely categorizable as ominous items...

Chapter 1651

So that's why the herbs had been kept so well hidden from the rest of the world... June was even here to constantly stand guard over the thousand-year-old panax ginsengs!

"Nobody should ever get their hands on the herbs... Otherwise, catastrophe will be sure to follow! I'm sure you can understand that, right?" said June as she stared at Gerald.

Now understanding the consequences that could happen, Gerald simply nodded as he replied, "I understand. Don't worry, I won't take any of them!"

“I’m glad to hear that. Regardless, I’ll be giving you something to express my gratitude!” said June as she gracefully waved her hand, prompting a small, cubic treasure box of sorts to materialize within her palm...

After receiving the treasure box from June, the curious Gerald wondered what she had just given him. Carefully prying the box open, Gerald was greeted by the sight of a single tiny pellet inside...

Looking up at June, Gerald then said, “...This...”

“That’s a rejuvenating pellet, and it’s the only one I constantly keep with me. I can sense how strong you are, so I’ll be leaving this pill with you. May it be useful to you!” replied June.

Gerald was honestly flabbergasted by this turn of events. After all, June was actually willing to give him such an invaluable thing. This was the only existing rejuvenating pellet for heaven’s sake!

“I... I appreciate that you’re giving me such a precious gift... I... How should I even thank you...?” asked Gerald, honestly feeling that he didn’t deserve to be given such an invaluable item out of the blue.

“There’s no need to thank me!” replied June rather casually.

Following that, she led Gerald away from her garden and back to her home...

It wasn’t long after when night fell...

Despite how dark the sky had gotten, the inside of a temporary camp—that had been set up quite a distance from the holy mountain—was still brightly lit...

While Quest and the others had made it back to the camp in one piece—and were currently inside that tent—, everyone had solemn expressions on their faces.

After witnessing what had happened to Gerald, everyone was either absent-minded or filled with overwhelming grief at the moment...

Nori herself was sitting outside alone. Staring intently at the holy mountain, she could only hope that Gerald would suddenly appear in the distance and begin running toward her...

At that moment, Yoshua's voice could suddenly be heard shouting, "Nori!"

Rushing toward his daughter, Yoshua felt like a massive load had just been lifted off his chest when he realized that she was doing fine.

Staring at Yoshua with teary eyes, Nori got to her feet and embraced her father before saying, "...Dad... Gerald... he... He fell into the valley...!"

"...What? Gerald fell into the valley? Nori, please give me more details!" replied the now trembling Yoshua as he stared wide-eyed at his daughter.

If Gerald was truly gone... then how was he going to explain all this to Chace and the Talisman Union...?

Gerald had just become a First-rank Talisman Master in the Talisman Union too! The thought of him dying so soon after that... It was shocking, to say the least...

Chapter 1652

Following that, Nori began telling her father what had happened on the holy mountain... By the end of her tale, even Yoshua found the turn of events slightly hard to believe.

To think that Gerald had sacrificed his safety just to protect the adventure team from those white wolves... What a truly heroic act...

Patting his daughter's back, Yoshua then consoled, "Don't worry, Nori. Gerald will definitely make it back safely!"

Nodding in response, Nori hoped with all her heart that Gerald would make a safe return as well...

Meanwhile in Magic Land, Gerald himself was having a meal while chatting with June, completely oblivious to what was happening in the outside world.

Not even knowing how anxiously Nori and the others were awaiting his return, Gerald took a sip of tea before looking toward June and

asking, "Speaking of which... Have you been guarding this place this entire time? Could it be that you've never left this place before...?"

Shaking her head in response, June then said, "I'd love to go out myself, honestly... Unfortunately, I'm simply unable to do so!"

"What do you mean by that?"

"Call it a... barrier of sorts. A barrier made just for me... Since I've been given the responsibility of guarding Magic Land, I'm incapable of going past that barrier... Not to worry though, anyone aside from me can still go past it..." replied June as she sighed.

Living here alone for so long without even the slightest contact with the outside world... It must've been painful...

While Gerald couldn't quite pinpoint how much pain June was in when she said that, he could tell that she really wanted to leave this place...

Even so, Gerald personally hoped that June wouldn't enter the outside world. After all, things out there were much more dangerous and viler compared to the conditions within Magic Land. While thinking about that, Gerald also found himself hoping that other outsiders wouldn't be able to find this place.

After all, with so many thousand-year-old panax ginsengs here, their discovery by the public would definitely cause a massive uproar. To prevent all that chaos in the first place, it was best that some things remained unfound and subsequently unchanged...

Late into the night, Gerald—who had been leaning against his chair for a while—eventually dozed off... It was a nice, calming slumber, and Gerald hadn't felt this comfortable in quite a while...

It was around dawn when he was awoken by June's voice saying, "Are you awake...?"

Opening his eyes, Gerald saw that June was sitting before him.

"I am now... You're quite the early bird as well I see..." replied Gerald.

“Indeed. Regardless, since you’re already awake, let’s get you out of this place...,” said June.

Having no objections to that, it suddenly came across Gerald’s mind that he had technically been ‘missing’ for the entire night ever since he fell into the valley. With that in mind, he was now worried about how anxious Nori and the others must be feeling at the moment.

Whatever the case was, once they were outside June’s house, she took his hand before leaping together with him, soaring high into the sky...

Eventually, both of them landed before a small boulevard of sorts...

Pointing at the boulevard, June then said, “You can leave by walking through here.”

“I see... Thank you for everything!” replied Gerald in a gratuitous tone before walking into the boulevard...

As he walked on, the scene before him seemed to suddenly warp... and all of a sudden, he realized that he was no longer in Magic Land! Looking around, Gerald found that he was now in a forest at the foot of the holy mountain...

Though mystified, Gerald knew that he had to keep this location a secret for as long as he lived...

With that, he then began walking out of the forest. It wasn't too long after when he arrived before the temporary camp. Surprisingly, the exit was this close to the camp!

Standing before the camp, Gerald saw that Quest and the others were seriously discussing something inside...

It took them a while to realize, but eventually, Nori found herself compelled to look out of the tent... and once she did, her eyes instantly widened. Gerald... he was standing there...

He was safe...!

Chapter 1653

The second she managed to snap out of her stupefied state, Nori immediately yelled, "G-Gerald...!"

Now teary-eyed, Nori then rushed over and hugged him tightly.

Realizing that Gerald was in one piece, Quest and the others were equally as delighted and surprised.

As they ran over to him as well, Nori was already scanning Gerald from head to toe while asking, "A-are you alright Gerald? Are you hurt anywhere?"

Seeing how worried she was, Gerald could only smile before replying, "Don't worry, I'm fine!"

Hearing that, Nori was so relieved that she found herself gently hitting her small hands against his chest while whining, "You... You really scared me half to death this time...!"

The solace she was now getting after witnessing yesterday's events was simply too much...

As both Patrick and Quest began patting Gerald's shoulders, Quest eventually found himself asking, "Regardless... What happened after you fell? That was a pretty high fall you know?"

Laughing in response, Gerald simply replied, "I was fortunate enough to fall right atop a large tree! That definitely helped break my fall!"

Naturally, Gerald couldn't tell them about Magic Land, and thankfully, the others seemed to believe his story. After all, the important thing to them was that Gerald had returned safely...

Either way, now that he was back, they no longer needed to launch another rescue effort. With that in mind, everyone began packing up to return to Earth Capital...

Upon arriving at the Zahn family manor, Yoshua—who had returned the night before after finding out that his daughter was safe—immediately heaved a sigh of relief when he saw Gerald with the rest of the group.

Once he was before Yoshua, Gerald took the chance to say, "Apologies, Master Yoshua, and Nori, but I have to return to earth for a while!"

Upon hearing that, Nori's mood was instantly dampened as she muttered, "...Oh... You're... going back...?"

After getting so used to having Gerald by her side this entire time, she really didn't like the idea of him leaving... Though she didn't like it, she knew she couldn't really stop Gerald.

Whatever the case was, Yoshua then asked, "I see... When will you be returning here?"

"Probably for quite a while. After all, I've stayed here for some time as well. I still need to keep my other family members company and tell them what I've been doing," replied Gerald with a slight smile.

"Ah, I see... Keeping tabs with your family is important too! Very well, then. Regardless, know that whenever you return to Jaellatra, this is your home. We'll always be waiting for you here!" declared Yosha with a firm nod.

Upon hearing that, Gerald found himself feeling slightly moved. Aside from his master, Nori and Yoshua were the only other people who treated him so well in Jaellatra... Even so, reminded himself that he couldn't be with Nori.

With that in mind, Gerald then bid farewell before leaving for Earth...

When he got back to earth, he instantly felt a welcoming warmth and familiarity... Though Jaellatra was great in its own way, earth was still his true home...

Regardless, Gerald's first stop was naturally the Sacrasolis Palace. After all, it had been ages since he had last met Mila and his family members, and he missed them dearly.

Upon arriving home, however, Gerald was surprised that neither Mila nor his sister was present...

Thankfully, his parents were there, so Gerald then asked, "Mom, dad, where are Mila and Jessica?"

Chapter 1654

Hearing their son's question, Dylan then replied, "Ah, well, they've both gone to the Laiross State! From what we've been told, Mila appears to have found her biological parents there! With that in mind, she's paying the Smith family there a visit to confirm it!"

"What? The Laiross State? Her biological parents?" muttered Gerald in slight disbelief.

Following that, Gerald left some instructions for his parents before leaving for the Laiross State alone...

Meanwhile, both Mila and Jessica were standing in the hall of the Smith family manor.

The Smiths in the Laiross State were considerably powerful—due to them owning a large business chain—and were one of the more prestigious families here.

Whatever the case was, Mila's sudden arrival was definitely unexpected, to say the least.

“So... You're saying that your name is Mila Smith?” asked a luxuriously dressed woman—with heavy makeup on—as she stared at Mila.

“That's right. I came here looking for Zyre Smith, my biological father!” replied Mila with a determined gaze.

“Humph! That's my father's name, you know? And I've never heard him mentioning having another daughter! Truth be told, I think you're just here to create trouble!” sneered the woman as she pointed angrily at Mila.

Hollie Smith was the daughter of Zyre—the master of the Smith family—, and she was also the second young lady of the Smith family.

Upon hearing that, Mila didn't take her retort personally and simply said, "We'll find out if that's true once your father meets up with me!"

After learning where her biological parents were from Master Ghost, Mila had come all the way here to see if his prediction was true. Worrying that she would get into trouble, Jessica had followed her over as well.

Still, to think that they would be rejected entry right at the manor's door! It was then when they bumped into Hollie.

Either way, it wasn't long after before a middle-aged man and a woman made their appearance.

"What's wrong, Hollie?" asked the man.

"Thank god you're here, dad! This woman's been persistently asking to meet you! She claims that she's your daughter!" explained Hollie.

Before Zyre could even reply, the woman beside him instantly retorted, "I beg your pardon? As if you could ever have two fathers!"

The angered woman went by Chaney Littlebury, and she was Hollie's mother.

Whatever the case was, Zyre found himself frowning slightly by this turn of events. Turning to look at the two strangers, his eyes instantly widened the second he saw Mila.

Realizing how much Zyre's appearance resembled hers, Mila stared at him for a while longer before asking, "...Are... you Zyre? The master of the Smith family...?"

"...I am indeed! Regardless, you... You really look like your mother...!" cried out Zyre.

Upon hearing that, both Chaney and Hollie's expressions darkened.

"What? What do you mean by that, dad? Do you have another woman out there?" asked Hollie while looking her father in the eye.

Chaney herself was already tugging Zyre's arm as she angrily added, "That's what I want to know as well! Did you cheat on me? Is this person really your daughter?!"

Momentarily at a loss of where to even begin, Zyre understood that he couldn't keep this a secret forever. It was finally time to face the music...

Chapter 1655

Upon hearing that, Mila barely said a word. Instead, she simply held onto Jessica's arm before tugging her away.

Not even sure what to do, Zyre could only watch as the two of them left...

Seeing that the duo was gone, Hollie and her mother instantly yanked Zyre into the house with them. After sitting him on a couch, they made sure to properly interrogate him.

As it turned out, Zyre had apparently made out with another woman—who went by the name of Yviene Morish and was Mila's biological mother—before getting married to Chaney. Unfortunately, Zyre's family was unwilling to let them be together. Due to that, after Mila's birth, Yviene left just like that.

Though the memory of her remained for the many years to come, Zyre never mentioned it to a soul. While he had thought of the possibility of Yviene appearing one day with Mila, he never thought that he would meet his daughter alone under such circumstances.

Regardless, Chaney and Hollie were greatly angered after hearing all that. The truth was, both mother and daughter were assuming that Mila had showed herself—after all this time—with the intent to snatch the properties of the Smiths.

Despite their worry, however, the thought had never even crossed Mila's mind. Regardless, Mila and Jessica soon returned to their hotel...

Sitting alone by the window, Mila found herself shedding tears not long after. To think that her biological father was such a person...

Seeing that, Jessica slowly walked over to Mila's side to console the poor girl. Such incidents were surely difficult to just accept...

Gently patting her back, Jessica then said, "Don't be sad anymore, Mila... Remember, you still have Gerald and us! We're your family now!"

Hearing that, Mila instantly hugged Jessica tight before wailing in tears. Anyone would feel miserable upon hearing her excruciating cries...

Meanwhile, back at the Smith family manor, Hollie and Chaney could be seen discussing something...

“There’s definitely a reason why she’s showing herself now, Hollie! With that in mind, let’s hire some people to get rid of her before she gets too close to your father! Once she’s out of the picture, we won’t have to fear her threatening us anymore!” declared Chaney as a wicked smile formed on her face.

“I know right? She’s definitely here to snatch our family’s properties! If we let her, I’m sure she’s also going to start demanding to have a place within our family! With that said, we definitely can’t allow her to have her way!” growled Hollie, immense hatred in her tone.

Seeing that her daughter saw eye to eye with her, Chaney then whispered something into her ear... By the time she was done, the sinister smiles on their faces grew wider than ever...

As the two continued perfecting their nasty plot, Gerald arrived in the Laiross State.

After contacting Mila and finding out where she was, he immediately rushed over to the hotel room they were currently in.

Upon seeing Gerald, Mila instantly threw herself into his arms, looking very much like a pitiful and frightened white rabbit...

Once all three of them were seated, Mila began telling Gerald about what had happened at the Smith family manor... By the time she was done, Gerald came to understand that Mila's father had had two women with whom he had intercourse with...

With that in mind, Gerald then said, "Honestly, I don't think you should continue looking for your biological father. After all, not only has he already formed a new family, but he's also a terrible father for starting another family after you were born!"

Hearing that, Mila had to agree with Gerald.

At that moment, Mila's phone momentarily rang... Looking at her phone, Mila saw that she had received a message from an unknown contact number...

Chapter 1656

'Hello, Mila. This is Hollie. I'd like to meet up and have a little chat with you!' said the message.

Finding it odd and surprising that Hollie would take the initiative to ask her out, Mila then looked at Gerald before saying, "It's... a message from Hollie... She apparently wants to meet me!"

"Oh? Let's see what she wants then! I'll go with you!" replied Gerald, sensing that Hollie definitely had ulterior motives.

Upon realizing that Gerald was coming with her, Mila was given an extra boost in confidence. Even if he hadn't chosen to come along, however, Mila was still pretty sure that she would be able to take on anything that Hollie threw at her.

Whatever the case was, after deciding a meeting location with Hollie, Mila and Gerald then left the hotel...

The meeting location itself was what seemed to be a secluded park, and though Gerald came along, he chose to remain in the shadows for the time being.

By the time they got there, Hollie was already at the park.

Not wanting to beat around the bush, Mila then said, “What can I do for you?”

Chuckling in response, Hollie then replied, “Ah, well, I simply wanted to get to know you a little better! After all, I now know that you’re my elder sister, and sisters should get along with each other, right?”

Despite the bright smile on Hollie’s face, sinister thoughts were the only thing in her mind.

Still, with how differently Hollie was now treating her compared to earlier, Mila could instantly tell that something was wrong. Hollie definitely had something planned for her...

“Look, just tell me what you want already. I know how much you resent me, so let’s not waste each other’s time, alright?” retorted Mila in a rather cold tone.

Stunned that Mila had seen through her so easily, Hollie was momentarily unable to say a word.

Quickly snapping out of it, Hollie then clapped a few times. If Mila wanted to get straight to the point, so be it!

Following those claps, Mila watched as a few knife-wielding men—who were obviously under Hollie—dashed out from behind the surrounding bushes!

If Mila disappeared from the world, then she wouldn't be able to compete for a place within the Smith family in the first place!

Sneering in response, Mila then added in a contemptuous tone, “From the looks of it, I'm assuming you thought I showed myself to get some status in your family, correct? Still, is this all you've got to stop me?”

“Is that not the truth? Regardless, this is your fault in the first place for coming over out of the blue to threaten my position! Getting rid of you once and for all is the only viable solution!” scoffed Hollie as she glared viciously at Mila.

The second her sentence ended, Hollie then gestured for her men to surround Mila!

Before Mila could even make a move, a silhouette of a person suddenly flashed past her!

A split second later, an explosive sound was heard as a shock wave hit all of Hollie's men!

Eyes now fully widened as she stared at all the fresh corpses that had just flopped to the ground, Hollie found herself quickly going pale. She had disregarded the fact that Mila would have her own men! What a fatal blunder!

Chapter 1657

With those people out of the picture, Gerald then turned to look at the stupefied Hollie who was so terrified that she couldn't even find the strength to move...

Realizing that Gerald was now slowly walking toward her, the quivering Hollie then stuttered, "Y-you...! Don't come this way...! I-I'm from the Smith family...!"

The fact that she thought that she could use her family as an actual threat truly showed how idiotic this girl really was...

Regardless, before anything else could happen, Mila quickly jogged over to Gerald before tugging his sleeve as she said, "Let's just forget about her, Gerald..."

In the end, not only was Hollie still a woman, but she was also the daughter of Mila's biological father. With that in mind, Mila found herself rather reluctant to have anything too bad happen to Hollie.

Hearing that, Gerald then nodded slightly before replying, "...Fine."

However, he still wanted to give Hollie a severe warning, just so she understood that messing with him and Mila would bring about dire consequences.

"Hollie, right? Listen here, if you or the other Smiths ever dare to lay a finger on Mila again, I guarantee that your family will be completely wiped off the face of the earth! Just so you know, I'm a man of my words. Do I make myself clear?" scoffed Gerald.

Not even daring to say a word, Hollie simply nodded frantically.

Seeing that, Gerald then led Mila away...

He wasn't really worried about the corpses since he believed that Hollie and her family could easily dispose of them. As for the worry about exposing him as a murderer, they probably wouldn't dare to do that either. After all, these hooligans were recruited by the Smiths in the first place!

Whatever the case was, Hollie only dared to call her mother—to update her on the situation—once Mila and Gerald were completely out of sight...

By that point, Gerald and Mila had already reunited with Jessica, and following that, the trio quickly left the Laiross State. Once they were out of there, the Smiths would surely be unable to deal with them any longer. What more, they wouldn't be able to hunt Mila down either since Gerald made sure not to leave behind any of their traces...

Either way, it was a full night and day later when the three finally returned to Sacrasolis Palace...

The second they got back, however, Master Ghost instantly met up with Gerald.

Seeing how anxious he was, Gerald couldn't help but ask, "Is there something important you wish to discuss with me about?"

“Indeed! You see, a large portal to another world has just opened! I’d like to know whether you’ll be entering it!” replied Master Ghost.

Upon hearing that, Gerald was momentarily stunned silent. To think that such a bizarre event would occur!

After snapping out of it, Gerald quickly asked, “Where exactly is this portal, Master Ghost?”

Hearing that, Master Ghost then made a few hand gestures... until suddenly, a ray of blue light shot out of one of his fingertips!

With the ray of light flying toward the sky, Master Ghost then said, “The portal is at the Skyreach Stone Tablet within Jaellatra! However, do note that by choosing to enter that world, you’ll have to be prepared to lose something!”

Chapter 1658

Hearing that, Gerald simply nodded in agreement...

Fast forward to the next day, Gerald made sure to bid farewell to Mila and his family before heading off for Jaellatra's Skyreach Stone Tablet.

By that point, news that the Skyreach Stone Tablet had opened had already spread across the entire Jaellatra. Since this was a great opportunity for adventure that only presented itself once every few decades, several people were apparently planning to cross the portal as well!

Regardless, on his way over to Jaellatra, Gerald made use of a sound talisman to tell Nori about his plan. Upon hearing that he was heading to the Skyreach Stone Tablet, Nori found herself instantly overjoyed. After all, she was planning to head there herself. With that in mind, she immediately set off to wait for him there.

It was around noon when both of them reunited.

Though it had only been a few days since they had last met, Nori missed Gerald greatly. This was made evident by how she instantly leaped into his arms the second she saw him, not even bothering about the stares from everyone else around them.

Gerald himself was already used to Nori doing this by this point. There was simply no way of stopping the girl from doing this...

Whatever the case was, once she calmed down a bit, Nori looked at him rather curiously as she asked, “How did you even find out that the Skyreach Stone Tablet had opened, Gerald?”

Her curiosity was warranted since people on earth shouldn't have been able to learn of this event. The only feasible answer would be if another person from Jaellatra had told him about it...

Still, Gerald could pretty much be considered as a local to Jaellatra by this point. After all, he had even mastered the art of making secret technique talismans!

Either way, after chuckling in response, Gerald simply smiled faintly before replying, “Let's just say that someone notified me about it!”

At that moment, an almost ethereal hum could be heard as the Skyreach Stone Tablet began shaking, preparing to open...

Shortly after, a swirling halo appeared above it! Slowly, the halo grew larger and larger, and at one point, the light it emitted became so bright that it was almost blinding... By the time everyone opened their eyes again, the halo had stopped and a large portal had appeared before them...

Seemingly leading into some kind of passageway, everyone watched as a few strangely dressed people walked out from the portal...

These people weren't from earth or Jaellatra. Rather, they came from another world known as the Leicom Continent...

The portal—that only appeared once every few decades—served to connect the Leicom Continent to Jaellatra, and once it appeared, it would remain open for an entire year. Throughout that year, people were free to move between the two worlds, though strangely enough, only those from Jaellatra would enter the Leicom Continent and never the other way around. This had always been the case every time the portal was opened....

Whatever the case was, upon seeing so many people gathered there, one of the people from the Leicom Continent then declared, “Ladies and gentlemen, my name is Miland Knott, and I’m the guardian of the Leicom Continent! While today marks the day the Leicom Continent is connected with Jaellatra again, there are some notable changes this time! For one, not everyone is allowed to enter the Leicom Continent this year! As the new rule states, you’ll first need to pass a test in order to qualify for entry!”

Upon hearing that, everyone instantly began discussing the new rule. Wasn't the Leicom Continent being a bit too strict this time around? After all, everyone could enter and leave as they pleased before this! Why was that rule suddenly established?

Either way, after saying that, Miland then waved his large, right hand, prompting another portal to appear beside the one he had exited from.

“This portal leads to a place called the Challenge of the Fairyland, and all of you are only allowed to enter in the form of your divine senses. Upon entry, you won't be able to leave that place till either your divine senses are defeated or you manage to gather five divine stones. Speaking of which, only those who have managed to gather five divine stones will be qualified to enter the Leicom Continent. The stones themselves can only be obtained by defeating the other participants' divine senses! With that said, upon entry, you'll all be given half an hour to prepare yourselves. After that period of time, the portal will be closed and the challenge will officially commence!” explained Miland.

The second his explanation ended, the crowd instantly fell into an uproar! Since everyone was eager to enter the Leicom Continent, they barely gave a second thought as they began turning into their divine sense forms before rushing through the Challenge of the Fairyland portal...

Chapter 1659

“Let’s hurry in as well, Gerald! The good spots may get taken by others if we don’t get a move on!” exclaimed Nori.

Nodding in agreement, both of them then transformed into their divine sense forms before going through the portal as well.

Upon entering, they were immediately greeted by the sight of a dense forest that felt so refreshing and comfortable that it gave the impression that they really had just entered some fairyland. Even so, Gerald and Nori were well aware that this was actually just an illusory space. Despite that being the case, they also knew that unknown dangers could be lurking in every corner.

While they didn’t know how large this illusory space truly was, they had a hunch that the forest they were currently in wasn’t the only terrain here...

And they were right.

Including the forest, there were several other terrains in the Challenge of the Fairyland such as the desert, the ancient city, and the snowfield.

Since the divine senses appeared at random locations—after going through the portals—, the fact that Nori and Gerald had appeared together was truly a sign that they were favored by God.

Regardless, since there was still about fifteen minutes before the challenge began, both Gerald and Nori decided to take a stroll while chatting with each other.

“Since we’ll need ten divine stones to both qualify to enter the Leicom Continent, I guess we’ll have to defeat ten people!” said Nori while looking at Gerald.

Nodding in response, Gerald then replied, “That’s the idea. Still, I find this rule to be slightly surprising... To think that entry into the Leicom Continent would be controlled so strictly!”

“This is honestly the first time this has happened! Before this, just about anyone was allowed to freely traverse between the Leicom Continent and Jaellatra!” explained Nori as she shook her head.

“Well, whatever the case is, I believe that aside from us, several others must have already begun forming groups of their own, even the stronger ones. Then again, Jaellatra already has a great number of strong people!” replied Gerald as he carefully began inspecting his surroundings.

Since Gerald was the only participant from earth, he realized that getting through all this was going to be a good experience for him in general. After all, just as he had said, there were many powerful people in Jaellatra, and they all seemed to have hidden themselves rather well.

Unfortunately for anyone they bumped into, however, Gerald and Nori weren't weak either. In fact, as long as they didn't bump into some crazy strong person who had entered the Seventh-soul rank of the Sage Realm or the Avatar realm, both of them were pretty much good to go.

At that moment, Miland's voice began booming all across the sky.

“Everyone participating! The challenge begins in ten! Nine! Eight...”

As Miland's count got near to zero, Gerald and Nori glanced at each other before simultaneously leaping atop a tall tree before them.

Standing on tree branches, both of them then used the leaves around them to conceal themselves. Unless they were being particularly looked for, it would be incredibly difficult for anyone to even spot them.

Both of them had figured that since they didn't know what dangers were lurking around yet, their best option was to wait patiently for the right moment to strike. It certainly beat the thought of just rashly running around to look for people to defeat.

All in all, there were about a thousand participants in the challenge. In other words, though the illusory space was rather large, the probability of bumping into someone else was still rather high.

“The countdown is over! Let the challenge begin!” announced Miland seconds later.

Following that, the entire area went dead silent. With no voices or even hints of shuffling around, the only sounds that could be heard were the rustling of leaves being blown by the wind...

However, it wasn't long after before several people got swiftly taken out! Most of those who were disqualified weren't that strong in the first place, and the others just weren't that good at hiding themselves. With that in mind, they had been targeted the second

they entered this place, which explained why they had been taken out so quickly and easily.

After a while, Nori couldn't help but mutter, "...Simply hiding here isn't going to do us any good, you know? Allow me to remind you that we're pretty strong too! With that said, we should definitely take the initiative to hunt down the weaker people who are still in the challenge while we can!"

Chapter 1660

Appearing rather distressed as she stared at Gerald, Nori felt the need to remind him that in the end, both of them had already entered the Sage Realm.

Hearing that, Gerald felt that she had a point. With that, he then replied, "...Well, alright then! Let's take the initiative to attack then! The sooner we gather the required divine stones, the sooner we'll be able to complete the challenge!"

With that said, both of them then hopped off the tree together...

However, the second the duo landed, several arrows suddenly shot out at them from within the bushes!

Thankfully, both of them reacted extremely quickly, and they were able to easily dodge the arrows. The arrows themselves ended up piercing a few trees that were behind them...

Following that, three people wielding crossbows rushed out from the bushes, encircling Gerald and Nori in no time!

“To think that we’d bump into prey so soon! What luck, boss!” said a bald man as he smiled sinisterly while looking at the scar-faced man standing beside him.

The trio had earlier been silently moving about when they suddenly saw Gerald and Nori hopping off from that tree. Knowing that this was their chance, all of them had swiftly made their moves without the slightest hesitation.

“Luck you say... In the end, there’s still only two of them! How are we going to distribute the divine stones among ourselves?” replied the scar-faced man with a snort as he revealed his own frigid smile.

“I know right? Both of us won’t have that problem, however! After all, by the time we’re done with you, we’ll have three divine stones to share between ourselves!” replied Gerald as he smiled slyly.

Before either of the men could reply, an aurablade suddenly manifested, and just like that, all three of them were taken out in a single swipe!

The second their corpses fell to the ground, their bodies instantly transformed into three separate divine stones...

Picking them up, Gerald kept one for himself before handing the other two to Nori while saying, "Here, take these! They're for you!"

Momentarily shocked silent, Nori—who hadn't expected to be given two divine stones just like that—eventually snapped out of it before quickly replying, "...You were the one who defeated them, Gerald! With that in mind, you should be the one to keep all three of them!"

True to her words, Nori hadn't really done anything, and that led her to believe that she didn't deserve the stones. These were Gerald's spoils!

However, Gerald simply said, "It's fine, I'll just get more later. Just take them!"

Seeing that he wasn't going to take no for an answer, Nori had no choice but to accept the two divine stones. While she didn't explicitly show it, Nori was extremely moved by his generosity.

Gerald himself didn't really think much of it. After all, the trio from earlier was pretty much just sitting ducks waiting to be taken out by either him or Nori.

There was a saying stating 'not accepting offered things was disgraceful', and since those three men were making themselves such easy pickings, Gerald would've certainly been a fool not to take them out while he could.

Regardless, Nori and Gerald then continued moving forward to look for their next prey.

Oddly enough, even after walking around for an entire hour, neither of them bumped into a single person! It was strange, to say the least, and the possibility of everyone else already being defeated didn't sound so farfetched now...

Even so, the challenge had just started... What more, there were at least a thousand participants! The challenge couldn't be over so soon, right...?

A little while later, the duo came across a river. It was only then when they finally decided to take a break from their hunt...

Chapter 1661

Now sitting by the riverside, Nori couldn't help but ask, "...It's strange that we haven't come across any others even after walking around for so long, right...?"

"It truly is... It makes me wonder if we're a little too far off from the others," muttered Gerald—who was also finding the entire experience to be rather perplexing—in response.

The second his sentence ended, a blast of water suddenly shot out from the river... and the duo found themselves staring wide-eyed at the green dragon that had just leaped out of the water!

Now hovering in the air, the dragon glared at Nori and Gerald before releasing a mighty roar that resonated across the area!

Neither of them could have anticipated that such a creature was living in that river!

However, now wasn't the time to ponder about that. After all, the green dragon suddenly began diving toward Gerald and Nori without warning!

"Watch yourself!" shouted Gerald as both he and Nori leaped to the side to avoid the attack!

While they were fortunate enough to dodge the attack, the fact that the area they had been sitting on had completely crumbled proved just how powerful the dragon was. Had they failed to avoid the attack, they would've surely died on the spot...

"Why the hell is there a dragon all of a sudden?! Aren't we supposed to only be fighting against other people?!" asked the shocked Nori.

Based on the current turn of events, Gerald felt that the dragon was just another kind of magical challenge within this illusory space...

With that in mind, Gerald then shouted, "Go hide first, Nori! I'll deal with the dragon!"

Following that, he summoned Jade Infused Blade and turned it into a sword. After tightening his stance, Gerald then began charging toward the dragon!

For a moment, the dragon almost appeared excited as it began diving toward Gerald as well!

“Slaying Surge of Turmoil!” roared Gerald as his aurablade flared red and flew toward the dragon, piercing right through it!

Roaring in pain, the dragon attempted to struggle for a while... until its eyes eventually turned grey and its massive body came crashing down into the river...

With the dragon now slaughtered, Gerald raised a brow when he saw that two shining items had appeared on the surface of the river.

Heading over to inspect them, the items stopped glowing once he got close enough. The first item was a jade charm whereas the second appeared to be a dragon egg...

After taking the two items for himself, Gerald then returned to Nori.

Now that things had calmed down, both of them began inspecting the two curious items. Neither of them had expected to be rewarded for slaying that dragon, and that only served to prove how magical this illusory space was...

A while later, Gerald slipped the jade charm into his pocket and carefully placed the dragon egg in his backpack.

Both of them had been unable to guess what those two items could be used for, so Gerald made a mental note to study them properly once the challenge was over. Whatever the case was, Gerald was sure that both of the items had to be extremely valuable, either in terms of usage or the fact that they could be hiding secrets within them...

Gerald's train of thought was cut short when he suddenly heard Nori asking, "Come to think of it, what was that move you used earlier? It was super powerful!"

Nori could still remember how amazed she had felt when she saw Gerald's red aurablade earlier...

"Well... Quite frankly, I have no idea either! It just sort of happened!" replied Gerald as he shrugged. He wasn't bluffing when he said that.

After all, the one who had earlier launched the attack was Jade Infused Blade. With that in mind, it explained why Gerald wasn't able to answer Nori's question.

Chapter 1662

Regardless, both of them soon packed up and left the riverside...

It was about ten minutes later when both of them heard the clashes of a fierce battle...

Turning to look at Gerald, Nori then said, "It appears that there's an intense fight happening up front! Let's hurry over and have a look!"

Gerald agreed with Nori's statement. After all, if the fighters were already battered, then there was definitely a chance that both of them could obtain something without any effort. What more, if the fighters were taking on something particularly dangerous, Gerald and Nori could always step in once they were taken out.

With that in mind, both of them then swiftly proceeded forward before masterfully concealing themselves behind a large rock.

Staring ahead at the small forest before them, both of them were greeted by the sight of several black-robed men attacking a youth in white clothes. Since the shoulder areas of his clothes were dyed red, it was only fair to assume that he had been injured there.

Despite his injuries and being severely outnumbered, the youth still fought vigilantly.

Even so, Gerald knew for a fact that the youth was fighting a losing battle. Then again, why were those four people so insistent on taking him down? There had to be a reason for their actions...

“Those four men are clearly bullying that poor youth, Gerald! Let’s step in and give him a hand!” grumbled Nori as she glared at the situation with resentful eyes.

Of course, Gerald saw no issue with that. It was a virtue to play the white knight, after all.

Meanwhile, in the forest itself, one of the black-robed men found himself sneering, “Come on Zelig! Stop playing so hard to get and give us your divine stone already!”

“Over my dead body!” scoffed Zelig in response, clearly still having quite a bit of fight left in him.

“If you insist!” roared the man in anger as he gestured for the other three to attack Zelig at the same time!

Seconds before Zelig was hit, a ray of golden light suddenly engulfed Zelig, shocking the other four men enough to momentarily retreat!

Following that, slight rustling could be heard, and the next thing everyone knew, two people were already standing guard before Zelig!

“How villainous for four of you to take on a single person!” scoffed Gerald as he stared at the four people with contemptuous eyes.

Hearing that, all four of them took turns exchanging glances with each other. They hadn't expected to be interfered with halfway through what they were doing.

Shortly after, what seemed to be the leader of the group then glared at Gerald before warning, "Look, buddy. Beat it and leave us to our affairs. Otherwise, don't blame me for killing you too!"

"Hah! I'd like to see you try!" retorted Gerald as his eyes suddenly began glinting murderously.

Before any of the black-robed men were even able to reply, Gerald tossed two secret technique talismans—that he had earlier hidden inside his sleeves—toward the men!

Appearing to burn up just inches away from the talismans' targets, the duo that Gerald had attacked found themselves being engulfed in flames before they were even able to react! And just like that, the two black-robed men had been burned to death...

"...W-what...?!" shouted the two remaining men, momentarily unable to process what had just happened.

Quickly snapping out of it, the shocked leader of that group then shouted, “You... You’re a Talisman Master!”

To think that they would actually bump into a Talisman Master here of all places! With that in mind, the two men instantly attempted to bolt off.

‘Bold of you to even attempt escape!’ Gerald thought to himself. It was evident that they weren’t going to be leaving alive!

With that, Gerald then tossed another two secret technique talismans! Upon collision with the escaping duo’s bodies, were instantly ensnared by vines that appeared out of nowhere!

Fully bound, the duo flopped to the ground, utterly terrified as they watched Gerald slowly walk toward them.

Staring back at them, Gerald then casually said in a frigid tone, “Well then, thanks for giving us your divine stones!”

With that, Gerald summoned his sword before swiftly ending the remaining two men...

There was no mercy in his attack since Gerald was well aware that not being cruel to his enemies would mean that he was being cruel to himself...

Chapter 1663

Regardless, Gerald then took all four of their divine stones before slipping them into his pocket. Gerald now had five of them.

Either way, he then turned to look at Zelig before asking, "Are you alright?"

Shaking his head, Zelig then replied in a gratuitous voice, "I'm fine, thanks to you saving me! Also, where are my manners! My name is Zelig Lear!"

Upon hearing that, Nori found herself momentarily stunned.

"Wait, you're... Zelig Lear? The second young master of the Lears of Jaellatra?" asked Nori.

Looking at her, Zelig—who clearly hadn't expected her to know who he was—found himself raising a slight brow as he curiously replied, "...I am. And you are...?"

“Ah, I’m Nori from the Zahn family! I didn’t think I’d bump into the second young master of the Lear family here! What an honor!” said Nori as she smiled subtly.

The Lears were an extremely strong family in Jaellatra, and many of its members were so strong that some had even managed to enter the Avatar Realm!

Zelig understood how strong his family was as well. With that in mind, to think that he had been caught in the process of failing to defend himself against only four assailants... It was rather embarrassing, to say the least.

Chuckling rather bitterly, Zelig then sighed before replying, “You’re exaggerating it, Young Lady Zahn! I’m just a good-for-nothing who’s been left behind by the other Lears!”

Though Zelig was the second young master of his family, his training was honestly rather low in comparison. After all, he had only managed to enter the Ninth-rank in the Rune Realm. The fact that he couldn’t even breach the Sage Realm had caused his family to collectively label him as being useless. With that in mind, Zelig wasn’t exaggerating either when he said that the rest of the Lears had abandoned him.

After staring at Zelig's body for a while Gerald frowned slightly as he said, "...I can sense that due to some odd reasons, you haven't been able to progress past the Ninth-rank of the Rune Realm."

Nodding in response, Zelig then replied, "You're rather insightful, sir! What you said is true and from what I've managed to gather, there seems to be a strange aura within my body that's keeping my elixir-of-life field sealed. That's the reason why I haven't been able to make any progress at all!"

"I see... Well, it's not like your situation is incurable. You just haven't been using the right methods to properly tackle it!" explained Gerald.

The second he heard that, Zelig was instantly surprised though joy quickly overtook that feeling. The fact that Gerald was able to say that definitely meant that Gerald had a way of helping him!

"...I see! But before that, where are my manners indeed! How should I address you?" asked Zelig.

"You can just call me Gerald. Gerald Crawford!"

“Very well, Mr. Crawford! Getting straight to the point, if you truly have a way to help me, then I’ll be willing to offer you my entire life in exchange! I’ll be there for you at your every beck and call!” replied Zelig. With how excited he looked, Zelig barely had the temperament of a young master of such a powerful family...

However, that did show how sincere Zelig’s words were. Adding that to the fact that Zelig wasn’t even close to feeling like a villainous character, Gerald decided that he wasn’t against helping him out.

“While I’m fine with helping you, you should focus on gathering five divine stones first. We can talk about this in more detail once we leave this illusory space!” replied Gerald.

After all, though Gerald already possessed five divine stones and Nori had two, Zelig hadn’t managed to gather a single stone. With that in mind, they needed eight more stones, which meant that eight more people needed to be defeated...

Chapter 1664

“You’re right, Mr. Crawford!” replied Zelig as he instantly began tending to his earlier wounds.

Once he was done, he then set off together with Gerald and Nori.

Thankfully, the subsequent people they bumped into were rather weak, so in no time at all, the trio managed to gather the remaining eight divine stones...

With that done, they quickly rushed back to the exit to get themselves authenticated. Once that was successfully done, they then left the illusory space.

Upon returning to the real world, they were each given a wooden token. The tokens were proof that they had passed the challenge and served as 'passes' of sorts that granted them entry into the Leicom Continent. Naturally, this meant that people who didn't own the wooden tokens wouldn't be allowed access into the other world.

Regardless, since they had been waiting to enter the Leicom Continent for quite a while now, the trio then—rather impatiently—went through the initial portal...

Shielding their eyes from bright rays of white light, they eventually made it into the Leicom Continent without a hitch.

Since this was Gerald's first time here, he was momentarily taken aback by how beautiful this place was. Not only did everything look marvelous, but the entire area seemed to be filled with floating continents as well!

Regardless, Gerald found himself snapping out of it when he suddenly heard someone jeering, "Well, well, well! If it isn't Young Master Lear!"

Turning to face the source of the voice, the trio was greeted by the sight of a youth—who had a dark green robe on—walking toward them.

"Lev Bayfield!" scowled Zelig as he frowned.

Lev was the young master of the Bayfield family in Jaellatra, and he had managed to enter the First-soul-rank within the Sage Realm.

"To think that the useless second young master of the Lear family would be able to make it past that challenge! Someone must've helped you, right?" scoffed Lev as he looked at Zelig mockingly before turning to size up Gerald, a glint of interest in his eyes.

It was clear as day that Lev was looking down on Zelig for having to rely on others to fight for him, but before Zelig could even reply, Lev had already turned to leave, laughing mockingly throughout the process.

“...I had previously only heard tales of how sharp Lev’s tongue could be. Now that I’ve witnessed it first-hand, I can safely agree with those rumors!” scowled Nori rather contemptuously as she glared at Lev’s back.

From what she had said, it was clear that though she hadn’t met Lev before, she had definitely heard of him.

Either way, upon finding a hotel to stay in, the trio quickly realized that the Leicom Continent’s currency was rather different from theirs! Since they weren’t going to be able to use earth or Jaellatra’s currency here, all three of them knew that they had to start thinking of ways to obtain money.

After asking around, they found out that gold coins were the main form of currency here. They also came to realize that there was a famous auction house here that went by the name of the Aurum Auction House. That was definitely going to be their best shot of quickly obtaining this foreign land’s currency.

With that, the three people then swiftly headed off for the auction house...

Upon arriving, the trio realized that almost everyone trying to auction things there came from Jaellatra. With that in mind, the crowd was massive, to say the least.

It was quite easy to tell apart who came from Jaellatra and who was a local too due to how different the two cultures looked. If that wasn't already enough, many of the Leicom Continent's residents appeared to resent those from Jaellatra...

Chapter 1665

Regardless, after waiting a short while, Gerald and the other two finally got their chance to reveal their auction item to the appraiser.

Upon revealing the jade charm to him, the trio watched as the appraiser's eyes momentarily widened in shock.

After carefully observing it for a while, the appraiser then said, "...Come with me! All three of you!"

Hearing that, the trio then followed him deeper into the Aurum Auction House...

Once inside, they were soon greeted by the sight of an old man who had a golden crown on his head.

After the appraiser handed the jade charm to the old man, he then whispered something into his ear, prompting the elderly man to appear slightly surprised.

Staring at Gerald for a while, the old man then asked, "How did you obtain the jade charm of the green dragon?"

While slightly hesitant to reveal the information, Gerald eventually replied, "I obtained it after I slaughtered a green dragon that I came across during the Challenge of the Fairyland!"

Upon hearing that, the old man's initial surprise quickly turned into delight.

"To think that you were able to slaughter the green dragon! Just so you know, this jade charm is incredibly valuable since the only way to obtain it is by defeating that dragon! Nobody else has been able to

do it but you! How exceedingly powerful you must be!” praised the old man.

Now realizing how valuable the jade charm was, Gerald couldn't help but ask, “How valuable are we talking about here...?”

Booming with laughter in response, the old man then replied, “How do I even say this... I can say for sure that even if you auction it for a few million gold coins, you'd still find a buyer! That's how valuable it is! Now that you know how much it's worth, please tell me whether you'd still like to auction it!”

Hearing that the jade charm was worth that much, Gerald and the other two instantly found themselves getting excited. After thinking about it for a little longer, Gerald finally declared, “Very well! I'm agreeing to have it auctioned!”

In the end, no matter how valuable the jade charm was, money was still the priority since without any, they wouldn't be able to survive long in the Leicom Continent.

“I'm glad to hear that! However, do note that the Aurum Auction House will get a share of thirty percent off the final auctioned price. Do you accept?” asked the crowned old man.

Turning to look at Nori and Zelig, they didn't appear to object to the idea. With that, Gerald then nodded in agreement.

"Very well, then! Please come with me to the waiting area! We'll be auctioning the jade charm of the green dragon very soon!" said the auctioneer as he led the trio to an area where the other sellers were. With how the area was positioned, the sellers were given a clear view of their items getting auctioned.

Whatever the case was, upon arriving, Gerald and the two others sat side by side as they waited for the auction to begin.

It was only a few minutes later when they saw the crowned old man walk up the stage. The auction was finally beginning!

Clearing his throat, the elderly man then declared "Ladies and gentlemen! We have a wonderful array of valuable auction items today as well! Without further ado, here comes the first item, the Phoenix Fan!"

Following that, the old man then pulled the red cloth off the first auction item, revealing a golden fan! Since the feathers on the fan were supposedly phoenix feathers, the item was definitely an exquisite one.

Chapter 1666

“We’ll begin the bid at a hundred thousand gold coins! As a reminder, each bid’s increment has to exceed fifty thousand gold coins!” explained the crowned old man.

Now that the bidding process had officially begun, the crowd instantly went into an uproar!

“Two hundred thousand gold coins!” shouted a wealthy-looking man. Since he had increased the bid by a hundred thousand gold coins right off the bat, it was only fair to assume that he was filthy rich.

However, right after that, a fat man—who was sitting opposite of the previous bidder—stood up before shouting, “Three hundred thousand gold coins!”

Truth be told, Gerald and the other two felt that the old hand fan wasn’t really worth that much. Even so, who were they to judge? These people were filthy rich, so they could do anything they wanted with their money.

Eventually, the hand fan was sold—to the businessman from before who had started the bid—for a whopping six hundred thousand gold coins!

Following that, it took about two more hours for the next two items to be auctioned off.

Since Gerald's jade charm of the green dragon was the fourth and last item to be auctioned for the day, the trio had to patiently wait throughout the bidding process.

Now that the second-last item had been auctioned off, all three of them instantly began focusing on the auction again as the crowned old man removed the red cloth covering Gerald's jade charm...

Clearing his throat, the old man then declared, "For our last item for today, we have the jade charm of the green dragon! I'm sure I don't need to elaborate on how rare this treasure is! With that said, the bid starts with three million gold coins, and any further increment must exceed a million gold coins! Without further ado, let the bidding begin!"

The second his sentence ended, someone immediately shouted, "Five million gold coins!"

“Give it up! I’m paying six million gold coins!”

“Seven million gold coins! It’s mine!”

With how rapidly the bidders were increasing the final price of the jade charm, it wasn’t long before the bid amount went over ten million gold coins... Even then, the price just kept on rising!

Eventually, the final bid amounted to a whopping twenty million gold coins! By that point, the crowd had quieted down, and nobody dared to further increase the already outrageous bid amount. After all, twenty million gold coins was already far beyond what anyone could have anticipated the final price to be.

With that in mind, the crowned old man then hammered on the podium before looking at the final bidder—a young man wearing a royal-looking outfit who was seated at the front-most row—and declaring, “Prince Severin has bid twenty million gold coins! Even if anyone else wishes to compete against that, I’ve decided that Prince Severin will be the rightful owner of the jade charm! With that said, congratulations, Prince Severin! The jade charm of the green dragon is now yours!”

Since Prince Severin was the prince of the Leicom Continent’s royal family, that amount was nothing much to him.

To the trio, however, it was as though they had hit the jackpot.

Nori herself was so excited that she couldn't hold herself back from exclaiming, "By god! Twenty million gold coins! You're definitely made a fortune this time, Gerald!"

Gerald himself hadn't expected the jade charm to fetch such a high price. If the jade charm of the green dragon alone could be sold for this much, then the dragon egg would surely sell for billions, right...?

Despite the thought, Gerald didn't really want others to know that he had the egg yet. Besides, it wasn't as though he was poor in these foreign lands anymore.

Regardless, soon after the auction ended, the trio watched as the crowned old man ordered his men to carry three huge chests filled with gold coins over...

Though he was extremely wealthy on earth, Gerald himself had never seen so many gold coins at once! Due to that, all three of them found themselves momentarily shocked by what they saw...

Chapter 1667

Eventually snapping out of it, Nori then turned to look at Gerald before asking, "...That's... quite a lot. How on earth are we going to carry all this around, Gerald...?"

Though it was true that there were three chests and the trio could technically carry one each, it was going to be far too much of a hassle in the long term. What more, once people saw all that gold, they would surely be tempted to rob them...

Realizing that Gerald was stressed over how to bring all that money around, the crowned old man then handed a small ring to him.

Slightly startled to suddenly be given a ring, Gerald couldn't help but ask, "...I'm sorry, but what's this ring about...?"

"It's a storage ring with a particularly huge storage space! You can keep your gold in that so you won't have to fret about carrying it about!" explained the old man with an amiable smile.

"That... I can't just accept something like this for free! How about this? I'll buy this ring off you for a million gold coins! Is that acceptable?" asked Gerald who simply wasn't the kind of person to willingly take a free meal for nothing.

Seeing how sensible Gerald was, the old man chose not to refuse. And just like that, the money was traded for the ring.

After slipping the ring on, Gerald gently tapped it, prompting a pocket space to suddenly appear before him!

Upon seeing how spacious it was inside, Gerald quickly placed the remaining money within that space, making sure to put his backpack inside as well.

With how convenient the storage ring was, Gerald couldn't help but consider it to be a treasure.

Regardless, now that that issue had been solved, Gerald was just about to leave with Nori and Zelig when the old man suddenly called out, "Please wait for a moment! There's someone who wishes to meet you!"

Hearing that, the trio was instantly puzzled. After all, they had just arrived at the Leicom Continent. Who on earth could be wanting to meet them?

Now that he had their attention, the old man then led them to a guest hall at the back.

Upon arriving, they were surprised to see that the one who had wanted to meet up with them was none other than Prince Severin!

Being the buyer of the jade charm of the green dragon, Prince Severin had been keen on meeting the person who had even considered selling the precious treasure in the first place.

Either way, now that they were here, the old man bowed respectfully before the prince before saying, “Lady and gents, this young man goes by the name of Prince Severin, and he comes from the royal family of the Leicom Continent! He’s also the one who bought the jade charm of the green dragon!”

Hearing that, Gerald couldn’t help but stare at the prince for a while. Though he didn’t really know how to greet a prince, Gerald was at least sure that he had to be respectful.

With that in mind, Gerald then greeted, “It’s an honor to meet you, Prince Severin!”

Staring back at Gerald with a curious gaze, the prince then replied, “...You’re the one who sold the jade charm, correct?”

Chapter 1668

Nodding in response, Gerald then replied, "That's right. My companions and I came from Jaellatra, you see, and since we had no money, I decided to sell the jade charm!"

"...You... Do you not know how precious the jade charm of the green dragon is...?" muttered the confused Prince Severin.

Gerald, for one, honestly had no clue.

Truth be told, was he not in dire need of money, he wouldn't have sold off the jade charm. After all, he hadn't even studied it yet. Even so, Prince Severin's tone alone was enough to tell Gerald how extraordinary a treasure the jade charm actually was...

Now getting increasingly curious, Gerald shook his head before asking, "I'm afraid I'm clueless, Prince Severin. Do enlighten me!"

"...Very well! You see, the jade charm you sold me is the symbol of the green dragon, and the person who owns it will be granted the powers of the green dragon! In case you didn't know, among the four Divine Beasts, the green dragon is the strongest among them!" explained Severin.

Upon hearing that, the trio instantly found themselves surprised. To think that the jade pendant was this useful! Now that he knew what the jade pendant was capable of, Gerald began slightly regretting his choice of selling it...

Even so, what was done, was done. He couldn't just take it back now that it had officially been sold. What more, the buyer of the jade pendant was the prince of this continent! With that in mind, getting it back was only going to be even more difficult!

Understanding that it was best if he just gave up on reobtaining it, Gerald then said in a slightly resigned tone, "...I see. I appreciate you telling me more about it, Prince Severin... Regardless, the jade pendant is now yours, so you don't need to worry about me trying to reclaim it!"

Staring into Gerald's eyes, the prince could sense that Gerald wasn't lying to him. With that, he then replied, "...Well said. I trust in you!"

Following that, the two parties talked for a while longer before going their separate ways...

As they left the Aurum Auction House, Gerald kept reminding himself that it was no use crying over spilled milk. The fact that they now owned a fortune definitely helped Gerald convince himself that

this outcome wasn't all that bad. After all, it was better than having nothing at all.

By rough estimation, all that money was more than enough for all three of them to live for an entire year in the Leicom Continent worry-free.

With that in mind, the trio made sure to not only find a better place to stay in, but to also celebrate by having a hearty dinner together...

Fast forward to night time, Gerald ended up having to share a room with Nori while Zelig slept in another room.

While Gerald was naturally reluctant to have to share a room with her, Nori kept insisting that she stayed with him with the excuse that she was afraid of being alone. With how things currently were, it was obvious that Nori won in the end.

Whatever the case was, now that they were in a private room, Gerald finally took the chance to take the green dragon's egg out from his backpack.

Carefully placing it on the table, Gerald then began observing the egg, wondering if another green dragon would actually hatch from it.

Walking over to Gerald's side, Nori then sat beside him. Looking at the egg with her own curious gaze, she then found herself asking, "...Do you think another green dragon will hatch from this...?"

"It's possible. Even if that's the case, we don't really know when it's going to hatch anyway," replied Gerald rather calmly.

The second his sentence ended, however, a crisp crack could be heard from the egg...

Staring wide-eyed as small cracks began racing down the dragon egg, Gerald and Nori were momentarily left speechless when a green dragon eventually peeked out from within the now cracked egg!

With eyes that were the size of Gerald's thumbs, the baby dragon simply stared back at Gerald and Nori until Nori eventually snapped out of it.

With how cute it was, Nori was immediately captivated and she found herself squealing, "It's... It's an adorable baby green dragon!"

Chapter 1669

Just as she was about to touch it, however, the baby dragon instantly responded with a tiny roar! Though the small dragon was even bearing its two tiny fangs, its actions only made Nori's heart melt even further.

"Oh...? Are you being mean to me even though I'm treating you so kindly, little fella?" scowled Nori in a playful tone.

Seemingly understanding that it was being scolded, the baby dragon quickly curled up into a ball...

Seeing that, Gerald couldn't help but smile.

Reaching out his arm, Gerald then lifted the baby dragon before placing it in his palm... Contrary to its initial reaction toward Nori, the dragon appeared to trust Gerald completely, and this was made evident by how much it kept rubbing its cheek against his palm.

Seeing how comfortable the dragon was around Gerald, Nori added in a cheerful tone, "It seems that the little fella trusts you a lot! It didn't even attempt to be mean to you when you first touched it!"

The truth was, the baby was only behaving this way since it was familiar with Gerald's scent. After all, he had been carrying the egg around this entire time. With that in mind, it was only natural that the dragon trusted Gerald the most.

Regardless, the two then proceeded to play around with the baby dragon late into the night...

By that point, the baby dragon had already familiarized itself with Nori, so it no longer saw her as an enemy. To Nori's delight, it was even willing to let her hold him!

Eventually, the three then headed to bed...

When morning came, Gerald and Nori were abruptly awoken by the baby dragon's hisses!

Seeing that it kept hissing while hopping atop their bodies, Nori quickly realized what was up, prompting her to say, "...I think it's hungry, Gerald!"

While they now had one mystery solved, another one was instantly posed. What should they feed it? For all they knew, dragons probably had different diets compared to humans...

Unsure where to even begin, Gerald then placed the dragon into the storage ring before leaving the hotel with Nori and Zelig in search of food...

Eventually, they managed to find a restaurant and they made sure to order all sorts of delicious-smelling foods.

Once the food arrived, Gerald slipped some meat into the storage ring, hoping that the dragon would like it.

To his dismay, all it did was lay on its stomach! It barely had any interest in the food Gerald had provided!

“It doesn’t eat meat...? Then what does it eat?” mumbled the perplexed Gerald.

Whatever the case was, Gerald eventually decided that it was best if the trio fed themselves first before worrying about the baby dragon.

After their meal was over, the trio then continued walking around, hoping that they would somehow come across something that the baby green dragon was willing to eat.

As they were passing by a magnificent-looking manor, the baby dragon suddenly appeared to grow excited within the storage ring! Finding its reaction to be odd, Gerald then released it from the pocket space to see what was up.

The second it was freed, however, the dragon bolted right into the manor, appearing to be drawn by something inside!

Unable to react fast enough to recapture it, Gerald then called out, "Hey, come back!"

Leaping over the manor's fence, the trio then quickly began chasing after the dragon...

By the time they caught up to it, the baby dragon was already munching on something underneath a tree...

Seeing bits of food all around it, Nori raised a slight brow as she curiously asked, "What is it even eating...?"

All three of them were equally curious since the dragon appeared to be eating so contently even though it barely had any interest in the meat that Gerald fed it earlier.

Squatting beside the dragon, Gerald took a closer look at the bits of food before saying, "...It seems to be eating some kind of fruit... Since it likes it so much, it's only fair to assume that whatever it's eating is the king of fruits!"

Chapter 1670

With that deduced, all three of them found themselves looking upward... and to their amazement, they saw countless fruits emitting dazzling pink glows growing on the tree!

"My god! Those fruits look so beautiful and juicy! What kind of fruit even is that?" exclaimed Nori in her awe.

By no means was she exaggerating when she described how stunning the fruits looked. From the looks of it, the fruit was native only to the Leicom Continent...

Upon picking one of the fruits, Gerald could instantly feel a strange energy being emitted from it. How mysterious...

Barely a second later, the trio snapped out of their awe when two women—each wearing long white robes—with white wings growing on their backs suddenly descended from the sky!

“Who are you people? How dare you barge in here and steal our holy fruit!” shouted one of the women as she pointed angrily at Gerald.

“These women are strong, brother Gerald!” warned Zelig upon seeing how strange the two women were. From what he could tell, they had at least entered the Fourth-soul-rank in the Sage Realm!

“Um... Sorry, but we didn’t mean to barge in intentionally!” explained Gerald, trying to deescalate the situation.

“Quit your cr*p! You’re saying that even when you have a fruit in your hand?! I’m teaching you thieves a good lesson if it’s the last thing I do!” scowled the other curvier woman.

The second her sentence ended, both of them then charged toward Gerald and his friends!

“I’ll take care of them! You two leave first!” ordered Gerald.

Not about to say no to that, Nori and Zelig then bounded away while Gerald summoned his blade to take on the two women.

Though the duo had entered the Fourth-soul-rank in the Sage Realm, they were still unable to take on Gerald!

As the duo was sent flying back by a shockwave from Gerald's aurablade, they couldn't help but look at each other, feeling slightly taken aback. Neither of them had anticipated for Gerald to have such terrifying power... They weren't even his match even when working together! They had truly bumped into a tough opponent this time...

Before the two parties could clash again, a stream of light suddenly blasted right between them, prompting the trio to back away!

Once the blinding light faded, Gerald saw that the one who had stepped in was a crowned woman donning a robe with phoenix-like patterns...

"Stop it, all of you!" ordered the crowned woman in a calm voice.

"Lord Mage!" shouted both of the women in respectful tones as they quickly took a few steps back before kneeling before her.

Seeing that, Gerald didn't feel the need to continue fighting either.

Whatever the case was, the crowned woman then replied, "Both of you can leave now. I'll handle the rest."

Upon hearing that, the duo then got up and left.

Now that they were gone, the crowned woman then turned to look at Gerald before asking, "This young green dragon... Is it yours?"

Hearing that, Gerald turned to look at the dragon—who was already savoring another fruit—before looking back at the crowned woman and saying, "It is, and to be quite frank, I have no idea why it's so interested in that fruit!"

Chapter 1671

"Well, for one, this particular fruit is a holy fruit known as Heaven's apple!" explained the crowned woman.

As she went on, Gerald came to learn that the Heaven's apple only matured once every hundred years. Since the fruit was capable of replenishing energy and mending wounds, it was a fundamental pharmaceutical ingredient in the Leicom Continent.

“...Alright, but... That doesn’t explain why the dragon’s so interested in the Heaven’s apples. Just so you know, I even fed it meat earlier, but it barely showed any interest!” replied the confused Gerald.

Chuckling in response, the crowned woman then said, “Since that’s the case, I’m now surer than ever that the green dragon is one of the Divine Beasts of the Leicom Continent. I’m assuming you found it while taking on the Challenge of the Fairyland? Regardless, just know that the dragon will only feed on Heaven’s apples!”

Seeing that Gerald registered her words, the crowned woman then cleared her throat before adding in a more serious tone, “Either way, since the young green dragon chose you to be its master, I’m sure you’re no ordinary person. With that said, I hope you’ll nurture it well! If you do, I’m sure it’ll help you obtain unimaginable gains!”

Hearing that, Gerald simply nodded. Even without the idea of getting anything back in return, he was still going to take good care of the baby dragon.

Pleased by Gerald's determination, the woman then waved her hand... prompting hundreds of Heaven's apples to be plucked before they quickly gathered in front of Gerald!

Momentarily dumbfounded, Gerald eventually snapped out of it before asking, "...What's all this then?"

"Well, let's just say that I believe we were fated to meet! Since the young dragon needs the Heaven's apples anyway, consider these to be my gift to you!" replied the crowned woman with a smile.

Before Gerald could even reply, the crowned woman had already leaped into the sky, and soon after, she couldn't even be seen anymore...

Unsure how to even respond to the turn of events, Gerald simply placed all the Heaven's apples into his storage ring...

Following that, Gerald then began walking out of the manor with the baby dragon. Since it was already full, the happy dragon soon began snoring within the storage ring...

Sighing helplessly, Gerald then muttered, “Hey now... To think that you’re sleeping right after I cleaned up the mess you made... It makes me wonder if I’m really your master here!”

Still, the dragon was now his pet, so Gerald was well aware that it was his duty to take good care of it.

Eventually, Gerald reunited with Nori and Zelig who had been waiting at the manor’s gate this entire time.

Seeing that he was in one piece, both of them instantly sighed in relief. That made it quite evident that they had been worried about his safety this entire time.

Even so, that didn’t stop Nori from looking around Gerald—almost as though she was trying to see if he had suffered any injuries—as she asked, “Are you alright Gerald? Are you hurt anywhere?”

Shaking his head, Gerald then replied, “I’m perfectly fine. I was able to clear the misunderstanding!”

Hearing that, the duo was relieved once again. After all, they would surely be greatly saddened if something bad happened to him.

Regardless, now that the food problem had been solved, Gerald then looked at the duo before asking, “Speaking of which... Do you two have a reason for coming here?”

Quite frankly, he had no idea why he was here in the first place.

“...Huh? You’re telling us you don’t know why we’re here...?” replied Zelig in surprise.

“Not a clue. I’m assuming you know the reason...?” asked Gerald with a slight frown as Zelig and Nori exchanged glances with each other before nodding.

Chapter 1672

“We’re here to enroll in the Leicom Academy to train and become stronger cultivators!” replied Nori.

“The Leicom Academy...?” asked Gerald, feeling confused.

Following that, Nori and Zelig then began detailing the academy to Gerald.

Essentially, the Leicom Academy was the largest academy for cultivators in the Leicom Continent. Once every decade, the academy would select talents from different continents to enroll there, and those who were chosen usually ended up becoming the most powerful of cultivators. The academy also had a system where the student with the most outstanding performance would be appointed as chief scholar. Needless to say, obtaining that title was a great honor within that academy...

Regardless, that was pretty much the reason why all those people from Jaellatra had come over. Gerald himself wasn't aware of all this since only those from Jaellatra even knew about the Leicom Continent.

Whatever the case was, now that Gerald understood what was happening, he was prompted to ask, “And... How exactly can we enroll in the academy?”

After hearing how prestigious it was, Gerald was now fired up to get into the academy and have a look at how great it was himself. Who

knows, he could encounter an experience of a lifetime if he managed to enroll there...

“Well, we first need to pass a test!” replied Zelig.

“I see... When’s it going to be held?” asked Gerald.

“Around three this evening.”

Raising a slight brow, Gerald then checked the time...

...It was already half-past two. The test was in half an hour!

“...It’s already two-thirty! If we don’t hurry, we’re going to be late!” exclaimed Gerald, prompting the duo to look at each other before nodding.

Thankfully, the trio was able to arrive at the academy in time...

By three, the Leicom Academy’s front gates were already flooded with at least a thousand people. Though many among them were

from Jaellatra and had already undergone the initial selection process in the Challenge of the Fairyland, they were still keen on joining the academy.

Even so, just like all the previous times, only eight hundred people would be recruited in the end. With that in mind, it was no exaggeration that the competition just to get enrolled was extremely fierce.

Looking at the crowd, Nori couldn't help but exclaim, "There are so many people this year!"

Seconds later, the crisp sound of a bell being rung could be heard from within the academy...

Following that, four figures suddenly appeared before the academy's gates!

They were the four main guards of the Leicom Academy—who had each already entered the Avatar Realm—, and their main task was to keep the academy safe. With that in mind, it was clear as day that these four were extremely terrifying individuals.

In fact, all four of their auras combined were so pressuring that everyone instantly fell into silence upon their arrival.

Naturally, Gerald and his friends weren't excluded from this feeling. Even though Gerald's mind was well-trained, having to face such strong cultivators who had entered the Avatar Realm was still proving to be a little too taxing for him. Gerald's strength was near-incomparable to the four guards...

Understanding that, Gerald could guess that there had to be many more strong cultivators within the academy. It seemed that Nori and Zelig really weren't exaggerating earlier when they sang praises about the largest academy within the Leicom Continent...

Chapter 1673

Following that, everyone watched a man wearing a blue robe descended from the sky...

Steadily landing before the crowd, his presence somehow made everyone go even quieter than before.

"...Welcome. I go by Karsten Ykink, and I'm the exam proctor of the Leicom Academy. With that said, I'll be the chief examiner of your

tests today. If any of you weren't already aware, you'll only be able to enroll if you pass our test!" explained Karston.

With that said, Karsten then waved his hand, prompting a massive gust of wind to begin blowing... The next thing everyone knew, two huge platforms had manifested before them!

"Let's not beat around the bush, shall we? The gents are to queue for the left platform while the ladies the right. Essentially, you'll all be going against representatives of the Leicom Academy, and in order to pass the test, all candidates will have to withstand attacks from them! For those who manage to withstand three consecutive strikes, you'll be allowed to enter the elite class! If you manage to take two, you'll be given access to the intermediate class! Finally, those who are only able to withstand a single hit will be allowed to enter the beginner class. If you can't even take the first hit, then don't even dream of getting past the gates!" added Karsten.

Gerald found that the selection process was pretty simple and efficient. If he was going to be completely honest, he now" felt that passing the test was going to be a breeze.

"Confident, brother Gerald?" asked Zelig.

“Of course! What about you, brother Zelig?” replied Gerald with a smile.

“Same here. Which class are you aiming for?”

“The elite one of course!” declared Gerald.

Since he was already taking the time and effort to enroll, it felt only natural to Gerald to want to be in the best class. To him, entering any other class was pretty much meaningless.

Upon hearing that, Zelig simply nodded. With how confident Gerald sounded, Zelig truly wanted to believe that Gerald was capable enough to achieve his goal...

Shortly after, both of them heard Nori say, “Well, I’ll be heading over to the other platform first. We’ll regroup later!”

Recalling that the participants were separated and tested by gender, Gerald then smiled as he replied, “Alright! Go on ahead!”

With their momentary goodbyes said, the trio then began lining up accordingly...

Compared to Nori's side, Gerald's line was exceedingly long. After all, there were definitely a lot more men trying to get enrolled compared to women.

By listening in on the others' conversations, Gerald was able to find out that many of the present candidates had previously failed and were here to attempt their luck in getting enrolled again.

It was sometime later when an angry voice could suddenly be heard shouting, "Get lost!"

Turning around, Gerald watched as a man in a blue brocade outfit began walking to the front with two other men following behind him. As the man in blue continued walking forward, his two lackeys made sure to shove anyone too close to him away.

The man himself would scowl or even straight up beat up anyone who stood in his path. With that in mind, nobody dared to get into his bad books.

Watching all this take place, Gerald couldn't help but frown. After all, he hated people like these the most.

Just as Gerald was thinking that, a chubby young man—who wasn't all that far from Gerald—got pushed to the ground by one of the lackeys.

“Stop blocking the road, fatso!” scowled the man in blue brocade as he glared at the young man.

Upon hearing that, the chubby man instantly got to his feet before lowering his head and standing aside.

Watching as the chubby man dusted himself, the man in blue couldn't help but get slightly excited now that he knew how wimpy the chubby man was.

Unable to hold back, the man in blue then scoffed, “You know what? For blocking my way in the first place, I'm teaching you a lesson if it's the last thing I do! Men, beat him up!”

“Right away!” shouted both of his men as they prepared to punch the innocent chubby man!

However, before they could even land their hits, a figure suddenly appeared right before the chubby youth...

Chapter 1674

Unable to even react in time, the two men watched as the figure launched two consecutive lightning-fast kicks! The next thing they knew, they were already flying in the air!

Upon seeing that, the man in blue was instantly shocked. It hadn't occurred to him that someone would actually dare to beat his men up!

"Three against one? How shameless!" scoffed Gerald who was obviously the one who had taken action.

"...You... Who are you? And how dare you get involved in this! You must have a death wish or something!" retorted the man in blue as he glared at Gerald.

Of course, Gerald wasn't afraid of them in the least.

"Who, me? I'm just a passer-by who can't stand scummy people like you!" replied Gerald in a casual tone.

“You...! Look kid, if you didn’t already know, my name is Yan Zanetti! The eldest young master of the Zanetti family from Jaellatra’s Jouen State! Now kneel before me and apologize! If you don’t, well... Let’s just say that you’ll soon be in for a world of suffering!” growled Yan.

“Like I care who you are. We’re all equals in my eyes! With that said, who are you to bully others?” scoffed Gerald as he looked at Yan with disdainful eyes.

“So you crave death that much, huh?! Fine then! You only have yourself to blame for offending me so much!” roared Yan as he instantly launched a fist at Gerald!

From the looks of his attacking stance, Yan was most probably a cultivator who had a rather good grasp of martial arts. Unfortunately for him, his strength was nowhere near Gerald’s immense power...

With that in mind, all it took was a single kick from Gerald to launch Yan into the sky! With how swift Gerald’s movements were, Yan wasn’t even able to react in time, let alone land his hit!

Shouting in pain as he fell to the ground, it was evident that the fall hurt quite a bit.

Whatever the case was, everyone who had watched all that play out couldn't help but gawk at Gerald. To think that he was this fast and strong!

"You... You dare attack me?! I'm not letting you off if it's the last thing I do!" roared Yan, attempting to act tough.

Hearing that, Gerald was about to continue beating Yan up when he felt someone tug on his arm. Looking back, Gerald saw that the person was a handsome young man...

Smiling as he looked at Gerald, the young man then said, "You're a really good fighter, brother! With that said, let's not bother about someone like him!"

"...And you are?" asked Gerald with a slightly raised brow.

"Ah, where are my manners! My name is Cyril Gabrio, and I'm from Jaellatra's Arbreux Prefecture!"

The second everyone heard that, they were once again flabbergasted out of their minds!

“The Arbreux Prefecture?! Holy cow!”

“I know right?! To think that he’s the eldest young master of the Gabrio family!”

“That’s what surprises you? I’m more shocked to know that he’s here to enroll in the first place!”

“Now that you mention it, yeah! How utterly unbelievable!”

As the others continued talking about Cyril, Yan couldn’t help but widen his eyes in shock. After all, Yan was well aware that compared to Cyril, he was nothing...

Chapter 1675

“...I see. Gerald Crawford!” replied Gerald as he politely introduced himself.

Nodding in response, Cyril then praised, “Noted, brother Gerald! Still, you were amazing just now!”

“It was nothing, I was simply trying to help the bullied,” replied Gerald calmly. After flashing a subtle smile at Cyril, Gerald then turned back to look at Yan... only to realize that he had already snuck off!

Well, it wasn't as though he was all that interested in Yan in the first place. After all, there were many others in the world just like Yan, and Gerald couldn't be bothered to teach each and every one of them a lesson.

His train of thought was cut short when he heard Cyril ask, “Brother Gerald, I wonder if you'd be interested in becoming my friend...?”

Seeing no reason not to be, Gerald simply nodded in agreement.

Whatever the case was, the selection process soon officially began. Since they weren't in any particular rush, Gerald, Zelig, and Cyril simply took the chance to watch the other participants first.

Standing near the platform, Gerald kept a close eye on the academy's representatives. It was always good to know your opponents first before battle, and this was Gerald's chance to properly analyze their abilities and think of ways to counter them. Truth be told, Gerald wasn't planning on only withstanding the three strikes, oh no. Instead, he wanted to completely defeat his opponent. After all, this

was what a strong man should do. Simply having to withstand three strikes was a little too belittling for Gerald's tastes.

Either way, Gerald began paying attention to the platform again when a man donning blue robes walked up the platform. With a folding fan in his hand, the man appeared rather confident.

However, Gerald had to actively hold back from laughing when he saw that man.

'Who even is this guy? Can just about anyone participate in the selection process? What an eyesore!' Gerald thought to himself.

With the sounding of a gong, the first round of testing officially began!

Understanding that the testing process had begun, the man bolted toward the academy's representative, waving his folding fan before him the entire time!

However, it was barely a second later when the man was kicked off the platform! He never stood a chance!

Not even bothering to look at the man, Karsten then announced, “Fail! Next!”

Seeing that, everyone who had witnessed what had just happened instantly began discussing the situation. Nobody had anticipated the academy’s representative to be this strong...!

Despite everyone’s worries, Gerald was as cool as a cucumber. After all, he already knew that the man in blue was weak before he was even defeated, so the result didn’t really shock him all that much. That man simply never stood a chance in the first place...

Following that, many other candidates got up the platform as well. However, just like the first man, many of them ended up getting tossed off the platform in a single strike.

Eventually, Karsten—who had been relaxing on a chair—couldn’t help but shake his head. What a disappointing selection...

“Next!” shouted Karsten, now growing considerably impatient.

“Why don’t you go next, Brother Gerald!” suggested Zelig.

“Sure, why not?” replied Gerald as he nodded before raising his hand.

Upon seeing how thin Gerald was, many of the participants couldn't help but think that Gerald would surely get defeated in a single hit.

Walking up the platform and standing before his opponent, Gerald was now in full view of everyone...

Chapter 1676

“You know, you look just like all the previous others who've failed. With that said, why don't you just toss in the towel already! In doing so, you'll at least be able to leave with all your bones intact!” mocked the academy's representative.

‘You're looking down on me already?’ Gerald thought to himself with a frown. After hearing that, there was no way he was letting his opponent off easily.

“So, you're talking big before the fight has even begun? Let's just hope that you won't end up being the one tossed out the platform instead!” retorted Gerald in a confident tone.

“Talk is cheap, kid! Regardless, you seem to be itching to die! With that in mind, I won’t be going easy on you! State your name!” scowled the representative as he glared at Gerald.

“The name’s Gerald Crawford! And what’s yours? Hopefully I won’t forget who you are if we ever meet again in the academy!” replied Gerald.

“How ballsy! Alright, listen up! My name’s Ferdinand Gagne, and I’m the class monitor of the fifth elite class!” roared Ferdinand.

Following that, the gong was rung and the test commenced!

Watching as Ferdinand charged toward him, Gerald could sense that he had at least entered the Third-soul-rank of the Sage Realm. Though his speed would’ve been impressive to normal people, Gerald honestly found that Ferdinand was still quite weak compared to him.

With that in mind, Gerald knew that he didn’t even need to come close to using his full power. At most, he only required the strength of a Second-soul-rank master in the Sage Realm to take Ferdinand down.

Regardless, as Ferdinand's fist came inches away from Gerald, everyone could already imagine Gerald getting flung off the platform...

Of course, that wasn't about to happen.

Staring wide-eyed, everyone could hardly believe it when Gerald successfully dodged Ferdinand's first attack!

"...Huh? Did... Did he just dodge that attack?!" shouted several people who were watching.

Upon hearing that comment, Ferdinand instantly got simultaneously annoyed and embarrassed. How humiliating to not be able to take Gerald out in a single strike! No matter, he just had to finish him off with another one!

With that, Ferdinand quickly began running toward Gerald again, this time aiming to kick him! With how deadly his attack looked, it was quite obvious that he was trying to finish Gerald off for good!

However, Ferdinand was truly underestimating Gerald's capabilities. With barely any effort, Gerald managed to dodge Ferdinand's second attack as well!

“That’s the second move!” cheered several people from the crowd.

By that point, Karsten—who was still seated there—turned to look at Gerald in surprise. After all, he hadn’t expected Gerald—of all people—to be able to withstand two strikes from Ferdinand!

Smiling rather smugly now, Gerald then sneered, “Come on, you have one final go! Let’s see if you can finally land a hit!”

Naturally, Ferdinand exploded in rage after hearing those humiliating words! However, he was no idiot. After missing two of his attacks, he was well aware that he wasn’t a match for Gerald.

Despite knowing that, his ego was much higher than his intelligence. He couldn’t just admit defeat like this! With that in mind, Ferdinand decided to use his full strength against Gerald!

Now laughing almost maniacally, Ferdinand’s expression darkened as he confidently scoffed, “Oh, don’t you worry! I’m definitely ending you with this move!”

Though he was being threatened, Gerald barely even flinched. After all, he now knew that Ferdinand was all talk. The fool was probably thinking that mere power was sufficient to take Gerald down!

Chapter 1677

Regardless, Ferdinand then stomped his foot so hard onto the platform that it left a circular dent within it! Following that, he used all that force to leap into the air like some ferocious tiger!

Despite facing that feral man, Gerald remained as cool as a cucumber as he slowly lifted his leg... before swinging it right into Ferdinand's stomach!

Instantly sent flying backward, Ferdinand landed quite a distance away with a loud 'thud'!

Upon witnessing that, everyone was momentarily stupefied. When they recovered, however, they quickly began murmuring among themselves in admiration.

"By god! That person's so powerful that he was actually able to defeat Ferdinand!"

Naturally, Gerald's victory instantly made him the most prominent person there.

Even Karsten was amazed by the turn of events. To think that Gerald would actually be able to take down someone who had entered the Second-soul-rank of the Sage Realm so easily!

Getting to his feet, Karsten then walked over to Gerald before saying, "Congratulations for passing the test! Due to your perfect performance, you'll be given access to the elite class of Leicom Academy!"

Hearing that, Gerald then nodded as he replied, "Thank you, Master Ykink!"

With that, the youth then got off the platform as everyone stared jealously at him... Though many envied him for all the attention he was getting, they knew for a fact that they would never even come close to being as strong as Gerald. After all, he had actually managed to take down Ferdinand!

Speaking of Ferdinand, though the testing period resumed immediately after, he was in no shape of testing any other candidates. After all, Gerald's kick had caused him to suffer a number of internal injuries.

Forced to recuperate, the furious Ferdinand vowed that he wouldn't let Gerald off that easily!

Regardless, the testing finally ended after an entire day...

By the end of it, Zelig was assigned to the beginner class while Cyril and Nori managed to make it into the intermediate class. Gerald himself was granted access into the elite class as mentioned before.

However, among the thousand over people who had attempted to enroll within the academy, Gerald was actually the only person who was qualified enough to enter the elite class! From that, it was evident how strict the Leicom Academy truly was...

There were only a few dozen students who had ever managed to enter Leicom's Academy's elite class, and each of them had at least entered the Fifth-soul-rank of the Sage Realm.

The dean of the academy himself had already attained the Seventh rank in the Avatar Realm. At that rank, he was already an individual who was not only capable of stepping into the void, but also transforming heaven and earth at will! That was the power of an Avatar...

As for the tutors and masters there, their strength ranged between the first to fifth ranks within the Avatar Realm. With how strong even the educators there were, it was no wonder why the Leicom Academy was the Leicom Continent's symbol of power...

It was sometime later when a few masters could be seen talking to the dean in the academy's main hall.

Shortly after, Master Ykink entered the scene. After bowing respectfully toward each of them, he then sat down before declaring, "Dean, and Masters! The recruitment test for this year has ended! The results are... Four hundred new students in the beginner class, two hundred in the intermediate one, and as for the elite class... We only have one new student!"

Hearing that, the four masters in the hall instantly looked surprised. They hadn't expected so few students to pass the test! What more, there was only a single person who had managed to enter the elite class!

Chapter 1678

"...Is there truly nobody else who was able to qualify entering the elite class? Only a single person was able to withstand three

moves...?” asked an old master seated at the side—who had a long purple robe on—who went by the name of Master Jizo.

With the strength of a person who had entered the Third rank of the Avatar Realm, Master Jizo was one of the masters teaching the elite class in the academy.

“While it’s unfortunate that that’s the case, the truth is, not only did that student manage to withstand three moves, but he even ended up defeating his opponent! With how strong he was, I have a feeling that he’s already entered the Fifth-soul-rank within the Sage Realm!” replied Karsten.

“What? He actually managed to defeat a representative of our academy?” exclaimed Master Jizo in surprise.

Even the other three masters found themselves exchanging glances with each other. To think that their newest elite class student would have such amazing power...

They were right to be surprised. After all, throughout the academy’s many years, Gerald was the first and only person who had managed to defeat a representative selected by the academy!

“What’s his name, Karsten?” asked Sumeru, the dean of the academy.

“Gerald Crawford, sir!”

“Very well! Bring him over so that we can meet him!” ordered Sumeru.

“Right away!” replied Master Ykink as he immediately left to bring Gerald over.

Not long after, he returned with Gerald, and upon bowing again, he then introduced, “Dean and Masters, I present to you, Gerald Crawford!”

Following that, he then turned to look at Gerald before adding, “That there, is Dean Sumeru, Gerald! The other four are the masters of the elite class! Here we have Master Jizo, Master Temple, Master Yushin, and Master Vale!”

After being introduced, Gerald then bowed before greeting, “It’s a pleasure to be within the presence of my dean and masters! I, Gerald Crawford, will be in your care starting today!”

Seeing how polite Gerald was, all five of them showed satisfied expressions on their faces.

With the introductions now over, Sumeru cut straight to the chase and asked, “So... I heard that you defeated our academy’s representative! Is that true?”

Nodding in response, Gerald then replied, “It is, Dean Sumeru!”

“Just so you’re aware, aside from you, there hasn’t been a candidate who’s been able to defeat a representative from our academy from the day the academy began! With that in mind, could you tell me what your true level of cultivation is?” asked Sumeru.

Appearing to hesitate for a brief moment, Gerald then replied, “...I’ve currently managed to enter the Fifth-soul-rank in the Sage Realm, Dean Sumeru!”

Naturally, that was a lie. The truth was, Gerald had already entered the Ninth-soul-rank in the Sage Realm. As for why the others hadn’t caught on, it was because Gerald had actively been concealing his true power.

“I see. No wonder you were able to defeat our representative! A Fifth-soul-rank Sage... You’re definitely a strong one, even among your future classmates in the elite class!” said Sumeru as he nodded in satisfaction.

“I’m flattered to hear that, dean!” replied Gerald with a smile.

“Nicely said! Now then, since you’re going to be a student in the elite class, you may now choose any of the four masters here to be your tutor!” said Sumeru.

Chapter 1679

Upon hearing that, Gerald turned to look at the four masters sitting before him... Seeing that, the masters straightened their backs, anticipating Gerald’s choice.

However, even after a while had passed, Gerald didn’t appear to have his choice made.

With all five of them getting increasingly confused, Sumeru eventually asked, “...Are you unable to make a choice, Gerald?”

Forcing on a slightly awkward smile, Gerald then replied, "...Dean Sumeru, am I only allowed to choose among these four masters...?"

"You...! Are you looking down on us, kid?!" shouted Master Jizo as he glared at Gerald, clearly irritated by Gerald's question.

Keeping his cool, Gerald then explained, "I'm afraid you misunderstand me, Master Jizo. I wouldn't dare look down upon any of you four masters! I'm just asking to see if there's a better choice for me!"

"Hmm? What better choice could you possibly be looking for?" asked Sumeru in a rather playful tone. This young man was rather special...

Hearing that, Gerald then asked, "...Well, I wonder if you'd be interested in taking a student, Dean Sumeru..."

"...Kid, if you haven't already noticed, Dean Sumeru is the head of the Leicom Academy! How imprudent do you have to be to request for that?!" snarled Master Jizo.

Watching as all this played out, Master Ykink—who was still standing by Gerald's side—found himself getting increasingly

terrified. To think that Gerald would be daring enough to say such things!

Sumeru was the dean of Leicom Academy! The highest-ranked individual of this prestigious place! There was no way he was going to accept a student just like that!

Surprisingly enough, Sumeru hardly appeared angered by Gerald's request. On the contrary, he was actually displaying a satisfied smile!

"While you're certainly a brazen one, you're the first to make such a direct request before me! Not bad!" replied Sumeru with a chuckle.

Realizing that Sumeru was actually subtly praising Gerald, the four masters found themselves momentarily stunned. After all, this was their first time seeing Sumeru so interested in a student.

"I've never taken a student before, you know? I guess that changes today! With that, I declare that you, Gerald, will be my one and only student!" declared Sumeru while looking straight into Gerald's eyes.

And just like that, all four masters found their eyes widening even more! To think that he would actually make an exception for Gerald! How unexpected!

“Thank you, Dean Sumeru! No, thank you, dear teacher!” replied Gerald with great respect.

Since he had decided to enroll in the Leicom Academy, Gerald was determined to be the top student. With that in mind, just having one of the four masters be his teacher wasn't enough. He had planned to have the dean be his master from the very beginning!

Now that it had been agreed upon, Gerald's status within the academy would surely skyrocket...

Chapter 1680

Following that, a golden wooden token flew out from Sumeru's pocket and hovered before Gerald's face...

“That there, is a wooden token exclusively for you. It serves as a symbol of your identity within the Leicom Academy. Also, since you're my only student, you'll have access to all the study resources

of the academy!” explained Sumeru as he officially granted those privileges to Gerald.

Being a student of the dean, Gerald could pretty much do whatever he wanted in the academy. It was truly a noble position to have...

Even so, Gerald naturally cared little about the fame aspect. He was honestly more excited about the fact that he could use the academy’s study resources anytime and any way he pleased. With that privilege, Gerald would surely be able to master more skills and secret techniques, hence allowing him to improve himself much faster.

With that said, Sumeru then ordered, “Karsten! Clean up the pavilion in the east court! From today onward, that will be Gerald’s private residence!”

“Right away, dean! I’ll be leading Gerald there immediately!” replied Karsten without even a second thought.

After Karsten led Gerald out of the main hall, the four masters turned to look at Sumeru, clearly unhappy with his decision.

“Why did you choose to accept Gerald as your student, dean...?” asked Master Jizo in a puzzled tone.

For context, never had any of the academy’s deans accepted personal students. With that in mind, the fact that the dean made an exception for Gerald was definitely mind boggling.

Chuckling in response, Sumeru then replied, “Couldn’t the rest of you tell? He isn’t in the Fifth-soul-rank of the Sage Realm at all! He’s been actively suppressing his true power!”

Upon hearing that, all four of the masters instantly grew curious.

“...If that’s the case, then... How strong is he actually?” asked Master Jizo.

“From what I’ve been able to tell, he should have already entered the Ninth-soul-rank of the Sage Realm! What more, he’s already showing signs of successfully breaching the Avatar Realm!” replied Sumeru, instantly shocking the four masters even more.

Even the most capable students in the Leicom Academy were only able to enter the Eighth-soul-rank of the Sage Realm. If what Sumeru

had said was true, then Gerald most certainly qualified to be the dean's student...

Now that he was aware of all this, Master Jizo's mood instantly changed for the better as he said, "...If that's really the case, then Gerald's already the most talented student of our academy ever since it started! There's just no contesting his strength!"

Still, what a pity it was that Gerald didn't choose him to be his master. If Gerald had chosen him instead of the dean, Master Jizo would've surely gained a higher status and more bragging rights within the academy...

Understanding what social value Gerald now held, Master Juzo decided that he had to form a good relationship with Gerald no matter what.

Sometime later, Gerald arrived at the pavilion in the east court under Master Ykink's guidance.

While the pavilion had previously been used as a storage room to keep miscellaneous items, Sumeru had ordered for it to be cleaned up to be turned into Gerald's personal residence. After all, as a student of the dean, there was no way he was allowing Gerald to

stay with the other students from the lower classes. That was simply too degrading to even think of!

Seeing how thick the dust was inside the pavilion, Gerald couldn't help but say, "I'm assuming the pavilion's been left vacant for quite a while, Master Ykink..."

Nodding in response, Master Ykink then replied, "Indeed! Also, you don't have to refer to me as master anymore. Since you're now the dean's student, you're no longer of low status!"

Hearing that, Gerald then chuckled before humbly saying, "You're exaggerating things, Master Ykink! While it's true that I'm now the dean's student, I'm essentially still a student here! With that in mind, I still have to respect you, a teacher of the academy!"

Chapter 1681

When Master Ykink heard him, a smile appeared on his face.

His impression toward Gerald was getting better and better now. After all, his status now was different as he was a student of the dean.

“Master Ykink, living here alone is a bit boring. Can I get a few people to live here with me? I have some friends studying in the academy as well!”

After thinking for a while, Gerald proposed to Karsten.

“Um... This...”

Master Ykink showed a doubtful face immediately.

Such a thing had never happened in the academy before, as Gerald’s identity was different from the rest.

Gerald took out a Heaven’s Apple from his storage ring immediately and gave it to Karsten.

“Master Ykink, this is a token of appreciation from me. Please help me with this!” Gerald pleaded with Karsten.

The moment Kasten saw Gerald taking out a Heaven's Apple, he was dumbfounded.

He never expected Gerald to have a holy fruit.

"A Heaven's Apple! Where... where did you get this?!" Karsten looked at Gerald in surprise and asked.

In the whole of Leicom Continent, there was only one place that grew Heaven's Apples. Naturally, Kasten Ykink would know about it. However, he was very surprised that Gerald actually had one.

"Oh, someone gave it to me!"

Gerald smiled slightly and explained briefly.

Nevertheless, Karsten could sense that Gerald was hiding something, but he did not want to question him any further.

Since Gerald was so sincere, he was very willing to help him with it. So, he quickly took the Heaven's Apple from Gerald and secured it in his pocket.

The Heaven's Apple was such a precious thing that not just anyone could get. Karsten would of course accept the gift.

"Just tell me, Gerald. Who are the few that you want to live here with you? I shall make the arrangements for you!"

After that, Karsten agreed right away.

Gerald leaned closer to Karsten and whispered three names into Karsten's ear.

"Alright, no problem. I'll make the arrangements now. But Gerald, please keep this between just the two of us. You shouldn't let the others know about this, or else the dean and the masters would blame me for it!"

Karsten did not forget to remind Gerald.

Gerald understood this well. He knew that this was not an honorable thing to do, but he didn't want to live alone in this place.

Besides, Zelig, Nori, and Cyril were his friends. When he had such a good thing, of course he should share it with them. Moreover, Gerald didn't want them to live here uncomfortably.

"Then, all is settled. Wait here first, and I will make arrangements for them to come and live here with you!"

Karsten instructed Gerald one last time before turning around and leaving.

Then, Gerald sat outside the pavilion and waited.

After ten minutes or so, he saw Karsten coming to the pavilion again with his three friends.

"Gerald!"

At the sight of Gerald, Nori couldn't help but shout. She ran and skipped forward happily.

“Gerald, I shall not disturb you all now. You can clean up on your own. Tell me if you need anything!” Karsten did not want to disturb them anymore, so he left after advising them.

Looking at how Karsten treated Gerald with such respect, Nori and the other two were shocked.

“Gerald, what have you done to make Master Ykink treat you with such respect? And why are you here? What did you call us here for?”

Chapter 1682

Nori asked Gerald three questions in succession.

Gerald’s lips curled upward, and he said to them, “From now on, this place will be our residence. I am now the student of the dean!”

Hearing this, the three were even more amazed.

“Brother Gerald, are you kidding with us again? Are you really the student of the dean?” Cyril asked, looking at Gerald suspiciously.

“Well, I know you won’t believe me right away. Here, let me show you something. This is the special wooden token the dean gave me. If you still don’t believe me, you can go and ask Master Ykink!”

As Gerald was talking, he fished out the special wooden token Sumeru had given to him from his pocket and showed it to them.

Now, Nori, Zelig, and Cyril finally believed him. No wonder Master Ykink was so respectful toward Gerald. Evidently, this was the reason behind it.

“Gerald, you’re so cool! You actually become the student of the dean, plus, you get to live in such a good place!” Nori praised Gerald and looked at him with admiration.

“Ha! Ha!”

Gerald chuckled.

“But now, you will all live here together with me. That way, I won’t be so lonely!”

Hearing Gerald’s words, Nori, Zelig, and Cyril were taken aback. They didn’t expect that Gerald would let them live here with him.

Soon, the four friends roughly cleaned up the place and went to the canteen for dinner.

In Leicom Academy, there was a place specially designed for them to have meals. It was the same as the one on earth, just that the only difference was that it was in another world.

The four friends went to the canteen and took their food. Then, they sat together to eat and chat.

“Get out of the way! It’s the elite class’s turn to have a meal. Get lost, all of you!”

Right then, a furious and cold voice was heard.

They were all students from the elite class. Just by taking a look at them, they already felt that these people were very arrogant and domineering.

The students there quickly left when they saw the students from the elite class. Nobody dared to offend them.

“Gerald, they don’t seem to be friendly. What should we do?” Nori looked at Gerald and asked.

The others might be scared of the elite class, but not Gerald. Gerald was a student of the dean, so his status was even higher than those students. Moreover, Gerald was strong, so why must he fear them?

“Just ignore them. Let’s continue eating!”

Gerald said calmly. Then, they continued to eat their meals.

Seeing that Gerald and his friends had remained in their seats, the few students from the elite class walked toward them and surrounded the four of them,

“Hey, you four. Didn’t you understand what we said? It’s the elite class’s turn for meals now. If you know who you are, get lost, then. Otherwise, don’t blame us for being unfriendly!”

A man with a buzzcut haircut glared at them and scolded them in a cold tone.

These elite students were roughly Three- or Four-soul-rank of Sage Realm. They were more or less strong.

Right after the man with the buzzcut haircut had finished talking, he was flung into the sky by a strong force.

The one who had struck him was none other than Gerald.

“Where did that wild dog come from? This is a shared eating place. This is not the territory of the elite class!”

Gerald squeezed out the words coldly.

Immediately, the other elite students around prepared to fight.

All at once, swords were drawn, and the smell of fire was very strong. A big battle could erupt at any time.

Chapter 1683

“Kid, you must be tired of living!” The man said furiously. As he said that, he slammed his fist toward Gerald.

Before he could touch Gerald, Gerald gave him a swift slap and sent him flying out. The man fell heavily on the table, splitting it into two halves.

“Stop!”

Right then, a serious voice was heard.

The master of the voice was Master Ykink.

He came in through the door and walked toward Gerald in quick steps.

Seeing the arrival of Master Ykink, everyone fell into silence and dared not act hastily. The few elite students even lowered their heads.

“Master Ykink!”

Everyone at the scene greeted him.

Karsten approached Gerald and asked with a serious face, “What’s going on? Who let you fight in the canteen?”

Although Gerald held a special status, he still had to act stern in front of other people.

“Master Ykink, it’s those elite students who started it. We were having our meals here, and they chased us out right after they came in, saying that it was the elite students’ turn to have their meal!”

Gerald stood still steadily and explained it to Master Ykink.

Upon hearing this, Master Ykink frowned even deeper. Then, he turned to the elite students and glared at them.

“The canteen is a shared place. Since when has it become your place for meals?” questioned Master Ykink.

The elite students did not dare to refute this. Although they were in the elite class, they did not dare to offend Master Ykink.

“We’re sorry, Master Ykink. We were wrong!”

The man with the buzzcut haircut got up and admitted his mistake cautiously.

However, his heart was burning with anger. He felt very embarrassed, and his heart was filled with hatred toward Gerald. He decided he absolutely had to find a chance to get his revenge.

“Let’s all disperse. No more next time!” Master Ykink admonished them sternly.

After that, the man with the buzzcut haircut quickly left the canteen with his gang.

After they had left, Master Ykink turned around and looked at Gerald.

“Gerald, you have to be careful with them. The boy with the buzzcut haircut is an elite student of Master Jizo. He’s called Landon Zukerberg. He’s a troublemaker in the academy who always bullies others. Also, he likes to play dirty tricks!” Master Ykink warned Gerald.

Gerald nodded and replied, “Don’t worry, Master Ykink. I, Gerald Crawford, do not fear such people. If they come to me, I’ll handle them!”

“Right. Gerald, there will be a contest soon. All of you better get ready!”

Before he left, Master Ykink reminded them again.

“Okay!”

Gerald nodded.

The four did not expect that they would have a contest so soon after just joining the academy.

Chapter 1684

However, this contest was not that simple.

The academy would hold this event every year after the enrollment of new students. This was also to test the students' true ability. It would be carried out in the form of a duel between students from the beginner to the elite classes.

Soon, two days had passed.

And today was the very day of the contest at Leicom Academy.

Everyone in the academy gathered in the square. The beginner class sat in the east corner, the intermediate in the west corner, and the elite class in the south corner.

As for Gerald, he sat beside Dean Sumeru.

Seeing Gerald sitting beside Sumeru, everyone was in shock. They were curious about what his status was so much so that he was receiving such good treatment.

“Fellow students, today is the annual martial arts contest of our academy after the enrollment of the new students. As always, the students from three different levels will join the contest and duel with each other!”

After that, Master Ykink came forward and explained the flow of the event to the students.

“Next, let me introduce you to one person. He’s the student of our dean, Gerald Crawford. He will join this contest as well. You will have the chance to duel with him later!” Master Ykink introduced Gerald to the other students.

The whole crowd was stirred up at once with all the people talking about the same thing.

Who would have thought that Gerald would become a student of the dean? As far as they knew, the dean had never taken a student under his guidance. And now, Gerald had become the first one. This made them wonder how strong Gerald was.

“Master Ykink, I have a question. If we beat him, does that mean that we will also become the dean’s student?”

Suddenly, a student from the elite class stood up and asked Master Ykink.

Master Ykink was stunned after hearing the question. He turned and looked at Dean Sumeru.

Sumeru pondered for a moment before standing up and saying, "Dear students, anyone who can defeat him will become my student!"

Upon his words, it once again caused a stir among the students down the stage. It was clearly a rare opportunity for all of them. Thinking of becoming the dean's students just by defeating Gerald, they were very much willing to do it.

However, it would not be that easy, as it was impossible for them to defeat Gerald.

"Great. Next, let's start with the first duel between a beginner student and an intermediate student. I shall invite the two classes to send out their respective students to the centre of the square!" Master Ykink said to the students immediately.

Having said that, a student from each of the classes walked to the centre of the square.

It was a battle between a beginner and an intermediate right in the first round. Although the contest might seem unfair, it wasn't. In truth, the distribution of the students of different strengths varied among the three levels, so there might be some strong and powerful characters in the beginner class.

Soon, the duel between the two students at the centre of the square started.

It was worth mentioning that the student from the intermediate class was quite satisfactory. Whether it was his attack skills or speed, he was more excellent than the beginner student.

Even so, the beginner student was not easy to deal with either, and he didn't get defeated too soon.

The two students fought for a few rounds before the intermediate student finally defeated the beginner student and won the battle.

Regardless, the beginner student's performance was considered quite good. It was just that there was still a small gap between his ability and his opponent's.

“Well, the victory of the first round goes to the intermediate student! Next, for the second round, let's welcome a beginner student and an elite student!”

With the first duel ended, Master Ykink announced the second match.

A beginner student actually had to fight against an elite student in the second round. It seemed to be too demanding.

Naturally, nobody from the beginner class dared to step forward.

Chapter 1685

“I will do it!”

Suddenly, a voice rang out from among the beginner students.

Gerald found the voice very familiar, so he looked in the direction of the voice immediately.

It turned out to be Zelig.

Gerald didn't expect that Zelig would dare to come forward, knowing that this match was between a beginner and an elite, whose level of strengths would be apparently wide.

"What's your name?" Master Ykink looked at Zelig and asked.

"Zelig Lear!" He blurted out his name.

Then, a student from the elite side came out. He was none other than Lev Bayfield, who had recently joined the elite class.

Lev Bayfield and Zelig Lear were both from Jaellatra, but Lev was slightly stronger than Zelig.

Zelig was currently in the Rune Realm, whereas Lev had already broken into the Sage Realm. Hence, there was a big gap between them in terms of power.

Lev's lips curled upward into a wry smile, thinking that he had finally gotten the chance to torture Zelig.

Although they were both people from Jaellatra, the Lear family was more influential than the Bayfield family. This was also another reason Lev looked down upon Zelig, as he felt that it was absurd for the young master of the Lear family to be so weak.

"Yo, Young Master Lear, we finally meet again. But be careful, don't blame me for showing no mercy!"

Lev walked forward and stood in front of Zelig as he spoke, looking at him with a grim smile.

Zelig ignored what Lev said. He knew what Lev was thinking in his mind. He must have seen him, so he had deliberately stepped forward to fight with him. He had to be planning to humiliate him since he had gotten the chance.

Even though Zelig knew his ability was weaker, he would not retreat nor feel scared. He would resist Lev's attacks with all his might.

"Get ready, the match is about to start!"

Master Ykink cued Zelig and Lev.

Zelig and Lev got back to their respective sides, forming a ten-meter distance between them so that both of them would have a chance to react.

Meanwhile, Gerald was looking at them from above. He couldn't help but start worrying.

Gerald was aware of Zelig's strength. This match would most probably end with Zelig's defeat since Lev was a strong opponent in the Sage Realm.

However, Gerald could not intervene and stop it since this was the rule of the contest.

So, Gerald could only hope that Zelig would be able to withstand the attacks and not lose too terribly.

“And it starts now!”

After that, the second match started officially with Master Ykink's announcement.

Lev leaped forward immediately, heading toward Zelig at top speed.

Lev was in front of Zelig in the blink of an eye, drawing out his sword and stabbing it at Zelig.

The speed of a Sage was, of course, faster than a Chakra King.

But luckily, Zelig had been highly alert since just now. He took a few steps backward immediately and dodged Lev's first attack.

"Huh. It looks like your reaction is fast enough!"

Lev smirked and smiled disdainfully as he mocked Zelig.

Having said that, Lev leaped into the sky and rotated his body one hundred and eighty degrees. Then, swinging the sword in his hand so fast that it formed a flower-like shadow, he attacked Zelig.

Chapter 1686

Zelig immediately shone his sword to shield himself.

“Cascading petals!” Lev yelled.

This was the name of Lev’s move, and the sword’s shadows cascaded everywhere from the sky like flower petals, rendering Zelig unable to determine which one was the real sword.

After a few seconds, Zelig’s shirt was already torn and ripped up with marks from the sword everywhere, and he seemed to be extremely battered and confused.

At this moment, it was already known who had won and lost—it was obvious that Lev had won this round.

“Alright, both of you can stop now. We already have a winner!”

Master Ykink instantly yelled and announced the result of the battle.

“Lev Bayfield from the elite class won the second round!”

Although Zelig was unsettled and unwilling to admit defeat, his ability was indeed not as good as Lev’s, so he could only accept the result.

“Hmph. Zelig Lear, I’m telling you, you’re going to lose to me forever, so, from now on, you’d better scram whenever you see me around the academy. Otherwise, I’ll beat you up every time I see you!”

Lev warned Zelig coldly as he pointed his finger at him before everyone else at the scene.

His words caused a surge amongst the crowd again. Who would have expected that Lev would be so reckless to announce such ruthless words in front of everyone, not to mention the headmaster and great masters were there as well.

However, these were all normal happenings. Dean Sumeru and the other great masters wouldn’t care that much as the competition was really strong here. After all, students from the elite class indeed had higher statuses than those from the beginner class.

Still, Gerald didn’t think the same way as them. He felt that Lev was too arrogant and ruthless for his own good, and this made Gerald a bit enraged.

Zelig was his friend, and Lev was obviously insulting his friend. Naturally, this made Gerald feel unsettled, and he decided to avenge Zelig’s dignity and justice.

“Okay, for the third round, it will be the elite class versus the dean’s selected student—Gerald Crawford. I would like the elite class to select someone among yourselves to fight, and for Gerald to wait patiently in the center of the square!”

The battle was continued with master Karsten’s announcement of the third battle.

Gerald knew his chance was here, and he stood up instantly, leaping right toward the center of the square swiftly, becoming the center of everyone’s attention.

Everyone wanted to see how incredible Gerald’s ability was.

Now, the students in the elite class were all chattering and having a commotion. A lot of them wanted to fight against Gerald as they were all tempted by the reward.

“Dean and fellow grand masters, I have a request!”

At that moment, Gerald yelled as he stared right at the headmaster and the four grand masters.

“Gerald, please let us know!”

Dean Sumeru asked instantly.

“Can I choose someone from the elite class for the battle!” Gerald made a request.

His words immediately made students from the elite class unsatisfied, and they felt as though Gerald was too arrogant. This simply meant that he didn’t really value any of their abilities at all.

“Okay, then. Tell me, who do you wish to choose?”

After all, he was still the dean’s own selected student, so of course he would treat him slightly more special. He then swiftly asked Gerald.

“Him! Lev Bayfield! He’s the one I wish to choose!”

Right after Sumeru’s sentence had ended, Gerald immediately announced a name as he pointed right at Lev, who had just sat down.

Right at that instant, everyone's eyes were on Lev. None of them had expected that Gerald would actually choose Lev as his opponent, and this made them astounded.

Lev, on the other hand, was excited and felt as if his chance was finally here. After all, if he beat Gerald, he would be the dean's selected student himself.

Chapter 1687

Under everyone's gaze, Lev stood up slowly.

Lev walked right toward Gerald in front of everyone.

"Who would have thought that you would choose me. Looks like the position as the dean's selected student will be mine for sure!"

Lev ridiculed Gerald with utmost confidence.

They hadn't even started the battle, and Lev was already acting so arrogantly.

Gerald, on the other hand, wasn't really bothered by it. In his eyes, Lev was just a buffoon, so he didn't really have to care about his arrogance.

The strong ones always held a low profile instead of showing off in a high-key way. If not, that would be stupid, and that referred to none other than Lev himself.

"Both sides, please get ready!"

Master Ykink spoke up and signalled at Gerald and Lev.

Hearing Master Ykink's instructions, Lev immediately entered a fighting stance, waiting to attack anytime. Once the start was announced, he would immediately attack Gerald.

Gerald was as calm and composed as he had ever been with his eyes closed while standing at the same place, without even a slight change in his expression.

Seeing Gerald's action, everyone around them wondered whether this meant that it was a sign that Gerald was surrendering?

“The battle starts now!”

After a few seconds, Master Ykink announced.

As soon as those words fell, Lev took action instantly as he shoved his sword out and jetted right toward Gerald.

Gerald, on the other hand, was still standing at the same place calmly without moving at all. It was almost as if he was waiting for Lev to stab him.

Just as everyone thought that Gerald was going to lose for sure, Gerald opened his eyes suddenly and extended two fingers as he held Lev’s sword in between them almost instantly.

The sharp head of the sword was just a few millimetres from Gerald’s eyes! What a move right at that juncture!

“What?!”

Lev was extremely astounded.

He wanted to take back his sword but suddenly realized that he couldn't take it back at all. It was as though the sword was frozen in mid-air.

Immediately after, Gerald bent and snapped Lev's sword with his fingers.

Without waiting for Lev to react, Gerald smacked Lev's chest with his other palm.

Lev flew backward immediately in an arc across the sky before crashing onto the ground, blood leaking from his lips.

Gerald didn't intend to take Lev's life with his palm. After all, this was a battle test and it should be light, not life-and-death in any way. Therefore, Gerald held back, otherwise, Lev would be an ice-cold corpse by now.

"Gerald has won!"

Master Ykink announced loudly.

Right at this moment, Dean Suneru had a satisfied smile on his face as he started clapping.

Seeing how the dean was clapping his hands, the four grand masters and other students started to clap as well. Instantly, thunderous applause could be heard from the scene.

Gerald had won without a teeny hint of suspense.

Now, everyone knew that Gerald truly had strong abilities, and it was not just a rumor. He was indeed worthy enough to be the dean's selected student.

"I'm not satisfied. I want to compete against him!"

Right at that moment, a deep voice was heard from the elite class.

"It's Master Ray!"

"Master Ray is going to fight, looks like there'll be a good battle to watch!"

“Yeah! Master Ray is incredible, of course he won’t accept this willingly!”

Chapter 1688

After discovering the owner of the voice, an uproar appeared amongst the crowd again.

The man who was being discussed by everyone was Ray Leighton, the best student in the elite class. His ability had reached the Seventh-soul-rank in the Sage Realm.

Ray got up and walked out of the circle coldly toward the center of the square to stand before Gerald, and he pointed at Gerald icily as he said, “I, Ray Leighton, want to challenge you. If you win, I will willingly listen and follow you. If I win, you have to scam from this position of yours and be my underling!”

Ray’s words were extremely arrogant with a dominant vibe.

After listening to him, Gerald wasn’t angry at all. On the contrary, he thought that Ray was very interesting.

Someone like Ray was direct and straightforward, and he would express his dissatisfaction outright instead of doing something dirty behind one's back. This deserved other's respect.

“Okay, I accept!”

Gerald didn't reject him and accepted it immediately.

Without waiting for Master Ykink to announce the start of the battle, Ray charged right toward Gerald like a ferocious tiger with a crushing force like a tornado.

Ray had a buffy physique and muscular body, and he crashed his fist right toward Gerald heavily.

Ray, who had reached the Seventh-soul-rank in the Sage Realm, already had strong power. If one really got hit by his fist, his bones would be crushed into pieces for sure.

However, Gerald liked fighting against opponents like this. This was because he could test his body's strength at the same time.

The next moment, Gerald thrust his fist out as well.

Gerald matched his fist with Ray.

Right in that instant, the sand around the square flew everywhere, and heatwaves were created, surrounding the two in between.

The ground beneath both of them was already cracked and collapsed, numerous rocks flying up into the air. It could be already be seen how powerful the aftereffect of them clashing against each other was.

After that, dust and the sand dissipated.

Everyone saw Gerald and Ray both standing in the same spot, but Ray seemed to be a bit sick.

If they were nearer, it could be seen how Ray's purlicue was already torn with blood streaming out of the wound endlessly, dripping onto the cracked ground.

With just one move, the winner and loser could already be determined.

The two stood still for a few seconds facing each other before Ray finally retracted his fist slowly.

“I’ve lost!”

His words made everyone turn silent.

Everyone was still in surprise and disbelief.

Ray had actually surrendered?!

This result wasn’t something that could be expected by anyone. One should know that Ray was the strongest man in Leicom Academy, and now, he had actually lost to Gerald, which he had admitted himself willingly. What astonishing news!

“You’re really powerful! You have my respect!”

Ray smiled and told Gerald.

“You’re not bad yourself. I hope we can be friends!”

Gerald smiled back politely as he replied to Ray, stretching out his hand.

“Of course. It would be my honor to be friends with you!” Ray stretched his hand out for a handshake with Gerald without thinking twice.

At that moment, the two were like the strong ones sympathizing with each other. The truly strong ones were always respected by everyone.

Gerald felt that Ray would be a worthy friend. There were not many people as magnanimous as Ray anymore.

Chapter 1689

“Okay, that’s the end of our battle test today. Tomorrow will be the practice test in Heaven Tower, I hope everyone can get a good rest tonight!”

After the end of the day, the sky had begun to turn dark by the time Master Ykink made this announcement.

Then, everyone left the scene.

Heaven Tower was the most powerful challenge in Leicom Academy, and there were twenty levels.

Up until now, no one had been able to reach the top successfully. Even Dean Sumeru had been halted at the eighteenth level while the four grand masters had stopped at the seventeenth.

Every floor had different challenges for different people, so no one knew exactly what kind of challenge would be given by Heaven Tower. Hence, no one knew how to even cheat.

That night, Gerald was called to Sumeru's bedroom.

“Dean, you wanted to see me?”

Gerald entered the room respectfully as he asked Sumeru, who was meditating on the meditation deck.

Sumeru opened his eyes slowly and looked at Gerald with a smile on his face.

“Gerald, you did well this afternoon. I’m very satisfied as your teacher, but are you prepared for the challenge tomorrow at Heaven Tower?”

After praising Gerald, the dean asked Gerald with concern.

“Dean, I’ve listened to Master Ykink introduce Heaven Tower in a simple way, but I’m curious, what kind of challenges are there inside? Please teach me about this, teacher!”

Gerald instantly asked Dean Sumeru curiously.

“Hoho!” Sumeru chuckled lightly.

“Heaven Tower was created by the ancient god of Astral Traveler in Leicom Academy. After the god of Astral Traveler stepped into the human world, Heaven Tower became the most symbolic feature of the Leicom Academy. Every scholar who enters Leicom Academy has to pass the challenge of Heaven Tower. Only then can they be deemed as students of Leicom Academy!”

“About the challenges inside, I can’t tell you anything. Heaven Tower is fascinating, and the challenges it offers vary from person to person. You’ll only know when you go inside yourself!”

Sumeru didn't answer Gerald's question and instead told him the general information about Heaven Tower.

"Dean, I heard from Master Ykink that you stopped at the eighteenth floor, right?"

Gerald asked Sumeru carefully.

"That's right. It gets harder as you proceed further up Heaven Tower. It was tens of years ago when I reached the eighteenth level. From then onward, I never went into Heaven Tower anymore!"
Dean Sumeru nodded and answered.

Sumeru's words made Gerald more and more curious as he told himself that he would surpass the old in the future as a new generation.

Now that even Sumeru could only stop at the eighteenth level of Heaven Tower, he himself had to surpass Sumeru and reach the top of Heaven Tower to prove himself.

If the older generation couldn't make it, it didn't necessarily mean that the new generation couldn't do it as well. After all, times were always changing.

Subsequently, Sumeru took out a sachet from his sleeve and passed it to Gerald.

"Dean, what's this?"

Gerald asked curiously.

"This is a sachet I got from Heaven Tower back then, but I have never opened it before. Now, I want to give this to you. Maybe this can help you when you enter Heaven Tower, but you can only open and use it at the most critical and urgent moment. You must remember my words!" Sumeru reminded Gerald seriously.

"Yes. I'll keep that in mind, Dean!"

Gerald nodded automatically and promised him.

After their chat, Gerald left Sumeru's room.

After Gerald had left the room for a while, Sumeru waved his arm, and a starry sky map appeared right in front of his eyes instantly.

The starlight shone brightly on the map, but one couldn't see anything beneath those starlights.

“Messy starry map and diminishing starlight—looks like the catastrophe of Leicom Continent is bound to arrive soon!”

Sighing after throwing a last look at the map, Sumeru's expression turned complicated and sad.

But right at that moment, a bright white starlight appeared out of the blue in the starry map, shining brightly and eye-catchingly.

Chapter 1690

“Could it be that Gerald will be the saint who will save our Leicom Continent?!”

Upon seeing the starlight, Sumeru couldn't help but become astonished.

Not long after, Gerald returned to the South Pavilion.

“Brother Gerald!”

Just as he reached the door, a familiar voice was heard from behind him.

The owner of that voice was none other than Ray Leighton, the man who had fought him this afternoon.

“Brother Ray, anything you need at this late hour?”

When he saw that it was Ray, Gerald became puzzled as he asked, not expecting Ray to come to find him.

“Hoho! Brother Gerald, I’m here to have a casual chat. Would you like to have a drink?”

Ray chuckled lightly as he shook the beer bottle in his hand.

Gerald smiled understandingly and nodded. “Sure. Come in, then!”

After that, Gerald led Ray inside the pavilion.

When they entered the pavilion, Nori and the two others were sitting inside.

“Gerald, you’re back!”

Seeing Gerald arrive, Nori stood up and greeted him.

“Hmm? Isn’t this Senior Ray?”

When they saw Ray, they all became surprised.

“Good day to you all!”

Ray greeted Nori and the two politely.

Then, the few people sat down as they drank and chatted.

Beer was, after all, something to bond people together and make friends without much effort. Gerald and the three were soon good friends with Ray, and the five were happy to meet each other as they talked while laughing, making it seem as if they had known each other for a long time already.

It was only until late at night before they finally fell asleep in the pavilion.

The next morning, with a ray of sunshine shining into the pavilion, Gerald and the four woke up.

Today was the day of Heaven Tower's practice test, and all newbies of Leicom Academy had to participate in the practice test.

Of course, Gerald was the one to bear the brunt.

As the dean's selected student, of course Gerald had to be the one kickstarting this.

At 9.15 am, all the trainees had gathered below Heaven Tower.

Heaven Tower stood tall amongst the clouds, striking and elegant.

“Today is the day where the new trainees will enter Heaven Tower for the practice test. Every newbie has to enter and accept the training. Regardless of the result, only those who accepted the training of Heaven Tower will be worthy enough to be students of our Leicom Academy!”

Master Ykink walked out and announced to the crowd beneath.

“The dean’s selected student, Gerald Crawford, will be the first to enter Heaven Tower for the practice training!”

After receiving the instruction, Gerald stood up and walked toward the door of Heaven Tower to wait.

At that instant, the door of Heaven Tower opened, followed by a loud noise, the pitch-black environment inside displayed to everyone. No one could see what it looked like inside.

Gerald didn’t say another word as he took a step to enter Heaven Tower.

Following Gerald’s entrance, the tower door was shut instantly.

Chapter 1691

As the tower's doors were lowered, Gerald couldn't help but look around, attempting to gather his bearings. However, the pitch darkness made it impossible to see a thing...

Just as Gerald was wondering what to do next, a beam of light suddenly appeared from the tower! With how increasingly bright it was getting, the light's radiance was reminiscent of a raging bonfire...

Regardless, it wasn't long after before a man donning white clothes walked out from the light...

Seeing that, Gerald was prompted to ask, "...And you are?"

"I am the god of Astral Traveler in the Leicom Continent, and the form that you're currently seeing is the final primordial spirit that I've left behind in the Heaven Tower. I was summoned by your arrival!" explained the primordial spirit as it stared at Gerald.

“You’re the god of Astral Traveler? And what do you mean my arrival summoned you?” replied Gerald, stunned by the sudden turn of events. For one, he definitely hadn’t expected the person before him to be the legendary ancient god of Astral Traveler...

Chuckling when he heard that, the god of Astral Traveler simply extended his hand... before snapping his fingers.

And just like that, Gerald was greeted by the sight of countless stars! While it was most probably just a manifested illusion, it truly felt like he was currently standing in the middle of space...

Apparently not done yet, the god of Astral Traveler then waved his hand... Revealing another scene to Gerald. A greatly unsettling one...

The continent was in ruins, complete shambles! With countless bones scattered across the lands and the sky layered with a blanket of dark clouds, Gerald felt a shiver run down his spine just from looking at all that...

‘What the hell happened here...?’ Gerald thought to himself.

Now curious out of his mind, Gerald was prompted to ask, “What... on earth happened here, god of Astral Traveler...?”

The second his question ended, an ethereal ‘whir’ could be heard, prompting Gerald to look at the source of the sound... and projected there, was the number, ‘three hundred’.

Raising a slight brow, Gerald began wondering, “Three hundred? What does that signify? Is it a secret code of some sort...?”

After a slight pause, the god of Astral Traveler then replied, “...This... is the fate of the world in exactly three hundred days...”

Upon hearing that, Gerald was rightfully shocked. Eyes widened and filled with incredulity, Gerald then asked, “...What? The world’s falling into complete ruin by then?”

“Indeed. On the three hundredth day, Masrus, the demonic god will be revived... Following that, he’ll surely take over the entire world! If he’s allowed to do that, then not only will the Leicom Continent fall under his rule, but Jaellatra and the other continents will share that fate as well!” explained the god of Astral Traveler in a solemn tone.

Though Gerald felt that the claim was somewhat reminiscent of some legendary fairy tale, he knew that the god of Astral Traveler—of all people—wouldn't lie to him. With that in mind, that meant that the world's fate was truly looking grim...

"...I see. God of Astral Traveler, I'm assuming you're showing me all this for a reason. Could it be that I'm capable of preventing all this suffering?" asked Gerald.

After all, the God of Astral Tower surely wouldn't have shown him all this without a proper reason. Could he be some prophesied savior for the new generation...?

"Your assumption is correct. Only you have the power to go against Masrus, and should you succeed, you'll surely become the savior of the world!" replied the god of Astra Traveler as he gave Gerald a determined look.

Utterly shocked by this sudden revelation, Gerald could only think, '...But... Why was I chosen to be the savior out of the blue...?'

Chapter 1692

He simply found it weird how the world's fate suddenly concerned him.

"...Alright, but... Why me?" asked Gerald.

"It's because there exists an ancient will hidden within your body. If you manage to properly develop that will, then you'll surely be able to resist Masrus! With that in mind, you truly are the world's final hope!" explained the god of Astral Traveler in a patient tone.

Seeing the relevance of his words, Gerald then replied, "...And how do I develop that will?"

Hearing that, the god of Astral Traveler then cupped his hands together, causing a scroll of sorts to materialize there shortly after...

After being handed the scroll, Gerald noticed that there was a slot of sorts on it. It was quite apparent that something needed to be fitted inside it to open the scroll...

"That there is the Scroll of Stars... In order to unlock its secrets, you'll first have to obtain an item known as the Scintillating Gem. While you'll be able to begin developing the will in your body after you open the scroll, know that nobody's ever been able to obtain or

even locate the gem from the day it came into existence!” explained the god of Astral Traveler as he looked at Gerald with a serious gaze.

Upon hearing that, Gerald couldn't help but look at the scroll for a little longer before storing it within his storage ring.

With that done, Gerald then turned to face the god of Astral Traveler before asking, “...Well, that aside, what exactly is the trial of the Heaven Tower?”

‘I came to participate in a trial, no? Who do I now feel like I'm here to receive a mission instead?’ Gerald thought to himself.

“I established the trials of Heaven Tower only as a front. My goal had always been to await the arrival of the destined individual, and you've finally come today. With that in mind, you naturally don't have to go through the trial. After all, all the trials here are useless for you. Time is of the essence, so I'll be sending you to the top of the tower immediately!” replied the god of Astral Traveler.

Hearing that, Gerald could only raise a slight brow as he bounded up the tower with extreme speed...

Seconds later, someone from the outside could suddenly be heard shouting, “...H-hey! Look up there! The top of the tower is shining!”

Realizing that what the person had said was true, Sumeru and the four great masters instantly expressed great shock. After all, the light—that everyone was now seeing—would only begin shining when someone managed to reach the top of the tower... With that in mind, Gerald must have been able to achieve that! How unexpected!

Ever since the trials were established hundreds of years ago, nobody had been able to fully scale the tower... Until today.

Moving back to Gerald, upon arriving at the top of the tower, Gerald was greeted by the sight of a sword that was emitting a white light.

Walking closer to the sword, Gerald watched as it instantly began quivering in place. In a sense, it almost seemed like it was behaving that way due to some telepathic link it had with Gerald...

Before he could get too close, the god of Astral Traveler appeared before Gerald again before saying, “That there is the Astrabyss Sword, and it’ll function as your special weapon from today onward. Beside it, is a book that contains all the skills you can perform with

the sword. I hope you'll use it wisely and master all the Astrabyss's skills. If you do, you'll definitely get much stronger!"

That was needless to say, of course, so Gerald simply nodded before continuing to walk toward the sword.

Now before the sword, Gerald heard as the god of Astral Traveler shouted, "Outstretch your hand and pull it out!"

Momentarily stunned by how commanding the god of Astral Traveler suddenly was, Gerald quickly shook out of it before firmly grasping the sword's hilt... Only to instantly feel a slight pain on his palm!

Unbeknownst to Gerald, the sword had caused a tiny cut to form on his palm, resulting in a single drop of his blood coming into contact with the sword's hilt...

The second that happened, the Astrabyss Sword immediately emitted an ethereal ring...

Releasing the hilt and taking a step back, Gerald then watched as the sword quickly began flailing wildly!

It only took the Astrabyss a few seconds to break from its restraints, and the second it was freed, it instantly flew into Gerald's hand!

Instinctively holding onto the sword's hilt tightly, Gerald immediately began feeling a strong force surging into his elixir-of-life field from his palm... This feeling...

He was about to make a breakthrough!

Chapter 1693

Feeling the immense power continue surging into his elixir-of-life field, Gerald quickly sat on the floor and began meditating. With his eyes now closed, Gerald actively attempted to tame the immense power in his body...

To his dismay, he wasn't able to do it!

Momentarily feeling anxious, an idea suddenly came to Gerald as he thought, 'Wait, don't I have plenty of Heaven's apples?'

Quickly retrieving one from his storage ring, Gerald then bit into it.

The second he did, his entire body instantly felt cool and refreshed! As for the surging power from earlier, it was no longer pulsing wildly through him...

In other words, Gerald had successfully breached the Ninth-soul-rank of the Sage Realm! He was now finally at the first rank of the Avatar Realm!

With his body now brimming with power, Gerald could tell that he was much, much stronger than before.

“Congratulations for breaching into the Avatar Realm, Gerald. You now possess the power to enter God Transformation mode, a state where you momentarily grow inhumanly strong! Even so, you’ll only be able to use it when facing extreme situations. Consider it as a last resort to remain alive!” explained the god of Astral Traveler.

As the god of Astral Traveler had said, God Transformation was a skill that those from the Avatar Realm could use to defend themselves near death. A textbook example of how useful this ability was, was by using God Transformation to suddenly gain a massive boost in strength to hopefully turn the tables during a losing battle.

Of course, there were pros and cons to everything.

While the power of God Transformation was certainly nothing to scoff at, the user would go feeble for a rather long time after using it. With that in mind, it was wise to only use the tactic as a final resort.

“I appreciate the advice, god of Astral Traveler. Regardless, I definitely won’t disappoint you!” replied Gerald in a gratuitous tone as he bowed.

Seemingly satisfied with Gerald’s response as he laughed, the god of Astral Traveler then said, “Remember, you’re the world’s only hope! Use the next three hundred days wisely!”

Before Gerald could even reply, the god of Astral Traveler’s primordial spirit instantly disappeared. Now that its final mission had been fulfilled, the god of Astral Traveler could finally rest in peace...

And just like that, the burden of the world had been placed on Gerald’s shoulders, and he was the only one who knew about it...

Shortly after, the Heaven Tower’s entrance was reopened, and everyone watched as Gerald slowly made his way out...

By this point, his aura was immensely pressuring, and many from within the crowd had to shield their eyes from the waves of dust that repelled themselves from Gerald!

Sumeru himself—who was seated at the seat of honor—could only reveal a satisfied smile when he saw that. Gerald had definitely succeeded...

When noon came, Gerald could be seen standing in the middle of Leicom Academy's large hall. Naturally, Sumeru was once again seated at the seat of honor while the four major great masters sat at the side.

Beaming subtly as he looked at Gerald, Sumeru declared, "Congratulations for being the first person to ever fully scale Heaven Tower! With that in mind, I'm sure you now know why all the trials were held there in the first place."

"I do, Master, and four great masters! This is about the event that will be taking place in three hundred days, correct?" replied Gerald as he slowly looked at all five of them.

Chapter 1694

Hearing that, the four masters then turned to look at Sumeru as the dean nodded in response.

“So, you truly do know everything now... I suppose that means that you really are the destined person! With that in mind, are you ready to hold that responsibility, Gerald?” asked Sumeru as he stared closely at Gerald.

“I am! After some thought, I feel that locating the Scintillating Gem should be prioritized!” replied Gerald in a resolute tone.

He was placing priority on the gem since with it, he would be able to open the Scroll of Stars. Following that, Gerald would hopefully be able to quickly develop the hidden will in his body in order to stand a chance against Masrus when the demonic god appeared three hundred days later.

“While you’re free to do things in whichever order you please, please remember that the clock is constantly ticking. If you can’t locate the gem by the time the three hundred days are up, the only thing that awaits our world is ruin!” replied Sumeru without mincing any words.

“I understand, master! Also, in order to hasten the search, I’m thinking of banding together a small team! What do you think of that, master?” asked Gerald.

Gerald, for one, felt that doing things on his own again would surely make him feel lonely. With that in mind, Gerald was planning to bring Nori and the four others along in search of the Scintillating Gem.

“I see no issue with that. Go on ahead and select the members you see fit to be part of your team!” replied Sumeru.

Hearing that, Gerald then bade farewell to Sumeru and the four great masters before leaving the large hall to begin making his preparations.

Once they were sure that Gerald had left, Jizo couldn’t help but look rather worriedly at Sumeru as he asked, “...Do you really think he’ll be able to do it, dean?”

With the fate of the world on his shoulders, Gerald was most probably feeling immense pressure at the moment...

“...We simply have to believe in him and give him all the support he needs. Otherwise, the world will surely end in ruin!” replied Sumeru in a firm tone without giving Jizo a direct answer. Even so, what he meant was clear as day.

With that, all four of the major great masters nodded in understanding, prompting no further questions to be asked...

Sometime later, Gerald returned to the South pavilion. Upon entering, he saw that Nori and the other three were resting inside while chatting among themselves.

Upon realizing that Gerald had returned, the four of them immediately smiled at him before praising, “You’re just way too powerful, Gerald! To think that you’d actually be able to get to the very top of the tower! Because of that feat, you’re now immensely famous within the academy, and many are now looking up to you!”

Despite hearing that, Gerald really couldn’t be bothered about such trivial fame. After all, there were much more important affairs to deal with at the moment.

Shaking his head, Gerald then stood before the four people and straightened his back before saying, “Alright, putting all that aside... Please listen carefully to what I’m about to say next. I’ll be leaving

the academy as soon as possible to start locating an item called the Scintillating Gem. With that in mind, I was wondering if all of you would be willing to come with me and help look for the gem. Don't worry, I've already gained the dean and the four major great masters' permission. What do you say?"

Hearing that, Nori and the others were momentarily stunned. After all, it was a lot to take in.

After a short while, Zelig snapped out of it before asking in a slightly puzzled tone, "The... Scintillating Gem? What exactly is that...? And why do we need to leave the academy all of a sudden to look for it?"

"I'm afraid I can't share the details with you just yet. However, I'll definitely do so one day. Regardless, my question remains. Are you willing to join me in my search? Do note that we may be facing a lot of troubles and dangers throughout the journey, so if you're reluctant, I understand and I won't try to force you to come along. I'm completely fine with going alone!" replied Gerald as he retained his serious gaze.

With how serious this affair was, Gerald wasn't even planning to make a joke to lighten up the mood.

Seeing that Gerald meant business, Nori and the others found themselves momentarily exchanging glances with each other...

Chapter 1695

“...I’m willing to join your team, Gerald! I’ll follow you wherever you go!” declared Nori after a brief moment’s thought.

“Count me in as well, Mr. Crawford!”

“We’re all willing to be part of this!”

Seeing that Nori had taken her stand, Zelig, Cyril, and Ray felt the urge to do the same.

Upon hearing their enthusiastic replies, Gerald couldn’t help but feel touched.

In all honesty, he had already factored in the chance that none of them would go with him. After all, the four people weren’t even long-time acquaintances of his. With that in mind, Gerald knew that it was already asking a lot for them to risk their lives just to help him.

Now that all of them were agreeing without so much as a second thought, however, it showed Gerald that they truly saw him as a friend. In fact, it also displayed how much they trusted in him.

“...Thank you... All of you. While I’d like to have a sentimental moment, there simply isn’t any time to waste. With that said, do hurry and start packing up! We leave in two hours!” declared Gerald.

Since time was of the essence, the faster they packed up their essentials and headed out, the sooner they could hopefully locate the Scintillating Gem.

While three hundred days may have sounded a lot, Gerald was well aware that the days they would spend searching for the gem would come and go extremely quickly. It certainly didn’t help that he didn’t even have any clues as to where the gem could be. With that in mind, the faster they acted, the higher the chances of them actually succeeding in finding the gem in time...

Regardless, after hearing Gerald’s order, all four of them hurried off to do as they were told.

Thankfully, exactly two hours later, all four of them regrouped with Gerald, fully prepared.

Following that, the five people made sure to bid goodbye to Sumeru and the four major great masters before finally leaving the Leicom Academy.

Immediately after leaving the academy, Gerald and the others made sure to stock up on food and drinks. Not knowing how long their journey was going to take, the more preparations they made, the better.

Once they got everything relevant that they could think of, their hunt for the gem officially began.

“...Speaking of which, where are we headed to first...?” asked Nori.

Since Gerald hadn't even told them where to begin looking, the four of them were feeling rightfully curious.

Upon hearing that, Gerald opened up the map and began inspecting it. It took him a while, but he eventually pointed at an area on the map before declaring, “We're going to start looking here! The South Wastelands!”

The South Wastelands was a desolate area located south of the Leicom Continent. Literally nobody inhabited that place, and few dared to venture there...

However, since Gerald had made his choice, Nori and the others simply agreed. With the location settled, all five of them immediately set off for the South Wastelands...

It took them half a day, but they eventually arrived at the border of the South Wastelands by evening.

Upon leaving the Leicom Continent, the five found that the place was as desolate as the rumors had claimed. No buildings and not even a single soul... The fact that evening was quickly turning to night definitely amplified the creepiness of the area.

Even so, the five simply continued walking on. After all, Gerald wasn't afraid of such things.

After walking for a while within the South Wastelands, the group came across a loess wall and decided that it was high time for them to take a temporary rest.

By that point, it was completely dark... A little too dark...

Raising a brow, Nori turned to look at the moon in the sky... Only to have a jaw drop.

“...H-hey! Look at the moon! Its shine stops right at the border of the Leicom Continent! The moon’s rays can’t reach us here at all!” shouted Nori as she pointed at the bright moon in the distance.

Realizing that what she had said was true, the other group members instantly found that fact to be rather mysterious and strange...

Chapter 1696

The South Wastelands truly was an extraordinary place... To think that the moon’s shine couldn’t get in here! How utterly perplexing! Even so, it wasn’t as though they could do anything about it.

With that in mind, Gerald and the others could only continue sitting there as they stared at the bright and beautiful moon...

Sometime later, Ray was scanning through the area when he suddenly shouted, “...Mr. Crawford, come quick! There’s some kind of stone tablet here!”

Upon hearing that, Gerald and the other three immediately ran over to where Ray was. True to his words, all of them now saw an erect stone tablet before them...

Wiping the thick layer of dust off the tablet with his hand, Gerald noticed that a few words had been carved onto it.

Squinting his eyes to get a closer look, Gerald then declared, "The South Beast of the Wastelands!"

Immediately after Gerald read that out, an angered and ear-piercing roar could suddenly be heard coming from above them! As the roar continued resonating across the barren wastelands, an explosive sound was heard!

Following that, everyone could only watch wide-eyed as a massive black figure leaped out of the stone tablet!

Upon landing right before the five individuals, the creature's inhumanly strong landing caused the ground around them to quiver so much that it was difficult to even maintain their balance! What terrifying strength!

“W-what the hell is that thing...?” stuttered Nori as she looked at Gerald slightly fearfully.

“...I guess that’s our South Beast!” replied Gerald as he stared at the humongous figure that somewhat resembled a lion.

To think that simply reading the text on the tablet would summon it! Judging from how angry it seemed, they must have awoken it from its nap!

“D*mn it, we need a proper light source! We can’t even see it properly now!” grumbled Zelig as he frowned. Since the moon’s rays were unable to pierce into South Wastelands, their vision was severely limited to only a few feet in front of them!

“Don’t worry, I have a solution!” replied Gerald as he summoned his talisman paper and brush from his storage ring.

After swiftly painting a talisman, he then tossed it into the air, prompting the talismans to burst into a huge ball of fire!

Under the newly illuminated light source, everyone could now see the beast before them in full detail. With a huge, golden mane, the massive male lion’s open jaws exposed its extremely sharp teeth for

all to see. Fuming in anger, the lion continued glaring with its rage-filled eyes at all five of them... Though it didn't appear to be in an attacking stance.

Finding that fact to be slightly puzzling, Zelig was prompted to ask, "...Why... isn't it attacking us...?"

To everyone's dismay, the second he said that, the lion instantly began rushing toward them!

"You and your big mouth!" grumbled Cyril.

"All of you, hurry and run! I'll deal with it!" Ordered Gerald as he bolted toward the lion with lightning speed.

Chapter 1697

Continuing to roar as it charged straight for Gerald, the lion then leaped, clearly trying to slam its weight down on the incoming youth!

Naturally, Gerald wasn't about to grant it that opportunity!

Sliding right under the lion, Gerald expertly struck the beast's belly with his palm, instantly stunning it and sending the oversized lion flying!

Watching as it soared quite a distance away, Gerald had already summarized that though the lion was massive, it was bogged down by its weight. With that in mind, there was no way it was ever going to be able to match Gerald's speed.

Regardless, Gerald wasn't particularly trying to end the lion's life. On the contrary, he was thinking of taming it. After all, Gerald was certainly not against the idea of having such a large lion under his control.

Moving back to the lion, the second it hit the ground, it ended up rolling a few times before finally coming to a stop. Shaking its body as it crawled back to its feet, it then turned to face Gerald, glaring and growling fiercely at him.

Though it was a beast, it wasn't stupid. It was well aware that it wasn't going to be able to take on Gerald, which was why it was refraining from rashly attacking him again.

Seeing that, Gerald then took a few steps forward before pointing at the lion and shouting, "You have two choices. The first is to come

along with me and obediently allow me to be your master. If you refuse, the only other choice you have is to get killed, cooked, then eaten! Just so you know, I've never tasted lion before, and I'm quite keen on trying! Regardless, state your choice!"

Being a divine beast, the supernatural lion could naturally understand human speech. With that in mind, upon hearing Gerald's proposal, the lion appeared to calm down a bit, seemingly falling deep into thought...

After a brief moment, the lion emitted a low growl.

"Are you serious? You'd rather get eaten than be under my control? Surely you aren't stupid enough to believe that you can even come close to defeating me!" taunted Gerald as he snorted contemptuously at the lion's behavior.

Quite frankly, if he had wanted to end the lion's life, Gerald could've done so extremely easily. Giving the lion a choice to be under him was already Gerald's way of showing mercy.

Still, if the lion was going to continue being stubborn, Gerald truly saw no reason to keep it alive. He would rather just deal with it decisively.

Either way, in response, the lion simply sassily lay on its belly before turning to look to the side with a grunt, completely refusing to even look at Gerald. How arrogant!

“Aww... Did I piss off the princess?” scoffed Gerald, seeing how childishly the lion was behaving.

All of a sudden, something flew out from Gerald’s direction before landing right in front of the lion! Upon seeing it, the lion instantly whimpered as it got to its feet and lowered its head before the tiny figure...

Of course, the figure in question was none other than the small green dragon!

Now appearing to be much tamer, it was evident that the lion was feeling intimidated by the tiny dragon. To think that the aggressive beast would be this terrified of a mere baby!

Chapter 1698

It was shocking to the group of five, to say the least. Who would’ve guessed that the tiny green dragon would actually be powerful enough to scare that large lion!

“That dragon must have an immensely prestigious identity! After all, it’s able to intimidate that lion despite being so tiny!” said Ray as he walked toward Gerald’s side.

Following that, they watched as the dragon let out a tiny cry before flying back to Gerald, staring at him while swaying its body. Realizing that it was trying to ask him for something, Gerald easily put two and two together.

Shaking his head, Gerald could only say in resignation, “I get it, you want a Heaven’s apple, don’t you? Fine, I’ll give one to you!”

With that, Gerald retrieved a single Heaven’s apple from his storage ring before handing it to the dragon.

However, the dragon didn’t appear to be content with only a single apple. Swaying its body even more, the dragon then continually alternated its gaze between Gerald and the lion.

Understanding that the dragon wanted him to give the lion a Heaven’s apple as well, Gerald was slightly hesitant. Even so, he had come to adore the baby dragon. With that in mind, in the end, he couldn’t help but hand a second apple to it.

Satisfied, the small dragon—that was holding the two apples within its jaws—then quickly flew over to the lion. After placing an apple right before the lion, the dragon then swallowed its own apple with a single gulp.

Seeing that, the lion raised a brow before alternating its gaze between Gerald and the apple in front of it. Upon confirming that nothing was amiss, the lion quickly swallowed the apple whole, seemingly worried that someone would steal the apple from it.

The second it ate the apple, the lion instantly appeared much happier. Aside from its temperament clearly becoming much gentler, the lion also began shrinking to about the same size as Gerald and the others.

Following that, the lion then walked up to Gerald before lying down and rubbing its cheek against his leg. It was evident that this was its way of showing its submission to him.

“So I could’ve bribed you over with just a single Heaven’s apple? If I had known, I wouldn’t have wasted my energy trying to fight you in the first place!” said Gerald with a chuckle seeing how differently the lion was now behaving toward him.

Still, now that the lion was obedient to him, it meant that he had a new pet to take care of. With that in mind, Gerald then took another two Heaven's apples out to feed his pets.

It was at that moment when he remembered how precious Heaven's apples were. It pained him slightly to know that he was going to lose even more apples at a faster rate now.

Gerald could only hope that the lion didn't need to eat as many Heaven's apples as the baby dragon did. If that wasn't the case, then his apple supply would surely deplete to nothing soon enough...

"If I may, was what you just fed the lion the legendary Heaven's apple, Mr. Crawford?" asked Ray as he looked at Gerald in surprise.

Ray had heard about the legendary Heaven's apple for a long time now, and it certainly hadn't occurred to him that Gerald would actually possess the holy fruit. Truth be told, it made him jealous that Gerald had access to such resources.

Regardless, Gerald simply smiled in response as he replied, "Bingo!"

Now that they knew about his stash of Heaven's apples, Gerald felt the need to share them among his companions. With that, he retrieved four more apples and handed them to Nori and the others.

"Go on, have one each! With any luck, your strength could improve after ingesting them!" added Gerald.

Since the four of them were now good friends of his and they were even willing to follow him in his search for the Scintillating Gem, Gerald felt that it was only right for them to be rewarded with the Heaven's apples.

Upon seeing Gerald's generosity, the delighted four quickly took an apple each and began munching down on them.

After consuming them, the group of four instantly made breakthroughs in their strength!

Zelig finally managed to enter the Sage Realm while Nori was able to enter the Second-soul-rank of the Sage realm. Cyril himself landed in the Fourth-soul-rank of the Sage realm while Ray entered the Sage realm's Eight-soul-rank...

Chapter 1699

Regardless, after the lion was tamed, the rest of the night was rather quiet and uneventful. With that in mind, Gerald and the four others were well-rested by the time morning came.

Since the South Wastelands wasn't exactly an area one could call safe, the group of five decided to set off as early as possible. Naturally, Gerald made sure to open the map first to find out where they were headed next before actually starting their journey.

Shortly after, he declared that they were headed to Dragonblood City next. With any luck, they'd be able to find the gem there...

There were many rumors surrounding the ancient Dragonblood City, the most famous one being about the existence of an ancient Blood Dragon within the city's grounds. Within said dragon, was supposedly an object known as the Dragonblood Ball, and whoever managed to obtain the item was said to be able to gain the powers of the Blood Dragon.

While the tale was certainly compelling, Gerald wasn't going there in search of the Dragonblood Ball. He was strictly going after the Scintillating Gem, which was why he showed little interest in obtaining the Dragonblood Ball.

Either way, Gerald and his group of friends finally arrived at Dragonblood City after walking the entire morning.

However, just as they were entering the city's grounds, the group of five watched as several aggressive-looking people began riding their horses past the city's gates! Had it not been for their quick reactions, they'd surely have ended up getting trampled by those horses!

Staring at the riders, each of them seemed to have immensely murderous auras which only served to amplify how demonic those people were. While terrifying, it certainly set up the premise that they weren't ordinary people who could be trifled with.

Regardless, the fact that they had just barely avoided getting hurt prompted Zelig to scowl, "Who the hell were those brutes?!"

Upon hearing that question, Ray instantly replied, "They're from the Hulkerioic Union!"

As everyone turned to look at Ray—unsure how he even knew about such a group—Gerald couldn't help but ask, "The Hulkerioic Union...?"

Understanding that Gerald and the others wouldn't know about the Hulkerioic Union since they were new to the Leicom Continent, Ray then explained, "They're a powerful force within Dragonblood City..."

"...I see. Call it a gut feeling, but I feel like they aren't very nice people!" replied Gerald in a decisive tone.

Rei simply shrugged without saying another word, his silence a clear sign that what Gerald had stated was right.

True enough, the Hulkerioic Union was infamous for doing all kinds of outrageous and lawbreaking activities within Dragonblood City. The fact that the force was so strong only served to make its members more violent during their rampant acts of savagery.

With that in mind, locals of the city knew that it was best to just stay away from them. After all, offending them would only bring unnecessary trouble to themselves...

Either way, the group then continued strolling around Dragonblood City. The city, for one, was vastly different compared to the area around Leicom Academy...

As they were walking on, the group suddenly heard a woman screaming!

After exchanging glances with each other, all five of them then hurried over to the source of the sound...

By the time they got there, they witnessed four men dragging a young woman into an alleyway! Some of them had even begun tearing her clothes off! To think that such heinous activities would occur, even in broad daylight!

During times like these, someone needed to play the role of a white knight. Thankfully enough, Gerald was best at doing that.

With that, the group immediately charged into the alleyway together...