

## Chapter 1777

The very next morning, Gerald took Rey with him and set off.

“Where are we headed to this early in the morning, Gerald?” asked the puzzled Rey.

He hadn’t been able to get a good night’s sleep in the past few days, and when he was finally able to sleep in his own bed, Gerald had come early in the morning to drag him out! It truly made him feel helpless.

“We’re going to the Dark Sect of Ghost City!” replied Gerald.

As they talked on, they soon arrived at the tower of the Dark Sect of Ghost City...

Since the manhunt for the Ember Lord was still on, the construction of the Dark Sect had been put to a halt, leaving the entire tower sealed. Due to that sudden halt, however, many people ended up losing their jobs.

Just as the saying went, ‘Karma would always come back to bite’.

Regardless, upon stepping before the tower’s entrance, both of them found that the door had been locked with chains. There was even a strip seal attached to it!

“How do you propose we get in, brother Gerald?” asked Rey.

Giving no response, Gerald simply walked around the tower, looking here and there until eventually, he found an air vent connected to the back of the tower.

Removing the lid, Gerald then began squeezing into it! Seeing that, Rey knew that all he could do was follow...

After crawling for a while, the duo eventually made their way into the tower's third-floor bathrooms.

Knowing that the Ember Lord's chamber was on the sixteenth floor, Gerald then headed for the stairs and began running all the way up! Even after running all the way to the top, however, Gerald's face barely reddened, nor did his heart race. In fact, he didn't even feel the need to gasp for air!

Rey, on the other hand, found himself lagging far behind. Taking at least ten minutes to get to where Gerald was, Rey immediately flopped onto a nearby couch the second he saw one.

Gasping for air, Rey then muttered, "C-could we... please... not go so fast next time...? I'm dying here...!"

He really had no idea how Gerald could just bolt up sixteen flights of stairs... It was simply an inhuman feat!

Then again, Gerald wasn't a regular human to begin with. By this point, he was already a half-phantom, so his body no longer functioned like a regular human's. With that said, sixteen flights of stairs were nothing to him.

Regardless, Gerald didn't bother replying to Rey's statement and instead began looking for clues about the Ember Lord within the chamber.

After what Juno had told him the day before, Gerald knew that he couldn't afford to remain passive anymore. They had to take the initiative to make the Ember Lord come to them, and the only way that was going to happen was if Gerald managed to find something that the Ember Lord cared about.

Once he managed to get his hands on such a thing, Gerald would surely be able to catch him.

Either way, after searching for a while, Gerald eventually managed to find a small wooden box in the chamber. It was just a simple-looking old box that didn't look particularly special. Even so, the fact that Ember Lord—a person with such high status—would even possess such a normal-looking box was strange in itself.

With that in mind, Gerald figured that the wooden box must certainly contain something important to the Ember Lord, and that he must have forgotten to take it with him.

Immediately opening the box to see if he was right, Gerald was greeted by the sight of a ring made of green jade... With how dull the jade ring looked, it was clear that it was extremely old...

After examining the ring for a bit longer, Gerald then placed it back into the wooden box before slipping the box into his pocket with the intent of bringing it back with him.

At that moment, a furious voice could suddenly be heard shouting, "Who's there?"

Hearing that, Gerald and Rey instantly turned to look at the door... only to realize that it was Old Flint and a few other men!

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## Chapter 1778

Realizing that it was only Old Flint, Gerald and Rey breathed a sigh of relief.

Old Flint, on the hand, couldn't help but raise a slight brow as he puzzledly asked, "...It's you two? What are you doing here? And how did you get in?"

The chief inspector had already ordered him not to have any contact with Gerald anymore. What more, he had also been told that Gerald wasn't allowed to help them in the investigation any longer. With that in mind, Old Flint could only obey his superiors.

"We're here looking for clues!" replied Gerald.

"Look, I'm sorry, but you two aren't allowed to get involved with this case anymore. With that in mind, please leave! If you return here again our only option will be to take you back with us!" warned Old Flint.

Hearing that, Gerald simply nodded.

Not wanting to make things difficult for the old man, Gerald then replied, "Copy that!"

Just as he was about to leave with Rey, however, he heard Old Flint yelling, "Hold on a minute! Did you find any clues while you were here? If you did, please hand them to us!"

Smiling subtly, Gerald then shook his head before saying, "Sorry, Old Flint, but we didn't manage to find any!"

With that, the duo then left the tower...

Who was Old Flint kidding? As if Gerald would ever hand over the clue he found to him!

Whatever the case was, now that they had left the Dark Sect of Ghost City, Gerald and Ray quickly returned to their office...

It was only once they were inside when Gerald took the jade ring out of the wooden box again.

Staring at Gerald, the puzzled Rey couldn't help but ask, "...Is there something special about that jade ring? Why did you feel the need to bring it back here...?"

Hearing that, Gerald then replied, "Just think about it. Why would a person with such high status as him keep such an old jade ring around? Don't you find that odd?"

It was then when Rey realized that what Gerald had said was true.

At that moment, Juno entered the room before saying, "That jade ring should belong to an old person!"

"And where's this coming from?" asked Gerald as he looked at her.

"Well, not only does the ring look weathered, but the carvings on it are also extremely old-fashioned! My grandma used to wear a similar ring, you see, which is why I feel that the wearer must be old as well!" explained Juno.

Upon hearing that, Gerald felt that her statement made sense.

With that information, Gerald assumed that the ring once belonged to the Ember Lord's grandmother, though she later passed it down to him.

"...I mean, that's nice and all, but even if we have the ring, we may not be able to catch the Ember Lord, right...?" muttered Rey.

"...No. I believe that this jade ring will surely help us find him! In fact, I already know who his next victim will be!" declared Gerald in a confident tone.

Following that, he walked right out of the office, and Rey could only follow behind him.

Once they were downstairs, Gerald threw his car keys at Rey before saying, "You drive. Our destination is the Census Bureau!"

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Chapter 1779

"Hello? What is it, Gerald?" asked Old Flint from the other side of the line.

"Old Flint, while I know you can't let us join the investigation, I hope you can still help us out. Essentially, if you want to solve the case and capture the Ember Lord, listen closely and believe me when I say that everything that I'm about to tell you is going to be extremely important!" replied Gerald in a serious tone.

Hearing that, Old Flint paused for a moment. Eventually, however, he knew he could trust Gerald, so he was willing to risk it. After all, both of them wanted the case to be solved and have the Ember Lord be captured.

“...Alright, tell me how I can help!”

“Head to the Census Bureau now. I’m currently heading over as well, and I’ll tell you more about it when we meet!” replied Gerald before hanging the call up.

Half an hour later, Rey and Gerald met up with Old Flint at the assigned venue.

“What are we even here for, Gerald...?” asked the confused old man.

“Look, I need you to do a background check on the Ember Lord as well as his family, and not just his parents either. I need you to thoroughly research anyone related to his parents as well!” ordered Gerald without giving so much as an explanation as to why.

Even so, Old Flint knew that Gerald must have his reasons for asking for that. With that in mind, the old man then said, “...Copy that!”

Shortly after, Old Flint then entered the bureau. Gerald needed the old man’s help since only someone with his credibility was allowed to access and retrieve the information and profiles of others...

It was about an hour later when Old Flint finally exited the bureau with a thick stack of papers.

Getting into the car, he then handed the papers to Gerald before saying, "Here's everything about the Ember Lord and his family, including the information about his parents and grandparents!"

Hearing that, Gerald immediately began scanning through the documents, his reading speed faster than someone skimming across the pages of a book.

With how serious Gerald was, Old Flint couldn't help but ask, "...What exactly did you discover, Gerald...?"

Gerald, however, simply ignored the old man and continued breezing through the papers... until eventually, Gerald stopped.

Pulling out a file that was labeled, 'Yamilet Faes', he then showed it to Old Flint.

Yamilet Faes was none other than the Ember Lord's grandmother. Even so, she passed away about three years ago. Everything in the file was information from about two years ago...

"...Am... I supposed to understand something from this...?" asked the puzzled old man.

Following that, Gerald immediately stated Yamilet Fae's address before saying, "Rey, check if the coordinates of the address match the numbers left behind by the Ember Lord!"

Hearing that, Rey quickly took his tablet out and began searching for the address... and sure enough, once the results came out, the numbers left by the Ember Lord truly seemed to be the coordinates of his grandmother's home!



“You... You’re right! The numbers are exactly the same!” exclaimed Rey as he looked at Gerald and Old Flint.

Hearing that, Gerald and Old Flint exchanged glances with each other. They finally knew what the numbers represented!

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There was no way in hell that those two facts could be coincidences. With that in mind, that could only mean that the Ember Lord was hiding there.

However, since the Ember Lord had left that hint for them, it was possible that instead of finding him there, they would instead find the location of his next victim.

After thinking about it for a while, Old Flint then started the car and immediately stepped on the gas! They needed to head to Yamilet Fae’s home right now!

“Are you really sure that the Ember Lord will be hiding there, Gerald...?” asked Rey on their way there.

Shaking his head, Gerald then replied with a serious expression, “To be quite honest, I’m not too sure. After all, the Ember Lord is a meticulous person who never plays by the rules. My guess is that the numbers will lead us to the next victim, but in finding that victim, we’ll surely get one step closer to where the Ember Lord is hiding!”

Hearing that, Rey then nodded in understanding...

After about forty minutes of driving, the trio finally arrived at the Ember Lord's grandmother's house.

Yamilet lived in a small, remote village, and the trio soon found themselves walking along the road in the village.

Since they didn't meet anyone along the way, it was quickly made evident that the village had very few residents. What more, despite the fact that there were quite a number of houses in the area, many of them were locked and showed signs of being unoccupied for a rather long time...

Then again, it wasn't all that surprising. After all, the city was much better developed than this place. With that in mind, who would be willing to continue suffering in such a place when they could live in much better homes?

Regardless, after walking for quite a while, they finally came across a plainly dressed person. With how old his clothes looked, all three of them assumed that he was just a farmer living here.

"Hello there!" called out Old Flint.

Hearing that, the old man instantly turned to face the trio, looking rather surprised that outsiders would even come to this village.

"...Yes? Who... are you?" asked the old man, sounding slightly frightened.

"Don't worry, I'm just from the Grand Council! Cutting straight to the chase, I'd like to know if you know where Yamilet lives?" replied Old Flint.

Hearing that Old Flint was from the Grand Council, the farmer lowered his guard before asking, "...I'm sorry, who...?"

"Yamilet Faes! She's an old lady!" repeated Old Flint.

"Oh, you're looking for her? She passed away some time ago! Do you have business with her...?" asked the farmer.

Of course, Old Flint and the other two already knew that she was dead.

"We know about that, but we still need to go to her home. There's something we need there!" explained Old Flint.

"Oh! Well, if that's the case, I'll bring you there!" replied the old farmer as he cheerfully agreed to help.

Delighted, Old Flint then replied, "I'm glad to hear that! Thank you, good sir!"

Now that someone was leading the way, they didn't have to go looking around for her place anymore.

With the farmer's guidance, all three of them soon arrived at Yamilet Faes's home.

While it was a simple wooden cottage that had fallen into disrepair over the years, the door still appeared to be locked.

Looking at the state of the house, Ray couldn't help but mutter, "...I... don't think the Ember Lord would hide in such a shabby and creepy place, Gerald...!"

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Chapter 1781

"Hehe, Rey, don't forget that Ember Lord is no longer a human. He's even creepier than a ghost. Do you think he will be scared hiding in this place?"

Gerald chuckled and reminded Rey.

When Rey heard him, he found that it somehow made sense.

"You can take a look, and I shall leave, then!"

The old man said to the three.

"Okay, old man. Thanks a lot for your help!"

Old Flint thanked the old man quickly.

"Don't mention it!"

The old man responded by waving his hand.

After the old man had left, Gerald and the other two stood in front of the wooden cottage, staring at it blankly.

They didn't know what to do. They couldn't enter the cottage, nor did they know how to get into it.

"Gerald, Old Flint, what should we do now? Kick the door open?"

Rey looked at Gerald and Old Flint and asked.

"No, that's nonsense. Trespassing is not right!"

Old Flint stopped Rey immediately.

Although Yamilet Faes was no longer alive, this cottage still belonged to her. So, they could not simply do what they wanted.

"Then, what should we do? We don't have the key."

Rey sighed helplessly.

"We'll wait until nighttime and see if Ember Lord will make an appearance here!"

After a while, Gerald suggested.

And so, they just waited there just as Gerald had suggested.

The wait lasted for a few hours.

They waited until eight o'clock, but still, Ember Lord did not appear.

The whole surrounding fell into darkness and stillness.

Being in such a dark environment could really intensify the fear in one's heart.

Apart from Gerald, Rey and Old Flint shrunk their necks and pulled their clothes tighter.

"Gerald, it's been so long. It's so dark already, do we still have to wait?"

Rey looked at Gerald and asked.

"Yeah. Gerald. Why don't we get back into the car? It's at least better than staying in the cold like this!"

Old Flint, who was beside them, quickly made a suggestion.

When Gerald heard this, he nodded in agreement.

Seeing Gerald agree, Old Flint and Rey instantly felt delighted.

After that, the three got up and were ready to leave.

Just then, a light shone from the woods.

As soon as the light came on, it caught Gerald and the two's attention immediately. They were alerted and squatted down again immediately.

"You three?"

Then, they heard the voice of the old man from just now.

Hearing his voice made the three breathe a sigh of relief.

They had thought that it was someone else. Apparently, it was him.

Gerald and the two got out of the bushes right away.

"Old man, why are you still out wandering around at this late hour?"

Old Flint asked the old man doubtfully.

"I saw that you have been waiting here for so long. So, I came to check on you!"

The old man smiled and answered.

“We’re fine. We’re just waiting for someone here!”

Old Flint hurriedly explained to the old man as he did not want the old man to sense that something was wrong. Chapter 1782

“Eh, it’s already so late! I’m sure the person you are waiting for will not come. Come, let’s go to my place and rest!”

The old man sighed and proposed to the three.

When Old Flint heard him, he turned around immediately and looked at Gerald, seeking his opinion.

Gerald saw his reaction and nodded subtly.

Since they had no other choice, for now, they could only rest at the old man’s place.

Besides, the sky was already very dark, and it was not safe. Who knew what would be lingering outside?

After the conversation, Gerald and the others followed the old man and left the wooden cottage.

The old man brought Gerald and the others to his house. Although it was not very old, it looked like it should have been rebuilt before.



“Old man, are you the only one left in the village?”

Once they were in the old man’s house, Old Flint asked curiously.

“Hehe!” The old man chuckled.

“Yes. The others have moved into the cities already. I’m the only one left here!”

After he chuckled, he answered.

“Then, why didn’t you move into the city? Isn’t it more comfortable living in the city?”

Old Flint continued to ask.

“Alas, I have no relatives or children. I don’t want to live in the city anyway. It’s good living here. I’m used to living here!” The old man spoke with a bitter smile.

They could hear the helplessness in the old man’s voice.

Having no family member at an old age was indeed pitiful.

Perhaps this was the destiny of this old man. He was destined to live in the mountains for his whole life. It was not bad for fallen leaves to return to their roots.

“Right, who are you waiting for actually?”

The old man asked Old Flint.

“Old man, did you know that Yamilet Faes has a grandson named Ember Lord?”

After a pause, Old Flint asked the old man.

Once the old man heard that, he was startled for a moment, and then he said, “Yes, I know him. Speaking about Ember Lord, he is indeed a good young lad. He was the one who spent money to help me rebuild my house. He used to be an obedient boy. Sometimes, he would stay here with his grandmother. Sometimes, he would come to my place to play with me. However, after his grandmother passed away, he has never come back!”

The old man sighed as he recounted his story.

“Oh? Old man, did you find anything strange lately? Or maybe something happened in the wooden cottage of Yamilet Faes?”

After that, Old Flint asked the old man.

Since the old man knew Ember Lord, the number Ember Lord had given them would not be that simple.

“I didn’t hear anything. I would pass by the wooden cottage every day when I go up and down the hill, but I’ve never heard any noise.”

The old man said to Old Flint.

“You guys are asking about it so much. What is happening here exactly? What has Ember Lord done?”

The old man asked in confusion.

“It’s nothing, old man. We’re his friends. It’s just that we couldn’t keep in touch with him lately, so we wanted to come here and check if he is here!”

Old Flint quickly made up an excuse to explain it to the old man.

“Oh, I see.”

After the old man heard his explanation, he didn’t suspect anything and simply nodded his head.

Gerald and the others sat in the house until late at night.

However, none of them fell asleep.

It wasn’t that they didn’t want to, but it was because they didn’t dare to.

If they fell asleep, nobody knew what would happen, much less if Ember Lord would appear.

Creak!

Suddenly, the door was opened.

After the sound of the door being opened was heard, the sound of the door being closed was heard immediately after.

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## Chapter 1783

The three quickly looked outside only to see that the old man had left the house alone, carrying a basket with him as he headed toward Yamilet Faes' wooden cottage.

Seeing this, the three exchanged glances.

They found it rather strange that the old man would want to go out in the middle of the night carrying a basket. There had to be some secret unknown to people hidden behind it.

Soon after, Gerald and the two got out of the house and followed the old man quietly.

They followed the old man all the way to the wooden cottage. Then, they saw him take out a key from his pocket to unlock the door.

Once the door was unlocked, the old man surveyed his surroundings carefully. After making sure that no one was around, only then did he push the door open and walk in with reassurance.

Gerald and the two others also walked to the wooden cottage immediately and stood in front of it.

“Gerald, it looks like the old man must be hiding something from us. He actually has the key to this house!”

Rey whispered to Gerald.

Now, it could be seen that the old man was not as simple as he looked. He must have some kind of relationship with Ember Lord.

“Rey, Old Flint, you two should hide. I’ll go in and take a look first!”

Later, Gerald instructed Rey and Old Flint.

Hearing his words, Rey and Old Flint did not object, Instead, they nodded in agreement right away. Then, they quickly retreated to a bush nearby and hid in there.

As for Gerald, he went to the side of the wooden cottage and sat beside the wall. Then, he freed his soul from his body.

Of course Gerald would not enter the house directly. Otherwise, he would alert them and be discovered by the old man.

Once he had freed his soul, Gerald went into the wooden cottage and started searching up and down.

When he went upstairs, he could hear the old man’s voice. It sounded as though he was talking to someone.

Soon, after the old man finished talking, the voice of Ember Lord was heard.

Gerald knew it was him the moment he heard his voice. Ember Lord had indeed hidden in this place.

Gerald didn't expect that this old man was hiding it so well and that he indeed had a relationship with Ember Lord.

"Ember Lord, those three who are looking for you must be looking for trouble with you, right?"

The old man asked.

Ember Lord sat on the chair and snorted.

"Hmph, those three want to catch me. It looks like they are smart enough to find this place!"

"It's not that we are smart, but it was you who gave us the clue, Ember Lord!"

The moment Ember Lord finished talking, Gerald's voice rang in the room. Then, Gerald appeared in front of Ember Lord and the old man.

"Gerald Crawford!"

At the sight of Gerald, Ember Lord was enraged.

He yelled angrily and charged toward Gerald, wanting to tear Gerald into pieces.

Gerald reacted quickly and kicked Ember Lord away.

Now, since Gerald was also a half-phantom, he was not afraid of Ember Lord at all. Everything had to come to an end today.

“Ember Lord, I am not going to let you escape again today!”

Gerald glared at Ember Lord and said.

Having said that, Gerald threw out the Soul Chain in his hand.

The Soul Chain flew toward Ember Lord and bound him tightly.

Of course, Ember Lord wasn't that easy to deal with. He morphed into a black miasma and charged toward Gerald.

Gerald summoned his Astrabyss Sword swiftly and sent out a spirit blade toward Ember Lord.

When the old man saw this, he ran forward and threw himself in front of the black miasma, not wanting to let Gerald's spirit blade hurt Ember Lord.

Swish!

The spirit blade passed through the body of the old man.

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## Chapter 1784

At the same time, the black miasma of Ember Lord wrapped around the old man.

Soon after, the black miasma absorbed the soul and energy of the old man, directly turning the old man into a dry corpse.

This surprised Ember Lord very much. He didn't expect this would be the outcome. Moreover, he never expected that the old man would actually block the attack from Gerald for him.

"Ember Lord, you've killed another innocent person again!"

Gerald shouted at Ember Lord angrily.

Having said that, Gerald decided to use his forbidden technique to completely destroy Ember Lord.

At this moment, Ember Lord had totally lost consciousness. He stood there motionlessly, almost as if he had lost his soul.

"Thousand Sect Destruction Technique!"

Gerald shouted and threw the Astrabyss Sword in his hand directly at Ember Lord.



When the sword pierced into Ember Lord's body, it immediately emitted a bright light and engulfed Ember Lord completely.

"Argh!"

Ember Lord shrieked.

The next second, Ember Lord was turned into ashes.

At last, Gerald had wiped out Ember Lord.

Finally, Gerald had avenged the villagers of Moonset Village.

When they heard the commotion in the wooden cottage, Old Flint rushed in with Rey and went straight to the second floor.

When they saw the dry corpse of the old man and a pile of ashes, they were extremely shocked.

"This... What is going on here?!"

They didn't see Gerald anywhere.

After a few seconds, Gerald came from downstairs.

“Huh? Gerald, why did you come in from outside? Didn’t you come inside already?”

Old Flint stared at Gerald in surprise and asked.

“I’ve finished off Ember Lord!”

Gerald did not answer. Instead, he pointed to the pile of ashes and told Old Flint.

Old Flint looked at the pile of ashes with a surprised look on his face.

“Are you telling me that this is Ember Lord?!”

Old Flint asked again in disbelief.

Gerald nodded. Then, he turned around and left the house.

Old Flint and Rey exchanged glances, but they did not bother saying anything else. They just followed him out.

After leaving the wooden cottage, the three returned to their car.

Once they got into the car, they started the engine and left the village immediately.

At long last, Ember Lord was dead, and Gerald could finally breathe a sigh of relief.

“Old Flint, please send us home. You have been working very hard lately. This matter is finally considered settled!”

Sitting in the car, Gerald looked at Old Flint, who was driving, and said.

Old Flint nodded in agreement when he heard him.

Of course he knew what Gerald meant.

“Thank you, Gerald!”

Old Flint thanked Gerald as well.

If it wasn't because of the clue Gerald had found, they wouldn't have found this place at all, and they wouldn't have been able to find Ember Lord and finish him.

Although Old Flint was someone from the Grand Council, he agreed with Gerald's way of tackling this matter.

After all, Ember Lord deserved to die, and his death was not regrettable at all.

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Chapter 1785

The next morning, as Gerald and Rey were still sleeping, the doorbell woke them up.

Rey walked out of the room to the door half asleep and opened it.

Once the door was opened, he saw a few men in uniforms standing outside. At the sight of the logo on their uniforms, he knew that they were from the Grand Council.

“Excuse me, are Mr. Gerald Crawford and Mr. Rey Leighton here?”

One of the inspectors entered the house and asked.

Rey nodded and replied, “I’m Rey. What is it?”

“Take him away!”

Once he heard Rey’s words, the inspector ordered his men, and immediately, two inspectors came forward and grabbed Rey’s arms, dragging him outside.

“Hey, what are you doing?!”

Rey shouted immediately.

The commotion woke Gerald, Juno, and Nori up.

They got out of their rooms quickly.

“Who are you?”

When Gerald came out, he looked at the people from the Grand Council in surprise and asked.

“You must be Mr. Gerald Crawford. We suspect that you are related to the death of Chief Lake, who is also known as Old Flint. So, we want to bring you back for an investigation now!”

As the inspector was talking, he took out an arrest warrant and showed it to Gerald.

“Wait. What did you say? Chief Lake is dead?!”

Gerald was stunned when he heard this.

This news was really too surprising to Gerald.

They had still been with Old Flint early this morning. How could he be dead now?! This was simply too bizarre.

“Mr. Crawford, I hope you will cooperate with us!”

The inspector was well aware of Gerald's identity. So, he maintained a gentle tone when he was talking to Gerald.

"Alright. Please let us get dressed before going with you!"

Gerald had no problem with it and agreed to it right away.

Soon after, Gerald and Rey got changed and left with the inspectors of the Grand Council.

On the way to the Grand Council, Gerald remained silent in the car.

Old Flint's death was completely unexpected. Gerald truly had no idea how he had died.

It seemed like there was something weird in regards to this.

Soon, Gerald and Rey were brought to the Grand Council and into separate interrogation rooms for questioning.

After a while, two inspectors pushed the door open and sat down.

"Mr. Crawford, can you tell me where you went with Chief Lake last night? What did you do there?"

One of the inspectors stared at Gerald and asked.

"We went to Ember Lord's home last night," Gerald told the inspector.

“What time did you come back?” asked the inspector.

“About two o’clock in the morning. It was Chief Lake who drove us home. After that, he left on his own,” Gerald replied seriously.

“Did you two stay in your house after that? Did you go out at all?” questioned the inspector.

Gerald frowned.

“I suggest that you do not waste your time on the two of us. Do you honestly think we would kill Chief Lake? Besides, there are CCTVs along the street where Chief Lake met with the accident. Why don’t you retrieve the footage and watch it?”

Gerald didn’t want to keep on answering the questions anymore, so he asked the inspector in return.

Hearing Gerald’s words, the inspector was speechless.

Indeed, what Gerald had just said did make sense.

In truth, they had brought Gerald and Rey back just to grasp the situation.

No evidence showed that it was Gerald and Rey who had killed Old Flint.

However, apart from the two of them, Old Flint had not had any contact with other people.

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They had indeed watched the CCTV footage.

When the accident happened, there was no one and no other car around. Moreover, Old Flint was the only one in his car.

So, that meant that the situation when Old Flint had met with the accident was utterly bizarre.

In the footage, Old Flint's car had simply skidded and rolled out of control on its own all of a sudden.

Gerald and Rey were only released in the afternoon.

They took a cab back to the office once they had left the Grand Council.

On the way back, Rey looked at Gerald with a very puzzled look and asked, "Gerald, what do you think of Old Flint's death? How did he die?"

Gerald's face was very grave. He was not sure about it either. However, he was sure that the incident was certainly not that simple.

"Does this mean Ember Lord is not dead yet?"

The next second, a bold idea came across Rey's mind.

Gerald felt that the possibility of this speculation was very tiny. After all, Ember Lord had died before his eyes. How could he still be alive?



“Let’s go back first. Maybe it really was just an accident!”

Gerald told Rey.

Soon, they arrived back at the office.

“Gerald, Rey, you two are back! Are you alright?”

Seeing them return, Juno hurried forward and asked them in concern.

When they were taken away by the people from the Grand Council, it had really made Juno and Nori worry.

But now, seeing them return safe and sound, they were relieved.

“We’re fine. We just went there to help with the investigation!”

Gerald smiled gently and explained to Juno.

“By the way, did you guys find Ember Lord this time?”

Juno handed a glass of water over to Gerald and asked.

Gerald took the water and took a sip. He answered, "We found him, and I have killed him!"

Hearing this, Juno instantly felt relieved, seeing as the murderous monster had finally been exterminated.

"But what about Old Flint's death? I saw the news just now, saying that his death was very strange. It doesn't seem to be caused by a human?"

Immediately afterward, Juno got curious again and asked.

"I'm not sure about that. When we came back last night, Old Flint was still fine. Nothing special happened along the way."

Gerald said with a gloomy face.

Everything that had happened made people feel rather uncomfortable.

"Sigh."

Juno sighed heavily when she heard what Gerald had said.

Knock! Knock! Knock!

Right at that moment, someone knocked at the door of the office.

“Rey, go and see who it is.”

When Gerald heard it, he told Rey to answer the door.

Rey stood up and walked to the door, only to see a delivery boy standing outside.

He opened the door and walked out.

“Hello, does Mr. Gerald Crawford live here? There’s a parcel for him!”

The delivery boy said to Rey with a smiling face.

“Yes.”

Rey replied immediately and signed for the parcel.

“Gerald, there’s a parcel for you!”

Rey told Gerald when he came back.

“A parcel for me?”

Gerald was puzzled when he heard him. He hadn’t bought anything. Why would he receive a parcel?

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The parcel was a small square box.

Gerald shook the box gently, but there wasn't any sound coming from the box.

"Let's see who sent it to you!"

Juno, who was sitting at the side, reminded Gerald.

Gerald quickly checked the information on the sender. Apart from his name and address, there was no information about the sender.

Gerald and the others were baffled by what they were seeing. Who could have sent Gerald the parcel? What exactly was in the parcel?

Gerald was not in a rush to open the parcel. He felt that there was a problem with it. Maybe, it was a scheme.

"Back off, you guys!"

Gerald told his friends.

Upon hearing Gerald's words, Rey and the girls stood up immediately and moved backward.

Gerald picked up a small knife and slashed the box open with extreme precision.

Once the box had been slashed, the lid popped open.

Gerald looked at the box carefully. After making sure it was safe, only then was he relieved, and he signaled his friends to come forward.

The three walked toward Gerald and stood beside him once more.

“Gerald, what exactly is in the box?”

Rey asked curiously.

Gerald put down the small knife. Then, he grabbed the box and opened it.

There was only a purple envelope in the box.

“It’s a purple envelope again!”

When Rey saw the envelope, he yelped in surprise.

The purple envelopes would keep on appearing when Ember Lord was still alive. Now that he was dead, they didn’t expect that it would appear again.

“Gerald, isn’t Ember Lord dead already? Why is this purple envelope appearing again?!”

Rey asked Gerald, looking at him in disbelief.

Gerald also cocked his eyebrows. He looked very serious.

He reckoned this incident was certainly not simple, as if everything had not ended yet.

“Come, let’s go to the courier company!”

Soon after, Gerald regained his senses and suggested to Rey.

Then, Gerald left the office with Rey and headed to the courier company. He wanted to know who had sent him the parcel.

After a short while, they arrived at the courier company.

Once they entered the office, Gerald started looking for the person-in-charge.

“Hello, may I know who sent me this parcel?”

Gerald handed the box to the person-in-charge and asked.

When the person-in-charge took the parcel, he said something that made Gerald and Rey dumbfounded.

“This courier box is not our company’s courier box, and the packaging is not either!” He said to the two.

“What? It’s not your company’s courier box? How can this be?! It was clearly delivered by a delivery boy from your company just now.”

Rey told the person-in-charge immediately.

Seeing as Gerald and Rey refused to believe him, the person-in-charge brought them into his office.

“Look. This is the standard courier box and packaging of our company. So, this box is really not from our company!”

The person-in-charge pointed at the boxes and explained to them.

Now, Gerald and Rey were completely perplexed.

If the parcel wasn’t from this company, where did it come from?

“Can I meet the delivery boy who sent us the box just now?”

Then, Gerald proposed to the person-in-charge.

“Sure, no problem!”

The person-in-charge was very helpful and agreed to it right away.

Soon, he called the delivery boy out for Gerald and Rey.

“Rey, is he the one?” Chapter 1788

Gerald looked at the delivery boy and asked Rey.

“Yes, that’s right, Gerald. It was him who sent the parcel.”

Rey nodded firmly and said.

“What’s wrong? Is there any problem, misters?”

The delivery boy standing in front of them asked in puzzlement, not knowing what was happening.

“Let me ask you. This parcel was delivered by you just now. Where did you get it from?”

Gerald stared at the delivery boy and questioned him.

The delivery boy took the box from Gerald and took a look.

“That’s right. It was me who delivered the parcel. I also wondered why there was only the receiver’s name and address on the parcel, and the packaging was different. I asked about it for almost a day, but no one bothered to answer me, so I could only deliver it according to the address!”



The delivery boy admitted that he was the one who had delivered the parcel, but he himself did not know who the sender was.

Upon hearing this, Gerald and Rey exchanged glances.

The investigation came to halt once more. The clue didn't help them to find out the sender.

"Okay. Thanks for the trouble!"

Later, Gerald thanked the delivery boy and left with Rey.

"Gerald, do you think Ember Lord is truly dead?"

When they were in the car, Rey asked Gerald again.

"It's impossible that he's not. I witnessed his death with my own eyes. How could he still be alive?"

Gerald denied Rey's speculation directly. He didn't believe Ember Lord was still alive.

"Then, this..."

"Forget it. We'll go back and see what's written in the letter first."

Left with no choice, Gerald could only choose to study the purple envelope first.

If Gerald had guessed it correctly, there should be numbers on the letter, just like the previous one.

When they got back to the office, Gerald immediately opened the purple envelope.

At the sight of it, Gerald was totally baffled. He had guessed it wrongly this time. There wasn't any number on it, but a pattern of the Star of David.

"It's a pattern? It's not the same as before!"

Gerald exclaimed when he saw it, his face full of disbelief. It was indeed different this time.

Looking at the pattern of the Star of David, Gerald sank into contemplation.

Immediately afterward, Rey searched for information about the Star of David online.

"Gerald, this is all the information about the Star of David. You can take a look!"

Rey handed the tablet over to Gerald.

Gerald took the tablet and started reading when he heard that.

After reading for a while, Gerald's face started turning dark.

And right at that moment, Gerald's phone rang.

Gerald fished out his phone and found that it was an unknown number.

After hesitating for a while, he answered the call.

"Hello. Who's this?"

Once the call was connected, Gerald asked the caller in a deep voice, only to hear a man's sinister voice on the other end of the phone.

"Mr. Crawford, you should have received the present I sent you!"

When Gerald heard his voice, he frowned.

"Who are you?"

Gerald asked the man on the other end of the phone.

"Hehe, don't be so nervous.! I'm just a nobody who wants to play a game with you!"

The man laughed wickedly and said to Gerald without telling Gerald his identity.

"Play a game? Hmph, I have no time to play with you. If you are trying to play a prank, sorry, you have the wrong person!"

Gerald snorted coldly when he heard what the man had said.

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Chapter 1789

“Gerald, who was it?” Rey looked at Gerald and asked.

“I don’t know. It was a man. He was the one who sent the letter, and he told me that he wants to play a game with me. He’s nuts!” Gerald said helplessly.

What time was it already that he still wanted to play a game with him?! Gerald didn’t want to bother so much about this.

It had indeed made them a little anxious to the point that they had thought it was Ember Lord and he had not died.

As for the identity of this man, Gerald was uninterested to know about it.

After hearing what Gerald had said, the three did not ask any more questions. They felt that it might just be a prank.

However, everything was not as simple as Gerald had thought.

That day, Gerald brought Rey out to buy some groceries.

They had not been able to rest properly for a long time. So, they decided to buy some good food and cook a hearty meal together.

Gerald and Rey went to the supermarket. When they came out, both of them were carrying two big bags in their hands.

Boom!

Suddenly, a loud explosion was heard.

The impact of the explosion was so strong that the entire surrounding was shaken. The glass of countless cars and shops was shattered by the explosion.

As for Gerald and Rey, they were thrown to the ground by the force. Everything in their hands scattered all over the place.

That's right. A car not far away from them had exploded.

"Gerald, it's our car!"

Rey realized something and looked at the car that had been blown up. Then, he shouted in shock at Gerald.

Gerald got up and went forward to take a look.

At the sight of it, sure enough, it was his car.

At that moment, the car had already been completely destroyed, still burning in the huge fire.

Soon after, people from the Grand Council and the firefighters came to the scene and started examining the car after putting out the fire.

And so, Gerald and Rey were invited to the Grand Council once again.

“After our investigation, we found that someone had installed a kind of fuse in your car. The firefighters found some fragments at the scene. It seems like your car was deliberately tampered with by somebody. Anyway, it’s fortunate that both of you were not in the car and escaped the catastrophe!”

An inspector came in with the documents and explained them to Gerald and Rey.

“Do you know who did this to you?” asked the inspector.

Gerald was startled for a while. Then, he replied, “No. Maybe it was just a prank.”

However, when Gerald said that, not only did the inspector not believe it, even Gerald himself and Rey did not believe it.

Nevertheless, Gerald didn’t want people from the Grand Council to get involved with this. It looked like this incident had something to do with the man who had called him last time.

Now, Gerald was enraged.

He didn't expect that the man would dare to lay hands on him. Since that was the case, Gerald would definitely not let him go.

After that, Gerald and Rey completed the formalities and left the Grand Council, returning to their office by taking a cab.

Seeing the two come back intact, Juno's heavy heart was lightened once more.

Upon receiving the news of the car explosion, they had been very scared and worried.

Ring! Ring!

Just then, Gerald's mobile phone rang.

Gerald didn't even have to guess. He already knew it must be the strange man calling.

He picked up the call right away.

"B\*stard, what exactly do you want?! If I find you, I will kill you!"

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Chapter 1790

Gerald cursed at the man angrily.

“Hehe, chill, Mr. Crawford. I was just joking with you. After all, it was you who did not want to play the game with me.”

The man laughed and replied in an eerie voice.

It was just a joke?!

It had been a big explosion, but this man had actually said that it was just a small joke. It was really driving Gerald crazy.

“What exactly do you want to play?”

Gerald calmed himself down and questioned the man over the phone.

“Hehe! Mr. Crawford, I know your ability, and I’m very impressed with your power. So, you are the only one who can play the game with me.

Do you still remember the purple letter? There’s a pattern of the Star of David on the paper.

The pattern represents each different area, and a different thing will happen in each of the areas. It may be a person or a thing, and everything depends on you to discover it yourself.



Right, since it's a game, there must be a win and a loss.

If you win, I will give you the address to save a person so that you can go and save him. Of course, if you lose, the person can only die!"

The strange man explained the rules of the game to Gerald.

"You b\*stard! What if I don't agree with it?" Gerald shouted angrily again.

"Ha! Ha! Ha! Mr. Crawford, perhaps you have felt the power of the explosion? If you don't play with me, I can't guarantee where the next explosion will happen.

And you will have to be responsible for the death of those people because you were the cause of their deaths!"

When the strange man heard what Gerald had said, he burst out laughing as he replied.

"Okay, Mr. Crawford. The decision is yours to make. There will be another letter for you tomorrow morning. You can decide whether you want to play with me or not!"

Then, the strange man reminded Gerald once more before hanging up the call. He didn't give Gerald any chance to speak.

Gerald threw his mobile phone away angrily.

“Gerald, what does he want exactly?”

Rey asked, frowning.

“It looks like we have no choice but to play with him!”

Gerald had no other choice but to helplessly compromise.

Moreover, he still did not know the identity of the man. Therefore, he could only look for clues based on what he had told him.

From what he had said, Gerald was sure that the strange men had some hostages in his hands. If Gerald didn't play the game, the hostages would be in danger. By then, Gerald would truly become a sinner.

That night, Gerald didn't sleep, or to be more precise, he couldn't sleep at all.

The next morning, Gerald went to the office alone.

The moment he arrived at the doorway, Gerald saw an envelope lying on the floor in front of the door. It was that familiar purple envelope again.

Gerald picked up the envelope right away. He opened the door and started reading the letter.

Once opened, there was a paper with only one sentence written on it.

'Water flies straight down three thousand feet.'

Seeing this phrase, Gerald fell into confusion.

Wasn't it a phrase from a classical poem?

What did he mean by this?

What was the hidden message behind this?

Soon after, Gerald turned on his computer and started searching for information about the phrase of the poem.

However, Gerald couldn't figure out the meaning of this phrase in the poem at all.

Ding!

Right then, Gerald's phone rang.

Gerald took it out immediately and saw a news message.

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Chapter 1791

Upon looking at the message, Gerald couldn't help but momentarily pause.

“Water that comes crashing down from three thousand feet... Could that be hinting at some kind of waterfall...?”

After thinking about it for a short while, Gerald instantly stepped out of his office—making sure to properly lock the door behind him—before driving off to the newest waterfall in the Leicom Continent. All of this... it couldn't just be pure coincidence.

The clues that the other party provided most probably involved incidents that were happening around Gerald, and if Gerald's thought process was correct, then the old poem was probably hinting that there was a hostage in that area...

Whatever the case was, after about half an hour, Gerald arrived at Durduff Mountain where the newest waterfall was located. The area itself had the largest mountain range in all of the Leicom Continent, leading many tourists to have their vacations here.

Regardless, upon entering the mountain, Gerald blended in with the crowd. After following them for a while, he eventually arrived at the newest waterfall...

Looking up, Gerald saw that it was barely even a hundred feet tall. While it certainly didn't have a height of three thousand feet, Gerald was well aware that the ancient poem's description was simply a hyperbole. After all, did a waterfall spanning three thousand feet even exist?

With that, Gerald immediately resumed looking for hints while everyone else was still aweing at the waterfall.

While looking around, the corner of Gerald's eye caught a glimpse of what appeared to be a rather narrow and mysterious-looking boulevard on the left of the waterfall. From the looks of it, only one person could pass through at a time...

Still, Gerald felt compelled to head there, which was why he immediately did just that...

After walking for a bit, he eventually arrived at the opening of a large cave. Before he could even venture in, however, he suddenly heard someone from inside crying out, "H-help...!"

Hearing how anxious the feminine voice's cries were, Gerald immediately deduced that she was in grave danger. With that, he bolted right toward the source of her voice without any hesitation!

As the screaming grew louder, Gerald soon caught sight of a woman who had been tied to a stone pillar. With water appearing to constantly drip from above her, it certainly explained why she was so drenched.

Running over to free her, Gerald also noticed that both her eyes were bloodshot, signifying just how long she had been trapped here...

Either way, upon seeing Gerald, the overjoyed woman instantly cried out, "H-hello! P-please, save me...!"

Nodding in response, Gerald then retrieved a small knife from his backpack before easily freeing the woman from the rope.

Realizing that she was finally free, the relieved woman instantly hugged Gerald tight.

Not even flinching from that, Gerald didn't beat around the bush and immediately asked, "You're safe now. Regardless, may I know how long you've been trapped in here, miss?"

Hearing that, the woman shook her head before replying, "...That... I'm not too sure, honestly... All I remember is that I was knocked unconscious by someone as I was heading home last night... Upon waking up, I was already here..."

Upon hearing that, Gerald instantly frowned before asking, "...I see. Prior to getting knocked out, are you absolutely sure you didn't come across any weird situations on your way home?"

Shaking her head again—and feeling slightly confused as to why she was being asked all this—the woman then replied, "Not at all. After all, I always get off work at around eight. While it's true that I leave work alone, I also drive, you see, and I make it a habit to go straight home after office hours..."

As Gerald registered her reply, the corner of his eyes suddenly caught a glimpse of what appeared to be a purple envelope that had been slipped into a stone with a tiny crevice on its side...

Raising a slight brow, Gerald then walked over and picked it up.

"...Huh? An envelope...?" mumbled the confused woman.

"...Whatever the case is, you're safe now, miss. Even so, I'll need you to report what happened to you to the Grand Council. Also, please be more careful in the future!"

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Chapter 1792

Gerald had deliberately avoided her question so that she wouldn't ask too much.

Getting the hint, the woman then nodded before quickly leaving the cave.

Seeing that she was now gone, Gerald quickly opened the letter and began reading through it...

'Congratulations on finding the first hostage, Mr. Crawford! Now hurry along and go find where the next hostage is! There's no money hidden here!'

After reading through the letter, Gerald couldn't help but frown. Another ancient poem...? The culprit really enjoyed using ancient poems as clues, didn't he?

Regardless, the hint this time was pretty straightforward. Since the poem included the word 'money', it was only fair to assume that the next hostage could be found in a bank.

However... which bank? There were way too many banks in the Leicom Continent for Gerald to find the right one in such a short amount of time.

Realizing that he wasn't going to get anything done just by speculating here alone, Gerald immediately left the area, intent on studying the clue with Rey back at the office.

The second he got into his car, however, he immediately received a call from an unknown number.

"It appears that you've rescued the first hostage, Mr. Crawford. I'm guessing you've found the purple envelope as well, then?"

While Gerald could tell that the speaker was a male, his voice was weird, to say the least. Whatever the

case was, Gerald then retorted, "I have, also f\*ck you. You won't get away with all of this! I'll make sure I capture you if it's the last thing I do!"

Following that, Gerald immediately hung up, not wanting to waste his breath on this strange man.

With that, Gerald then drove Juno's car back to his office. Since his own car had previously been blown up, he could only use hers for the moment...

Regardless, upon entering his office, Gerald was instantly greeted by the sight of Rey and two others inside.

Seeing that Gerald was back, Rey took the chance to ask, "Mr. Crawford, you're back! Where did you head off so early in the morning?"

Since all three of them hadn't seen Gerald all morning, they all had a hunch that he had probably gone off to do some personal investigating.

Either way, despite Rey's question, Gerald simply ordered, "Rey, I need you to immediately start investigating the phrase, 'There's no money hidden here'!"

Not even bothering to ask why, Rey immediately headed to his computer to get to work as he replied, "Loud and clear!"

While Rey was used to not getting immediate answers from Gerald, Juno wasn't. With that in mind, she quickly walked up to him before asking, "What's wrong, Gerald...?"



Hearing that, Gerald retrieved the purple envelope from his pocket before handing it to Juno.

After reading through it, she momentarily appeared shocked, though that was to be expected.

What Gerald hadn't expected, however, was the fact that Juno would suddenly say, "...I... I think I know where the letter is pointing to! If my guess is correct, it should be referring to a bank or a tax building... And there's only one place I can think of where both buildings can be found close together!"

Upon hearing that, Gerald immediately knew the area Juno was referring to. With that in mind, he patted Rey's shoulder before saying, "You heard her. Let's head there right now!"

With that, Gerald and Rey bolted out of the office before speedily driving toward the tax building Juno had talked about.

Since Juno's guess made total sense, Gerald had a feeling that the second hostage was definitely going to be there...

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Chapter 1793

While they were on their way there, Rey couldn't help but ask, "So... mind filling me in, Mr. Crawford...?"

Turning to look at Rey for a moment, Gerald then replied, "Remember that call from yesterday?"

Nodding in response, Rey then said, "I do. That person said he wanted to play a game with you... Don't tell me it's already started?"

“It has. That person has challenged me to rescue six hostages, and I’ve already rescued one this morning. We’re currently on our way to rescue the second one!” explained Gerald.

Hearing that, Rey found himself momentarily speechless. No wonder Gerald hadn’t been around this morning... He had already saved someone while they were still barely awake!

Disregarding how stunned Rey looked, Gerald then added, “Either way, that phrase I told you to investigate earlier, ‘There’s no money being hidden here,’ directly relates to the second hostage’s location, which is why we’re currently targeting the bank near the tax building!”

Just as Gerald completed his explanation, both of them arrived at the entrance of the tax building.

After getting off, the duo began looking around for the bank, and soon enough, they found it. However, since it was the weekend, the bank was closed, and only the self-service bank—at the side—remained open.

“Closed, huh... What should we do now, Mr. Crawford?” mumbled Rey as he looked at Gerald.

“I’m sure the culprit anticipated the bank being closed today as well. With that in mind, the second hostage should be within the only operational part of a bank on a weekend, that being...”

“The self-service bank!” yelled the duo at the same time.

Now that they had come to this conclusion, both men rushed into the self-service bank and immediately began looking around.

A short while later, Rey—who had searched high and low for clues of where the hostage could be—couldn't help but say, "...There doesn't appear to be anyone here, Mr. Crawford... Could we have been mistaken...?"

"Negative. I'm sure Juno made the right guess!" replied Gerald without any hesitation.

The hostage was definitely here. They just hadn't found them yet.

Thankfully, since there weren't too many people around—due to it being the weekend—after the duo went silent for a while, they were able to hear faint knocking sounds coming from behind them!

Turning around, Rey perked his ears... before pointing at one of the ATM machines and shouting, "It's coming from the third ATM, Mr. Crawford!"

Nodding in agreement, both of them then hurried over to the machine...

As Gerald squatted and began investigating the ATM, the duo was caught slightly off guard when they heard a voice coming from the area where one would usually slip their cards into!

The voice itself was feminine, and it was calling out in a weak voice, "H-help... Please..."

Hearing that, Rey instantly yelled, "We've found the second hostage! We really did come to the right place!"

“Indeed, but it’s too early to be celebrating! Go call the Grand Council, Rey! Tell them to send people over to open this machine up!” ordered Gerald.

“Roger that!” replied Rey as he quickly fished his phone out and began calling the Grand Council...

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About half an hour later, people sent by the Grand Council could be seen rushing over alongside a few of the bank’s staff, all of them appearing anxious. After all, it was definitely flabbergasting to learn that a person was locked inside an ATM machine.

After about another ten minutes of prying the ATM open, they finally managed to reveal what was inside...

Just as Gerald and Rey had deduced, there truly was a woman trapped inside! To make matters even more shocking, she was one of the bank’s staff!

Regardless, once the woman was hurriedly sent to the hospital, those sent over by the Grand Council began inspecting the scene...

From what they could gather, the lid—at the back of the machine—had been deliberately welded tightly by the perpetrator...

As they continued investigating, one of the supervisors retrieved a purple envelope from within the machine as he asked, “...Hmm? A letter?”

Hearing that, Gerald immediately took it from him. The supervisor himself made no effort to stop him. After all, Gerald had become quite famous among those in the Grand Council, which explained why he was aware of who Gerald was and why he knew better than to meddle in the youth's business.

In any case, with the letter now in his hands, Gerald then led Ray back into the car...

Once inside, Gerald immediately opened the envelope... but instead of a message, the only thing inside was a pink hairpin...

"...Hmm? A hairpin...?" muttered Gerald as he raised a slight brow.

'This is a new one... Was there really a need to make such a major change in how you give your clues out?' Gerald thought to himself.

While two heads were definitely better than one, neither of them could figure out what the deal was with the hairpin.

Due to that, the duo eventually gave up for the moment and decided to return to the office first. Women would probably know more about hairpins than them, and thankfully, they had Juno and Yrsa on their side. With any luck, they'd be able to decipher the message behind the hairpin...

With that in mind, upon returning to the firm, Gerald instantly handed the hairpin to her before saying, "Say, Juno, have a look at this hairpin. If I wanted to buy something similar, where could I get it?"

Taking the hairpin and frowning slightly, Juno then brought it with her to the computer and quickly began researching it...

Shortly after, she exclaimed, "I've got it! It's a special hairpin that's currently being distributed to all the staff members of one of the banks! They're given out in pairs!"

Hearing that, Rey was momentarily stunned. After gathering his thoughts, he then turned to face Gerald before saying, "...You know, the woman we saved before had a similar hairpin on! However, I'm pretty sure she only had one on, which is why I'm assuming this pin is hers! No wonder the hairpin felt so familiar when you first took it out of the letter!"

"What? Are you absolutely sure?" asked Gerald.

"Positive!" replied Rey.

"Then what are we waiting for? Let's head to the hospital!" declared Gerald as he and Rey bolted out of the office again, driving straight for the hospital...

While driving, Gerald—who now understood that the incident had been too straightforward for it to be over—was prompted to say, "The incident is far from over... Freeing that girl from the ATM was only the first step! With that in mind, we haven't moved past the crisis regarding the second hostage!"

Forget the third hostage, they weren't even done saving the second one yet! Regardless, now that Gerald was sure that the incident wasn't over yet, he knew that he had to protect the second hostage at all costs.

"I see... How abominable our opponent is...! To think that he'd fool us like this!" grumbled Rey.

Either way, the duo soon arrived at the hospital...

After quickly inquiring about the woman, they realized that she had left the hospital not too long ago!

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Hearing that, Gerald and Rey dashed out of the hospital, hoping to catch up with the woman. As they rushed out, the duo thankfully stopped just in time to avoid getting run over by a speeding black car!

“Where the hell did you learn to drive, b\*stard?!” scowled Rey as he glared while pointing at the black car.

Gerald, on the other hand, was much more interested in the purple letter that had fluttered out of the car and was now lying on the ground.

Quickly opening it, Gerald then read the letter...

‘The second game has officially begun!’

“That utter b\*stard...!” growled Gerald as he crumpled the letter up, knowing full well that he had been a step too late.

Since the envelope had come from that black car, the car was undoubtedly the key!

Still, now wasn’t the time to feel sorry for himself. With that, Gerald began running toward their car while shouting, “Hurry, Rey! We have to pursue them!”

Once both of them were inside, Gerald stepped on the accelerator, sending the car lunging forward! Since the black car was long gone, Gerald could only speed in the direction he had last seen the black car in.

Unfortunately, even though Gerald accelerated all the way, soon enough, he understood that he had lost the black car for good...

Thinking the same thing, Rey was prompted to ask, "...What should we do now, Mr. Crawford...?"

Neither of them even knew how to proceed since the culprit was always one step ahead of them...

As Gerald wondered how to even reply to Rey, his phone suddenly began ringing.

Immediately knowing who the caller was, the angered Gerald picked it up and roared, "You b\*stard! What the hell do you want? Are you fooling around with me?!"

Laughing maniacally, the caller then mocked, "Not so calm anymore, eh, Mr. Crawford? It's not your style to be this manic!"

"...Don't get too smug just yet! I'll definitely capture you...!" sneered Gerald.

"Hah! Be my guest! If you can, that is! Regardless, let's meet at the Moon Observation Deck at seven tonight! If you don't come, well... this woman isn't going to be alive for much longer!" scoffed the man before hanging up the phone.

The Moon Observation Deck was a viewing platform in the Leicom Continent that was only open at night. From up there, one could see the entire continent...



Regardless, since the perpetrator had made an appointment there, Gerald was sure that something was definitely going to happen at the observation deck. Even so, what choice did he have but to obey the scoundrel's orders...

With that, Gerald and Rey then drove to the Moon Observation Deck... While it was still noon by the time they arrived, their wait in the car didn't feel long at all.

Soon enough, the clock struck seven and the Moon Observation Deck became open to the public. With that in mind, it barely took a few minutes for the entire place to be packed with people. Everyone had come over to enjoy the night view from the famed observation deck...

Well, everyone except for Gerald and Rey. They were here to save someone.

Either way, now that the observation deck was finally open, the duo got out of their car and immediately began looking for that woman... To their dismay, no matter how much they looked, they simply couldn't find any traces of her!

"...Could that b\*stard be playing around with us again...?" speculated Rey with a slight frown on his face.

Upon hearing that, Gerald gave no response. However, it was shortly after when Gerald noticed the presence of a rather odd spot.

Pausing for a moment, Gerald then said, "...Come with me. I think I have a lead!"

With that, Rey began running after Gerald who was already bolting toward that place...

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Chapter 1796

Soon enough, the duo arrived at what appeared to be a suspended platform.

Looking up and pointing toward it, Gerald then shouted, "Up there!"

As Rey turned to look up, he was surprised to see the hair of a woman hanging from the side of the platform!

It didn't take a genius to figure out that the woman lying up there was none other than the bank staff member they had previously saved from the ATM machine! To be captured again immediately after being released from the hospital... What an unfortunate woman...

At that moment, both of them noticed that a figure had been staring intently at them from some rockery formations nearby.

Seeing that, Gerald ordered, "...Go save that woman, Rey. I'm hunting that person down!"

Following that, Gerald bolted straight for the figure, believing that he was definitely the culprit behind all this!

As he swiftly gained on the now fleeing man, the frustrated Gerald couldn't help but yell, "Stop running, you coward!"

To Gerald's surprise, the man did as Gerald told.

After his abrupt halt, the man then slowly turned around to look at Gerald—who had stopped in his tracks as well—before saying in a sinister voice, "So, we finally meet, Mr. Crawford!"

"...Who the hell are you..." growled Gerald as he glared daggers at the man.

"Hah! I'm just someone who's about to die!" replied the man as he slowly slid his hood off to reveal his face...

Only for the now stunned Gerald to realize that the person was faceless!

Blank, smooth, and white, the expressionless person would've terrified any ordinary person to the point of fainting! Thankfully, Gerald was no ordinary person.

"You... You're not human, are you!" yelled Gerald as he stared at the faceless man.

"That I'm not! Though the same applies to you too, no? Still, unlike you who's only half ghost, I'm an actual dead person who died drowning!" sneered the strange man.

"...Alright, so... Why did you come looking for me then...?" asked Gerald who was now more confused than anything.

"Listen up! My name is Yorrek Gurland and I drowned in a river three years ago! The one who drowned me was none other than the chairman of the Ember Lord Group, the Ember Lord himself! Regardless, after finding out that you had killed the Ember Lord, I just couldn't come to terms with it, which is why I came looking for you!" declared Yorrek.

Now understanding that this person had come looking for him for killing the Ember Lord, Gerald then replied, "...Couldn't come to terms? I'm not sure what your thought process is, but shouldn't you be thanking me now? After all, I've technically avenged you by killing him!"

"Silence! He should have died by my hands! You ruined everything!" roared Yorrek almost hysterically.

Hearing that, Gerald could immediately tell how deep his hatred was toward the Ember Lord. To think that Yorrek would be so reluctant to let him go, even after the Ember Lord's death...

"...Well, whatever the case is, he's already dead! What else do you want?" asked Gerald.

"Heh! While he's dead, you're still alive! Since you're the one who killed him, I'm holding you responsible for all this! With that said, I'm killing you as his substitute!" retorted Yorrek in a frigid tone.

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Chapter 1797

"...Oh? Do you really think you're capable of getting rid of me?" retorted Gerald as he looked at Yorrek with a disdainful expression.

Forget getting rid of him, Yorrek was probably incapable of even harming him!

“While it’s true that I can’t personally kill you, I can still get rid of others!” sneered Yorrek before immediately dashing toward Gerald!

Seeing that, Gerald quickly drew the Astrabyss Sword, ready to slash Yorrek when he came within range!

However, in the very next second, Yorrek seemed to just disappear into thin air! Despite Gerald having his sword at the ready, Yorrek appeared to have successfully escaped...

While it was certainly disappointing, Gerald was sure that the game between him and Yorrek wasn’t over yet. In fact, this meeting probably symbolized the true start of the games...

Fast forward to sometime later, Rey—who appeared quite flustered—couldn’t help but look at Gerald, his tone brimming with admiration as he said, “You’re... really amazing, you know that, Mr. Crawford?”

“Am I?” replied Gerald in a humble tone.

To explain what led to this exchange of words, let’s go back to when Gerald first regrouped with Rey at the car park. By that point, Rey had already saved the woman and he was simply waiting for Gerald to return.

When he finally saw Gerald, he was about to call out when all of a sudden, Gerald disappeared! The next thing Rey knew, a gust of wind had rushed past him, and a second later, all of Tyson’s men—who had been lying in ambush—could be seen lying on the ground, defeated. Gerald was the only one who remained standing in the middle...

Naturally, that had stunned Rey greatly, and he became surer than ever that Gerald was actually some kind of mythical being... Thinking back, it truly was a wise decision to remain by Gerald's side.

Gerald himself found those men to be trivial affairs. After all, it barely took seconds for him to defeat all of them.

While his past self would've surely been afraid in that situation—due to his lack of ability back then—, his present self was different. He was no longer afraid of going against people like Tyson or anyone possessing that level of strength.

"Of course, you are! You were able to beat those ten men like they were nothing! What more, you were so fast that I wasn't even able to witness you defeating all of them!"

"Barely praiseworthy. They were just too weak! Speaking of which, call it a gut feeling, but it seemed like those men were just trying to steal something from you. Am I correct? And if so, what were they trying to obtain?" replied Gerald rather curiously.

"...That..." muttered Rey, sounding slightly hesitant to reply.

Seeing Rey's hesitation, Gerald then said, "...If it's inconvenient to share, just forget about it. I won't force you!"

The fact that Rey was being so wary about sharing the information must have meant that the item was extremely extraordinary and special to him...

"...Rather than it being inconvenient to me, I'm just worried that it'll bring trouble to you! For context,

this item I have... It's unique, to say the least..." replied Rey.

Rey wasn't lying when he said that either. After all, if he ended up bring unnecessary trouble to Gerald's doorstep, he would surely end up being filled with self-reproach...

Even so, Rey's warning only made Gerald even more curious than before.

"...Now I'm really curious. Just tell me what it is already. Don't worry, I'm stronger than you could ever imagine. Who knows, I could even help you solve what's been troubling you! Besides, I'd rather not have you bear such a great risk alone!" said Gerald.

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Seeing that Gerald had hit the brakes, Rey took the chance to take a wooden box out from his backpack. The box itself had a painting resembling a spider on the lid...

Following that, Rey slowly opened the wooden box... Revealing a single black bead.

"The item they were after... is this bead!" said Rey as he handed the box to Gerald.

Taking the box, Gerald then stared at the black bead... and barely a second later, the bead momentarily glowed red!

Seeing that, both of them exchanged glances with each other. It appeared that both of them had witnessed the same thing.

"...Where on earth did you even get this thing?" asked Gerald after a short pause.

"Well, remember when we went for a trip to the countryside? I found it by a small river and simply felt compelled to pick it up... Later on, Tyson and the others realized that I had the box, and they instantly wanted me to hand it to them though I refused..." replied Rey.

"I see... Have any strange incidents happened to you after you took the box?" asked Gerald.

Hearing that, Rey took a moment to think about it.

After quite a while, Rey eventually said, "...Come to think of it, there is one incident... Back then, I was just returning home when the bead suddenly began emitting a red, dazzling glow... Truth be told, I was sure that it was going to explode back then! However, the glow simply dimmed after that, and the bead hasn't behaved strangely ever since..."

"...A red glow... You mean the one we just witnessed?"

"Bingo. Regardless, do you have any idea what this black bead even is, Mr. Crawford...?" asked Rey as he looked at Gerald.

In response, Gerald simply shook his head. While he hadn't the slightest clue what the bead was used for, he did know that it was brimming with the aura of an evil spirit. With that in mind, the bead was definitely bad news.

With that in mind, after looking at the bead for a while longer, Gerald then closed the wooden box



before returning it to Rey.

“Hold onto this first, Rey. Once we get back to the office, I’ll have someone look at it. With any luck, we’ll be able to find out more about its history!” said Gerald in a reassuring tone.

Nodding in response, Rey then replied, “Loud and clear, Mr. Crawford!”

After making sure that the box was safely returned into Rey’s backpack, Gerald then started the car’s engine again before driving straight for the office...

Upon returning, the duo saw that Juno had already prepared everything for the trip.

“I’ve packed all the equipment we’ll be needing, Gerald! We’re all set to go!” reported Juno.

“Excellent. We’ll be heading off at dawn then!” declaring Gerald as he turned to face both Juno and Rey.

“...Well, if you insist...” replied Rey, sensing how sincere Gerald’s concern was toward him.

With that, a brief screeching of tires could be heard...

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“Copy that!” replied both of them.

Since they were going into the adventure mostly blind, all three of them had no idea what troubles to even expect. With that in mind, all they could do was prepare different tactics and equipment in hopes

that it would allow them to be ready enough to deal with the situations they eventually came across.

Still, with Gerald there, Juno and Rey undoubtedly felt much more assured. After all, the duo knew that Gerald would never let anything happen to them.

Regardless, all three of them turned in early that night. After all, they were embarking on a new adventure the next day, so they needed to be well-rested and be in good shape.

At eight the next morning, the trio took one more look at Gerald's map—that Old Flint had given them—before getting into their car and driving for Sunset Village...

From their starting point, it would take approximately two days before they would arrive there. With that in mind, they would have to spend two whole days on the road..

While Gerald speedily drove along the highway, Juno—who was seated at the shotgun seat—passed the time by reading a book entitled, 'Yin and Yang Theory', that she had borrowed from Rey's house.

It was a while later when Juno closed the book for a moment... And it was also then when she realized something.

"...Say, the book doesn't specify who the author is!" muttered Juno.

"Yeah, I realized that too. I wonder if they just forgot to add the author's name in while publishing it..." replied Rey who had evidently realized that much earlier on, though he didn't particularly find it noteworthy.

"Forgot? Such books have to undergo strict examination! Without the author's name, the book couldn't

have been published in the first place! At least not legally!” replied Juno.

“Well, there’s also the case of the book’s author being a special person. With that in mind, the author could’ve easily bypassed the need of having their name written on the cover to be published!” said Gerald, putting his two cents in.

“...When you put it that way, it does make quite a bit of sense!” replied Juno in agreement.

“Still... If the author truly is that special, then doesn’t that make the book very special as well? Why would they still choose to publish it then?” said Rey in a confused tone.

“A valid question. Still, a published book with a mysterious author... I wonder if the book holds any secrets in it...” muttered Juno.

“...Speaking of which, did the book mention anything about the token of Demonic Blood? From the Demonic Blood Clan?” asked Gerald.

Hearing that, Juno began flipping through the pages... and after a while, she realized that there were mentions of the token!

“There are... Apparently, the token of Demonic Blood is a divine artifact of the Demonic Blood Clan. It can be used to rule all ghosts and spirits!” replied Juno.

Upon hearing that, Gerald nodded slightly. As it turned out, what Old Flint had told him was true.

“...Say... Are we heading to Sunset Village for the token of Demonic Blood...?” asked Rey who appeared to have caught onto something.

Juno turned to look at Gerald as well when she heard that.

“We are, actually. We’re going to the most feminine place to look for the Demonic Blood Clan’s territory. With any luck, we’ll finally be able to obtain the token of Demonic Blood!” replied Gerald without the slightest hesitation.

Since all three of them were in this together, Gerald found little reason to hide such crucial information.

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## Chapter 1800

“...I see... Even so, it won’t be easy to get that token... After all, the book also states that many others have attempted to obtain the token of Demonic Blood. In the end, not only did all of them fail, but they all had to pay heavy prices as well...” replied Juno.

“I’m aware. Still, I believe that we’ll ultimately be able to obtain the token!” declared Gerald confidently.

After all, though the others failed to get the token, Gerald didn’t necessarily have to fail as well. Gerald was sure that with how times had changed, the capabilities of his generation should be much harder for the Demonic Blood Clan to deal with. What more, with how powerful he currently was, he truly believed that he had the right to obtain the token of Demonic Blood...

Regardless, after driving for two days, the trio finally arrived at Sunset Village...

Upon arriving, Gerald told Juno to look for a hotel for them to stay the night. They would continue the second stage of their journey the next day...

Following his orders, Juno quickly found a high-end hotel for them to stay in.

After getting their luggage to their rooms, the trio then headed to the restaurant downstairs to have their dinner.

The second they stepped into the restaurant, however, Rey suddenly frowned as he held onto his belly. Looking at Gerald and Juno, he then said, "...I... may need to head to the washroom for a bit. You two go on ahead, and order whatever you're ordering for me. I'm not a picky eater, so don't worry!"

Following that, the duo watched as Rey hastily dashed for the bathroom.

Choosing not to think much of it, Gerald and Juno then found a dining table for three and began ordering...

It was about ten minutes later when Rey finally returned. However, he appeared noticeably nervous as he quickly walked over to Gerald's table.

Raising a slight brow, Gerald was prompted to ask, "...Is... something the matter? Why do you look so nervous?"

"...W-well... You see, when I was in the bathroom earlier..." stuttered Rey who was sounding rather out of breath.

“Hold up. Drink some water and calm down first...” said Juno as she passed a glass of water to the anxious lad.

Nodding, Rey then took a sip of water before taking in a deep breath. Once he was calmer, Rey then lowered his head before whispering, “...Alright, so... While I was at the washroom earlier, I overheard a conversation between two men... From what I’ve managed to gather, they’re here for the Demonic Blood Clan, just like us!”

Hearing that, both Gerald and Juno immediately began looking around to see if anyone overheard that. Once they were sure that nobody was close to them, they turned back to face Rey.

“...Are you absolutely sure you didn’t hear wrongly, Rey?” asked Gerald with a serious tone.

“One hundred percent!” replied Rey with a determined nod.

Based on how sure he looked and sounded, the duo definitely didn’t have any further doubts. As it turned out, the trio wasn’t the only ones looking for the Demonic Blood Clan...

“...Do you remember what the duo looked like?” asked Gerald after a brief pause.

Upon hearing that question, Rey immediately began looking around... until finally, he found the two people he had eavesdropped on back in the bathroom.

Subtly pointing toward the men—who were seated quite close to them—, Rey then whispered, “That’s them!”

Turning to look at where Rey was pointing, Gerald saw four black-robed men sitting around a dining table. Even from afar, he could already tell that these weren't good people...

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Chapter 1801

"...Both of you, stay here. I'm heading there to have a look!" instructed Gerald as he got up and took his empty glass before walking in the direction where the four men were sitting.

Since the customers had to refill their own drinks in this restaurant, it was perfectly normal for Gerald to get more water for himself. On his return trip, however, he made sure to 'accidentally' drop his glass right next to the four men's table!

Seeing that some of the water had accidentally splashed onto a few of the men's pants, Gerald quickly reached for the glass while 'apologetically' saying, "I-I'm sorry!"

In response, one of the men simply got Gerald's glass for him before handing it back to the youth while saying, "It's fine. Be more careful!"

"I-I will!" replied Gerald as he noticed the tattoo on the man's wrist while taking his glass back.

Following that, he then hurried back to his dining table. The second he sat down, however, his expression instantly turned slightly unpleasant...

Noticing the change in his mood, Juno was prompted to ask, "...What's wrong, Gerald? Did you manage to gather anything...?"

“...Well, for one, those aren’t ordinary people... They belong to the Soul Hunter organization!” whispered Gerald.

“The Soul Hunters? That’s them? To think they’d be here as well!” replied the shocked Juno in a hushed voice.

Raising a slight brow, Rey then asked, “...Um... Who exactly are the Soul Hunters...?”

As the name suggested, the Soul Hunters were an organization that specialized in hunting and killing ghosts and spirits. Naturally, they also possessed special equipment that would help them detect the presence of what they hunted.

Regardless, Gerald ignored Rey’s question before saying, “...Since they’re looking for the Demonic Blood Clan’s territory, they’re definitely after the token of Demonic Blood as well...”

If that group managed to get their hands on the token, then the consequences would be near unimaginable... After all, they would be able to rule over every ghost and spirit on the planet! Things would surely go out of hand by then! With that in mind, there was no way Gerald was going to let them have their way.

“Figured as much... Still, what are we going to do now? Are we getting rid of them?” asked Juno.

Shaking his head, Gerald then replied, “Negative. While it’s true that there are only four of them, if I attack them now, I fear that the entire Soul Hunter organization will come after us to have their revenge. That wouldn’t be beneficial at all. With that in mind, I propose that we spy on them first.”

Hearing that, Juno could only agree.



With that, the trio then returned to their rooms to rest after their meal.

Well, Juno and Rey did. Gerald himself simply couldn't allow himself to remain idle. With that, he began meditating... and soon enough, he was able to have an out-of-body experience. With his mind now free to explore, Gerald—who was now invisible to the naked eye—immediately began searching for the four Soul Hunters again.

It didn't take long for him to find them, but by that point, all four of them were already sneakily leaving the hotel despite how late it was.

Watching as they entered the darkness, Gerald knew that he had to tail them.

A few minutes later, the group of Soul Hunters found themselves approaching a forest... And standing before that forest, was a mysterious-looking cloaked figure who had his back against them... It was evident that he was waiting there for them...

Seeing him, the four Soul Hunters then hurriedly stood at attention—behind the man—before respectfully declaring, “Leader!”

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Chapter 1802

June 9, 2021 by itgoes

Gerald Crawford: The Secretly or invisible Rich Man Chapter 1802

Perfectly hidden, Gerald—who had been secretly monitoring all this—found himself slightly surprised.

To think that the cloaked man was actually the leader of the Soul Hunter organization... Since their leader was also present, it only made sense that this was a large-scale mission. In other words, there was possibly going to be more Soul Hunters around...

Gerald's train of thought was cut short when the cloaked man asked his subordinates in a frigid tone, "I trust nobody knows your true identities yet?"

"Worry not, leader, for we've concealed our identities well!" replied one of the Soul Hunters.

"You'd better have. Regardless, head for the phosphorite mountain area at dawn. I'll be heading there first tonight. Again, don't get found out!" instructed the cloaked man.

"Loud and clear, leader!" replied all four of the Soul Hunters in unison.

With their reply, the cloaked man then leaped into the air, promptly disappearing into the dark of night...

After watching all that, Gerald couldn't help but feel slightly stunned. Just as he had speculated, the Soul Hunters were here for the token of Demonic Blood. The fact that he could tell how strong the leader of the Soul Hunter organization was certainly didn't make him feel any better...

Regardless, since his party was also planning to head out at dawn, there was a high chance that they were going to bump into the Soul Hunters while heading to the phosphorite mountain area...

Under normal circumstances, even if they did meet, both parties would've just ignored each other. After

all, the fact that the cultivators and the Soul Hunters had completely different backgrounds meant that there was little reason for the two groups to meddle with each other.

Unfortunately, since both of them wanted the same thing, conflict was pretty much inevitable.

With that in mind, after thinking about it, Gerald decided that it would be best to take out the four Soul Hunters before they even got to the phosphorite mountain area. By doing so, he would at least ensure that the three of them would have fewer enemies to deal with once they were at the actual location.

His mind made up, Gerald watched as the four Soul Hunters began to leave... and once they were close enough, Gerald made himself visible as he punched the air, forming a shockwave that sent all four of the Soul Hunters flying backward!

Of course, the attack wasn't lethal, and when they realized what had assaulted them, the four men instantly shouted, "A ghost?!"

All of them recognized Gerald as a ghost due to his body's current state.

Either way, it was clear that none of them had anticipated to bump into a ghost here of all places. Even so, they were trained professionals.

With that, all four of them quickly regained their wits as one of the Soul Hunters angrily shouted, "Quick! Gang up on him!"

Taking their daggers out in response, the four individuals then began charging toward Gerald! Since these people actually hunted down and killed ghosts and spirits, they were naturally much stronger compared to ordinary people.

Even so, in the end, they were nowhere near as strong or fast as Gerald, and Gerald knew it. With that in mind, Gerald wasn't about to get intimidated by their group attack anytime soon.

Instead, he simply chose to easily dodge their attacks!

Before the Soul Hunters could launch their second round of attacks, Gerald swiftly grabbed one of the men by his throat!

Unable to react in time, the other three Soul Hunters could only stare wide-eyed as the sickening sound of bones cracking could be heard... And just like that, one of them died from a broken neck!

Gerald himself simply tossed the body aside as casually as it was rubbish.

As for the hunters, they were simply too stupefied to feel humiliated. After all, none of them could've imagined that Gerald would be this powerful...

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[Chapter 1803](#)

“...What power... What kind of monster even are you?! Regardless, we bear no grudges against you! What reason do you have to kill us?!” interrogated one of the Soul Hunters.

After all, he was right. Gerald had simply attacked them out of the blue! It certainly raised quite a few questions.

“Hah! I don’t need to explain anything!” retorted Gerald, finding it laughable that they even considered the possibility of him telling them his motive or his identity. That was simply impossible!

With that in mind, Gerald then made his move... and in the blink of an eye, the three remaining Soul Hunters found themselves dead as well. To think that they weren’t even able to find out who Gerald really was before death...

Regardless, now that all four of them were dead, Gerald began searching their bodies... and eventually, he found four Soul Hunter tokens.

As the name suggested, these tokens represented their status as Soul Hunters, and anyone who was accepted into the organization would receive one. Either way, after obtaining the tokens, Gerald kept them by his side before swiftly leaving the scene...

As for the four corpses, while someone would probably discover them the following morning, Gerald wasn’t too worried about being a suspect. After all, he had attacked them in his Avatar form, which meant that he wouldn’t have left behind any traces of physical evidence no matter what he did.

Whatever the case was, now that he had the four tokens, Gerald felt that he and his party would be able to enter the phosphorite mountain area a lot more smoothly. At the very least, the trio wouldn’t be targeted too quickly by any other Soul Hunters they bumped into.

While this was slightly underhanded, all was fair in love and war. As long as he was able to obtain the token of Demonic Blood, Gerald didn't mind doing all this.

Regardless, Gerald quickly made his way back into his physical body—back at the hotel—before promptly falling asleep...

The next morning, all three of them awoke pretty early and after checking out, they instantly headed for their car. Once they were inside, Juno and Rey raised their heads as they heard Gerald say, "Here, take these!"

Raising a brow, both of them then extended their hands out... only for Gerald to hand a Soul Hunter token to each of them.

"...What's this then?" asked Rey in a curious tone.

"...Soul Hunter tokens? But how? And why would you have these?" exclaimed Juno in surprise as she turned to look at Gerald. Though she asked that question, she had a hunch as to why he had these.

"I bumped into the four Soul Hunters the night before and after dealing with them, I took their Soul Hunter tokens! With them, it'll be much more convenient for us to enter the phosphorite mountain area since we won't easily be found out by the other Soul Hunters. With any luck, we'll be able to keep our identities concealed throughout the process!" explained Gerald.

Hearing that, Juno and Rey realized that Gerald had secretly taken out the competition the night before. What swift action!

"By, 'won't be easily found out', do you mean to say that we should pretend to be Soul Hunters since we now have their tokens?" asked Rey for confirmation.

“Bingo. If all goes well, we should be able to achieve our goals right under the noses of the other Soul Hunters!” replied Gerald with a smile.

Following that, Gerald stepped on the gas and immediately began heading toward the phosphorite mountain area...

The phosphorite mountain area was quite famous in Sunset Village.

With how much phosphorite there was in the area, the locals would sell them to manufacturers who would then use the raw materials to manufacture other chemical substances. Aside from that, the phosphorite would also be sold for decorative purposes.

In short, the locals would rely on that place to obtain riches.

Whatever the case was, it was a two-hour drive from Sunset Village to their destination, and by the time they finally arrived there, it was twelve.

Seeing that they were just in time for lunch, Gerald then parked his car at a parking lot before leading Rey and Juno to a restaurant...

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Chapter 1804

After ordering their food, Rey couldn't help but whisper, "Did you two see all that phosphorite out there? What ungodly amounts!"

"Naturally. From what I've heard, the locals sell them to gain extra income. Another interesting fact that I came across is that the phosphorite is supposedly unlimited. Once an area is completely excavated, more phosphorite will simply reappear after some time! It truly is magical," explained Gerald.

"It truly is! Still, if that really is the case, then we could undoubtedly become rich just by relying on the endless phosphorite!" muttered Rey.

Hearing that, Gerald and Juno could only shake their heads. As it turned out, Rey was simply thinking more about the money.

"Allow me to remind you that you're an outsider, Rey. If you even dare touch the phosphorite, you'll surely be beaten up by the locals in no time!" replied Gerald.

Since the locals were the rightful owner of the phosphorite and they used it to gain riches, there was no



way in hell that they were going to let some random nobody take that away from them for free!

“I’m just saying!” said Rey as he chuckled in response before remaining silent.

Gerald himself didn’t care much about the money. After all, he was a person who had near endless wealth, so money wasn’t really an issue for him. Besides, it wasn’t as though they were here for money in the first place. Their goal was to obtain the token of Demonic Blood.

Regardless, it wasn’t long after before a group of men donning black clothes entered the restaurant they were in... and upon realizing their presence, the trio instantly put their guard up. After all, all the men who had just entered had tattoos reminiscent of the Soul Hunters on their arms!

“...Judging from those tattoos... They’re Soul Hunters, right, Mr. Crawford...?” whispered Rey.

Nodding in response, Gerald then said, “Indeed. I must say, their tattoos are a dead giveaway for people trying to lay low...”

Whatever the case was, to think that they would bump into other Soul Hunters here of all places. How unfortunate!

“Regardless, stay calm. Don’t let them find you suspicious!” added Gerald.

Hearing that, Rey and Juno quickly nodded. Rey even made sure to lower his head, afraid that he would mess up and make them look over.

Either way, the food soon came and the three of them quickly began chowing down.

However, it wasn't long before all three of them realized that the Soul Hunters were staring in their direction. What more, they appeared to be discussing something as well...

Seeing that, the anxious Rey quickly began quivering in worry as he whispered, "T-they've been looking at us this entire time, Mr. Crawford...! Have we been discovered? What should we do...?!"

"Again, stay calm!" replied Gerald as he glared at Rey, knowing full well that panicking would only make the Soul Hunters feel even more suspicious of them.

To the party's dismay, they soon watched as one of the Soul Hunters got up and began walking over to their table...

Stopping right by Juno's side, the Soul Hunter completely ignored both Gerald and Rey as he looked at her while asking, "Well hello there, beauty! What are you here for?"

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Chapter 1805

"We're just here for some minor business, mister!" replied Gerald with a subtle smile as he stood up the second he saw Juno signaling for him to help.

In response, the Soul Hunter simply looked at Gerald with a bleak expression before arrogantly retorting, "And who the hell are you? Can't you see that I'm talking to her? Do you think any of this concerns you?"

Upon hearing that, Gerald instantly frowned... and the next thing the Soul Hunter knew, he was already flying backward from Gerald's force palm attack!

Seeing that, the other Soul Hunters immediately got up, unsheathing their daggers at the same time as they glared at Gerald.

None of them had expected Gerald to make the first move. Naturally, they hadn't anticipated him to be this strong either.

"Those aren't ordinary people! They definitely have a reason for being here! Get them!" declared one of the Soul Hunters.

Hearing that, the other Soul Hunters instantly bolted toward Gerald and his party!

Even so, Gerald wasn't worried at all. With another force palm, Gerald sent a wave of energy toward the assailants, causing all of them to fall to the ground!

Now that there was room to escape, Gerald immediately grabbed onto Rey and Juno's arms before yelling, "Run!"

With that, the trio dashed out of the restaurant, unable to even find the time to pay for their meal!

By the time the Soul Hunters got back to their feet and ran out of the restaurant, Gerald and his party were nowhere in sight... They had successfully driven away!

“Those b\*stards! They really are extraordinary! Hurry and report this to the leader!” yelled the leader of the group.

So much for a stealthy approach... Gerald and his party had been found out before the adventure even began!

Whatever the case was, Rey—who had been frightened half to death earlier—was finally able to catch his breath after panting for so long. He truly hadn't expected Gerald to just fight the other party right off the bat...

Still, now that he had regained his calmness, Rey turned to face Gerald before admiringly saying, “You really are something else, Mr. Crawford! Sending so many of them flying in a single attack... It was just like watching an action movie scene!”

“While I appreciate the compliment, could you please be a bit calmer in the future...” grumbled Gerald as he raised a slight eyebrow while looking at Rey.

Upon hearing that, the embarrassed and awkward Rey simply lowered his head, mumbling in agreement.

Regardless, Juno herself didn't really blame Rey. With that in mind, she tried to switch the topic by asking, “...Either way, what should we do now, Gerald? The Soul Hunters are definitely going to go after us now!”

With the mess they had just created, the alerted enemies would definitely start causing them trouble in the near future...

“Don’t worry, they still don’t have a good grasp on our identities for now! As long as we remain in the shadows while they’re doing things in public, I believe we can turn this situation into an advantageous one!” replied Gerald in a calm tone.

Gerald believed that the leader of the Soul Hunters wouldn’t waste too much effort on three nobodies. After all, their main target was still the token of Demonic Blood...

Not too long after, the cloaked man—whom Gerald had met the day before—could be seen sitting in his tent at a campsite.

A few Soul Hunters were now standing before him—after getting his permission to enter—as one of them reported, “We bumped into three peculiar individuals in a restaurant today, leader! We know that at least one of them has extraordinary strength, and we believe that the trio aren’t regular people!”

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Upon hearing that, the cloaked man stood up as well before asking, “What do we know about them?”

The same Soul Hunter from before then replied, “Not much, though we assume that they’re here for the token of Demonic Blood as well!”

“I see... Well, pay more attention to them from now on. If you discover the trio, then report back immediately! If they attempt to get in our way, just get rid of them!” ordered the cloaked man.

“Loud and clear, leader!” yelled the soul hunters in unison before leaving the tent...

Fast forward to nighttime, Gerald and his party could be seen setting up their tents after finding flat ground. Once that was done, they started a fire and sat around it.

After a short while, Rey couldn't help but look at Gerald as he asked, "...Is... there a reason we're camping out here...? Why didn't we just book a hotel room...?"

Turning to face Rey, Gerald then replied, "The Soul Hunters are tracking us down now, remember? Staying in a hotel would only turn us into sitting ducks!"

Hearing that, Rey quickly registered Gerald's logic. After all, if everyone from the Soul Hunter organization was here, then staying in a hotel would definitely increase their risk of being found. That, of course, would place them in an extremely dangerous situation...

Either way, a brief moment later, Rey stood up before saying, "I... uh... need to use the washroom!"

Following that, Rey then began jogging toward some bushes. Since they were in the wilderness, there really was no other way for them to relieve themselves...

Seeing that Rey was gone, Juno was prompted to say, "We'll definitely be facing a bloody battle with the Soul Hunter organization if we're found again, Gerald..."

Gerald naturally already knew that, so he simply nodded before replying, "I know. However, we don't really have much of a choice. After all, if the Soul Hunters obtain the token, then everything will surely go haywire!"

After all, the token of Demonic Blood could be used to control all the ghosts in the world. With that in mind, if the Soul Hunters got their hands on it, then the ghosts would surely be used to conquer all of humanity! By that point, everyone would surely be done for!

Shaking his head as he thought about it, Gerald then tried to change the topic by asking, “Speaking of which... You’re currently at the Sage Realm now, right?”

Nodding slightly in response, Juno then sighed before replying, “I am, though I’m already at the peak stage of that realm. Unfortunately, I’ve been unable to make a breakthrough!”

Raising one’s strength to the next realm was never easy, and Juno simply didn’t have the talent that Gerald had. With that in mind, all she could do was continue to train in hopes that she would be able to break through into the next realm. Sadly for her, she had already been training tirelessly for a few months by now, and the fact that she still hadn’t made any progress was certainly disheartening.

“Don’t worry, I’ll definitely think of a way to help you breakthrough!” said Gerald as he smiled faintly while consoling her.

Hearing that, Juno then nodded, placing her full belief in Gerald. He was definitely going to help her improve in the long run!

It was at that moment when both of them suddenly heard Rey shouting!

Instantly turning vigilant, both of them got up before running toward Rey’s direction!

“What’s wrong?” asked Gerald as he cautiously scanned the area while running.

To their shock, Rey—who hadn’t even put his pants on properly yet—was trembling vigorously on the ground!

Looking around to see if anything had attacked him, Gerald and Juno soon found it odd that they couldn't find anything out of the ordinary...

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Chapter 1807

Their attention was brought back to Rey when they heard his quivering voice say, "I-it was so terrifying, Mr. Crawford...!"

Looking at Rey's fearful expression, Gerald then frowned slightly as he asked, "What is? What did you see?"

"Yeah, I mean, there doesn't seem to be anything around..." muttered Juno who was feeling just as bewildered as Gerald was.

Still, both of them were sure that whatever had scared Rey wasn't a ghost. After all, the duo couldn't sense the presence of ghosts at all.

"I-I'm not too sure either... But just as I got up after doing my business, I suddenly felt a cool breeze blow past me... But... then..." muttered Rey who was now shaking so much that he couldn't even finish his sentence.

"...Then what?" asked Gerald.

"...W-well... When I turned around and looked up... I saw a pair of bloodshot eyes staring right back at me...! I-It was so terrifying...!" stuttered Rey as he recalled the incident he had witnessed.



Upon hearing that, the duo instinctively looked up... but even after scanning around again, neither of them was able to see anything that Rey had just described. All there was up there was the crescent moon...

"...You sure it wasn't a trick of your eyes? I don't think either of us see anything like that..." asked Gerald as he looked at Rey with a slightly raised brow.

Shaking his head, Rey then determinedly replied, "I swear on my life, Mr. Crawford and Miss Zorn! I'm not joking around here! There really were a pair of bloodshot eyes!"

Seeing how sure he appeared, Gerald and Juno knew that he wasn't playing around. Adding that to the fact that Rey was trembling so much, he must have really bumped into something exceedingly terrifying...

"...Got it. Regardless, don't worry, I'm here now. Nothing will happen to you! That aside... Pull up your pants already!" said Gerald as he firmly patted Rey's shoulder.

After hearing that statement, Rey looked down... before turning to look at Gerald and Juno again. It took him a second, but when it finally set in that his boxers were in full view this entire time, Rey's face instantly reddened as he quickly pulled his pants up.

Seeing that, Gerald then consoled Rey again by adding, "Alright, let's head back to our tents first. If you need to do your business again later, I'll keep you company!"

Understanding that Rey had undergone a major shock, this was the only way Gerald could think of that could slightly put Rey at ease. Even so, he knew that his words didn't help much since Rey still looked so terrified. The image of the glowing red eyes must have imprinted itself into his mind by this point...

Knowing that staying out here for any longer definitely wouldn't help, Gerald then led Juno and Rey back to their tents....

Once they were there, Gerald got out some warm alcohol and poured a cup for Rey.

"Here! Let's drink that horrible memory away!" said Gerald.

Compared to the much more experienced Gerald, Rey was just a fresh university graduate. Due to that, he barely had any experience with the real world, yet here he was. Out here on an adventure with Gerald. With that in mind, Gerald knew that it was his responsibility to take care of Rey since he was the one who dragged him into this in the first place.

Regardless, Rey took the cup with his still trembling hands before replying, "...Thank you, Mr. Crawford!"

With how frightened Rey still was, Gerald couldn't help but feel slightly worried that the ghost was still lingering around. While he did do a quick scan through the area, it was far too dark by this point to clearly discern anything...

Whatever the case was, after downing the hot alcohol, Rey appeared much more relaxed than before. At the very least, he wasn't trembling anymore.

Looking at Rey, Gerald then asked in a concerned tone, "Feeling better...?"

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## Chapter 1808

Nodding slightly in response, Rey then replied, “Very much so...”

Hearing that, Gerald couldn't help but breathe a sigh of relief.

However, as Gerald turned to face Rey again—about to say something else—, both he and Juno realized that Rey was staring wide-eyed at something behind them...

It was also at that moment when the duo sensed the presence of another being nearby... Something was definitely amiss...!

“B-behind you two...!” yelled Rey, prompting Gerald and Juno to dodge to the side, making sure to drag Rey to safety as well.

The second they were far enough from their tents, all three of them watched as a black figure leaped high into the air... before landing right atop their campfire and putting it out!

Now engulfed in darkness, the terrified Rey yelled, “T-that's what I saw earlier! I'm sure of it...!”

As if wanting to prove Rey's point, a pair of beady bloodshot eyes gleamed in the darkness at that moment... and they were staring right at Gerald and his party!

“What the hell is that creature...?!” asked Juno as she furrowed her brows.

Watching as Rey shook his head, clearly unsure of what it was, Gerald then ordered, “Whatever the case is, disperse! Standing together will only make it easier for it to attack all of us at the same time! Also, get the torchlight in your bag, Juno! I have an idea!”

“Copy that!” replied Juno.

“As for you, Rey! Go find someplace to hide while I deal with this thing!” added Gerald.

Gerald didn’t need to say that twice. After all, Rey wasn’t about to stay anywhere near that terrifying thing! Besides, he knew that he would only get in Gerald’s way if he stayed here.

With that in mind, Rey then nodded vigorously before the trio dispersed!

The bloodshot eyes themselves immediately began bolting in Gerald’s direction!

Realizing that the creature was exceedingly fast and was already quite close to him, Gerald successfully dodged its charge attack before yelling, “Any time now, Juno! Light this place up already!”

“Got it!” shouted Juno as she shone a blinding light in the direction of the bloodshot eyes!

After Juno tossed another torchlight to Gerald—which he easily caught—, Gerald turned his on as well, and with two bright lights shining on the eyes, the trio could finally see what their assailant was...

It was a tusked wild boar! As if its tusks didn’t already look intimidating enough, its entire body was layered with sharp spikes as well!

Staring wide-eyed, none of them had anticipated to bump into such a ferocious beast here!

Regardless, all three of them knew that wild boars were very aggressive, and if one was hungry, it would attack anything it perceived as food... Apparently, they were on its menu!

Either way, all of them snapped out of it the moment the boar began charging toward Juno almost maniacally!

Seeing that, Gerald instantly yelled, "Careful, Juno! Turn the torchlight off!"

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"Stay back and let me deal with it!" added Gerald as he quickly turned to face the boar that was now charging in his direction instead since Juno had switched her torchlight off.

Watching as the sharp-tusked boar opened its mouth wide—clearly aiming to chomp down on Gerald—Gerald knew that a single bite from it could either kill a regular person, or at the very least, maim them.

Naturally, with that in mind, Gerald wasn't about to allow the boar to do that.

Dodge rolling to the side, Gerald then summoned the Astrabyss Sword. Though the sword's main purpose was to deal with ghosts, Gerald believed that it would still hurt as a regular weapon.

Regardless, though the wild boar definitely looked ferocious, its humongous body made it quite slow and inflexible. As a result, it was unable to fully stop after Gerald dodged its attack, and it ended up ramming right into a large tree!

As a sea of leaves fluttered to the ground upon the boar's impact, Gerald knew that it was now or never.

Leaping into the air, Gerald then rapidly began descending, aiming his sword for the boar's back!

"Die!" roared Gerald as he plunged the blade into the boar's back before slicing it open with immense force!

With blood already gushing out from its back, the pained boar let out a massive roar that resonated across the entire forest...! To think that the peace and quiet of night would suddenly be disrupted by such a terrifying cry...

Whatever the case was, when its cry finally died down, the boar flopped to the ground, dead. Since Gerald had only needed to use a single move to finish it, in a way, the boar wasn't all that difficult an enemy to deal with.

Either way, upon realizing that Gerald had killed the wild boar, Rey breathed a sigh of relief, feeling much more relaxed now as he stepped out from behind the tree that he had been hiding behind...

Together with Juno, the duo then walked toward Gerald and stared at the massive boar's corpse...

Feeling that the boar was even larger than he had first imagined, Rey couldn't help but exclaim, "My god! What a massive boar!"

Gerald and Juno had to agree.

“...Well, as they say, good meat shouldn’t be wasted! I guess we now know what’s for dinner! In case you’re worried, wild boar meat is pretty good!” replied Gerald with a smile as he began using the Astrabyss Sword to slice off a large chunk of meat off the wild boar.

As Gerald had said, they hadn’t had their dinner yet, and he was glad that they hadn’t. After all, he—of all people—knew that wild boar meat tasted superb!

Ironically enough, the wild boar was now getting eaten even though it was the one on the hunt for food... While the experience was definitely a frightening one, none of them were complaining since their dinner had essentially come to them.

Regardless, Gerald quickly relit the bonfire before starting to roast the meat over the fire...

Soon enough, a sweet scent began wafting around, causing Rey’s mouth to water as he stared at the roasting meat while saying, “This is going to be my first time tasting wild boar!”

Disregarding Rey’s comment, Gerald paused for a moment before asking in an inquisitive tone, “...Tell me, Rey, do you know what a cultivator is...?”

“...A cultivator...? Is it an item of sorts...?” asked Rey curiously.

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Chapter 1810

Rolling his eyes in response, Gerald then helplessly explained, “It isn’t even an object... Look, cultivators are people who deal with and keep ghosts and spirits under control...”

“...Huh? So, like... Ghost hunters or something? Like those on television?” asked Rey.

“More or less. Either way, if you didn’t already know, Miss Zorn and I are cultivators!” replied Gerald with a nod.

Since Rey had been with them for a while now, Gerald figured that it would be better if he knew about things like these. What more, Gerald was honestly considering turning Rey into a cultivator as well.

After all, if Rey became a cultivator, then instead of fearing everything, he could instead start dealing with dangers on his own. Gerald, for one, was well aware that he and Juno couldn’t remain by his side to protect him his entire life. The thought of it alone was completely unrealistic!

“...H-huh? Both of you are... cultivators...?” asked the now wide-eyed Rey.

Exchanging glances with Juno, Gerald and her then smiled before nodding toward Rey.

“Indeed, we are. Now, my question is... Would you like to become one as well?” asked Gerald.

“...What? I can be one too?” said Rey, excitement in his eyes as he stared at the duo before him. To think that he was being given a chance to be a cultivator! How wonderful!

Rey, for one, had always dreamed of possessing martial arts skills as great as Gerald’s. If he successfully



became a cultivator, then no longer would he need to rely on Gerald for protection...

Smiling at Rey's response, Gerald then replied, "Of course you can! Miss Zorn and I can definitely teach you the ropes!"

"I... then, yes! I wish to become a cultivator, Mr. Crawford!" declared the excited Rey.

"Very well, then. From today onward, I'll be your master and I'll teach you the ways of becoming a cultivator!" replied Gerald, officially making Rey his disciple.

"Thank you for taking me under your wing, master!" shouted Rey, immediately changing how he addressed Gerald as he knelt to the ground.

Before Rey could kowtow, however, Gerald quickly pulled him back up while saying, "Look, while I've accepted you to be my disciple, you don't have to do this. I can't stand people kneeling before me out of the blue!"

Hearing that, Rey then grinned sheepishly, realizing that he was behaving like a person from ancient times.

Shaking his head with a chuckle, Gerald then added, "Alright, settle down. Either way, the meat looks cooked enough so let's dig in already!"

Upon hearing that, the trio then began chowing down on their dinner...

"I never thought that wild boar would taste this fresh and delicious! It's arguably even more delicious than ordinary pork!" exclaimed Rey after taking a bite.

True to Rey's words, wild boar was much tastier and had higher quality in general compared to regular pork meat.

"Speaking of which, slice some more meat off the boar later and wrap it up in a bag. We'll be eating boar for the entirety of tomorrow and possibly even the day after!" said Gerald.

Honestly, if they had a way to easily carry the large wild boar around, they'd surely be able to sell it for a lot. Gerald, for one, had certainly considered the idea. Unfortunately, carrying such a huge corpse around was simply too much. With that in mind, the best course of action was to just take a small portion of it for meals.

It wouldn't be a waste either since the carcass would surely be enough to feed many other animals in the forest...

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It was late into the night when the three of them finally decided to return to their tents to sleep.

Due to the wild boar incident, all three of them shared a tent. That way, they could increase the odds of them sensing danger and allow them to assist each other if they were attacked.

Thankfully, all was quiet that night, and the trio woke up early the next morning.

Leaving the tent as soon as he got up, Gerald realized that there were already a number of birds feasting on the wild boar's carcass, with most of them being eagles and vultures. Gerald paid them no notice, and instead began packing up.

It was around nine when all three of them were up and ready to continue on their journey into the depths of the forest...

According to Old Flint's map, walking past the phosphorite mountain area would allow them to accomplish their second step. Of course, that was easier said than done.

After all, not only was the phosphorite mountain extremely vast, but the trio had no idea what kinds of dangers awaited them there as well. With that in mind, they could only hope that they were prepared enough to face whatever obstacles they came across.

Up till this point, they already had to deal with the massive boar and the Soul Hunters... What a dangerous place...

Regardless, it was about two hours later when the trio finally came across a stream. With that, they then decided to replenish their water supply and take a short rest while they were at it.

Now sitting atop a flat stone, Juno found herself asking, "Say... Do you have any idea how much longer we'll need to walk, Gerald...?"

Shaking his head, Gerald then replied, "Not at all... Based on Old Flint's map, all I know is that we'll need to walk past the phosphorite mountain area... Sadly, the map doesn't really specify how huge the area is..."

Just as they were wondering how large the area really was, an arrow suddenly flew past all three of

them!

Immediately turning to face the direction the arrow shot out from, the trio was greeted by the sight of a few men—donning black clothes—with crossbows in hand!

“Soul Hunters!” yelled Gerald as he instantly held onto Juno and Rey’s arms before bolting away with them.

The Soul Hunters themselves instantly began shooting volley after volley of crossbow bolts. It almost felt like it was raining arrows!

Thankfully, the trio managed to take cover in the forest.

“Dmn it! How do we keep bumping into those bstards! How unlucky!” grumbled Rey.

“Please don’t forget that the entire Soul Hunter organization is here. Since they’ve been divided into several small groups, it’s pretty much inevitable that we’ll constantly bump into them while we’re here!” explained Gerald.

Regardless, once they were sure that the Soul Hunters had lost track of them, all three of them couldn’t help but sigh in relief before resuming their journey...

After what had just happened, the trio found that it was safer to simply use the forest path instead of walking by the side of the stream.

Compared to walking in an open area—which would allow them to be easily found and attacked—, traveling within the forest would make them harder to spot. What more, there was also plenty of cover

in the forest, making escape much more plausible there.

Whatever the case was, it was about half an hour later when they finally found a home in the middle of the forest.

“...Say, do you see that, master? To think that people would actually live out here in the middle of nowhere!” exclaimed Rey.

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Gerald and Juno appeared equally as surprised as Rey was. After all, who in the right mind would live this deep in the forest? It truly was mind-boggling.

After a short pause, Gerald then said, “...Well, since there’s someone living here, we may as well ask them if they know how much further we’ll need to walk!”

Nodding in agreement, the duo then began following Gerald’s lead as they walked toward the house...

However, they quickly found themselves retreating into bushes again when they realized that a few Soul Hunters were also walking toward that house!

After knocking on the door, what appeared to be the house’s owner opened it... and before he could even react, the Soul Hunters immediately rushed in!

Following that, horrified screams filled the air!

Hearing all the terror from inside that house, Gerald and the others quickly exchanged glances. The Soul Hunters were definitely there to eliminate that family... How inhumane!

Unable to bear the screams anymore, Juno found herself pleading, "Gerald, let's help them! The Soul Hunters have really gone over the line this time...!"

Upon hearing that, Gerald nodded before turning to face Rey and saying, "Hide here while we resolve the issue, alright, Rey? Don't make a move until we return!"

Of course, Rey wasn't about to go against Gerald's orders, so he quickly hid in some nearby bushes.

Seeing that, Gerald and Juno bolted toward the house! The second they arrived at the now open door, they were immediately greeted by the sight of a murdered couple lying in a puddle of their own blood...

The sight of that instantly infuriated the duo. For the Soul Hunters to do such inhumane acts... They truly were worse than beasts!

"You utter b\*stards...!" roared the angered Juno.

At that moment, both of them heard a screaming girl coming from deeper inside the house.

"H-help me...!" screamed the desperate-sounding girl.

Wasting no time, Gerald and Juno then rushed toward the source of the voice...

Realizing that there were a few Soul Hunters standing in their way, Gerald immediately summoned the Astrabyss Sword before expertly slicing all of their necks in one swift slash!

As the Soul Hunters began choking on their own blood, Juno herself continued running toward the source of all the screaming. Soon enough, she entered the room where the terrified screams originated from... And she was greeted by the sight of a Soul Hunter forcefully pinning himself atop a plainly dressed girl!

Now brimming with fury, Juno instantly stabbed the disgusting man's back before yanking him off the girl!

Since Juno was a cultivator, she was way stronger than these puny Soul Hunters. With that in mind, she easily lifted the human trash off the ground... and without the slightest hesitation, she sliced his neck!

Unable to even react, the man died almost instantaneously in Juno's hands...

And just like that, the duo had gotten rid of all the Soul Hunters who had raided the house.

With the issue now resolved, Juno then began walking over to the frightened girl before sitting next to her... As she placed a hand over the poor girl's shoulder, however, the girl instantly began screaming frantically as she instinctively curled up into a ball!

Heartbroken by the girl's state of mind, Juno then slowly embraced her while saying, "It's alright now... You're saved...! It's all going to be alright..."

It took a while, but after Juno's constant reassurance, the girl finally managed to calm down slightly... However, now that the fear was gone, sadness instantly set in, and within Juno's embrace, the girl began shedding tears, her wails resonating across the entire house...

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## Chapter 1813

Her cries only made Juno's heart ache even more. Gerald himself could only shake his head as he slowly walked out of the room...

Stepping out, Gerald then signaled for Rey—who was still hiding—to come over.

Seeing that, Rey then quickly made his way toward the house... But the second he saw how bloody it was now inside, he instantly dashed out again to puke his guts out! Since this was the first time he had seen such fresh corpses, it was undoubtedly a great shock to him...

Knowing that, Gerald couldn't really blame Rey for his reaction. After all, Gerald himself was only this nonchalant toward the dead since he was used to seeing corpses by this point. With that in mind, Rey's tolerance toward sights like these would surely rise the more corpses he witnessed in future.

Regardless, it was some time later when Rey finally gathered the courage to look at the corpses again. Once Gerald made sure he was fine, the duo then got to work burying the corpses. Naturally, they buried the girl's parents separately.

Once they were done, Rey couldn't help but growl, "Those people... they're inhumane...!"

While Gerald didn't reply, his solemn expression did the talking for him.



True to Rey's words, the Soul Hunters truly were ruthless to be able to do such brutal acts...

After witnessing all this, Rey was now more determined than ever to become a cultivator. By working hard, he would hopefully be able to prevent scenes like these from happening...

It was at that moment when Gerald raised his head... and floating before him now, were two spirits...

After staring at them for a while, Gerald cleared his throat before righteously declaring, "...Sir and madam... Since you were killed by those people, I'll bestow punishment on them! I'll make sure they can't undergo reincarnation! With that in mind, please rest in peace..."

The two spirits were obviously the girl's parents, and after hearing what Gerald said, the duo then vanished into thin air...

Though he didn't express it, Gerald was honestly feeling relieved. After all, now that they had passed on in peace, they wouldn't end up turning into evil spirits...

Either way, now that they were gone, Gerald drew the Astrabyss Sword before starting to mutter some odd incantations...

The spell Gerald was chanting was known as Soul Eater, and casting it enabled him to completely exterminate villainous spirits. As Gerald had earlier said, any spirits caught within the punishing spell wouldn't be able to be reincarnated...

While Gerald rarely used the spell, he knew he had to use it on the dead Soul Hunters. After all, they deserved this punishment, and Gerald wasn't about to let them die in peace and escape judgment.

Only their souls' annihilation would make Gerald feel that he hadn't let the girl's parents down...

With the chanting complete, Gerald then yelled, "Soul Eater!"

The second he shouted that out, the spirits of the Soul Hunters immediately merged into a white orb or light...

"Exterminate!" yelled Gerald again as he slashed right into the orb of light, causing it to shatter into pieces!

And with that, the punishment was complete. No longer would their souls continue to exist, and they would be incapable of reincarnating anymore...

Witnessing all that Gerald had done, Rey—who had been watching intently from the back—couldn't help but feel that it was all very magical. It certainly made him pumped to become a cultivator who was as powerful as Gerald one day.

Whatever the case was, now that all this was done, Gerald then returned to the room where Juno and the girl were in...

At first glance, the girl had completely calmed down by this point. Even so, she appeared reluctant to say a word... From what Gerald could tell, she was still in a state of shock...

Upon realizing Gerald's presence, Juno immediately pleaded, "Gerald...! Please, help her...!"

Getting what Juno was trying to get him to do, Gerald then asked, "...You're suggesting me to do 'that'? Are you sure?"

Hearing Gerald's question, Juno turned to look at the girl... before closing her eyes and nodding as she said, "...I'm sure. I don't want her to live in despair for as long as she lives...!"

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## Chapter 1814

From how serious Juno's gaze was, Gerald could tell how much she wanted to help the girl. With that in mind, Gerald then replied, "...Very well, then!"

Not understanding what the duo was going on about, Rey could only continue staring at them with curious eyes...

Gerald himself began walking toward the girl... before gently placing a finger on her forehead. The second he released his finger, a tiny orb of light was drawn out from the girl's forehead...

Following that, the orb began circling the girl's head... First slowly, then faster... and faster... until eventually, it completely disappeared.

Confused, Rey was prompted to ask, "...What... was that, master...?"

"He just removed her memory... A good chunk of it in fact... Still, it's better for her in the long run as long as she can forget all that's happened today..." explained Juno.

Upon hearing that, Rey was immediately shocked. To think that there existed skills to remove one's

memories...

“...Regardless, the process will also cause her lifespan to shorten, though we don’t exactly know how many years have been taken away from her... Only time will tell...” added Juno.

As with everything in life, there were pros and cons to everything... While the girl was now free of her painful memories, her lifespan had now been decreased. One could only call it the law of equivalent exchange...

Still, ignorance was bliss. As long as the girl could live happily after this, the exchange would be worth it...

Either way, it wasn’t long after before the girl regained consciousness...

Looking at Juna and the other two, the confused girl couldn’t help but ask, “...Who... are you people...?”

“...Ah, you fainted earlier so we saved you!” replied Juno with a smile.

“...Oh? Is that so? I... can’t remember fainting...” muttered the girl as she tried to remember what had happened before... Of course, there was nothing to remember since her memories had been erased.

“Whatever the case is, it’s great that you’re doing fine... Could you tell us your name...?” asked Juno as her smile widened, feeling much more assured now.

Upon hearing that, the girl instantly frowned. What was her name?

Even after thinking for quite a while, she simply couldn't recall what it was. Shaking her head, the vexed girl then replied, "...I... I can't remember..."

Hearing that, Gerald then turned to look at Juno.

Both of them were well aware that there existed a possibility of forgetting quite a bit after undergoing the memory-erasing process... It appeared that the girl had picked the short end of the stick.

"...Do you know where you are?" asked Juno.

Shaking her head, the girl then replied, "No idea... I don't know where this place is at all...!"

Unable to remember her name or even her own home, it was clear that the girl truly had forgotten everything...

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Chapter 1815

The memory erasure technique truly was something else...

Whatever the case was, Gerald then turned to look at Rey before ordering, "...Go see if you can find any books or ID cards belonging to her."

"Roger that!" replied Rey as he instantly began searching around the house.

It wasn't long after before Rey managed to find a book with her name written on it...

Handing the book to Gerald, Rey then said, "Master, I think I've found it! Her name should be Yrsa!"

Taking the book from Rey, Gerald then looked at it before handing it to the girl and saying, "...Yeah, your name appears to be Yrsa!"

Now holding onto the book, the girl couldn't help but furrow her brows, a clear indication that she didn't even recognize the book.

Vexed out of her mind, Yrsa then began shaking her head again as she replied, "...I really can't remember if that's really the case..."

"Don't worry, I'm sure it'll come back to you one day..." consoled Juno.

"I hope so... Still, who are all of you...?" asked Juno in a curious tone.

"...We're... your good friends! While you may not remember us, it's fine since we still remember you," lied Gerald as naturally as he breathed.

Yrsa herself didn't appear to doubt Gerald's words. After all, Yrsa was currently nothing more than a blank slate. Since she knew nothing, the only thing she could do was believe what everyone else told her...

Besides, as she thought about it, she figured that the trio couldn't be villains since they did claim to have saved her...

Her train of thought was cut short when Gerald suddenly asked, "Yrsa... Are you willing to live with us from now on...?"

While she was understandably shocked to hear that, Yrsa eventually nodded as she replied, "...I am. After all, I can't remember anything... You're the only people I know and trust at the moment!"

Hearing that, the three of them breathed sighs of relief. Since she was willing to come along with them, they could at least ensure that she was properly taken care of...

"...Very well, then! Come, let's clean up a bit and get out of here!" declared Gerald, understanding that the place they were currently in wasn't particularly safe.

If the previous Soul Hunters could find this place, then other Soul Hunters would definitely be able to find it as well. With that in mind, the sooner they left, the better.

After quickly packing up, the four of them then left the area...

Naturally, Gerald didn't mention anything about Yrsa's parents. After all, ignorance was bliss. The poor girl didn't need to remember such a painful incident, especially after Gerald had to decrease her lifespan just to make her forget...

Regardless, as the four began venturing into the forest, a Soul Hunter could be seen running toward a tent—that was located at the Soul Hunter's campsite—quite a distance away...

Upon entering, the Soul Hunter instantly reported, "L-leader! We've lost contact with the seventh squad!"

"What? How many people were in that squad?" asked the cloaked man who had been sitting in the tent before his subordinate came running in.

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Hearing the deep-voiced man's question, the Soul Hunter then replied, "There were six of them, sir! And none of them can be contacted!"

Upon hearing that, the cloaked man's expression instantly turned ugly. For six men to have lost contact just like that... Something terrible must have happened...!

"When was the last time we were able to contact them?" asked the cloaked man.

"From what we've gathered, they were last heard from near the mountain pass!"

"I see. Order some men to head there immediately. The seventh squad must be found, regardless of whether they're dead or alive!" instructed the cloaked man.



“Loud and clear!” yelled the Soul Hunter as he bolted off to do as he had been told.

Neither of them knew that Gerald and Juno had ended the lives of all six of those men... However, once the cloaked man found out about the deed, he would surely explode in rage...

Even so, it was undeniable that the dead Soul Hunters deserved what they got for being so inhumane.

Regardless, it was about an hour later when the Soul Hunters—who had been sent out to search for the men—returned to the campsite with the six corpses of the seventh squad...

“B-bad news, leader...!” yelled a Soul Hunter as he rushed into the cloaked man’s tent.

“What is it? But first off, calm yourself!” retorted the cloaked man as he glared at his subordinate.

Gulping, the terrified Soul Hunter then reported, “T-the men you sent out to search for the seventh squad... They’ve returned with six corpses! The seventh squad was completely taken out...!”

“What?!” roared the cloaked man furiously as he got up and walked out of his tent.

The second he stepped out, he was instantly greeted by the sight of six corpses laid out in a row... Each of them had deep gashes in their necks...

Clenching his fists tightly, the angered man then growled, "...Who's responsible for this... Who the hell even dares...!"

The cloaked man couldn't just sit still after six of his men had been taken out.

"After examining the corpses, we've found that five of them died in a single slash across the neck! From what we've been able to tell, the assailant wasn't using an ordinary blade either! As for the sixth victim, he died from a slice on his neck as well, though it appears to be from a different blade!" reported a red uniformed Soul Hunter.

The Soul Hunters were divided in rank according to the colors their uniforms were.

Those from the lowest level wore black, and upon promotion, they would be given a red uniform. Only the strongest of the strong would be bestowed with purple uniforms.

Naturally, the cloaked man was still the strongest individual in the organization. While that was a known fact, nobody knew how powerful he really was. In fact, nobody even knew his real name or had any other information about him. He was a truly mysterious individual...

"...I see! As it turns out, our opponents this time aren't ordinary threats!" scowled the cloaked man as he narrowed his eyes.

At that moment, a black-uniformed Soul Hunter came running over before reporting, "Leader! The fifth squad just sent in a report stating that they came across three individuals next to the stream the day before! Though the trio managed to escape, what's interesting to note is that the stream isn't too far off from the mountain pass!"

Hearing that, the cloaked man could already see what the Soul Hunter was trying to say.

Based on the clues they now had, there was a high chance that those three people were responsible for murdering the entire seventh squad...

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“Listen closely and forward my order around! Everyone’s to be fully armed at all times! Also, gather some purple Soul Hunters to hunt down that trio! I want them dead by the end of all this!” yelled the cloaked man after a short pause.

“Loud and clear, leader!” yelled the other Soul Hunters as they raised their fists in response. Gerald and the others had no idea just how much danger they were going to be in soon...

Regardless, it wasn’t long after before the night sky began encroaching in...

By that point, Gerald and his party had set up camp under a large tree and were already grilling the remaining meat over a fire they had started.

Since Rey was chatting with Yrsa, Juno chose to stay by Gerald’s side instead.

There was a brief moment of silence between them, but eventually, Gerald took in a deep breath before saying, “...Hear me out, Juno, but I have an idea of sorts!”

Raising a brow, the amused Juno already had a hunch as to what his idea was.

“Does your idea go along the lines of me accepting Yrsa as my disciple? You want her to grow to become

a cultivator, don't you?" asked Juno straight off the bat.

Surprised that Juno had read him like an open book, Gerald then displayed a serious expression before stating, "...Indeed. Since I've erased all her memories, it should be even easier for her to learn the ways of a cultivator now!"

"You're not wrong there. I'll be honest and say that I've been thinking about that as well. After all, I can't just let you have all the disciples! I want one as well!" replied Juno with a chuckle.

"Then it's settled! I'll see if I can persuade Yrsa then!" replied Gerald, understanding that Yrsa's consent in all this was equally as important. Even so, Gerald strongly believed that she would accept the offer.

With that in mind, he then called Yrsa over to sit by his side.

After obediently coming over, Yrsa then took a seat before asking with a smile, "Yes, brother Gerald? Is there something you wanted to talk about?"

"Indeed! Well, first off there are a few questions we'd like to ask!" replied Gerald with a subtle smile.

"I'll answer what I can!" declared the trusting girl rather enthusiastically. She appeared to really trust Gerald...

"Alright, first off... Do you have any idea what Miss Zorn and I do?" asked Gerald.

Upon hearing that question, Yrsa immediately raised a brow. It was evident that she hadn't thought about it before. Had Gerald not initiated the question, she would've surely remained oblivious to the thought for quite a while...

Regardless, now that Gerald was prompting the question, Yrsa found herself getting increasingly curious about the duo's occupation... After all, humans were naturally curious creatures.

"Not a clue... Mind sharing, brother Gerald...?" asked Yrsa with a sheepish smile.

"Well, we're cultivators!" replied Gerald.

"...Cultivators? What... kind of job even is that...?" asked Yrsa confusedly. It could just be her amnesia, but she had never heard of such a profession before!

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## Chapter 1818

"Alright, so listen closely... Humans aren't the only ones who inhabit this planet... There are also souls and ghosts! As cultivators, Miss Zorn and I are tasked with maintaining justice and balance between both worlds!" explained Gerald, much to Yrsa's amazement.

To think that such incredible people who could deal with ghosts existed...

After thinking for a while, she then turned to look at Rey before asking, "...Then... Is Rey also...?"

Chuckling in response, Gerald then replied, "Rey's just joined our team recently, and he's my disciple! Speaking of disciples, I'm telling you all this for a reason. Yrsa, what do you think about becoming Miss Zorn's disciple to become a cultivator? Naturally, it's all up to you and we won't force you if you don't

want to go with that! So, what do you say, Yrsa?”

“How could I say no, brother Gerald? After all, all three of you saved my life! With that said, I fully agree with being Miss Zorn’s disciple! I’ll definitely become an excellent cultivator!” replied Yrsa in a determined tone.

“I’m glad you’re so enthusiastic about it, Yrsa! Still, please understand that once you start, there’s no going back and you can only continue being a cultivator till the day you die... Naturally, you’ll also be facing all sorts of ghosts and souls, so you’ll need to overcome your fear of them as well!” said Gerald.

“Don’t worry, brother Gerald! I’ll definitely do my best! With you and Miss Zorn guiding me along my way, I’m sure I’ll be able to become the best cultivator there is!” declared Yrsa in a confident tone.

“Well said! Now then... Go ahead and pay respect to your master!” said Gerald with a smile as he stood up while signaling Yrsa to face Juno.

Hearing that, Juno and Yrsa got up as well.

Walking over to Juno, Yrsa then declared, “Miss Zorn- no, master! From today onward, please take care of me on my journey of becoming a cultivator!”

Upon hearing that, Juno was unable to hide her satisfied smile. After all this time, she finally had her own disciple...

Rey himself—who had been sitting at the side—was equally as happy. Not only had Yrsa decided to join

their party, but she was going to become a cultivator now too!

“Well said!” replied Juno, unable to contain her excitement.

However, the second she said that, several shadowy figures suddenly bolted out from the forests surrounding them!

Upon seeing that, Gerald and the others immediately stood with their backs against each other, now fully vigilant.

“D\*mn it, it’s the Soul Hunters again!” scowled Juno.

Gerald couldn’t help but raise an eyebrow. He didn’t think they would locate them that quickly...

“Take care of Rey and Yrsa, Juno. Now leave while you can! I’ll be taking these people on!” ordered Gerald.

“Loud and clear! Please, be careful!” replied Juno as Gerald summoned his Astrabyss Sword.

Seeing the sword, one of the purple Soul Hunters immediately pointed at it before yelling, “That must be the weapon, brothers!”

With how unique and sharp the blade looked, the Soul Hunters were able to immediately discern that it was the one used to take out the seventh squad...

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## Chapter 1819

“You Soul Hunters just don’t know when to give up, do you?” scoffed Gerald as he glared at them.

“Shut it! You killed quite a number of those from our organization, kid! With that in mind, we’re making you pay if it’s the last thing we do!” yelled the leader of the group as he angrily pointed at Gerald.

It was only a second after his sentence ended when the four other Soul Hunters began charging at Gerald!

With how fast these purple Soul Hunters were, Gerald could immediately tell that they were on a different level compared to the black Soul Hunters. After all, aside from their immense speed, they also appeared much stronger. The leader of the organization must have been furious if he was sending so many of his best men over to kill Gerald.

Regardless, it wasn’t long before the five Soul Hunters were attacking Gerald from all directions with multiple techniques. Truth be told, he was just glad that all of them chose to attack him instead of going after his party.

Either way, while the five Soul Hunters appeared strong, they were honestly nothing to Gerald.

With that, Gerald quickly drew a circle around him before yelling, “Wind and Dust Shield!”

The second his incantation ended, strong winds began encircling him! With how strong the wind and dust clouds were, all five of the Soul Hunters ended up getting pushed backward!



While they were stunned, one of them quickly snapped out of it before yelling, “He... He’s a cultivator!”

None of them had anticipated bumping into a cultivator all the way out here. No wonder he was so strong!

Snorting in response, Gerald then sneered, “Well, now that you know about this, don’t even dream about leaving this place alive!”

Before the Soul Hunters could even react to that, Gerald took a single step forward... and the very next second, he was gone!

The Soul Hunters weren’t even able to widen their eyes in time before a crisp slashing sound could be heard... And a split second later, a bloody mist began rising into the air as Gerald drew his blade out from the dead Soul Hunter’s chest...!

Despite being fearful when they realized that a single stab was all it took for Gerald to finish off their ally, the remaining Soul Hunters refused to retreat.

After all, the Soul Hunter motto was to never retreat, even when the odds were against them. While having this drilled into their minds definitely made them competent individuals who weren’t afraid of death, it was also the reason why all Soul Hunters were destined to end up losing their humanity and turning into cold-blooded beasts.

The inhumane seventh squad that Gerald ended up slaughtering were textbook examples of that statement...

Regardless, as the four Soul Hunters began launching another wave of attacks on Gerald, Gerald simply lifted his blade... and a blinding light suddenly appeared, followed by multiple slashing sounds...!

By the time the light dimmed down, four fresh corpses were already lying in their own puddles of blood...

None of the five Soul Hunters had even come close to being a match against Gerald...

Either way, now that they were dead, Gerald began propping the corpses atop some trees... and once that was done, he used the Soul Hunters' blood to write—with big letters—on the trees, 'They deserved their deaths!'

With that done, he then quickly regrouped with his party to plan their next move...

"First thing's first, I think we should hide our tracks, Gerald! Otherwise, we'll only get tracked down by even more Soul Hunters!"

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Chapter 1820

After hearing Juno's suggestion, Gerald then replied, "Agreed. Let's keep that in mind, then!"

By covering their tracks, they'd at least be able to lower the chances of Soul Hunters finding them again. Gerald really wasn't all that keen on being hunted down day in and day out...

As he was thinking about how much less they would have to worry if they covered their tracks, a thought suddenly came to Gerald.

Taking out the map that Old Flint had given him, Gerald scanned through it for a while before pointing at a town—on the map—and saying, “...Let’s head there next. While the journey will take a little longer, we’ll at least be able to bypass the phosphorite area. Since it’s a town, we’ll also get a chance to resupply there!”

“Anything you say!” replied Juno without the slightest hesitation.

Now that that was decided, the group of four then changed their route and began heading toward the town on the map...

The town itself was known as the Town of Five Elements, and it was aptly named that way due to geographical reasons.

Either way, after traveling for an entire day, the four finally arrived at the entrance of the town. Contrary to the previous lack of humans, the group quickly realized that the town was both lively and busy. In a way, it was almost as though the entire town was a bustling marketplace...

“Everyone! The black market’s putting up a crystal skull for auction! Let’s go check it out!” yelled a young man out of the blue.

Hearing that, many were drawn to his proposal, including Gerald and his party. To think that there’d be a black market in the town!

“Why don’t we go see it too?” said Rey who had always been interested in things like these.

“Sure, why not?” replied Gerald, seeing no reason to refuse. In all honesty, even he was interested to see what else was up for auction.

Following the crowd, all four of them soon arrived at the Town of Five Element’s black market...

From guns, bombs, to even drugs, pretty much everything was sold there! It truly was a fascinating place...

Eventually, the four of them found an empty spot to stand in. However, it wouldn’t be long before a man wearing a hat and leather jacket ascended the stage...

“Greetings, everyone! My name is Mario Grant, and I’m the chief administrator of the black market! I’ll say it right now that the item we’re auctioning today is extremely extraordinary! It wouldn’t be a stretch to say that just seeing it will broaden your horizons! While I’m sure that many of you have already heard about it, I’d like to emphasize that there’s only one of its kind on the planet! With that said, do I even need to elaborate on how rare the treasure is?” declared the man in the leather jacket rather excitedly.

Upon hearing that, the overwhelmed audience instantly began cheering for the item to be shown!

“Very well, then! I present to all of you... the crystal skull! Bring it up on stage!” ordered Mario as one of his subordinates quickly carried a box onto the stage before handing it to the chief administrator.

After receiving it, Mario carefully unlidded the box... and with a grin, he then took the crystal skull out, showing it to the audience as he shouted, “Behold! Our marvelous auction item today, the crystal skull!”

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## Chapter 1821

Looking at the crystal skull that Mario was holding onto, everyone below stage couldn't help but cheer in awe, including Gerald and his party. After all, the four individuals hadn't expected to find such a precious treasure out here of all places.

With the skull being so clear and dazzling, it was no wonder why it was capable of making everyone experience a special, indescribable feeling...

Whatever the case was, everyone snapped out of it when Mario cleared his throat before declaring, "Let's start the bidding at four million! To make things clear, each bid increment shouldn't be less than a million! With that out of the way, let the bidding begin!"

"Five million!" yelled a man as he immediately raised his hand.

"Six million!" shouted another man as he further increased the bid.

The way these people were shouting such massive numbers so eagerly could only be compared to water flowing off a waterfall. It was almost as though bidding by the million didn't hurt them at all!

“Seven million! It’s mine!” declared a bespectacled man, almost as though he was sure that nobody would be able to top that.

Even so, this was an auction. As long as one had the money, it was a free for all. With that in mind, nobody even gave a rat’s arse about his statement.

“Can it and scam! I’m paying eight million!” scoffed a fat man as he glared at the bespectacled bidder from before.

With how quickly the numbers were rising, the crystal skull soon exceeded the ten million point. Had these people gone insane?!

“It’s... just a skull, right...? Have these people gone nuts? Do they even understand the value of money...?” exclaimed the astonished Rey.

“Heh. The rich live in a world we can never understand!” replied Gerald with a subtle smile.

While Gerald was certainly rich, he wasn’t interested in just throwing millions of dollars away just for some stupid skull. Money shouldn’t be spent that way!

By the end of it, the crystal skull ended up getting bought by the same bespectacled man at a whopping price of fifteen million!

“Congratulations, mister! With a bid of fifteen million, the crystal skull now belongs to you!” declared Mario.

The bespectacled man himself immediately began indulging himself in the admiration from the crowd.

Seeing how proud and mighty the man now felt, one could say that this was what most rich people strived to feel.

Regardless, with the auction now over, Gerald turned to look at his party before saying, "Let's go, there's nothing else to see here!"

With that, the four then left the black market to continue wandering about the rest of the town...

Not long after, however, they came across the man—who had bought the crystal skull—again.

"Say... isn't that the person who had bought the skull earlier, brother Gerald?" asked Rey, recognizing the bespectacled man.

Nodding in response, Gerald then watched as the man walked right past them, appearing somewhat nervous... Now why was that...?

Having a gut feeling that something interesting would happen if they followed him, Gerald then said, "...Hey, let's sneakily follow him!"

Seeing no reason to object, the trio then began tailing after Gerald who was already ahead of them...

It wasn't too long after before they managed to tail him all the way to a house of sorts...

After scanning his surroundings, the bespectacled man hurriedly entered the house, making sure to lock the door behind him...

“Stay here. I’m going ahead to have a look at what he’s up to!” whispered Gerald as he made a giant leap... before landing right on the house’s roof!

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## Chapter 1822

Lying on his stomach, Gerald—who was careful to be quiet as he did all this on the roof—then stared into the yard... Only to see that the bespectacled man was now standing right before Mario! How unexpected!

From the looks of it, they seemed to be discussing something important...

While their meeting was already astonishing enough, what happened next truly shocked Gerald.

Eyes widened, Gerald could only stare as Mario took a dagger from his jacket and stabbed the bespectacled man right in the chest! Mario seemed to have stabbed the man right in the heart too, since the bespectacled man died almost immediately after...

As the bespectacled man flopped lifelessly to the ground, Gerald saw that his eyes were wide open, an evident sign that he wasn’t able to die in peace...

Regardless, with the man now dead, Mario then wiped it clean with a cloth that he had brought along before sliding the dagger back into his jacket...

Following that, Mario then shouted toward the house, prompting two men to come out shortly after.



“Take care of the corpse!” ordered Mario as the two men quickly nodded before stuffing the now dead bespectacled man into a sack and carrying him away...

Of course, Gerald had witnessed all this. Truth be told, he hadn't expected Mario to be such a ruthless person. To think that he would just murder his own client right after obtaining the money... What more, the crystal skull was now his to have again! How cruel!

After seeing all this take place, Gerald was prompted to think, ‘What is even wrong with the world today... How heartless... He's already paid for the item, just let him have it! At the very least, you could have spared his life even if you took the item by force!’

Whatever the case was, Gerald felt lucky that he hadn't bid on the crystal skull back when he was still in the black market. After all, who knows if he could've potentially ended up dying like the bespectacled man...

Either way, Gerald then shook his head before returning to his party.

“Anything interesting happened...?” asked Juno curiously.

“Indeed. The bespectacled man is now dead!” replied Gerald without mincing his words.

“...Huh? But why? And how?” exclaimed Rey, astonished.

“Remember that auctioneer back at the black market? That Mario guy? He killed him!” explained Gerald as he further elaborated what he had earlier saw.

By the time Gerald was done, Rey and the others were momentarily stunned speechless. To think that Mario was actually such an evil person!

“...Since he committed the murder so efficiently... He must have done the same to all the previous clients!” said Juno.

Nodding in response, Gerald then replied, “I believe so as well. These people are making quick bucks without having any losses!”

“How obnoxious!” growled Rey.

Even so, there wasn't really anything the four people could do. After all, the bespectacled man was already dead.

“...Regardless, let's leave this place as soon as possible. Lingering around here is bad news!” said Gerald after a brief pause, now well aware of how evil people could get in this town.

With that, the party of four then began leaving the area...

Unfortunately, since it was already getting dark, Gerald and his party had no choice but to stay the night in town... Interestingly enough, all the accommodation places here resembled ancient inns.

After locating a rather inconspicuous inn, the four then decided to stay the night there...

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## Chapter 1823

Upon entering the inn, Gerald saw the innkeeper and called out, "Evening! Any available rooms, boss? We have four people and we require two rooms!"

Looking at them, the innkeeper then asked, "Before that, where do all of you come from?"

While Gerald and his party were rightfully startled, Gerald simply smiled before replying, "We're... From Swindawn City! We're just here for leisure!"

Hearing that, the innkeeper then nodded before saying, "Very well, then. Here are your two room keys! Your rooms are at the end of the corridor on the second floor!"

"Appreciate it, boss!" replied Gerald as he took the keys and began leading his party upstairs.

Following the innkeeper's directions, the group then made their way to the end of the corridor. The ladies were to sleep in the room on the left while Gerald and Rey would sleep in the right one.

Regardless, Gerald quickly locked the door behind him once he and Rey had entered.

Now that they had privacy, Rey was prompted to ask, "...I'm not sure if you've noticed this, but people in this town seem to give outsiders like us strange looks... The innkeeper was no exception either..."

"I have, and I have a gut feeling that the innkeeper isn't a good person either. With that in mind, let's take turns sleeping and keeping watch over the situation. I'll be first to keep watch, and we can switch places later in the night," suggested Gerald.

“Sounds good!” replied Rey, feeling much safer now that Gerald had suggested that.

At that moment, knocking could suddenly be heard coming from Gerald’s door.

Raising a slight brow, Gerald then asked, “Who is it?”

“It’s the innkeeper! I’m here delivering some warm water!” replied the innkeeper as Gerald and Rey exchanged glances with each other.

Signaling for Rey to open the door, Rey then did as he was told.

With the door now open, the innkeeper then entered with a kettle of hot water before placing it on a table.

Watching as the innkeeper smiled at both of them, Gerald then faked a smile as he said, “My, my! How thoughtful of you to deliver hot water to us!”

Chuckling in response, the innkeeper then replied, “It’s only right for me to do so for my customers! Regardless, I’m here to tell you not to head out the inn at night... It’s not too safe out there in the dark. Try to just stay in your rooms!”

Upon hearing that, Gerald and Rey exchanged glances again, wondering what the innkeeper was on about.

“Boss-”

“Got it, boss! We appreciate the warning!” said Gerald as he cut Rey’s sentence short.

Nodding in response, the innkeeper then replied, “Good to hear! Also, if there’s anything you need in the night, don’t hesitate to call me!”

After saying that, the duo then watched as the innkeeper left their room...

Stepping out to make sure that the innkeeper had gone downstairs, the confirmation that he was really gone made Gerald breathe a sigh of relief as he closed the door again.

“About what you did earlier...” muttered Rey.

“Some things aren’t meant to be asked so bluntly, Rey. Remember that,” said Gerald.

Briefly nodding, Rey then asked, “Got it, brother Gerald. Either way... After what just happened, do you still think that the innkeeper is a bad person...?”

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While Rey could tell that something was off about the innkeeper, he simply couldn’t pinpoint what it was, and quite frankly, that was driving him insane.

Shaking his head in response, Gerald then replied, “While I’m not too sure where he’s bad or not, I’m at least certain that there’s a problem with him. After all, I saw him constantly looking around our room earlier, almost as though he was searching for something. My guess is that he must have some secret

here!”

What more, the fact that the innkeeper had told them not to leave their rooms tonight only served to make them more suspicious of him. With that in mind, the curious duo was now keen on unraveling his true nature tonight!

“...Let’s head to Miss Zorn’s room for the moment!” said Gerald.

Rey was thinking the same thing, and with that, both of them then walked out and began knocking on the door opposite of theirs...

“Who is it...?” asked Juno in a similar fashion to how Gerald had asked earlier. It was a clear sign that she was being vigilant as well.

“It’s Gerald!” replied the youth as Juno opened the door a few seconds later.

Seeing that Rey was there as well, Juno was prompted to ask, “Is... something the matter...?”

“Let’s talk inside,” replied Gerald as he and Rey entered her room, only to see that Yrsa herself had been watching television on the bed.

Once she locked the door behind them, Juno then got straight to the point as she asked, “So... What happened?”

“Essentially, both Rey and I feel that the innkeeper is a little off. With that in mind, we’d like you two to come sleep in our room later. We’ll just leave this room empty for the night,” said Gerald.

“I’m assuming you’re trying to use our current room as bait to test the innkeeper for foul play...?” asked Juno who was quick to catch on.

“Couldn’t have said it better myself,” replied Gerald with a firm nod.

“Well, alright then! Give us some time to wash up first then! We’ll head to your room once we’re done!” said Juno, now fully in on the plan.

With that settled, Gerald and Rey then went back to their room first.

It was about ten minutes later when Juno and Yrsa came over as well.

While it was certainly cramped, the four of them sharing a room would certainly make things much safer. After all, if the innkeeper truly was a despicable and lusty person, then having the two girls sleep in their own room was definitely a terrible idea.

While it was true that Juno was a strong cultivator, none of them could say for sure that the innkeeper didn’t have special means to deal with them.

Whatever the case was, now that all four of them were here, Gerald then said, “Alright, you girls sleep on the bed while Rey and I sleep on the table. In case you’re worrying about a midnight attack, Rey and I will be taking turns keeping watch the entire night. If anything happens, we’ll surely alert you girls!”

After saying that, Gerald and Rey then sat on the table.

Juno and Yrsa themselves got into bed and promptly fell asleep... This was going to be a long night for the boys...

Fast forward to a few hours later, it was late into the night, and not a single sound could be heard... It was honestly a bit scary.

Even so, the silence was what eventually gave away the tapping of approaching footsteps that stopped right before their door...

Staring at their room door, Gerald and Rey were now fully vigilant...

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Slowly moving toward the door, Gerald then peeked through the peephole... and almost immediately after, his eyes widened when he realized that the innkeeper was standing right in front of Juno's room!

Retrieving what appeared to be some kind of incense out from his pocket, Gerald watched as the innkeeper then lit it before placing it by Juno's door... From the looks of it, he was doing so, so that the smoke would seep into her initial room...

With that done, Gerald quickly backed away when he realized that the innkeeper was now walking toward his room!

By this point, Juno and the others were wide awake.

After seeing Gerald's reactions, Juno couldn't help but whisper, "...What's wrong, Gerald...?"



Cupping his hand over his mouth, Gerald then took a towel before cupping his mouth and nose with it.

Immediately understanding what Gerald was trying to relay, the others got their own towels and did the same as Gerald made sure to open the room's window as well.

Soon enough, everyone watched as white smoke began seeping into the room through the bottom of the door... Had Gerald not opened the window, the room would've been filled with smoke in seconds!

Regardless, Gerald and Rey's hunch had apparently been correct. The innkeeper really did have vile intentions... After all, why else would he do something this shady in the dead of night?

It was lucky that they suspected him. Otherwise, they would've surely gone fully unconscious by now...

Either way, Gerald peered through the peephole again after a short while to see if the innkeeper was still there.

While Gerald was thankful that the innkeeper was no longer there, it confused Gerald as to why he just left like that. After all, he had already gone through the trouble of doing all this!

After thinking about it for a while, Gerald then headed to the bed before lying down... and right after that, he freed his soul from his body!

Naturally, Rey didn't know that Gerald was having an out-of-body experience, causing him to instantly

widen his eyes in shock when Gerald suddenly appeared deeply unconscious.

Just as he was about to check on Gerald, Juno raised her hand, signaling for Rey not to move.

Upon seeing that, Rey realized that Gerald was doing this on purpose. With that in mind, he then returned to his seat...

As for Gerald, his soul was already drifting around the inn. He was going to get to the bottom of what vile things the innkeeper had planned if it was the last thing he did! Soon after, he found the innkeeper leading two men upstairs...

Raising a brow, Gerald then followed the trio all the way to Juno's initial room! Of course, none of the men could see or even detect Gerald's presence in his current form.

"The two ladies are in that room, Mr. Panther! They've both been knocked clean out with my bewitching incense!" said the innkeeper with a sinister smile as he looked at the sturdy-looking man beside him.

"Good job!" replied Mr. Panther as he nodded in satisfaction, prompting the innkeeper to retrieve the room's spare key...

Once Juno's initial room was open, all three of the men entered...

However, they quickly found themselves stunned when they realized that the room was completely empty!

"...And where are they?" asked the flabbergasted Mr. Panther.

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## Chapter 1826

“...Huh? That... That’s impossible! I’m sure they were in this room not too long ago!” exclaimed the puzzled innkeeper.

“...Are you trying to make a fool out of me?” growled the clearly pissed off Mr. Panther as he grabbed the innkeeper by his collar!

“I-I wouldn’t even dream of pranking you, Mr. Panther! I swear on my life that they really were here earlier!” explained the terrified innkeeper.

Before Mr. Panther could even retort, he was suddenly flung out of the room by what appeared to be a sudden strong gust of wind! In truth, the ‘wind’ was, in fact, Gerald, who had just rushed toward Mr. Panther and grabbed the man by his neck!

However, since the others couldn’t see Gerald in his current form, the duo could only stare in confusion, completely unaware of what was really happening.

Whatever the case was, with one strong squeeze, a sickening snap could be heard... Gerald had just broken Mr. Panther’s neck!

Knowing full well now that Mr. Panther had had dirty thoughts on Juno and Yrsa, there was no way he was ever going to show mercy on the b\*stard...

Upon realizing that Mr. Panther was now dead, the terrified innkeeper and the other man instantly began panicking as they attempted to run for their lives! Sadly for them, Gerald wasn't about to spare anyone tonight.

Flying straight after them, Gerald then easily kicked both men across the inn's corridors!

While the other man instantaneously died from the kick, the terror-stricken innkeeper was still alive.

Now lying on the ground, the innkeeper was so frightened that he barely registered that his bladder had just given in...

Unsure what to even do, the innkeeper then began begging for mercy as he knelt on the ground. To be quite frank, Gerald found the man's pitiful crying and begging to be rather amusing.

With that in mind, Gerald then stood before the innkeeper before suddenly making himself visible.

Glaring straight into the confused and terrified innkeeper's eyes, Gerald then said, "I knew something was wrong with you... I'm glad I trusted my gut! Regardless, do share with me what you were planning to do to us tonight..."

Since Gerald was currently in his ghost form, he looked downright terrifying, so much so, in fact, that the innkeeper quickly found himself passing out!

Seeing that, Gerald couldn't help but snicker. Still, he wasn't about to let the innkeeper off that easily.

With that, Gerald then lifted the unconscious man up before tying him to a chair with some strong rope.

Following that, he made sure to lock the inn's entrance as tightly as possible to ensure that nobody would find out about what had happened inside the building. With that done, Gerald then quickly disposed of Mr. Panther's body.

After cleaning up the scene, he then bolted back to his physical body... causing Rey to almost die of shock when the previously 'unconscious' Gerald suddenly sat up!

"B-brother Gerald...! You're awake! What happened just now? Why did you end up passing out all of a sudden?" asked the bewildered Rey once he snapped out of his shock.

Realizing that Rey didn't know about his out-of-body capabilities, Gerald simply said, "You'll find out about it one day!"

Naturally, that only made Rey feel even more confused about all this. Even so, since Gerald wasn't willing to tell him about it now, he believed that there was a reason for that. Due to that, Rey didn't press Gerald for answers.

"Either way, it's safe for us to go out and have a look around now!" said Gerald as he opened the room's door and began walking downstairs...

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Chapter 1827

Upon arriving downstairs, all four of them were greeted by the sight of the innkeeper tied to a chair, his lowered head making it evident that he had fallen unconscious...

“...Huh? What... on earth happened to him, brother Gerald...?” asked the surprised Rey.

Chuckling in response, Gerald then smiled faintly as he replied, “He’s just passed out from shock, I’d say!”

Following that, Gerald got a glass of water before splashing it all over the innkeeper’s face!

Immediately waking up, the innkeeper’s expression turned fearful as he began screaming, “G-ghost...! Ghosts...!”

However, before he could scream any further, he received a tight slap on his left cheek from Gerald!

Gerald had done so to calm the innkeeper down, and as he had predicted, it worked. Now pacified, the dazed innkeeper couldn’t help but stare at the four individuals standing before him...

Since Gerald’s physical form was vastly different from his ghost form, the innkeeper wasn’t able to realize that Gerald had done the deed earlier. With that in mind, the innkeeper could only ask in a shaky voice, “...Who... Who the hell are you people...?”

Hearing that, Gerald was slightly pleased. After all, the fact that the innkeeper didn’t know that he was the culprit of the earlier incidents meant that Gerald could get off scot-free.

Regardless, Gerald didn’t want to waste too much time with him. With that, he glared at the innkeeper before asking, “Before that... Tell us, boss. What exactly is your relationship with Mr. Panther...?”

Upon hearing that, the innkeeper instantly lowered his head, clearly not daring to say a word.

“Hmm? Not willing to cooperate? I don’t mind. Just so you know, I’m skilled in the art of torture! Mark my words, you’ll talk sooner or later!” sneered Gerald rather excitedly as he summoned his Astrabyss Sword. He had honestly been waiting for a chance to finally use sadistic tactics to force a vile individual to confess.

Staring wide-eyed at the sword, the innkeeper could help but gulp before meekly saying, “I-I’ll talk...! Just don’t hurt me...! Look, Mr. Panther and I are partners! He started this inn and I’m responsible for managing it! Every time someone stays at the inn, I’ve to inform him about it! With that done, what usually follows is that I’ll use my bewitching incense to make the customers fall into a deep slumber... And when they wake up, they’ll find themselves under his control! By that point, Mr. Panther can freely begin extorting money from the customers!”

As it turned out, the inn they had chosen to stay in belonged to some kind of gangster who extorted his customer’s money! Unfortunately for Mr. Panther and the innkeeper, they hadn’t anticipated having to deal with Gerald and his party... As a result, Mr. Panther ended up tragically losing his life...

Whatever the case was, Rey then stepped forward, glaring at the innkeeper as he angrily asked, “Tell me... Just how many times have you done this...?”

“J-just three times...! After all, not many people come to our inn in the first place...!” cried out the terrified innkeeper.

“So that makes us the third group, then?” asked Rey.

“N-no... you’re actually the fourth...” muttered the innkeeper... only to receive a tight slap across his other cheek the second his sentence ended!

Though Rey had just slapped him, the innkeeper was far too terrified to even make a sound...

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Chapter 1828

“...Well I’ll be d\*mned!” declared Rey.

“Hmm? What is it, Rey?” asked Gerald as he raised a slight brow.

“Well, you never told me before that slapping others could be this fun!” replied Rey with a sheepish grin.

Upon hearing that, Gerald and the girls could only roll their eyes in response. What an irritating yet amusing lad...

“Let’s not get too childish, shall we?” muttered Gerald with a sigh as Rey laughed embarrassedly while scratching the back of his head.

“Regardless, what should we do with him, brother Gerald? Should we dispose of him?” asked Rey as he made a slicing gesture on his neck, evidently hinting at decapitation.

“P-please don’t do it, brothers! I now realize the errors in my ways! So please, please, don’t kill me...!” exclaimed the panicking innkeeper as he begged for mercy.



To think that him wanting to earn a quick buck would lead to such a life-threatening situation...! He didn't sign up for this! He didn't want to die!

"Hmm... Well, while he is evil, he's not completely unforgivable... Let's just leave now that we've taught him a good lesson!" said Gerald in a calm tone as he stared at the innkeeper.

Gerald, for one, wasn't a completely unreasonable person. He could tell that the innkeeper had only done all this for the sake of money, and now that he had been threatened so much, Gerald believed that the innkeeper wouldn't dare to repeat the same mistake in the future.

What more, Mr. Panther was already dead, so the innkeeper wouldn't be able to continue committing such vile practices anyway. With that in mind, Gerald didn't mind sparing him.

Upon realizing that Gerald was sparing him, the innkeeper was instantly overjoyed. After all, as long as he could continue living, all was right in the world.

"T-thank you, big brother...! I won't ever do such things again...!" cried out the innkeeper.

"You'd better not. If I ever find out that you do, you only have yourself to blame when I come after you mercilessly! Though by that point, you'll simply be accompanying Mr. Panther... I'm sure you catch my drift?" warned Gerald with an intense glare.

"L-loud and clear...! I'll run my inn properly, I swear!" replied the innkeeper as he nodded profusely.

"Well said. Regardless, let's pack up and leave early!" said Gerald as the other three immediately agreed.

The Town of Five Elements really wasn't a good place to be in... With that in mind, it would be best that they left town as soon as possible before anything really bad happened...

Regardless, it was about ten minutes later when Gerald and his party finished packing up.

While they had decided to spare the innkeeper, they weren't letting him off the hook that easily. With that in mind, they dragged the tied-up innkeeper—who was still stuck to the same chair—all the way to the front of the inn and left him there. Once dawn came, the citizens could free him on their own.

With that done, Gerald and his party then set off to continue their journey. Since it was still about an hour before daylight, the entire town was enveloped in silence, the only sounds being the low hum of streetlights...

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## Chapter 1829

"As they walked on, Rey was prompted to ask, "...Say... Do you think the innkeeper will get people to attack us as revenge, brother Gerald...?"

Turning to look at Rey, Gerald then calmly replied, "Probably not. Even if he does try to get his revenge, it's not like we can't deal with anything he throws at us. I'm sure he understands that failing to take me out will grant him a one-way ticket to hell!"

Gerald himself felt that the innkeeper wouldn't dare to cause them any further trouble. After all, he had made sure to strike deep fear into that man.

“...I see! Speaking of which, how exactly did the innkeeper get tied up to the chair in the first place...?” asked Rey who had been dying to find out.

“...Hmm? Do you really wish to know?” replied Gerald in a somewhat playful tone.

Watching as Rey nodded, Gerald simply said, “While I’d love to tell you more about it, it’s not something you should be made aware of yet at your current stage. Again, don’t worry. I’ll definitely tell you once you’re ready.”

“Alright...” mumbled the disappointed Rey, understanding that Gerald felt that he wasn’t strong enough to even learn about what Gerald had done yet.

“No need to feel down. As long as you train properly, you’ll surely learn about it in the near future!” said Gerald with a smile.

Hearing that, Rey simply nodded in response. After all, he knew that Gerald wouldn’t go back against his word.

Either way, it wasn’t long after before the sun began brightening the sky...

Since they hadn’t slept much at all last night, the exhausted Rey couldn’t help but say, “...Um... Why don’t we find someplace to rest first, brother Gerald...? After all, we weren’t able to sleep a wink last night!”

Upon hearing that, Gerald turned to look at Juno and Yrsa who looked equally as worn out.

“I have to agree with Rey, Gerald... We really should stop to take a short rest... We’re already quite a distance from the Town of Five Elements, so I’m sure nobody will be catching up to us anytime soon...” added Juno.

While it was true that Juno had entered the Avatar Realm—just like Gerald—it didn’t mean that she was incapable of feeling tired. What more, while she and Gerald shared a realm, Gerald was already at the Heavenly Emperor stage. With that in mind, he wouldn’t ever get tired and his energy would always be maintained at a comfortable level.

Even so, he understood that the others still needed rest, which was why he then replied, “Alright, let’s take a short break then!”

Hearing that Gerald had agreed to it, Rey instantly breathed a sigh of relief, making it evident that he had assumed that Gerald wouldn’t have agreed to it.

Either way, they soon came across a rocky cave and decided to have their rest inside.

However, aside from the fact that it was pitch black in there, there also appeared to be a foul odor that could be smelled, even from the cave’s entrance...

“My god! What is that stench!” grumbled Rey as he covered his nose with a frown.

Now that they were right at the cave’s opening, the smell was so terrible that it was almost vomit-inducing...

Before anyone could even reply, however, a roar of thunder could suddenly be heard in the quickly

darkening sky...

“Great! A thunderstorm now...?” yelled the annoyed Rey as he stared at the sky.

Trouble just kept on coming! What a difficult life!

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Chapter 1830

The second his sentence ended, a dazzling flash of purple raced through the sky.

With that, the four knew that their only choice was to bear the smell and seek shelter in the cave till the storm ended...

“...As much as it pains me to say this, let’s just take cover in that cave first...We’ll continue the journey once the storm dies down!” said Gerald as the trio naturally agreed.

After all, with all that lightning in the sky, staying in the cave was definitely the safer option. Their minds made up, the four then went a little deeper in before sitting on the ground.

While Juno and Yrsa closed their eyes as they sat arm in arm—while leaning against each other—against the cave’s walls, Gerald and Rey sat on the opposite end to rest instead.

Though the stench was terrible, had it not been for the cave, they would’ve gotten drenched in the rain by now...

Soon enough, the comforting sound of rain and thunder caused all four of them to relax even further. It was as though all their worries were being washed away...

Even so, good things never lasted.

It wasn't long after when two shiny dots appeared from deeper within the cave... As the beady orbs grew closer and closer, a flash of lightning revealed that the tiny orbs were the eyes of a giant python!

Despite how close it now was to Rey, he was sleeping like a log. The other resting trio wasn't able to detect the python's presence either.

At some point, the python began nudging Rey's shoulder, causing Rey to get slightly annoyed.

"Gah... Stop playing around... Let me sleep a little longer...!" mumbled Rey—who still had his eyes closed—as he attempted to brush the python's head away...

Upon realizing how scaly whatever had been nudging him was, Rey instantly opened his eyes in shock. Gulping as he slowly turned to look at what he was touching... Rey's heart skipped several beats when he realized that a giant python was right next to him!

Scared half to death, Rey instantly shrieked as he fumbled to his feet while yelling, "Good god!"

Hearing Rey's screams, the trio instantly woke up, prompting Gerald to ask, "Rey? What's wrong?"

"P-p-p-python...! Giant Python...!" yelled Rey as he pointed at the snake.

Now fully awake, the others quickly realized that the massive python was staring straight at them!

Realizing that the girls had just stood up in their shock, Gerald quickly ordered, “Don’t move any further!”

Upon hearing that, the trio froze in place, not daring to move an inch.

“Alright... Once you’ve calmed yourselves, begin backing away slowly... Emphasis on the ‘slowly’ part!” instructed Gerald.

Nodding subtly, Juno then began doing as Gerald had told... Taking small steps backward, she barely even dared to breathe...

Meanwhile, the giant python itself had locked its gaze on Gerald...

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Chapter 1831

Hiss!

The next second, the giant python hissed at Gerald.

Then, it launched an attack and charged toward Gerald at top speed.

Gerald moved sideways immediately to dodge the attack.

“Find a place and hide quickly!”

Taking advantage of the opportunity, Gerald shouted at Juno and the other two.

The three reacted immediately after hearing Gerald’s words, and they quickly found a tree and hid behind it.

After all, the giant python could only deal with one person at a time. So, they should just leave it to Gerald.

Although the giant python had failed in its first attack, that didn’t mean that it would give up. It turned around and rushed toward Gerald once more.

As its huge body moved on the ground, it felt as though the ground had started to shake.

The giant python rushed toward Gerald and raised its head, trying to hit him.

If he was hit by the giant python, he would definitely faint even if he didn’t die on the spot.

However, Gerald would not let the giant python win, and he summoned his Astrabyss Sword.



Slash!

He slashed it.

Thus, the head of the giant python was chopped off by Gerald.

Hiss!

The giant python hissed to the sky, screaming painfully and terribly.

The ground was soaked in blood in an instant, and the head of the giant python fell into the pool of blood on the ground

“Beast, you can’t simply kill me!”

Gerald glared at the giant python and shouted angrily.

Having said that, Gerald leaped from the ground and thrust his sword directly into the body of the giant python.

The giant python trembled violently and fell onto the ground, dead.

With just two simple and crisp moves, Gerald finished off the giant python.

“Alright. It’s okay now!”

After dealing with the giant python, Gerald shouted at the three.

Only then did Juno and the others come out from behind the tree and go near the body of the giant python.

“This python is horribly huge!”

Rey couldn’t help but say in awe.

It was indeed their first time seeing a giant python this big. It was even two times bigger than the bear they had seen last time.

“The wild boar we met previously was also very big. Do all the animals here share the same trait? They are all so large?”

Juno voiced her thoughts immediately.

“Maybe it’s because of the red phosphorus, which has caused certain mutations in the genes of these animals!”

Gerald explained briefly.

“Anyway, this fellow has sent us food. I heard that snake meat is really delicious, and I have never tried it before!” Rey looked at the giant python and said.

“All you think about is food. If it weren’t for me, you would have already been eaten by this giant python!”

Gerald commented peevishly.

“Um. Brother Gerald, we have you, right? I know you won’t let such things happen to me.”

Rey hurriedly smiled at Gerald and said.

It couldn’t be helped, but he was not as capable as Gerald. If he was, he would certainly have taken the initiative and stood out to deal with the giant python.

“Alright, stop flattering me. Go and collect the snake meat. I will make a fire, and we will have a barbeque. We’ll continue our journey after the meal.”

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Chapter 1832

Gerald instructed Rey helplessly.

When Rey heard his words, he immediately walked over to the giant python excitedly and squatted down to pick it up.

Soon after, Gerald had already started the fire, and he began grilling the snake meat over the fire.

“Brother Gerald, I told you that the cave would not be that simple. It was so smelly, but I didn’t expect it to be a snake cave!”

Rey looked at Gerald as he spoke. He felt that the cave from earlier had been rather strange because of the smelly odor, and sure enough, there was really an animal living here.

The sleeping giant python had probably come out of the cave to check on them because they must have unknowingly disturbed it.

Ultimately, the giant python had still died in the hands of Gerald and become their food.

It couldn’t be helped since this was how the food chain worked. Their life and death were determined by God.

The giant python was just unlucky to have met Gerald and the three others.

After half an hour or so, the snake meat was finally done, and it smelled very fragrant.

Grilled snake meat was a rare delicacy that not everyone had the chance to taste even if you were in the city.

However, this time, Gerald and the three were considered lucky as the meat of one python was enough to feed all of them.

After cleaning up, Gerald and his friends began enjoying their meal at the entrance of the cave.

After the meal, they had finally filled their stomachs.

Frankly speaking, the snake meat was indeed very delicious.

“Buuurp!”

Rey let out a long burp when he felt full.

“I’m so full! I’ve never tasted such tasty snake meat before. This is the first time in my life. It’s so delicious!”

Rey exclaimed with a satisfied face.

Snake meat was not something just anyone could eat.

After all, snake meat was prohibited in the market.

However, it was different here. No one could stop them from eating it. Therefore, they would naturally enjoy it to the fullest.

After satisfying their hunger, the four cleaned up and departed again.

The weather outside had already calmed down, and there was no more lightning and thunder. The whole forest was back to life with birds chirping everywhere.

“Gerald, have we bypassed the phosphorite area?”

On the way, Juno asked Gerald curiously.

When Gerald heard her, he took out his map and checked on it.

After looking at the map for a while, Gerald replied, “We’ve almost bypassed the phosphorite area. Just a few kilometers more.”

The phosphorite area covered a very vast area after all.

From yesterday until now, Gerald and his friends hadn’t stopped moving. So, they traveled a long distance in just a short time.

However, there were still a few kilometers more before they would have bypassed the phosphorite area completely.

“Do you think the soul hunters will catch up with us?”

Juno looked at Gerald and asked in concern.

Gerald shook his head immediately.

“I don’t think so. They shouldn’t know that we have left the phosphorite area and taken another route.

However, they might have already gotten out of the phosphorite area before us. This is what I worry about the most.”

Gerald said, slightly cocking his eyebrows.

This was the problem that was the most worrisome to Gerald.

If the soul hunters got out of the phosphorite area before the four of them, it would mean that they would keep on encountering the soul hunters on their path.

It would be different if it was the other way round. If Gerald and the others walked out of the phosphorite area before the soul hunters, Gerald and the three would have the advantage, and they would not have to be so submissive.

“We should hurry up, then. We must not let the soul hunters get ahead of us, or we would have to be on the passive side!”

Juno understood Gerald’s concern and reminded them immediately.

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Chapter 1833

The journey of a few kilometers was not very long, and Gerald and the others took only two hours to complete the journey.

Once Gerald and his friends were out of the forest, they turned around and looked behind them.

At the sight of it, they knew that they had left the phosphorite area.

Behind them, there was a huge mountain rich in red phosphorus. This meant that they had exited the phosphorite area.

“We’ve finally gotten out of the phosphorite area!”

When Rey saw it, he burst out in excitement.

Swish! Swish! Swish!

However, as soon as those words had left Rey’s mouth, dozens of black shadows descended from the stone wall around them.

The black shadows surrounded the four right away.

That’s right. They were the soul hunters.

Seeing this, Gerald and Juno’s faces changed drastically. They didn’t expect that the situation they feared the most would truly happen.

Murphy’s Law was indeed true.



Things that could go wrong would always go wrong.

Sure enough, the soul hunters had gotten out of the phosphorite area ahead of them and hidden here, waiting for Gerald and the other three to ambush them.

“Don’t move!”

One purple soul hunter came out of the crowd and warned the four, pointing at them.

The soul hunters took out their crossbows and aimed the arrows at Gerald and the others.

Gerald and his friends didn’t dare to move since a dozen crossbows were aiming at them. The moment they made a move, the arrows of the other party would pierce through their bodies.

It was useless even when Gerald was very powerful since Rey and Yrsa were with them. He had to consider their safety as well instead of just thinking of ensuring his own safety.

“Go and tie them up!”

Shortly after, the purple soul hunter ordered the men beside him sternly.

A few black soul hunters went forward with ropes and tied Gerald and the other three up tightly.

“Let’s bring them back to the campsite to see the leader!”

After tying them up, the purple soul hunter ordered again, and they brought the four away.

About ten minutes later, they arrived at a big campsite.

This campsite was the headquarters of the soul hunters.

The purple soul hunter brought the four of them to the leader's tent right away.

"Leader, I want to report to you that we have caught the four people and brought them back. They are currently waiting outside the tent, waiting for you to decide their punishment!"

The purple reported to the man in the cloak in the tent.

Hearing the news, the face of the man in the cloak changed immediately.

"Bring them in!"

Then, they heard the order of that man.

Once he had said that, the purple soul hunter walked out of the tent and dragged the four inside.

Once inside, the four of them stood in front of the man in the cloak.

The man stared at them.

"So, you are the ones who keep pestering us?"

The man in the cloak questioned Gerald and his friends.

“So, you must be the leader of the soul hunters.”

Gerald didn't answer. Instead, he asked the man in the cloak in return.

Hearing Gerald's question, the man in the cloak immediately locked his gaze on Gerald.

They stared into each other's eyes, neither one willing to give in.

In an instant, Gerald and the man in the cloak released their powerful auras.

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