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Though he was dissatisfied, Mr. Lightburn wasn't a fool. After listening to what his subordinate had to say, he understood what was at stake if he continued pushing on with the issue. Because of that, he didn't say anything more.

Gerald's Royal Dragon Group itself had developed at an immense rate in the past few days. After all, it now had help from the five forces it had acquired in Talgo Town. What more, both Tyson and Drake—who had been beaten up terribly by Sven—were now back at Gerald's side.

Though their main base was still in Talgo Town, they had recently begun developing in Heavenly City as well. Their efforts in doing so, of course, had been greatly aided by the Westley family.

"The Royal Dragon Group truly is a powerful dark horse!" muttered Specky—who had been standing next to Gerald this entire time—to himself.

"I wonder how they got so powerful so quickly..." asked a few girls who heard Specky's comment.

"Well, from what I've heard, the Royal Dragon Group's boss is extremely powerful! I've also heard that the bosses of the five forces surrendered themselves only after a single round! Because of that, nobody dares to block their path in the entire Heavenly City now! Well, except for Sven, probably... He still hasn't returned though!" explained Specky who seemed extremely well-informed about the entire situation.

Regardless, Quinlan was now extremely smug and in high spirits. After all, now that the Royal Dragon Group had stepped forward, the incident he was involved with was as good as solved.

Following that, he then began heading to the chancellor's office together with Marjorie and a few others to discuss some issues.

As they passed by Gerald, Marjorie took a glance at him. However, she only shook her head slightly and moved on without even greeting him.

From her middle school days till she was in university, Marjorie had always enjoyed her status as a goddess admired by all. However, once she graduated from university, she knew it was high time for her to get a boyfriend. Of course, not just anyone was going to be able to be her boyfriend.

Upon meeting Gerald the first time, she had truly admired him. After all, he was a handsome young man who had a good disposition to boot! Quinlan, on the other hand, was lacking in every aspect that Gerald succeeded in, or at least that was what she assumed based on her first impression of them.

After getting to know them a bit more carefully, however, Marjorie realized that Quinlan was hands down the more suitable candidate to be her boyfriend.

As for Gerald, he was a nobody to her now. Because of that, her attitude toward him completely changed as well.

Gerald himself could only smile bitterly in silence as he watched her ignore him.

While it was technically his Royal Dragon Group that had helped resolve this mess, Quinlan ended up snatching all the credits from him.

'Humph!'

Even so, this wasn't his first rodeo experiencing such injustice.

Recalling the multiple times similar incidents had taken place, Gerald remembered the time when he had regretted not exposing himself. Back then, he had been just as aggrieved as Alice was.

However, he now felt nothing of the sort anymore.

With that, he then returned to the office as the clock struck twelve. It was a little later when he was just about to get off work when he received a call. To his surprise, the number belonged to Tulip.

“I’m currently in a Starbucks in the city, Mr. Crawford. You’re off work now, right? Could you come over? I have something urgent to tell you!” said Tulip rather mysteriously.

“What is it? Could you be planning to treat me to some coffee to repay my kindness for saving you?” asked Gerald in return.

“Well, yes, but that’s not the only thing. Just come over now. We’ll talk more about it once you’re here,” replied Tulip before hanging up the phone.

Frowning slightly, Gerald knew he still needed to go there in the end. After all, his main purpose was still to maintain a good relationship with her.

Upon arriving sometime later, he saw that Tulip was seated at a table by the window, a cup of coffee placed before her.

However, Gerald was surprised when he saw the woman—who looked to be around twenty-four, the exact same age he was—sitting beside her.

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Just like Tulip, the woman was very beautiful, and both of them resembled each other a lot. However, Gerald could see that while Tulip had a more innocent look to her, the woman, in contrast, looked much more mature.

“That’s him, sister!” said Tulip with a soft tone as she pointed at Gerald.

Hearing that, she scanned Gerald briefly from head to toe before nodding slightly.

Following that, she grabbed her bag and got up to leave. While Gerald did intend to at least greet her, she completely ignored him.

Once she was gone, Tulip smugly said, “That was my elder sister, Juliet Yowell! What do you think? A beauty, isn’t she? Hah! Even if you deny it, I saw how wide your eyes were the moment you saw her!”

Nodding slightly, Gerald simply replied, "So tell me, what did you want to meet me for?"

"Well, it's something good so of course I had to tell you in person. Actually, scratch good, it's great news!" said Tulip before sighing.

"The truth is, I've been looking for someone suitable for the longest time. At long last, I've finally found you to be the perfect candidate!" added Tulip.

"Pray tell what exactly I'm a perfect candidate for..."

Hearing that, Tulip simply chuckled before saying, "Alright, so before anything else, let me just say that what you're about to hear will be extremely shocking. If you end up dying from excitement, don't say I didn't warn you!"

Taking in a deep breath, she then continued, "...So you see, my sister's been looking for a live-in son-in-law for a while now... And after searching for so long, you seem to be the most suitable candidate for the job!"

"...I beg your pardon? Me? A live-in son-in-law?" said Gerald as he immediately stood up, wide-eyed.

"Haha! I know, right? I was surprised that my sister agreed with it as well!" replied Tulip happily. Tulip had clearly mistaken Gerald's surprise for excitement, which explained why she was feeling so joyful.

"...Alright, let's slow down for a bit. First of all, your sister's extremely beautiful, so I'm sure she has many admirers. Why's she only looking for a live-in son-in-law...?" asked Gerald, his resignation evident in his voice.

"It's a long story..." said Tulip with a sigh before detailing everything.

Basically, after Gerald had saved her, Tulip got scolded by her family the moment she arrived home. However, after being scolded by her father, an idea came to her.

To understand that idea, Tulip had to explain why she ended up going to Bloomlin Mountain in the first place. In short, she had been in a very bad mood recently. Though Gerald failing to get them into the laboratory was the last straw for her, it was far from the actual source of her annoyance.

The main issue, as Tulip explained, had been regarding an incident relating to her sister whom she had a very good relationship with.

According to Tulip, upon Juliet's return to her homeland recently, she had been taking things extremely terribly due to issues pertaining to a broken heart. Juliet was simply upset all the time, and she was almost completely different from the sister Tulip used to know. Things got so bad that at one point, her sister even considered committing suicide!

It was the reason why Tulip had been so worried and easily angered at the time.

As for why Juliet had a broken heart in the first place, she had initially been studying abroad in M country. During her time there, she had a boyfriend and both of them were in love for a good many years.

However, she eventually found out that that sc*mbag had already been engaged to another person!

When she suggested that he marry her instead, he was actually hesitant about doing so! Understanding at that point that his heart never belonged to her in the first place, Juliet took things extremely badly and immediately returned to Heavenly City in great fury!

Before dumping him, out of spite, Juliet even said word for word, 'Since you're so hesitant about being with me, fine then! Since you think so highly of yourself, I'll just find the most worthless man on the planet to be my husband! You'll regret ever making me feel this way!'

Upon returning, she had asked for Tulip's help to locate such a person. Essentially, the perfect candidate would be someone who was worthless, but honest.

Fast forward to the present, as she said, she got the idea that Gerald was perfect for the role as her father scolded her.

Once her father was done, she immediately sought out her sister and told her all about Gerald.

As Gerald attempted to register all that he had just heard, Tulip replayed the earlier conversation she had had with her sister in her mind.

Back then, Tulip had found Juliet staring out the window. Running up to her excitedly, Tulip had said, "I've finally found the perfect person for you, sister!"

"Who is he?"

"Well, he's a new lecturer of mine whom we all call Teacher Skitterbrook! He's also the one who saved me today, so I can say for sure that he's an honest man. To be quite frank, he doesn't look bad either. What do you think? Should I ask him out once he's done with work today? By doing so, you'll be able to have a good look at him! If things go well, then you can get married to him and have your revenge on that sc*mbag! He'll certainly be pissed since my lecturer clearly has no advantages to him! Haha!"

"I see... Alright then, please ask him out tonight. Once I get a good look at him and if things go well, we'll sign the contract so that he'll be my husband for a year. Once that year is up, I'll reward him accordingly. With the reward money, I'm certain that he'll be able to live his life without any more worries till the day he dies."

"Alright! Just leave everything to me!"

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With that, the memory of the incident came to an end. Looking at Gerald, Tulip could very much tell that he was deep in thought.

Gerald himself was certainly not too excited about the fact that he was about to marry that beauty out of the blue.

However, he was also thinking about the practicality of going along with it.

Quite honestly, Tulip had made a good move in terms of advancing his plans. After all, as long as he was able to sneak into the Yowell family, then he would be able to put a stop to his vagabond lifestyle for at least a while.

However, the main issue still remained. Why did he have to get married to such a strange woman just to achieve that?

A better question yet, would his choice of actions be answerable to Mila later on?

“So, how about it? Haha! Just so you know, the marriage will only last for a year. Once that year is up, you’ll need to divorce her. However! The Yowell family will be sure to present you with a massive amount of money once that happens. I see no downsides to you agreeing! After all, not only will you be set for life once the year is done, but you’ll also have the title of the Yowell’s son-in-law throughout the next year!” said Tulip.

“Deal!” replied Gerald instantaneously as he looked at her.

As long as he could become stronger, then he would have a higher chance to save Mila and also deal with Kort. Gerald was well aware that attempting to do so with his current strength was futile, therefore there was zero hesitance in his final decision.

“...Huh? I haven’t even told you the conditions yet! How could you just agree like that?” pouted Tulip slightly, a hint of contempt in her eyes.

‘Humph! And here I thought you were a gentleman of honor... In the end, you’re just another money-grabbing b*stard!’

“So there are conditions... State them,” replied Gerald.

“But of course there are! Well, there’s only one, though it honestly shouldn’t be that big of a deal for you. Regardless, the most important thing is that you understand that your marriage with my sister is akin to the relationship between an employer and an employee. Don’t even dream about ever being able to go beyond that!”

“I see. What you’re trying to say is that the marriage is only nominal, correct?” replied Gerald with a bitter smile on his face. Though his expression suggested otherwise, this was exactly what he wanted.

“Bingo! That’s pretty much the only condition so if you don’t find a problem with it, then just sign the contract! Do note, however, that the wedding ceremony will be held in the next two days before my mom returns from abroad. While my dad certainly won’t say much about it, my mom’s a different story. She’ll definitely disagree with the wedding, so we need to proceed with this quickly!”

Gerald really didn’t know what sorts of tricks the sisters were up to, but he simply couldn’t be bothered about them. Knowing that this was as good a chance as ever to get involved with the Yowells, Gerald immediately signed the contract.

And just like that, seven days came and went.

It was a fine morning sometime later when Juliet and Gerald got into her car.

The moment Gerald closed the door of the shotgun seat, the aloof woman—who was now driving—immediately said in a cold voice, “The gathering we’re attending now has been organized by my classmates who are returning from abroad today. All of them have seen much of this world, so once we’re there, speak less. Understand?”

It had now been three days since their marriage and Gerald himself had moved into the Yowell family as a live-in son-in-law.

However, throughout that period, Juliet never spoke to him unless absolutely necessary. In fact, she didn’t even look him in the eye most of the time.

Gerald completely understood her reasoning. After all, what was he to her but a mere tool? Then again, it wasn’t like that bothered him or anything.

“Got it,” replied Gerald with a brief nod.

Soon, both of them arrived at a high-end hotel in Heavenly City.

“Ah, welcome, Juliet!” said a few men and women as they stood up when they saw her entering their private room.

Noticing her presence, one of the young men—who was dressed in traditional attire and wore a gold watch—walked toward her before saying, “Hmm! Upon returning to the country, I heard that you got married to some teacher, Juliet! Is that the guy?”

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A hint of slight resentment could be heard in the man’s voice as he pointed at Gerald.

“Indeed! This is my husband, Gerald!” replied Juliet as she locked arms with Gerald.

“Gerald, this is Cavan, a classmate of mine from university!” added Juliet as she introduced him to the man.

“A pleasure to meet you!” said Gerald as he reached a hand out in accordance with the etiquettes Juliet had earlier taught him.

“I truly can’t comprehend what goes on in your mind... Even if you broke up with him, you could’ve easily just gone for anyone else other than this guy...” muttered Cavan.

Noticing Juliet’s warning gaze, however, Cavan simply stopped talking. It was evident that Cavan was one of Juliet’s suitors. That explained why he completely ignored Gerald’s handshake as well.

Cavan wasn’t the only one treating Gerald that way though. Many of Juliet’s other male classmates shot equally hostile gazes toward him, refusing to say a word to Gerald at all.

Even her female classmates were staring at Gerald contemptuously from time to time. It was as though they were all wondering how a beauty like Juliet could end up being with such a pathetic person as Gerald.

“Just look at that guy, Cavan! I would’ve never imagined that Juliet would actually get married to such a person! To think that she actually fell in love with a teacher working in Heavenly City University! I’m speechless! What the hell even goes on in Juliet’s mind?”

It was a while later when several of her male classmates were discussing Gerald right outside the gents.

Their dissatisfaction with him was warranted since most, if not all, of them there had either had a crush or fallen for her once. Cavan himself had had feelings for her for the longest time.

However, since Juliet already had someone else in her heart back then, nobody ever had a chance to even ask her out. Upon finding out that she finally broke up with her boyfriend, all her classmates were eager to finally be able to try their luck!

Alas, the next thing they knew, she had already gotten married to some useless person!

With all of them being distinguished people, it was really no wonder why they looked down on Gerald so much. After all, he was simply a lecturer.

“Humph! I know right? We can’t even say anything to Juliet now since he’s constantly around her! What an inconvenient eyesore!” scowled another classmate.

“In that case, then we should just make him leave then! We’ll make it clear to him that our gatherings aren’t events that just anyone can attend, especially people with his status!” sneered Cavan.

After saying that, he began whispering his plan to all the present male classmates. Once everyone agreed, they all returned to the private room together.

The moment Cavan saw Gerald, he walked over toward him with a smile before saying, “Speaking of which, we haven’t even had a drink with the bridegroom! Since you snatched our goddess from us, you’ll have to drink with us today!”

The other males simply exchanged gazes with each other in glee before smiling coldly at Gerald.

Despite the evident and sudden change in Cavan's attitude, Gerald simply returned the smile as he replied, "Sure thing! What are we drinking today?"

"That's the spirit! Also, we'll be drinking liquor! I just so happen to have a few boxes of good liquor in my car that I've brought from home! Someone's bringing some over as we speak!" said Cavan who wasn't expecting Gerald to agree so easily.

"Liquor sounds fine! In fact, I love drinking liquor!" replied Gerald with a laugh.

Since Juliet had easily sensed that Cavan and the others were up to no good, she had initially planned to remind Gerald against falling for it.

Seeing how mindlessly he was acting, however, Juliet was left completely speechless.

'Just let him drink if he wants to so much, then!' Juliet thought to herself before looking to the side.

Soon after, her male classmates returned with two boxes of liquor in hand.

"Oh, and by the way, Gerald. My friend here runs a winery! As a result, he can hold his alcohol extremely well. Would you have a problem with him being the master as we drink along? After all, both of us are plenty eager to enjoy a good drink with you! How about it?" asked Cavan as he continued smiling.

"Not a problem!" replied Gerald with a nod.

Nobody noticed the impish glint in Gerald's eyes as he said that. After practicing the many skills that Finnley had taught him, Gerald had trained himself enough to become immune to all forms of alcohol.

In fact, he was now even able to consume basic poisons without having to deal with any side-effects. Liquor was nothing to him!

The main reason Gerald agreed with Cavan's proposal was because he knew how much Cavan and Juliet's other classmates disliked him. The current Gerald was no longer as passive as he used to be. He wouldn't just endure all his anger after being bashed around so much.

Since they wanted so much to play with him, then play with them he would.

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Cavan, on the other hand, couldn't help but shake his head as he smiled wryly. All humans had a limit to their alcohol tolerance, and he would definitely make Gerald drink till he exceeded his.

True to his word, his classmate's family truly did own a winery. Cavan was certain that he would be able to completely ruin Gerald since his classmate—whom he also considered to be his brother—and his father were both extremely tolerant toward alcohol. In fact, after a check-up, their bodies apparently had access to a lot more alcohol breaking enzymes compared to regular people!

He had once seen his classmate drink seven whole bottles of extremely high alcohol percentage liquors, back to back, before finally reaching his limit.

Seven whole bottles of alcohol!

With that in mind, Cavan felt that Gerald would already be bleeding from his stomach long before his classmate even got too drunk.

Now that all of them were ready, the rules were simple. Each of the five participating people—inclusive of Gerald, Cavan, two other classmates, and Cavan's winery friend—would have to take turns downing cups of liquor, and every time their cups were filled, they had to finish every last drop in it before it could be refilled.

It wasn't long before both Gerald and Cavan's friend—whose family owned the winery—managed to finish three whole bottles of liquor, each.

Cavan himself had already gone pale by then, and he bore quite a frightening expression on his face. However, he was still conscious enough to know that he should still be fine for at least three more bottles of liquor.

At the same time, Juliet and the other girls were all getting increasingly scared with each glass the five men drank. They were definitely overdoing it!

Worried, Juliet turned to look at Gerald... However, to her surprise, he looked completely unfazed! It was almost as if he hadn't drunk any liquor at all!

"You can really hold your liquor, Gerald! I'm sure you can drink another three bottles, right?!" grumbled Cavan in both disbelief and surprise.

"Well of course I can! Still, remember that you three still have to drink together with us! Since this brother and I have already downed three bottles of liquor each, shouldn't you guys start picking up the pace as well?" replied Gerald with a smile on his face.

"Alright, then! Since Gerald's willing to carry on drinking, then we'll continue drinking as well!"

As the other two classmates declared that, Cavan whispered to his good friend, "Say, Jarson, are you still able to hang on...?"

"I... I'm fine...!" replied Jarson—who was the son of the winery's owner—as he waved his hand dismissively.

Hearing that, Cavan nodded and the next round of drinking soon commenced.

Juliet could only watch in horror as the five of them continued downing more and more liquor.

While Jarson and Gerald were still drinking on par with each other, Cavan and the other two boys had considerably slowed down by this point. What more, as the other two continued downing cups of liquor in single gulps, the remaining trio found themselves drinking half-a-cup at a time.

As a result, in no time flat, Gerald and Jarson had each finished another three bottles of liquor!

Cavan and the other two, on the other hand, had only managed to drink another bottle and a half of liquor, each. While the two other classmates had passed out by this point, both Jarson and Cavan were still slightly conscious.

“You drink rather well, Jarson. Care to have another three bottles of liquor with me?” asked Gerald as he looked at Jarson’s sallow face. As he did so, he also took a peek at Cavan, whose face was now drained of all color.

“You still want to continue drinking? Both you and Jarson have already drunk six bottles of liquor each!” said Juliet, trying to talk some sense into them.

“Drink! We’ll... We’ll continue drinking! Jason! Drink I say-”

Before Cavan could even finish his sentence, he quickly wobbled toward the exit, clearly trying to hold himself back from vomiting in front of everyone.

Eventually managing to make his way to the washroom, Cavan instantly began vomiting as soon as he reached a toilet seat.

He would’ve never have dreamt that Gerald was this capable of holding his liquor.

Due to him underestimating that, Cavan’s entire world was now spinning as his stomach ached like never before.

At some point, he even began vomiting blood! However, due to how drunk he already was, he didn’t even register the implications of that.

After quite some time, Cavan could barely feel his legs as fumbled back to the private room. The moment he got to the door, however, he was greeted by the sound of screaming!

Concerned, Cavan immediately pushed the door open to see what was wrong.

To his dismay, the first thing he saw was Jarson sprawled on the ground! Blood and foam were spurting from his mouth and even the whites of his eyes were showing!

“C-call an ambulance! Hurry!” shouted Cavan as he stumbled over, his eyes wide in shock.

Not long after, the wailing of ambulance sirens approached the venue.

With the matter now dealt with, Juliet and Gerald returned to her car.

Now that they were alone, Juliet immediately turned to look at Gerald—who was still looking as fine as ever—before asking in amazement, “You... Are you truly still doing alright...?”

“But of course I am! I’ll let you in on a secret... I’m actually naturally immune to alcohol! The only side effect of me drinking that much is a strong urge to use the washroom!” replied Gerald with a subtle smile on his face.

“How could a man with such an honest-looking face be such a liar!” said Juliet as she couldn’t help but glare at him.

At that moment, Juliet’s phone suddenly began ringing.

Picking the call up, Gerald listened as she made several ‘hmm’ sounds before eventually hanging up, a worried expression now on her face.

“...The call was from my mother who’s just returned from abroad... It seems that she’s somehow found out that I secretly got married without her knowledge!”

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After saying that, Juliet simply frowned before adding, “...You know what? I don’t care anymore. She can just do whatever she wants to, right?”

With that, Juliet drove both of them home.

Upon returning home, both of them were greeted to the sight of a glamorous woman sitting on the sofa.

As soon as she saw Gerald and Juliet, she immediately stood up and pointed at Gerald before saying, “So he’s Gerald? What right does a person like him have to enter the Yowell family?”

The woman who had just insulted Gerald was of course, Juliet’s mother who went by the name of Heidi.

Heidi had been notified about her daughter’s marriage while she was still abroad. The moment she found out that Juliet had gotten married to some wimpy man, she ended up immediately passing out! When she woke up, however, she instantly booked a flight straight for home. All that led to the current scene.

“Like that has anything to do with you. My marriage with him is a personal matter that doesn’t require your interference!” retorted Juliet.

“Doesn’t require my interference you say? Tell me, Juliet, what exactly goes on in that head of yours? Have you any idea how many marriage-seeking rich young masters I’ve turned down for your sake? Even if you truly wanted to get married without taking me to heart, you shouldn’t have married this kind of man! Do you even understand the shame and humiliation our family will have to endure because of you?!” replied Heidi before tossing a teacup directly toward Gerald.

With a loud shatter, the cup smashed into a million pieces right at Gerald’s feet!

Gerald, however, simply remained silent.

“As for you, Tulip! I heard that you were the one who urged the two to get married in the first place! Just you wait and see how I’m going to deal with you in the future! To think that both of you would actually cause such massive trouble for me while I was abroad looking for a buyer in M Country!”

After saying that, the madwoman immediately stomped her way toward Gerald before giving him a tight slap across his face!

“Why don’t you take a good, long look at yourself in the mirror? Do you honestly think that someone like you is worthy enough to be married into the Yowell family? I’ll say this now so listen closely. If both of you know what’s best for you, then you should get a divorce immediately! Make sure I never see you ever again!” roared Heidi as she stomped up the stairs in a rage while knocking down all the flowerpots—on the stairs—she could see.

While Gerald could’ve easily avoided Heidi’s slap, he had simply been too distracted by something she had said.

As it turned out, Heidi had actually gone to M Country to look for a buyer. Since Gerald was well aware that the Yowells weren’t traders, there was no other reason for a rich mistress like her to look for a buyer overseas unless it was regarding the Ginseng King.

Recalling what Quest had told him before, the Yowells were still looking for a buyer at the time though they didn’t even know who they could sell it to. In the end, they must’ve decided that the best course of action was to export the Ginseng King.

Regardless, since Heidi had been the one to go abroad, that must mean that the Ginseng King must be with her.

That was the gist of how Heidi managed to actually land a slap on Gerald’s face.

Regardless, when Juliet saw that Gerald still seemed to be in a daze upon returning to their room, she said, “Since she slapped you so hard, I’ll be sure to add an extra hundred thousand dollars as compensation when we finally terminate our one-year contract!”

“...Do you honestly think that money means everything?” asked Gerald out of the blue as he raised his head to look at her.

“Is it not? Haha! Didn’t you agree to do all this in the first place because of money?” replied Juliet with a hint of contempt in her voice.

Hearing that, Gerald chose not to respond. Instead, he headed to the bathroom outside to wash his face.

As he was washing his face, however, he briefly caught a glimpse of a shadowy figure moving extremely quickly outside the bathroom's window from the corner of his eye.

After training for so long, Gerald knew that he could trust his vigilance. There was definitely someone out there earlier!

Wiping his face dry, Gerald simply looked at the window for a brief moment. Following that, instead of walking out the door, he instead jumped out the bathroom window! Noticing that the shadowy figure was right ahead, he immediately began chasing after the other person.

It was soon evident to Gerald that the unnamed person was someone who was both extremely fast and skilled. After all, no matter how much Gerald increased his speed, the escaping shadow always seemed to maintain a 'safe distance' from him.

The term, 'safe distance,' was used by Gerald to describe the distance from where one would be safe from being killed by others through the use of hidden weapons. The more he thought about it, the more Gerald realized that there was a possibility that the shadowy person was actually more skilled than him.

Eventually, the person stopped moving once he arrived at a boat by a moat. Gerald himself caught up to the shadow seconds later and was finally able to see what the person looked like.

Under the glow of moonlight, the figure appeared to simply be a man with a black robe draped over him. However, the robe itself efficiently covered most of the man's features, leaving only his eyes visible.

Frowning, Gerald then asked, "...Who are you?"

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His eyes stared coldly at the man as he asked the question.

With his keen ears, Gerald was able to hear how the person breathed from where he stood. Based on that alone, Gerald could already tell that this was an extraordinary person.

Since the figure wasn't replying, Gerald was about to consider his next move when all of a sudden, a few flashes of lights flickered before him. The next thing he knew, four other similarly dressed men jumped out of nowhere and they were now all standing before him!

Just like the person he had initially been chasing after, all four of the new hooded figures seemed to have skills and abilities far higher than what he currently possessed.

'Could it be the Moldells?' Gerald thought to himself.

"There are two reasons why we have called you out today, Gerald!" announced the man who had led Gerald there. From his voice, Gerald could guess that the person under the hood was a somewhat elderly man.

"State them."

"Before that, I hope you're aware that the Crawford family's name has been passed on for many, many years and is widely associated with being distinguished and having great wealth. Know that as the young master of the Crawford family, you've humiliated and ruined the Crawford family's customary moral standards and their way of life by agreeing to become a live-in son-in-law! Therefore, our first reason for calling you out today is to teach you a lesson!"

"So you know my true identity... Based on what you've just said, can I at least confirm if you're from the Moldell family?" asked Gerald.

However, the man didn't reply.

Instead, the man dashed forward and before Gerald could even react, the man was already right in front of him! Immediately after, the man delivered two tight slaps to his face!

Once he recovered, Gerald instantly turned to look at his assailant. However, he was left shocked when he realized that in just a blink of an eye, the old man had already returned to his original position!

Gerald barely had a fighting chance!

In his surprise, Gerald repeated his first question, "...Who... Who are all of you?"

"As for the second reason, I've received an order from our lord to bring you back to see him. However, I am aware that the Ginseng King will be of great benefit to you. Because of that, I'll leave the Mighty Four Kingsmen by your side for now. Do note that they'll take you away once ten days pass, whether you're prepared or not."

"The Mighty Four Kingsmen...?"

"That would be us!"

"During these ten days, all four of you are to stay by Gerald's side and abide to all his orders. Regardless of whether he gets his hands on the Ginseng King or not, once his ten days are up, all of you are to bring him back to our lord!" instructed the old man in black.

"Affirmative!"

Upon hearing that, the old man nodded before turning around. However, before he could leave, Gerald shouted, "Hold it! Who exactly is this lord you speak of?"

Since the corners of Gerald's mouth were already bleeding due to the two slaps he had received earlier, he had asked while cupping his cheeks.

"You'll know who he is once you meet him!" replied the old man before leaving immediately after.

...How very strange. Thinking about it, the strength and abilities of these men far exceeded what even the Moldells were probably capable of. Could there truly be even stronger masters in this world who weren't from the Moldell family?

As Gerald speculated on, he thought about how great it would be if Finnley was by his side now. After all, Finnley would definitely be able to estimate how strong these men truly were!

When Gerald tried questioning the Mighty Four Kingsmen to get further details, all they did was either nod or shake their heads. It was clear that he wasn't going to get any useful information from them, and this made Gerald feel extremely helpless about the entire situation.

Understanding that he would only be able to know more about them once he met their lord, Gerald told them to return to his manor to await further orders. After all, it wouldn't be convenient for him to have them around since he was still living in the Yowell family's mansion.

Speaking of the Yowells, at that moment, Heidi had gathered all of her family members in the Yowell manor's family hall.

Noticing that Gerald wasn't present and that Juliet herself seemed to be looking for him, Heidi then said, "Humph! Well isn't this perfect that he isn't around! Maybe he's already dead somewhere! Wherever he's gone to, don't ever let me see him again! I just feel extremely annoyed and frustrated every time I think about his face! Regardless, I've called all of you here today to announce something extremely important!"

Chapter 970

Heidi then continued, "Throughout my absence, I've been contacting several extremely powerful forces from different countries. As was expected, all of them were very eager to get their hands on the Ginseng King! You should've seen the prices they were offering us for it!"

"But didn't you say that the price wasn't an issue, mom? After all, getting it off our hands should be the priority since all the Ginseng King has brought to our family is trouble! There are already a number of powerful forces keeping a close eye on us because of it! Why are you still contacting so many buyers instead of quickly getting rid of it?" replied Tulip in surprise.

"Pfft! Silly girl... Can't you see what I'm trying to achieve? Contacting more foreign buyers will definitely be beneficial for our family in the long run! See, once the buyers realize that other forces are also aiming to get their hands on the Ginseng King, all of them will eventually end up fighting for it! With each of the foreign forces being so powerful, the smaller forces in Heavenly City—who are also targeting the herb—will most definitely fail to persist till the end once the foreign forces get involved."

"To summarize, by involving foreign buyers, the Yowells will essentially—and eventually—force the families in Heavenly City into sieges. Adding the money we'll get from selling the Ginseng King into the

equation, we'll surely be able to establish our family's supremacy in Heavenly City in the near future! If everything goes as planned, we'll definitely succeed in killing two birds with one stone!" explained Heidi.

"I see... I understand your reasoning now! Once the foreign big guns arrive, the smaller forces in the city who are also looking for the Ginseng King will definitely be forced to retreat!" replied Tulip with a nod.

"I'm glad you finally see the bigger picture. Regardless, I've decided that the Yowell family will be holding an open auction for the Ginseng King in three days. When the time comes, we'll simply allow the forces to fight among themselves while the Yowells profit from all of this!" said Heidi, a subtle smile on her face.

Though Tulip's father was essentially still the head of the Yowell family, Heidi's position was similar to a dowager's. Though Tulip's father wasn't dead yet, Heidi usually had the final say regarding family matters both big and small.

Heidi, for one, had definitely given it her all this time to be fully in control of matters regarding the Ginseng King. The fact that she had been able to come up with such shrewd ideas proved that this woman was very good at scheming as well.

"Since several of the forces will surely begin gathering here tomorrow once I publicize the auction, both of you aren't allowed to leave the manor in the next three days. You're to help me receive our guests instead. Do I make myself clear?" said Heidi as she glared at Juliet.

The sisters simply nodded in response.

Before Heidi could say anything else, however, Tulip suddenly yelled, "Oh! You're back, brother-in-law!"

Hearing that, Heidi immediately glared daggers at Gerald before scowling, "So, the trash is back! Once this matter is done with, I hope you'll disappear from my sight forever!"

After saying that, she turned around to walk upstairs again.

Gerald himself had earlier managed to get back in time to catch Heidi's entire plan.

He honestly felt that this old woman was extremely vicious since she barely sounded guilty for plotting up a plan to get so many powerful forces to fight among themselves. After all, Gerald was aware of how feasible her plan was.

The next day came soon enough, and just as Heidi had said, once news of the open auction for the Ginseng King was made public, chaos was quick to ensue in the entirety of Heavenly City.

After all, it was needless to even talk about the immense economic value of owning the Ginseng King. To think that the herb had been in the hands of the Yowell family this entire time!

Forces both large and small had received the invitation to participate in the open auction. Even several underground forces were already showing up, resulting in all the hotels in Heavenly City getting fully booked.

On that day, the entire city simply came to life like it had never before.

However, just as Gerald and Heidi had anticipated, bloody disputes were soon to follow.

It wasn't even past morning when two local forces got into a terrible fight, resulting in both sides suffering severe losses. Due to that, both the forces found themselves withdrawing from the auction on the very same day they were invited.

Those, however, were only small fries. The two powerhouses that actually mattered in the Heavenly City were the Sven Westmore Group and the Royal Dragon Group.

Sven himself—who was the boss of Sven Westmore Group—had yet to make his appearance up till this point, which led many to begin speculating that Sven must have encountered some kind of mishap. Some wilder accusations even suggested that he was already dead!

As a result, many forces who were initially affiliated to the Sven Westmore Group found themselves eventually submitting to the Royal Dragon Group, the extremely strong and powerful dark horse.

Moving back to the Yowells, they had naturally been very busy seeing that they were the organizers of the event.

For the venue of the event, the Yowells had booked Longstone Mountain Villa which was a large scenic spot in Heavenly City. From the start of the first day, Heidi and her two daughters had spent most of their time there receiving guests from all over the place.

Several locals of Longstone City also came over to join in on the fun, all of them wanting to watch the extremely grand-looking ceremony. After all, nothing similar on this grand a scale had happened in Heavenly City for decades now.

“Aren’t there too many people, mom...? It’s going to be impossible for us to arrange for all of them to stay in Longstone Mountain Villa! It’s simply too crowded already!” complained Tulip.

Tulip had even invited her classmates over to come help them today.

“Have you already forgotten? I kept reminding you that out of all the forces who are attending, we only need to make special arrangements and pay extra attention to eighteen of them! You don’t need to bother about the other forces too much! Speaking of which, just in case you’ve forgotten, please remember to make extra special arrangements for the two major forces in Heavenly City as well. I’m talking about the Sven Westmore Group and also the Royal Dragon Group! After all, the Yowells will still need to deal with them once the matter is over. Because of that, we absolutely cannot afford to offend them at all!” warned Heidi as she turned to look at Tulip.

Chapter 971

“I got it, mom. Still, isn’t the Royal Dragon Group’s boss rather mysterious? After all, he was able to rise up the ranks in Heavenly City so quickly! The boss must be extremely extraordinary! Also, from what I’ve heard, he’s been unwilling to participate in many occasions... It makes me wonder if such a powerful figure would actually want to participate in our family’s event in the first place!” replied Tulip.

“Upon returning to the country, I’ve heard matters regarding the Royal Dragon Group as well. Rumors say that the Royal Dragon Group is packed with extremely fierce and tough subordinates. They also say that the boss of the group is a very young man with extremely vague origins! Would you happen to know anything more about them, mom?” asked Juliet who had also been curious for a while now.

After all, to think that the boss of the Royal Dragon Group was actually at the same age that she was! Juliet was also greatly interested in finding out what he actually looked like, as well as how he had acquired such great abilities to the point where people actually willingly submitted to him.

It certainly wasn't out of the ordinary for girls to admire such capable people, and Juliet was no exception to that.

"I'm not too familiar with him either... While the Yowells did send someone over to the Royal Dragon Group to congratulate him during their opening ceremony, in the end, the boss himself didn't participate in his own opening ceremony!"

"Regardless, I'm certain that he'll attend our auction this time. After all, very few people are able to resist the allure of the Ginseng King. Once the Royal Dragon Group's boss has arrived, I want both of you to be on your best behavior! You know, if he's interested in either of you, then the Yowells truly will be the overlords of Heavenly City in the future! The Westleys can just beat it by then!" replied Heidi with a smile as she crossed her arms.

"I'm already married, mom!" grumbled Juliet as she frowned slightly.

"Nonsense! What sort of marriage even is that? Don't think I'm unaware of what you're trying to do by marrying such a wimpy guy! I'm telling you ahead of time that what you're doing is useless! Also, the divorce happens as soon as the event is over! Stop being an embarrassment to the family!" growled Heidi as her face turned slightly red in anger.

Before she could continue bad-mouthing Gerald, a voice called out, "Our teacher is actually pretty good, Aunt Sachs! He was the one who saved Tulip, after all!"

Turning to look at the owner of the voice, it turned out to be Specky as he and Tulip's other friends backed Gerald up.

"You're all just kids, so what would you know? Love and gratitude are two completely different matters you know?" replied Heidi.

At that moment, one of Tulip's classmates shouted, "You're here, teacher!"

True to the student's words, Gerald was slowly walking over to the group of people. He had earlier been making arrangements for the guestrooms after being instructed by Juliet to do so. Now that he was done, he had decided to come over.

"I guess you've all come over to have fun since the university's closed for the next few days," replied Gerald as he smiled with a subtle nod.

"That's right, teacher!" said Specky and a few others as they all laughed.

"Pfft! What utter trash! Trying to put on airs here! Just have a good look at yourself! If it wasn't for Juliet, would you even be able to witness such an event with your own eyes?!" scowled Heidi as she poked Gerald's chest with a finger.

Heidi was really trying to make it a point that she was extremely upset with her daughter's decision to marry this wimp. After all, she had made it clear to Juliet before that her son-in-law had to at least be a reputable figure!

Just as she was thinking about that, Heidi heard a female voice saying, "Hello, Madam Sachs!"

Facing the direction of the voice, everyone present saw a group of people walking over to them. The leader was a beautiful, long-haired woman who was dressed in a professional suit.

Her group seemed to have attracted quite a bit of attention by the time they finally stood before Heidi.

"Oh, it's you, Miss Takena Meiko! I apologize for not greeting you earlier!" replied Heidi with an instant change in mood as she smiled at Meiko.

"It's alright, Madam Sachs! You seemed to be busy earlier so I didn't want to disturb!" said Meiko—with her rather inarticulate attempt at speaking the local dialect—as she glanced at Gerald. After looking at the earlier reprimanded man for a brief moment, she nodded toward him before smiling subtly.

The Japanese woman's smile was truly beautiful. After all, whenever she did so, her lovely eyes would curve into the shape of two breath-taking crescent moons that simply gave off a warm and pleasant vibe.

"My apologies! I was simply lecturing one of my naïve servants! You're not getting in the way of anything at all! Still, you must be exhausted from your journey all the way from Japan! I'll immediately arrange for a guestroom for you to rest in!" replied Heidi rather awkwardly.

"A servant? I remember you mentioning something about a son-in-law, however..." said Meiko as she fiddled with her hair.

Chapter 972

"You must've heard wrong then! It's impossible that he could be my son-in-law!" replied Heidi instantaneously as she peeked at the six young Japanese men who were standing silently behind Meiko. All of them had indifferent expressions etched on their faces.

Gerald himself was already looking at the six subordinates Meiko had brought along with her. Sensing their powerful auras, Gerald could tell that all six of them were masters at their craft. This Japanese woman certainly wasn't an ordinary person to be able to have such powerful guards by her side!

Meanwhile, a large group of people began heading up from below the mountain villa. While several other forces had also been making their way up the mountain road, as soon as they noticed the ascending group behind them, the other forces immediately stood on both sides of the road to make way for them.

"Madam! Those from the Royal Dragon Group are here!" exclaimed Heidi's butler who had been standing by her side this entire time.

Hearing that, Heidi instantly prepared her most respectful attitude before announcing, "Welcome, Royal Dragon Group!"

By then, even Juliet and Tulip were already looking at the swiftly approaching group. After all, they both wanted to see what the young boss of the Royal Dragon Group looked like.

Even Meiko—who was initially already walking away with her guards—stopped in her tracks and turned around.

“What is it, Miss Meiko?” asked one of her guards.

“I’ve heard plenty about the Royal Dragon Group of Heavenly City... They’re so powerful that they managed to conquer half of Heavenly City in less than a month! I believe that getting acquainted with their boss will definitely be beneficial to me in the future!” replied Meiko with a smile as she looked at the group of people who had just stopped in front of Heidi.

“Greetings, Madam Sachs! I go by Drake and this here is Whistler! Both of us have been sent to be representatives of the Royal Dragon Group!”

With Gerald’s help, over thirty percent of Drake’s injuries had already been healed. Though fighting was definitely not possible yet, Drake could already resume doing normal activities.

“The Yowell family is already very grateful that the Royal Dragon Group took the time to even attend our event! Your attendance is very much appreciated. I’ll get someone to arrange a guest room for you immediately! Speaking of which, about the Royal Dragon Group’s...?” said Heidi as she smiled before looking around. It was evident that she wanted to ask about their boss.

“Chairman Crawford is currently busy. However, he will definitely come albeit a bit late!” replied Drake.

“I see! So his last name is Crawford... Well, it would definitely be for the best if he came!” said Heidi.

The moment her gaze fell upon Gerald, however, her expression immediately changed as she yelled, “What are you still standing there in a daze for? Hurry up and arrange the guestrooms for the VIPs from the Royal Dragon Group and the Takena family already!”

“Roger!” replied Gerald with a subtle nod.

After looking at both Drake and Whistler, he began leading both groups to their respective guestrooms.

“Seriously! The more I look at him the more anxious I get! How is someone like him even still alive when there are so many other outstanding people on this planet! What more, his last name is Crawford as well so why’s there such a massive difference between him and the other party?” scoffed Heidi.

Juliet herself didn’t say anything to that. After all, she had deliberately chosen to marry a man who was as useless as Gerald.

Speaking of Gerald, once he had arranged the accommodations for Drake and his men, he quickly gave them new instructions.

A change of plans was definitely needed since he could never have anticipated the participation of so many powerful forces and masters due to Heidi’s actions. With how chaotic things were getting, Gerald simply told his men to stand down for the moment until he gave further instructions.

After relaying that, Gerald immediately arranged for Meiko’s accommodation next.

“This will be your guest room, Miss Meiko. Service staff will always be present as soon as you step out of your room, so do seek them out if you have any particular requests!” explained Gerald with a smile.

Just as he was about to leave, however, Meiko suddenly called out, “Hold on a moment, sir!”

“IS there anything else I could help you with?”

“Yes, I was wondering if you could do me a favor...” said Meiko as she bowed slightly before Gerald.

“A favor?”

Chapter 973

“Yes... If possible, I’d like you to pass on this message—along with my business card—on my behalf to those from the Royal Dragon Group... ‘The Takena family would love to have the opportunity to meet up and have a meal with Crawford-san from the Royal Dragon Group. Do you accept?’ I do hope that you’ll convey this message to them for me!” explained Meiko as she bowed once more while holding out her business card.

After taking it from her, Gerald looked at her card while thinking about how remarkable and well-educated this demure lady was.

However, Gerald was well aware that this probably had to do with how strict Japanese culture was. Regardless, he still believed that as an individual, Meiko was no simple person.

The fact that he didn't know what kind of family the Takenas were only served to increase his suspicions.

After thinking about it for a moment, Gerald nodded before replying, "Alright, I'll pass the message to them for you, Miss Meiko. Enjoy your stay!"

With that, Gerald nodded at her before leaving.

Once he was back outside, he saw that Heidi was still waiting in front of the mountains. This struck him as odd since the representatives for all eighteen of the powerful forces had already arrived earlier. Gerald would know since he was the one who had helped all of them settle down.

Who was she still waiting for then?

"Everyone's already here, mom... Shouldn't we leave now?" asked Tulip.

"And who was it that said that? There's one more mysterious guest who has yet to make their appearance! I have to personally receive this guest, you know?" replied Heidi with a smile as she continued looking down the mountain.

"Oh? We still have one more guest? And here I thought that the most luxurious villa within the mountain villa was reserved for us! Could that be for the mysterious guest instead?" asked Tulip again.

"Bingo! I'm thankful to have such a smart daughter!" replied Heidi with a triumphant smile on her face.

“From what we’ve seen, the guests who are already here are all extremely wealthy and distinguished! Not only that, many of the famous foreigners present are known for their power! Is there truly someone else who is even more powerful compared to the people we’ve seen today?” questioned Juliet next.

“But of course! There will always be more famous and powerful people out there! Speaking of our current guests, quite frankly, none of them are even close to comparing to how strong this noble family is!”

“I was only able to meet this person by chance when I was still in M Country. She was both elegant and gentle, the perfect oriental woman one could say! While she’s only about your age, Juliet, I can safely say that your temperance can’t even compare to hers, even after a billion years! If it wasn’t for her distinguished identity, I would’ve already asked her to become my sworn sister!” explained Heidi.

“Is that so?” replied Juliet slightly enviously.

“There’s no need for you to feel so dissatisfied... Regardless, I happened to mention the Ginseng King to her... Who would’ve thought that she would immediately express interest in buying it! She should be here any moment now!” said Heidi.

While waiting, Heidi continued telling her daughters more about the mysterious guest. In short, while she didn’t know where the mysterious guest came from, she did know that the young woman was exceptionally rich.

She was honestly the main reason why Heidi was able to gather so much confidence to host such a major event in the first place.

Gerald, on the other hand, simply listened in to their conversation. The more he listened to her talking, however, the more Gerald felt that Heidi was an extremely snobbish and arrogant woman.

Shortly after, several luxury cars came to a stop at the foot of the mountain. After a group of solemn and respectful-looking bodyguards cleared the way, two women stepped out of a car.

The woman taking the lead seemed to have an excellent temperament and she looked to be around the age of twenty-five. The younger woman, on the other hand, looked to be around twenty-two.

Locking arms, both of them slowly began ascending the mountain as Heidi laughed excitedly before saying, "She's here!"

Seeing Heidi so excited, Gerald and the two sisters turned to look at the young women who were slowly getting closer.

Squinting her eyes slightly, Juliet was instantly filled with awe the moment she saw how beautiful and elegant the woman walking toward them was.

Gerald himself found his eyelids twitching the second he realized who those two women were.

"...Lyra? Bea?" muttered Gerald to himself as he suppressed his urge to shout in shock.

There was no doubt about it. The two women were none other than his fiancée, Lyra, and Bea, his cousin sister!

The men surrounding them were naturally from the Crawford family as well.

It had already been over half a year since they last met and Gerald couldn't deny that he had frequently missed and thought about his family throughout that period.

He really hadn't expected that he would be able to meet them out of the blue and here of all places!

Chapter 974

Though Gerald was considerably excited, he quickly calmed himself down.

While Gerald knew that his family had finally gained some respite after his disappearance so long ago, he was also well aware that he couldn't just rush reconciling with the Crawfords just yet.

His thought process was that once news about the matter got out to the public, then all his effort and hard work in the past few months would go to waste. The foundation that he had so painstakingly established would easily be wiped out by the Moldells once that happened!

Understanding that, he knew that he absolutely couldn't reconcile with his family yet!

After glancing at Bea and Lyra one final time, he turned around and instantly left the scene.

"You've finally arrived, Lyra! I've been waiting for you to arrive!" said Heidi excitedly.

"You must've waited for a long time!" replied Lyra with a subtle smile on her face.

Now that Lyra was standing before them, Juliet herself was starting to feel overshadowed upon getting a closer look at the girl who was currently exchanging conventional greetings with her mother.

As they were doing so, however, Lyra caught a glimpse of a figure entering another room. For some odd reason, her heart skipped a beat the moment she saw him!

"Is something the matter, sister-in-law?" asked Bea.

"...No... Nothing at all..." replied Lyra as she quickly shook her head.

Lyra was here today since she had heard about how important the Ginseng King was from Dylan. From what her father had told her, the herb was extremely valuable and difficult to obtain. Even the Crawfords had apparently sought out for it once, though they were never actually able to find it.

As for how Lyra got to know Heidi, she and Bea had met her while they were attending an economic management class in M Country. Since Lyra and Bea were also there to manage some of their assets in that country, they had bumped into Heidi sometime then, which resulted in Lyra eventually finding out that the Ginseng King was in her hands.

The moment she found out about it, Lyra immediately reported the matter to Dylan. Following that, Dylan barely hesitated as he ordered her to buy the Ginseng King off Heidi's hands, no matter the costs.

All that eventually led to the events of today.

Soon after, night came, and excluding the most luxurious villa within Longstone Mountain Villa, all the other rooms were filled with joyous singing and dancing.

Almost everyone was drinking and celebrating the night away since the open auction had allowed people from all walks of life to gather in one place.

Meanwhile, Bea—who had just finished her bath—entered Lyra's room before asking, "What on earth could that Heidi Sachs be thinking...? Why would she go this far when all she's hosting is an open auction? If it's money she yearns for, then I'll just give her a blank cheque and tell her to fill in any amount she wants!"

Hearing Bea's complaint, Lyra—who was wearing a pastel nightgown as she dried her hair—simply smiled before replying, "You should know that by doing so, you're only going to scare her away! After all, anyone would immediately wonder if you were up to no good if you simply told them that so casually before handing them a blank cheque!"

"...That... makes sense..."

After that, both of them fell silent for a while as Lyra looked around while cupping a hand over her cheek.

Though neither of them noticed it, a figure was eavesdropping on them right outside their villa's window.

"Speaking of which, Sister-in-law, I've seen you occasionally sighing ever since we got here... Are you sure nothing is troubling you?" asked Bea.

“...Well, earlier when we just arrived, I noticed a figure that looked very similar to your brother...” explained Lyra as she felt her eyes water slightly.

“Ah... You’re missing my cousin again, aren’t you...?” replied Bea with a saddened tone.

“It’s already been over half a year yet there’s still no news about Gerald at all... We don’t even know whether he’s dead or alive...” mumbled Lyra as she slowly covered her entire face, bursting into tears shortly after.

Also in tears now, Bea replied, “Not to worry, sister-in-law... My cousin is a good man so the heavens will always keep him out of harm’s way! He’ll definitely be fine! What more, if the Moldells have truly captured him, then their family would certainly not keep mum about it, right?”

After saying that, Bea pulled Lyra close to her and the two sisters hugged each other tightly.

Upon seeing this, the figure outside found himself clenching his fists tightly as well.

Chapter 975

Gerald himself was well aware of why Heidi hosted the open auction in the first place.

Putting it simply, she had made sure to invite as many large and powerful forces that she could in hopes that they would eventually fight each other to the death.

That way, once everyone else was battered at the end of the day, the Yowells would be the only ones left standing. In other words, not only would they get lots of money, but they would also be placed at an extremely advantageous position!

Of course, Lyra and Bea had no idea about all this and simply assumed that it was an over the top auction.

Surprisingly, they had become easy targets for Heidi to drag into this mess due to how mysterious both of them were.

“Just why the hell did both of you have to get involved in something so complicated...?” grumbled Gerald.

Naturally, he was the one who had been spying on them this entire time. As Gerald looked at the two fresh corpses at his feet, he couldn't help but worry even more for the girls' safety.

Gerald knew that Lyra had planned to be low-key this time around from the moment he saw how few men she had actually brought along with her. The fact that there were so few people guarding her only served to increase Gerald's unease. It was the reason he was so actively protecting and keeping watch over the girls now.

As for the two dead bodies at his feet, Gerald still couldn't guess who they worked for. Regardless, both of them had clearly been sent over to investigate the girls and Gerald just so happened to run into them while coming over to spy on Lyra and Bea himself.

After dealing with them, Gerald did consider ordering the Mighty Four Kingsmen to keep watch over the girls. After all, the black-robed old man had ordered them to follow everything Gerald instructed them to.

However, in the end, Gerald chose not to since he knew he wouldn't be able to rest easy unless he was the one keeping an eye on them. Sitting outside their window, he knew all he could do for now was continue listening in to their conversations.

'I've broken way too many hearts since my disappearance back then... However, it's not like I have a choice since I can't go home yet.... I feel like I've let Lyra down the most though, since she still considers me to be her fiancé after all this time...'

'I'm sorry, but it really is impossible for me to be with you!' Gerald thought to himself.

The hours then passed by and eventually, Bea returned to her own room to rest. Lyra herself slowly cried herself to sleep.

In the dead of night, once he knew Lyra was fast asleep, Gerald silently snuck into the room. Under the moonlight, Gerald could still see traces of tears on Lyra's sleeping face.

Gently using a finger to wipe one final tear off the corner of her eye, he then blanketed her as he sat by her bedside.

"...Gerald... I've been... determined to be your wife ever since I was a child... Please... Just... please show yourself already... Please come home..." muttered Lyra in her sleep.

"...Home? I wonder when I'll finally be able to return home myself..." replied Gerald in a soft tone, a bitter smile on his face.

'I appreciate your love toward me Lyra... Though we can't be together, I swear on my life that I'll never allow harm to ever befall you!' Gerald thought to himself as he gently caressed her forehead with the back of his hand.

It was at that moment when Gerald heard Lyra's room's door opening slowly.

As Gerald immediately turned to look at the door, Gerald realized that it was too late to even think about escaping now. After all, the girl who had just entered was now staring right at him.

Understandably shocked, the extremely startled girl was just about to scream when the dark figure sitting on Lyra's bed instantly made a dash toward her, covering the girl's mouth!

"There's no need to scream, Bea! It's me!" whispered Gerald as soon as he covered her mouth.

Bea recognized that voice anywhere and as soon as she heard it, her eyes immediately widened.

"Keep it down, we'll talk outside..." added Gerald as he released his hand over her mouth and pulled the girl out of Lyra's room.

"C-cousin!" cried out Bea as she leaped into his arms as soon as they were outside. She was currently experiencing a cocktail of positive emotions, so much so in fact, that she was even shaking slightly in her exhilaration.

“Is... Is this really you, cousin? Am I dreaming?” asked Bea as tears ran down her cheeks.

Gerald could feel how tightly Bea was hugging onto him. It was almost as if she was afraid to let go, thinking that the dream would end once she did.

Chapter 976

“...You’re not dreaming... I really am here!” replied Gerald with a smile as he wiped the tears off Bea’s face.

“Where have you been in the past six months, cousin...? You seem to be much stronger and tanner now... If this really isn’t a dream, then I... I... I don’t know, I’m just so happy to finally be able to see you again!” sobbed Bea.

“It’s a long story... I’ll tell you all about it in the future. For now, you just need to know that I’m still perfectly fine!” replied Gerald as he felt his eyes going slightly red.

“Speaking of which, how are my parents doing...?” added Gerald.

“Well, it isn’t uncommon for aunt to cry all day long these days... Uncle himself seems to look much older than he used to before your disappearance... Both of them simply spend most of their time worrying about you...!”

“...I see. And what about my sister?”

“She’s... grown to have a very short fuse now... While she used to be very kind to her subordinates, from the day you went missing, she’d occasionally beat them up over very small matters! Nothing seems to please her anymore, and she orders her subordinates to search for you on a daily basis!” replied Bea.

Hearing that, Gerald could feel tears trickling down his cheeks.

Upon seeing that, Bea then continued, “...Still, it’s great that you’re finally back now, cousin... I’m sure that everyone from your family will be overjoyed once they find out about it, especially Lyra! You know,

she's constantly been missing and thinking about you this entire time... She's also the one in charge of shouldering all our family's affairs now... The poor girl is just beyond tired and exhausted now..."

"However, she keeps insisting that she be the one to take good care of the family! She's been positive that you'll make your return one day now here you are! She'll definitely be extremely happy once she finds out about all this! In fact, I should probably call her over now! Oh, and I should call uncle as well!" added Bea, feeling so excited that she wasn't even sure what to do first.

"...Hold on a moment, Bea. ...Please understand that I'm only meeting you now since I couldn't hold myself back anymore... Bea, please promise me that you won't tell anybody about what happened tonight... Nobody should find out that we ever met," said Gerald as he wiped his tears away.

"...Huh? ...Why not, cousin?" asked Bea, clearly confused.

"Because I'm currently at a critical point in my battle with Kort... After killing Kort's third son and ceasing his power in the Salford Province, everything will come crumbling down should my whereabouts or status be exposed... By then, not only will my family suffer a massive blow, but I probably won't be able to make it out alive either... Do you understand, Bea?" explained Gerald.

"...W-what? You killed Jett?" replied Bea as she cupped her mouth in shock.

"B-but I heard that Jett was kidnapped by a mysterious master! From what I know, he's still considered to be missing! After all, the Moldells have frantically been trying to locate him to the point of insanity since the day he disappeared! They just can't seem to find clues about his whereabouts anywhere!" said Bea, now more surprised than anything.

"Well, I made sure that not even a single strand of his hair remained once I was done with him... He died a very clean death, so I highly doubt that the Moldells will ever be able to locate him!" replied Gerald with a bitter smile on his face.

"How exactly did you kill him, cousin...? Even the top masters in our family are no match of Jett's subordinates, let alone Jett himself!"

"Just know that Jett wasn't an actual threat to me. Regardless, I was serious about making the promise. Nobody should ever know that you saw me, understand? Also, please bear in mind that the auction you're participating in is extremely dangerous so you'll have to be alert at all times. If you sense

anything unusual, notify me about it as soon as possible. I'll secretly be assisting and protecting both of you throughout your stay here," replied Gerald as he hugged Bea tightly.

Nodding with a heavy heart, Bea then said, "...Alright, I promise. Regardless, I'm just so happy to know that you're still doing fine!"

"Silly girl... Speaking of which, I'm currently the chairman of the Royal Dragon Group and I'm after the Ginseng King as well. I need your help getting the herb for me once the auctioning begins! It'll be more useful in my hands rather than my family's anyway!"

"Not a problem, cousin! Also... While I'll definitely keep our promise, could I please tell Lyra about our meeting? After all, I spend a lot of time daily with her and I simply can't bear looking at her so upset as she thinks about you day in and day out!"

"I'm sorry, Bea, but you can't. I'll meet her when the time is right so please keep the matter a secret until then!" instructed Gerald.

"...I understand-"

"Shh!"

Before Bea could even finish her sentence, Gerald had placed a finger over his lips as he gestured for her to remain silent as well.

"Someone's coming. Don't say a word!" whispered Gerald as he frowned.

Frightened, Bea did as she was told.

Gerald himself sprinted quietly in the shadows toward the direction of the sound, much to Bea's surprise.

Once he was outside, he saw what seemed to be a masked man donning black clothes slowly approaching the villa.

Looking at the ground, Gerald noticed a few twigs at his feet and purposely stepped on them. The moment the man in black heard the sound of snapping twigs, he immediately dashed away from the villa with extreme speed!

'How skillful! It seems that there truly are no ordinary people participating in this event!' Gerald thought to himself as he slid on his mask before chasing after the man.

Chapter 977

Under the moonlight, Gerald could see the man running faster and faster on the grassy and leaf-covered ground, leaving a trail of rustling noises behind him.

The gentle rustling signified how light the man's steps were, and he honestly looked like he was almost gliding across the grass rather than running over it.

While Gerald had to admit that the man in black's skill was top-notch, there was still a big gap between that man's and his.

'You're still trying to escape...?' Gerald thought to himself as he let out a tiny sneer.

Gerald then kicked a branch off the ground with the tip of his shoe and, with extreme precision, he flicked it with his finger, sending it flying toward the running man as though Gerald had just fired an arrow!

It wasn't long before the branch connected with the man's back, creating a loud 'thud'! The impact of the branch was so great that the man in black found himself rolling on the ground several times till he eventually rolled down the mountain slope!

To Gerald's surprise, when he went over to inspect the rightfully injured man, the man in black was nowhere to be seen! No traces of him ever being there were left behind either!

'How strange... How could he have just simply vanished into thin air?'

He could only frown at his own carelessness as he continued searching around the area. After a while, Gerald realized that there truly was nothing left behind so he silently left the area.

Elsewhere, a hotel room's door squeaked open as a figure staggered in before collapsing in the bathroom.

Blood was flowing out of the person's arm as they finally removed their mask, revealing the person's beautiful face and long, black hair. Her dark hair honestly made her face look all the more paler.

'How truly amazing!' The woman thought to herself as she gasped to catch her breath before getting some gauze and beginning to wrap her wound up.

In just the blink of an eye, the third day came and it was finally time for the open auction to begin.

Though things had appeared calm on the surface in the past few days, it was evident that the peace was only a façade.

After all, throughout the three days, several of the forces had been busy engaging in countless secret battles and rivalries.

From assaults to kidnapping incidents, anyone who seemed like a competitor to be worried about was dealt with swiftly.

The biggest danger, of course, came from the major forces who had no issues with going on killing sprees.

Due to their honorary receptions, Lyra and many others were just sitting ducks in this event. However, due to Gerald's protection, he managed to foil all of their plans, which included both kidnapping and assault attempts.

Things definitely weren't as fine and dandy as they appeared. However, on the day of the open auction, it was as though nothing had ever taken place under the peaceful façade.

In fact, all the major forces appeared to be beaming with joy as they brought their men over to participate in the auction.

Apart from the mysterious Lyra, the Takena family and Thunderous Dragon Inc. from the north of M Country seemed to have the strongest reputations and power among everyone else.

As for the layout of the auction site, it was set in the open-air front yard of the mountain villa. A large stage had been set up there and rows upon rows of seats had been prepared for the guests.

Though the Yowells themselves were the organizers of the event, they weren't qualified to sit on the platform. Instead, those from that family were all seated on the row of seats right below the stage.

The eighteen strongest forces were all seated up front, and the remaining forces simply sat behind them.

Aside from the bidders themselves, tens of thousands of onlookers were also present. The crowd of people stood around the bidders and it was honestly extremely lively then.

As Heidi—who was wearing a formal dress—delivered a speech for the auction on stage, Tulip called out to her classmates, “Hey! Specky! Nicole! Over here! I reserved some seats for you!”

Hearing that, the two and a few others quickly went to where Tulip was.

They made sure to greet their teacher as well as they passed by him. As a member of the Yowell family, Gerald naturally had to attend the event today. However, he simply chose to sit at a corner.

“Are you really going to continue spending the rest of your life with that guy, Juliet...?”

The question had come from one of Juliet's many friends whom she had invited over.

Chapter 978

The girls themselves were sitting beside Juliet as they continued staring at Gerald who hadn't moved from his corner.

"That's right! Sure, you broke up with that previous guy and that's honestly fine! However, you really don't need to make yourself suffer by being with this one! I mean, just look at all the powerful and reputable figures who are here today! You know, I've also noticed that several of the handsome men here have already taken interest in you!"

"Yeah! So why not take the opportunity to finally get rid of him today so that you can start seeking out your true happiness again!"

Listening to her friends trying to persuade her, Juliet herself began thinking about it.

Honestly, if her friends had persuaded her on any other day, Juliet knew that her decision to continue on with the fake marriage wouldn't falter in the least. After all, as the name suggested, the marriage was only for show and Juliet was well aware of that.

However, things were different today. After all, rich, young men from all over the world—with temperaments that far exceeded her ex-boyfriend's—were currently present.

A person's circle of friends determined their horizons, and in the past, Juliet used to think that her circle of friends was already large enough. Now, however, she finally realized and came to terms that she had been a person with a narrow view this entire time.

As a result, Juliet was now gripping onto her skirt tightly.

She regretted it. She regretted her own wilfulness. She regretted getting together with Gerald as well. Even though it was simply a fake marriage, she still utterly regretted her actions.

"You know, I think that Mr. Lockhart over there is a pretty good catch. Just look at how he speaks and behaves! Between you and me, he's secretly been sneaking peeks at you this entire time! I really think that he's fallen for you! So please come to your senses and seize this opportunity to divorce Gerald already! It's high time you start seeking your own happiness again!"

While Juliet's friends continued persuading her, one of them sighed before saying, "...Alright, if you're too embarrassed to bring this up with Gerald, then I'll go talk to him about it on your behalf! That way, both of you can get divorced tomorrow then! How about it?"

Since Juliet didn't seem to disagree with it, her friends took her silence as consent for them to do so.

"That's great! I'll go over and tell him right this instant!" said the same girl from before as her other friends smiled with glee, happy that Juliet was finally coming to her senses.

Seconds later, Gerald looked up as Juliet's friend walked toward him and said, "Hey! There's something I need to tell you, Gerald Crawford!"

"Go on."

"Do you honestly think you're worthy of being with Juliet? Hah! Just have a good long look in the mirror! How could you possibly ever compare to a person like Mr. Lockhart over there? Look, Juliet already regrets marrying you so she told me that she wanted to divorce you tomorrow! Since she's said that, what's your response? Are you going to continue pestering her?" explained Juliet's friend extremely bluntly.

Hearing that, Gerald frowned slightly before smiling.

"A divorce, you say? Sure! I guess I have no choice but to agree!"

Gerald had only agreed to get married to Juliet since he had his eyes on the Ginseng King. If he managed to get his hands on it today, then staying married to her was pointless anyway.

"Well that was straightforward. Haha! I'm glad you're at least aware of your own status! Fine then!" said Juliet's friend as she smiled contemptuously before returning to Juliet's side to tell her the good news.

After hearing that he had agreed, Juliet simply began straightening her hair as her gaze fell upon Mr. Lockhart's back.

The man had been sitting in the front row this entire time, and Juliet knew little about him. However, she did know that he was extremely popular. From what she had heard, Mr. Lockhart was also the son of a wealthy businessman from Myanmar. What more, he had already established a cooperative alliance with the Royal Dragon Group in Heavenly City!

If she was truly able to end up together with him, then it would certainly spell the best outcome for both herself and the future of her family in Heavenly City!

As Juliet continued thinking about it, Tulip—who had been sitting with her friends—suddenly said in a rather angry tone, “Humph! Why are they here as well? I feel disgusted from just looking at them!”

Those who heard her remark instantly turned to look at who could’ve possibly made Tulip so annoyed.

As it turned out, it was a young man who had brought along several young women with him.

The man himself was none other than Quinlan from Talgo Town. As for the three other females, one of them was Marjorie while the other two were lecturers from the biology department.

While Tulip was angered by their presence, Nicole immediately said, “Keep it down, Tulip! I think Quinlan’s here with his father today! Since his father works for the Royal Dragon Group, you better not let them hear you!”

Hearing that, Tulip could only silently hold her rage in.

“Regardless, Miss Marjorie seems to have gotten together with Mr. Quinlan, hasn’t she?” asked one of the girls.

“Indeed! You know, someone saw both of them holding hands while walking around campus! Speaking of Miss Marjorie, I’ve heard other interesting things about her as well! Haha! It’s about her and Mr. Gerald!” replied Nicole as she lowered her voice.

“Oh? What’s the scoop?” asked Tulip and the others, their interest clearly piqued.

Chapter 979

“Well, from what I’ve heard, Miss Marjorie seemed to be very interested in Mr. Gerald when Mr. Quinlan and him first came to the university. However, Miss Marjorie instantly had a lot of interest in Mr. Quinlan next, the moment she found out about his background! As a result, she’s been treating Mr. Gerald like a complete stranger since then!” explained Nicole.

“Hah! What an evil woman! What’s so good about her anyway?” grumbled Tulip, dissatisfied,

Marjorie and Quinlan themselves walked past the group—hand in hand—without greeting Tulip and the others. After all, they were here as guests today instead of being their lecturers.

As they continued walking on, Marjorie noticed Gerald who was still sitting in the same corner.

When she first found out that Gerald had gotten married to the eldest young lady of the Yowell family some time ago, Marjorie had felt extremely anxious about it. However, she soon calmed herself when she realized that he was only a live-in son-in-law.

Shaking her head with a wry smile on her face, Marjorie then turned to look away from him as she and Quinlan walked on. She wasn’t obligated to greet the Yowell’s live-in son-in-law on a day like this anyway.

It wasn’t long before everyone was seated and the auction began proceeding in an orderly manner.

The moment the Ginseng King made its appearance, a small spike of excitement could be detected from the audience as everyone’s eyes lit up while looking at the legendary herb that was being displayed inside a glass cabinet.

Gerald himself couldn’t help but take several glances at the Ginseng King.

‘The reiki of the Ginseng King is so compelling... It’s clear from a single glance that it truly has the ability to strengthen and renew a person’s body!’ Gerald thought to himself before sighing.

By then, Gerald was starting to get both anxious and impatient. He wasn’t alone either.

Like everyone else, Gerald truly wished that he could just grab the Ginseng King now and bring it home with him.

“The Ginseng King is a priceless gem. Regardless of how expensive it is, I, Taito Mahone, am going to be the one to take it back with me today! Anyone who decides to go against that will immediately signify that you refuse to give me any face!” shouted a tanned, middle-aged man out of the blue.

“Oh my! What a coincidence! It just so happens that I’m going to be taking it back with me instead!” retorted another force.

“Are you challenging me? Do you believe that I have the ability to make sure that you won’t be able to leave Heavenly City alive?”

“Sounds rather unlikely to me!”

As both forces continued quarreling, a fight seemed to be imminent.

However, before anything else could happen, a young man who appeared to have come from M Country stepped onto the stage before saying, “Aren’t both of you being too impatient, sirs? Let’s be real here, everyone sitting in the front row is probably filthy rich. Because of that, no matter how high we bid for the Ginseng King, in the end, it’ll still be completely useless. Therefore, it’s useless for both of you to start fighting now!”

Since the young man was speaking in English, his verbal translator explained what he was saying word by word.

“Hah! Who do you even think you are, blue-eyed boy? What do you suggest we should do then?” yelled Mahone in return.

“Personally, I say all the strong forces should just fight it out. After all, since money can’t be used as a standard to get what we want, then fighting is our second best option! The last man standing gets the Ginseng King! Clean and simple!” replied the young man with a smile.

“A brawl? Do you honestly think that a young lad like you is worthy enough to be my opponent? If we’re going all out, then none of you will be able to win against me, the great Mahone! Get down from the stage, right this instant then, young man from M Country!” yelled Mahone coldly.

“What did you say?” said the young man as he locked his gaze onto Mahone, his blue eyes as sharp as an eagle’s. They seemed to bear great meaning behind them.

It was only a second later when Mahone’s face turned pale and cold sweat began pouring out his forehead. His eyes went dull next and all of a sudden, the arrogant man knelt with a loud ‘thud’!

“B-boss!” shouted all of Mahone’s subordinates at the same time, utterly stunned.

Mahone’s expression, however, barely even changed. It was almost as though the man had been possessed.

As was expected, that scene instantly created a massive uproar among the crowd.

“What?! Taito Mahone, the person infamously known for his fierceness actually knelt after receiving a single stare from that young man?!”

“Actually, wait! Don’t any of you realize that there’s something clearly unusual about that young man from M Country? From the look in his eyes alone earlier, it almost seemed like his gaze could pierce through a person’s soul!”

Chapter 980

“Could that person be a practitioner of sorcery? Isn’t that a little too evil?”

As the people in the crowd continued discussing the situation, the young man simply glanced at everyone below stage as he said, “So, what does everyone else think about my proposal? After all, the best things in the world should naturally belong to the strongest, right?”

After all that had happened, several of the big bosses were now too frightened to speak up.

While the bosses momentarily remained silent, someone from the crowd said, "...That young man goes by the name of Marco Thunder! He's from Thunderous Dragon Inc. and just as the rumors had stated, Mr. Thunder truly is an extraordinary person! It's really no wonder at this point how Thunderous Dragon Inc. managed to dominate so many strong underground forces! How evil!"

"...He's right! Victory should always belong to the strongest! I agree!" shouted one of the bosses after a long silence.

One by one, the bosses took turns agreeing to Mr. Thunder's proposal until eventually, everyone was in on the plan.

With that settled, the rules were decided on the spot. Essentially, those who wanted a chance to bring home the Ginseng King would have to choose a representative to fight against those from other groups. Once their representative lost, they would automatically have to withdraw from the auction.

"How could they even do this...?" muttered Lyra—who had been sitting in front this entire time—nervously. Her nervousness was warranted since she didn't really bring any martial artist masters together with her this time around.

Knowing that, the flustered girl wondered if she had already lost before the competition even began. After all, anyone she sent out would definitely have to deal with extraordinary people.

"There's no need to worry, sister-in-law... All we need to do later is to fork out money for it! Just know that someone will definitely step forward to fight for us later. Our most important role today is to help the Royal Dragon Group acquire the Ginseng King!" said Bea as she smiled at the worried girl.

"The Royal Dragon Group again? Bea, you've kept mentioning their group to me throughout the entire day. While I can definitely assume that you've had a word with their men, why do I feel like you're constantly focusing on assisting them?" replied Lyra who couldn't help but feel that Bea's behavior was a little odd.

"The questions can wait! Regardless, just understand that if you were currently in my shoes, you'd want to help their group out as well. Trust me when I say that helping them out won't be in vain!" said Bea as she held on to Lyra's hands tightly, a hint of excitement in her voice.

“What on earth are you hiding from me...?” questioned Lyra as she looked at how strange Bea was behaving today.

“Hehe! I can’t tell you about it now, so just know that it’s something great!”

Hearing that, Lyra simply shook her head helplessly. What was this girl even babbling about...?

Before Lyra could say anything else, a battle had already begun on stage.

As everyone else turned to look at who the representative for Thunderous Dragon Inc. was, many of the selected representatives instantly lost confidence. After all, the one currently standing on stage was Mr. Thunder himself!

It was evident that Mr. Thunder was a master at his craft. There was simply nobody who could last long enough to withstand three rounds against him!

Due to that, several of the initially participating forces simply gave up on their pursuit to acquire the Ginseng King.

“I guess Thunderous Dragon Inc. will be the one getting the Ginseng King this time around...”

As the fights went on, Tulip and the others began discussing the matter. The statement wasn’t baseless either. After all, several of the larger and more powerful forces had already been defeated by this point and many of the smaller ones had simply chosen to give up on the herb.

Meanwhile, Mr. Thunder himself was on stage as he threw a leg whip, instantly resulting in a strong and burly man getting kicked off stage. As shouts filled the air, the man who was kicked out was now lying on the ground, unconscious as foam came out of his mouth.

“There goes another one! Sven Westmore Group really doesn’t stand a chance without Sven himself! They should be the last force that should’ve possibly even stood a chance against Mr. Thunder, right?” said someone from within the crowd.

“Bullsh*t! Neither the Royal Dragon Group nor the Takena family have sent out their representatives yet!” yelled another person.

Hearing that, a young man who had been sitting beside Meiko this entire time asked with a cold expression on his face, “Miss Meiko, should we...?”

Meiko herself—who at the time, had a demure and delicate look on her face—turned to look at the people from the Royal Dragon Group who were sitting close to them.

Sensing that they didn’t intend to take any action for the time being, she simply nodded before saying, “Do try to restrain yourself as much as possible once you’re on stage. There’s no need to try so hard. After all, we only need to defeat Thunderous Dragon Inc.!”

Upon saying that, she smiled before glancing once more at those from the Royal Dragon Group.

She had honestly been waiting for them to take action from the very beginning. Meiko wanted to see for herself what kind of power the biggest and strongest force in Heavenly City possessed. Had they actually already given up?

Meiko simply couldn’t help but feel slightly disappointed by their inaction.

“Understood!” replied Ito as he got up with a nod.

Chapter 981

“It turns out to be a master from the Takena family! Perfect! I have been waiting to compete against you on this trip!” Mr. Thunder said as he smiled lightly while standing on stage.

As for Ito, he had already walked up onto the stage, and he was bowing slightly in front of Mr. Thunder.

A big battle was about to begin.

The people in the audience did not make any more noise, and all of them were simply staring quietly at the stage.

“Although this Japanese warrior is very powerful, I don’t think that he will be Mr. Thunder’s opponent at all because Mr. Thunder is simply too evil!”

“That’s right. But I believe that he will be able to fight at least three rounds against Mr. Thunder. After all, he looks pretty strong and powerful too!”

There was a lot of discussion going on amongst the people below the stage.

“You can start. Let me see whether the Takena family really has this kind of strength and power, or whether it is merely for show!” Mr. Thunder laughed as he said this, crossing his arms across his chest.

“Excuse me, then!”

Upon saying that, Ito started moving at an extremely fast speed.

It seemed as though Ito had left his afterimage and shadow in place.

Mr. Thunder was shocked for a moment.

He had already heard of the Takena family from a long time ago. They were a family with a ninjutsu inheritance.

However, Mr. Thunder had initially thought that his own skills and power had already reached its pinnacle.

Unexpectedly, there were still people who were stronger compared to him.

Ito, who was in front of him, was extremely strong.

As Mr. Thunder was faced with the attack, he was already starting to feel a little tired and exhausted after battling dozens of rounds.

He wanted to use his own secret methods to deal with Ito, but Ito did not give him any chance to do so at all.

Boom!

At the end of the thirty-odd round, a white light suddenly flashed across Ito's chest. After that, Mr. Thunder seemed to have fallen into a trance before Ito kicked Mr. Thunder off the stage with a roundabout kick.

"What?!"

Everyone stood up in shock.

"Mr. Thunder!"

Marco's men hurriedly surrounded him at this time.

They could only look at Ito with a fearful expression on their faces.

Mr. Thunder had actually been defeated!

Ito nodded slightly. "Mr. Thunder, you let me win!"

"Let me go!" Marco broke free from his subordinates' grasp, and he was feeling a little dissatisfied at this time.

“The Takena family really have many methods to deal with their opponents! However, there will be another time in the future! As for the auction for the Ginseng King this time, I, Marco Thunder, will give up on my right to bid!”

After waving his hand heavily, Marco sat down directly.

“Then... then the Ginseng King will eventually belong to the Takena family!”

Heidi was feeling a little nervous as she walked up on the stage.

She had also been a little frightened by the scene before her.

At this time, Meiko also stood up as she got ready to get up on stage.

“Wait a minute!”

A voice suddenly sounded.

Everyone immediately focused their attention on the person who had just spoken up.

“Madam Sachs, it seems as though the battle is not over yet. So, why are you in such a hurry to give the Ginseng King to the Takena family? Our Royal Dragon Group has not even competed for it yet!”

The person who had spoken was none other than Whistler.

“Oh! That’s right! There is still Royal Dragon Group!”

“I heard that the boss of Royal Dragon Group is very powerful. Do you think that he will be the one competing?”

“I don’t think it will be him! The boss of Royal Dragon Group is just a young man!”

“I thought that Royal Dragon Group has already given up!”

Everyone continued discussing this matter amongst themselves.

“Sir, please enlighten me!” Ito said with a blank expression on his face.

“You have misunderstood me. I am not your opponent. Your opponent is naturally our boss!” Whistler said.

Meiko’s beautiful eyes moved as she smiled slightly. “What? Mr. Crawford is already here?”

“Of course he is already here!” As Whistler spoke, he suddenly glanced at the corner.

Right then, Lyra, who was aside, could not help but curiously ask Bea, who was very happy at this time, “Bea, how did you get to know the people from Royal Dragon Group?”

Bea replied, “Sister-in-Law, just wait and see! Don’t ask me anything first!”

“What?! Their boss, Mr. Crawford, is already here?”

Everyone began searching for him at this time.

Chapter 982

“Marjorie, you came at the right time today! You will have the opportunity to see the big boss in Heavenly City!”

Quinlan was also looking forward to this moment.

Marjorie straightened out her hair as she asked, "Based on what you have just said, it seems as though you have never met him before either?"

"Of course, not! Even my dad has only ever seen him once from a distance. Only the head of Talgo Town has ever had direct contact with him!" Quinlan replied as he smiled.

As for Gerald, he had been observing all the major forces from below the stage. He was now almost done observing every force here.

Gerald had already encountered and fought against many masters in the past six months or more.

However, ever since someone had tried to plot a sneak attack against Lyra the other night, Gerald already felt that this group of people were all not that simple.

Therefore, Gerald was not in a hurry to stand up and step forward without knowing and finding out the exact details.

But at this time, Gerald had already witnessed their strength and abilities.

Gerald now felt confident and certain in his heart.

So, why would he need to continue hiding, then?

Gerald stood up directly at this moment.

"Eh?!"

"D*mn it! Teacher, why did you suddenly stand up?" Tulip asked in surprise.

Juliet also glanced at Gerald before she said in disgust, "This has nothing to do with you. Hurry up and sit down quickly. Otherwise, Mom will be upset, and she might even kick you out!"

Juliet's good friend also chimed in contemptuously, "That's right! You just have to interfere in everything. You are seriously an embarrassment!"

Gerald moved his muscles and bones slightly.

Instead of answering them, he simply walked up toward the stage directly.

"He... has he gone insane?"

"Would a person's brain go bad after being a useless person for a long time?"

Juliet's good friend continued speaking.

"Sir!" The people from Royal Dragon Group and Talgo Town suddenly stood up and bowed before him collectively.

"What?!"

Everyone was dumbfounded as they witnessed this scene.

Juliet's mouth was also hanging open because she was so surprised.

'Sir?'

They were all actually being so respectful toward Gerald!

Wouldn't that mean that Gerald was the boss of Royal Dragon Group, then? Gerald was the mysterious boss, Mr. Crawford?!

A shock! This was seriously shocking!

Marjorie and Quinlan, who were sitting at the side, suddenly saw Quinlan's father standing up and bowing before Gerald. Quinlan's father also hurriedly pulled at Quinlan's sleeve to make him stand up.

He did not turn around until Gerald had straightened out his suit and walked past them toward the front.

The strong aura that Gerald exuded somehow made Quinlan stand up involuntarily.

Meiko could not help but open her beautiful eyes in shock as she spoke with a smile on her face, "You... you are actually Crawford-san?!"

"Miss Meiko, I could not let you know about my identity because of certain matters. I am sorry."

At this time, Lyra, who was sitting aside, slowly stood up because she felt as though she was dreaming.

After exchanging some greetings with Meiko, Gerald approached Lyra.

"Gerald..."

Gerald raised his hand and placed his finger gently on Lyra's lips, almost as though he was motioning for her not to expose his true identity. "Lyra! I will explain everything properly to you after I am done with this matter."

Lyra grabbed hold of Gerald's arm tightly as she nodded heavily.

After that, she tapped Bea on her head.

At this time, Gerald turned around to look at Ito, who was standing up on the stage.

“You... can you represent the Takena family?” Gerald spoke as he looked at Meiko, who was standing aside.

This was because when Gerald had shaken Meiko’s hand just now, he saw that there were traces showing that Meiko’s right hand had been bandaged before this.

This reminded Gerald of the incident that had happened a few nights ago. He had injured a person, but the person dressed in black had disappeared mysteriously after that.

It seemed as though Meiko was truly not as simple as she looked.

She was the real master in the Takena family.

So, this was the reason why Gerald had asked this question now.

“Yes, I can!” Ito replied as he nodded.

“Alright, then. If that is the case, we will not waste any more time and get started immediately!” Gerald said as he smiled and got up on the stage.

Chapter 983

Everyone in the audience below the stage had already stood up at this moment.

As for Ito, he performed a warrior ritual before he rushed directly toward Gerald.

Boom!

After leaping into the air, he wanted to raise his leg to attack Gerald’s chest directly.

His speed was extremely fast.

However, even though he was fast, Gerald was even faster than him.

Gerald immediately raised his leg to kick Ito's raised right leg.

After a cracking sound, Ito knelt directly on the ground.

He had a very pained expression on his face.

"What?!"

Everyone in the audience was in shock.

When Lyra saw Gerald going up on stage just now, she had been worried to death because she knew that this Japanese warrior was very powerful. How could Gerald, who had such thin arms and legs, possibly be his opponent?!

Lyra was kind-hearted, and she usually would not be able to bear seeing even a white rabbit get injured.

What's more, when this was her husband?

Lyra had been very fearful, and she was on tenterhooks when she thought about Mr. Thunder's tragic situation just now.

However, she never expected Gerald to be so skilled.

"Wow! Teacher is so amazing!" Tulip exclaimed as she clapped excitedly.

Only Juliet had a very complicated mood at this time.

Ito became even more furious. He instantly knew that this man before him was not to be trifled with anymore.

Thus, he instantly shook his wrist, and a white light flashed across his chest.

Gerald turned his body sideways to avoid the attack.

At this time, Ito's flying kick was already directly in front of Gerald.

Boom!

Right after, everyone in the audience saw Gerald raising his hand as he pushed Ito's leg aside lightly. Ito flew up in the air, and he fell and crashed, smashing the tables, chairs, and benches below the stage.

Meiko's beautiful eyes were filled with shock.

This person in front of her was so strong!

Ito was no match for him at all.

However, Ito had never been beaten or defeated by anyone else like this before, and he was completely unreconciled at this point.

He did not want to continue evading anymore. At this moment, a white light flashed again, and suddenly, he was holding a Japanese katana in his hand.

"Baka!" He roared as he rushed directly at Gerald.

At this time, Gerald had both of his hands behind his back, and there happened to be a broken chair leg beneath his feet.

So, he simply tapped his toes lightly before applying a little force.

Whoosh!

The broken chair leg flew through the air and slashed directly past Ito's cheek.

It did not stop there, but it continued flying until it embedded itself deeply into a stone pillar that was next to Ito. The stone pillar where the chair leg had been embedded started breaking and spreading into a spider web formation.

Ito froze, still holding the katana in mid-air with both hands.

Then, he lowered his eyes to look at the scratch on his left cheek.

He did not move anymore.

Everyone in the audience stared at the scene in silence with their mouths wide open.

Meiko's eyelids twitched slightly as if she had suddenly thought of something. So, she hurriedly shouted at Ito, who was up on stage, "Ito! We lose! Hurry up and retreat!"

Ito finally regained his senses at this time. He lowered his katana and bowed deeply in front of Gerald.

"I have lost!"

Upon conceding, Ito walked down the stage.

Meiko had a different look in her eyes as she spoke to Gerald, "Crawford-san, thank you for being merciful and lenient just now. The Ginseng King will belong to Royal Dragon Group, then!"

“You let me win!” Gerald said as he smiled on stage.

Heidi swallowed her saliva as she spoke to Gerald after walking up on stage, “Ger... Gerald, you are actually the boss, Mr. Crawford from Royal Dragon Group? I already knew that you did not look like an ordinary person! You are truly worthy of becoming the son-in-law of the Yowell family!”

Gerald did not even bother to look at Heidi as he said, “Madam Sachs, we will transfer the money to the Yowell family’s bank account without a cent less! Royal Dragon Group will take this Ginseng King, then!”

Then, he simply took the Ginseng King in his hand before he walked down the stage.

At this time, everyone was looking at Royal Dragon Group with a different view and perception once again.

Ito was filled with guilt as he said, “Sister, I was useless! I could not withstand any of his attacks at all!”

“Ito, the difference between you and him does not lie in your techniques or moves. However, it is simply because he is no longer an ordinary warrior!”

Chapter 984

Meiko spoke softly.

Ito was surprised. “Not an ordinary warrior?”

Meiko stared at Gerald and the others who were walking down the mountain with envy in her eyes.

“Well, don’t you remember, Grandpa told us that once a person’s physical strength and his meridians had already reached a certain level, he would no longer be an ordinary warrior because his body will start releasing inner strength!”

“Wouldn’t that mean that he is already a champion, then? In that case, that is not surprising at all! How could I possibly be the opponent of a champion who practices inner strength?! However, it does not seem right, Sister. I remember Grandpa saying that some talented masters cannot produce inner

strength even after training and practicing for their entire life. However, he seems to be about the same age as us. So, how could he possibly know how to channel his inner strength?!”

Meiko said, “That is also what I am feeling puzzled about! He is so young, but he actually possesses a physique that an ordinary person would not have. Furthermore, he has even developed extremely strong inner strength. In comparison, I am even more interested in finding out who his master is. What kind of skills and power could his master possibly possess?”

Ito exclaimed, “We should go back home and ask Grandpa about this. I really would not expect a master to be hidden in a place like Heavenly City!”

After the auction had ended, Gerald completely ignored the Yowell family.

Instead, he returned to his manor directly.

As Lyra sat beside Gerald in the car, she said, “Gerald, I really did not expect that you would have already become so strong and powerful after not seeing you for just half a year. I think that you are even stronger and more powerful compared to the people from the Moldell family!”

“I was fortunate and lucky enough to have met a good teacher.”

“By the way, Gerald, why don’t you come home with us this time? Did you know that Dad is constantly worrying about you every day?” Lyra spoke as she held Gerald’s hand.

Gerald smiled as he responded, “Lyra, I cannot go back now. Furthermore, the both of you cannot tell anyone else that you have seen me. I have already told you about the pros and cons. I absolutely do not want my persistence and effort over the past six months to go to waste!”

Lyra became worried again. “Alright, then. I will not say anything to anyone, okay? Gerald, what are you planning to do next? Will you continue staying in Heavenly City? I heard Dad saying that the people from the Moldell family are already in Salford Province. They are simply too close to you now!”

After driving back to the manor, Whistler said helplessly as he looked at the four men dressed in black who were standing outside the door, "Sir! It's those four men again!"

Whistler then asked as he felt that it was really strange, "Sir, how did you get to know these four strange men? They are acting like a dumb person, and they only nod and shake their heads every day. Furthermore, why are they dressed like this in broad daylight?!"

Gerald had brought these four men home and settled them down in his manor a few days ago.

So, Whistler had naturally dealt with them before.

"In truth, strictly speaking, I do not know who they are either!" Gerald replied as he smiled bitterly.

"Then why are you leaving them at the manor, Sir?"

"There is no other way. There is someone who wants to see me. Since this matter is already done, they are waiting for me to honor my words and meet up with their lord!"

Feeling worried, Whistler then said, "If that is the case, wouldn't it be too dangerous, Sir? Do you want to bring some of our men with you?"

Gerald replied as he took a deep breath, "No need. If they really wanted to cause me any harm, they could have attacked me whenever they wanted to. Whistler, you should continue staying here in Heavenly City with Drake and Tyson. Take good care of our company. I will just make a trip with them first!"

"Gerald, where will they be taking you?" Lyra asked again.

Gerald shook his head.

He did not know where he was going or who he would be meeting.

Just as Gerald was about to enter the manor with Lyra, the four men suddenly reached out their hands to stop Gerald.

“You have already gotten the Ginseng King. Therefore, it is time to leave now!” The four of them said coldly to Gerald.

Gerald smiled wryly as he looked at them and said, “Where are we going? Furthermore, you should at least allow me to change out of my clothes first, right?”

The four men spoke coldly again, “No need! We will leave now!”

After that, they grabbed hold of Gerald’s arm.

“Presumptuous!” Whistler was immediately enraged, and he stretched out his hand to hit one of the men.

Boom!

As for that man, he simply raised his hand gently, and Whistler flew out directly.

“Whistler! Don’t do anything!” Gerald hurriedly stopped him. “Sirs, how are we leaving? We cannot possibly be walking, right?”

The four men did not say anything. The leader of the men simply took out a device before pressing the red button on it.

Bzz! Bzz! Bzz!

Not long after that, a large black helicopter came in from a far distance...

Chapter 985

Gerald had no choice but to bring the Ginseng King with him as he boarded the helicopter with them.

After going up the helicopter, Gerald was blindfolded by them.

Who on earth could it be?

Who would want to meet him?

He felt even more surprised and bewildered at this time.

These men were all undoubtedly masters above all masters. Even Gerald himself would not be able to deal a single blow to them at all.

This made Gerald doubt whether they were even ordinary humans at all.

Ever since his childhood, aside from Finnley, Gerald had not known any other masters at all.

However, if it was Finnley who wanted to see him, he would not have to do all this and go to this extent at all!

Gerald did not know how long they flew.

After that, the four men escorted Gerald off the helicopter.

Gerald could smell the faint smell of the sea, and he could hear the sea breeze blowing and howling. Not too far away, there was also the sound of turbulent waves coming one after the other.

His blindfold was then removed.

At first sight, it was indeed an island.

“Where is this?” Gerald asked the four men.

This time, the four men did not continue pretending to be dumb as they answered, “The Soul Palace on Colonel Island!”

“Soul Palace? Colonel Island?” Gerald was secretly surprised.

Gerald had been following Finnley as he traveled to the north and south for more than half a year, and he had gained a lot of insights and experience.

But where was this Colonel Island? What was the Soul Palace?

Gerald really could not understand at all.

However, what he could be certain of was that these men were all from the same organization—A super extraordinary organization!

“Please!”

The four men brought Gerald into the island. The island was huge, and there were many black palace-like buildings on the island.

They brought Gerald to a place in another courtyard before they settled Gerald down there.

“Who wants to see me? Can I meet him now?” Gerald asked as he was already beginning to feel increasingly anxious.

The leader in black spoke up, “Mr. Crawford, please give us the Ginseng King!”

This group of men was obviously not trying to snatch the Ginseng King from him. Besides, even if they were truly trying to snatch it away from him, Gerald would not be able to defend and stop them from taking it anyway.

So, he simply handed the Ginseng King over to them.

The four men did not say anything else to him, and they stepped out after nodding slightly.

Gerald helplessly thought to himself, 'What are they trying to do?'

He started pacing back and forth in the room anxiously.

Not long after that, the room door was opened.

Then, Gerald saw an old man walking in with a few maids behind him.

Each of them was carrying a plate, and there were various things on each plate.

After that, they placed the plates on the table in front of Gerald.

'They are treating me to a feast? Well, I am indeed feeling a little hungry. But... the appearance of the food certainly looks a little ugly!'

"Is this food for me to eat?" Gerald asked.

The old man nodded as he smiled. He seemed to be a mute as he was making a hand signal at Gerald, asking him to eat the food on the table.

"Alright, then. I will try the food!"

Gerald picked up the chopsticks, and he picked up something that looked very dark and black.

Since the old man had already said that it was food, no matter how ugly it looked, he should still be able to eat it, then.

Was it because this place was really backward? Was that the reason why their food looked so terrible?

In that case, he would try it!

At this time, Gerald placed the food into his mouth.

After biting the food, Gerald realized that it was a wrap, but the filling inside was soft, and something that looked like soup or gravy started flowing out in an instant.

“It’s so bitter!” Gerald’s face flushed red as he exclaimed in misery.

As for the old man, he simply motioned for Gerald to swallow everything.

“What... what is this? Why is it so bitter?”

Gerald felt absolutely disgusted.

The old man made a gesture, and Gerald understood it in an instant.

“What?! You are asking me to eat a snake’s gallbladder? Furthermore, it is not even cooked! It’s completely raw!” Gerald exclaimed in surprise.

The old man continued making another gesture.

“This is the gallbladder of an anaconda that has survived for more than three hundred years?! It is that precious?!”

Chapter 986

Frank giggled and nodded his head, indicating for Gerald to eat the next plate.

“What is this?”

“What? Eagle’s eyes? Oh no...”

Gerald felt nauseated when he saw the plate of bright red things.

Frank would only let Gerald leave if he finished everything on the table.

“What kind of place is this?!” Gerald retched multiple times as he asked himself that question.

What he could not imagine was things were getting worse.

For the entire month, Gerald had to eat those hundred-year-old snake galls and take baths in a pool of herbs.

Gerald was only familiar with the baths because Finnley had trained him like that.

However, Gerald did feel that this pool of herb was much more effective than Finnley’s because, within a month, he was much stronger.

They hadn’t meant to use the Ginseng King, but within a month, they had separated the Ginseng King into 30 portions just for Gerald to consume.

They all tried everything they could to help Gerald become stronger. But who were they?

"I'm not eating these anymore. Take them away from me!" Gerald finally burst out when Frank brought in some food for him.

Frank got nervous, and he tried to ask Gerald what had happened.

"Who wants to see me and where are the Mighty Four Kingsmen? Who was that elder that brought me here? What do you guys want, and why is the person trapping me here but not even coming to see me?!" Gerald was going crazy after he had been here for a month.

He pushed Frank aside, and he walked out the door.

If nobody was there to see him, there had to be someone there that was in charge here.

Gerald finally came out, but there was not a single shadow in this big black palace. He walked into a forest, and he finally saw some people there.

A few kids were playing around, but then he realized that it was a group of boys bullying a girl. When Gerald walked toward them, the boys immediately ran off, leaving the girl crying on the ground.

She was drawing circles with her finger on the ground as she cried.

Gerald walked beside her. "Are you okay?"

The girl got startled, and she lifted her head to glance at Gerald as she pulled her hand back.

"I thought only those people in black were here. Who'd know there were even kids like you here!" Gerald smiled.

However, the little girl seemed like she was afraid of Gerald. She just stared at him quietly.

Gerald smiled at her and took out a packet of biscuits. "Biscuits?"

The little girl's expression immediately brightened up.

"It's for you! Eat it!" Gerald patted her on her head.

Gerald looked at her smiling. "What did you draw?"

The little girl was not afraid of Gerald anymore.

Kids were easily satisfied.

She pointed to the left and said, "That's my mommy, and next to her is my daddy. The one behind is my grandmother!"

"Are they on this island with you too?" Gerald asked.

The little girl stuffed her mouth with the biscuits and shook her head. "They are not with me. They were buried underground by the masters here. They said that they will be sleeping for a very long time!

"I'm waiting for them to come and get me!" The little girl said.

Gerald's felt a stab in his heart when he heard what she had said.

"What about the other kids?"

"They are the same as me too. Their family members are all sleeping, and now, we are living on this island together!" The little girl said as she finished the first packet of biscuits.

She then mustered all her strength to open up another packet of biscuits, but she was still too young, and she could not open it.

Gerald felt terrible watching her. "Come, let me help you..."

Chapter 987

"What are you guys doing on this island? Did they force you to stay?" Gerald wanted to find out more.

Gerald even started to suspect that the people from Soul Palace had killed these children's parents and snatched them.

"Young Master Gerald, you've thought too much. We saved these children and raised them!" An elder was standing behind Gerald.

He wore a black robe, but his face was not covered.

He walked over and patted the little girl's head gently. "Little girl, try not to snack on this kind of food in the future, you hear me?"

"Yes, Grandpa Welson. Would you like some biscuits too?" The little girl asked.

"No, thank you. You can have them. Remember to finish up your homework after that. If Hewsky and the boys bully you again, you must come and tell me!"

"Thank you, Grandpa Welson and Big Brother. I'm leaving now!" The girl took the biscuits and ran off after she had said thank you.

"Who are you?" Gerald glanced at the elder and asked.

"It has only been a month, Gerald. You don't recognize me anymore?" The elder smiled.

"I remember now! You were the one who asked the kingsmen to follow me around!"

"I'm Welson Freed. Everyone on this island calls me Master Welson!" Welson smiled as he shook his head.

"I was looking for you. You said you were going to bring me to see someone. I've been here for so long, shouldn't you let me see that person already?" Gerald was angry.

"I believe you've been eating those foods for a month now. I can tell from your energy that the impurities in your body have been completely detoxed with the help of the Ginseng King. Today, I'm here to bring you to see him!" Welson smiled. "After you, Gerald!"

Gerald frowned, but he did not say anything. He just followed him from behind.

There were buildings on one side of the island, and as they got nearer to the buildings, there were many extraordinary men in black guarding it.

Gerald was brought into the biggest palace that seemed like a very royally ancient palace.

There was a stage before Gerald, and an old man was standing before him with his back facing Gerald. He was staring at a very big piece of map.

"Grandmaster, Gerald is here!" Welson bowed down rigorously.

"You can leave now!" The old man waved his hand with his back still facing them, and Welson left.

"I believe we don't know each other?" Gerald queried.

"Yes, you don't know me, but I do know you! The only heir of the Crawfords, Young Master Gerald Crawford! Oh yes, I almost forgot, you're also the Yowells' live-in son-in-law, and they chased you away after they thought you were a coward!"

Gerald blushed. He was indeed a coward all because he had wanted to look for the Ginseng King and thus, he had become other people's live-in son-in-law.

“That is my personal matter. It’s none of your concern. I’d also like to thank you for all the precious gifts that made me so powerful!” Gerald tried to change the topic.

“Your personal matter? I don’t think you understand the shame you’ve brought to your family!” The elder slammed on the marble chair as he turned around.

They made eye contact, and Gerald could finally see this elder clearly. He had a full head of luscious hair and a young face. His eyes were bright and clear, and he seemed very elegant and respectable.

Chapter 988

For some reason, Gerald felt strange as he looked at that old man, and under that pressure, he even felt embarrassed and looked down.

“Hahaha!” The old man laughed loudly. “It seems like my grandson does indeed understand what he did wrong!”

“Grandson?”

Gerald was stunned. “You’re...”

“You’ve not greeted me ever since you stepped in here. I’m your grandfather, Daryl, you silly boy!” He laughed as he sat on a marble chair.

“You’re my grandfather?! I... I thought you went missing?”

Gerald had never heard anything about his grandparents ever since young, and his father had only told him that his grandfather had been missing for more than a decade.

They had looked for him, but there had been no news of him, and Gerald had always thought that his grandfather had already passed away. Never did he expect that his grandfather was alive, and he was actually the owner of Colonel Island’s Soul Palace!

“You seem surprised?” Daryl looked at him happily.

“Yes, I am! I’m very surprised, Grandfather!”

Gerald finally understood why he had felt so strange earlier on.

“Have you always been on Colonel Island and established the Soul Palace?” Gerald asked in shock.

“Yes. I left the Crawfords, and I left everything to young Dylan back then. It has been 35 years!”

“Come, Gerald. Sit next to me and let me tell you some stories!” Daryl smiled.

Gerald sat on the marble chair.

“How many things do you know about your grandfather?” Daryl asked.

“I only know that you left my father 35 years ago after you both had a big fight. You gave up the position as the family’s grandmaster and never came back. I tried asking my father about you, but he didn’t say much!”

“It seems like Dylan did not tell you anything about the picture of the sun!”

“The picture of the sun?”

“Yes. It is a confidential picture that is passed down from our ancestors, and the content of it contains great knowledge. The Crawfords have always been so powerful and wealthy because we possess the guidance of the picture of the sun. But then, I realized that the picture of the sun predicted that within 50 years, the Crawfords would be gone forever, and the picture of the sun has never lied!” Daryl said.

“I’ve heard about that from my father, and he said that within these few years, the Crawfords might end up bankrupt or dead!” Gerald recalled what his father had told him.

“Yes, that was what I told him too. I’ve always been searching for an answer, and hopefully one day, I might understand what the picture of the sun was trying to say. Until 35 years ago, I finally found a new answer, and I even got a method of survival that is hundred years old, even before the Crawfords existed. Before your father, every generation of the Crawfords knew a thing or two about martial arts. Your dad broke the chain, and that is why I’ve never liked him!” Daryl said.

“Is that why you established the Soul Palace?” Gerald finally knew more secrets about what had happened.

“Yes. I’ve been doing my research, and I found this isolated location to build my reputation. I even gathered some powers to protect my family from being banished!”

“Gerald, you’re very lucky to have people helping you train your skills. That is why I was very happy when my people reported back to me!”

“Does that mean that you knew my master, Finnley? Is he one of your people too?” Gerald asked.

Daryl shook his head. “I don’t know him. However, I did some research on his background, and I found something that surprised me. My informants are all around the world, and there is nothing that I wouldn’t know about, but your master, Finnley Quick, gave me a hard time. I believe Finnley Quick is not even his real name! One thing for sure is that he is a great and powerful master, his skills are far more excellent than mine!”

Chapter 989

“He’s greater than you?” Gerald was shocked.

Daryl nodded his head with a smile. “It doesn’t matter if he’s our friend or enemy because he has saved you and taught you some very solid basics. If it wasn’t because of him, I wouldn’t see you so quickly!”

“I wanted you to have a solid foundation so that you could go through the hellish transformation. It would usually take three years to build up this kind of foundation. However, your body is pretty solid, and with the help of the Ginseng King, your body has everything it needs for you to survive the hellish transformation!” Daryl said.

“The hellish transformation?” Gerald was confused once again.

“Yes. It is something I got out of the picture of the sun, and because of this, I’ve acquired skills that normal people don’t have and become one of the legends! Honestly, your requirements are better than mine!”

“Legends? I’ve heard about that from Finnley. He mentioned that when warriors are trained to a certain level, they will gain inner strength and become champions. After becoming champions, they will stand a chance to be legends, but only the best of the best could become champions, and legends are beyond the realm of mysteries. Grandfather, you’re already one of the legends?” Gerald’s interest was piqued.

Gerald had received many secrets of nourishment from Finnley, and now that he had completely consumed the Ginseng King, he had truly become a champion. However, his grandfather was actually from one of the legends from the realm of mysteries?

“Yes. I became a legend 20 years ago! I’ve also trained a small number of warriors here to become a mid-level or high-level champion through the hellish transformation. Your skills can only be at the beginner level!” Daryl laughed.

“No wonder your people are so strong and mysterious! They are all champions!”

“Hah! Anyone here could beat you up ten times! But don’t you worry, because I’ll use up all of the resources for the hellish transformation on you, and I’ll even teach you the ways. Gerald, from today onward, you will be the future of the Crawfords!”

“So this is what your plan was all about!” Gerald finally understood.

“But…” Daryl seemed worried.

“What is it?”

“It’s just, after the hellish transformation, your powers would improve tremendously, and you’ll receive the blessing of the dragons. You won’t have the body of a normal person anymore, and there will be

side effects, which is your personality. You'll be very different from who you are right now. It took me decades to tone down too!"

"And all this is because I have great powers to suppress it. I'm afraid that once you can't control the blessing of the dragons within you, you might become..." Daryl hesitated. "You might become a bloodthirsty demon and kill as you like!"

"But don't you worry! I've been observing you since young, and you are a very kind-hearted person just like your mother. You'll never fight for powers, and I believe you can control the powers within you!" Daryl patted Gerald on his shoulders.

Gerald needed the powers. He needed to get stronger. He understood that money could not protect the people he loved, and only power, the power to control everything could.

"Your second uncle, Peter, was also the right person to go through the hellish transformation, but unfortunately..." A hint of sorrow flashed through Daryl's eyes.

"Fortunately enough, the Crawfords have you, Gerald. You're our new hope. You can get used to Colonel Island first. A week later, the hellish transformation will start, and it will go on for half a year. For this one week, I'll also prepare the space for you. Gerald... I know you're going to go through a lot of pain soon, but... this isn't something that you can run away from. As the next generation of the Crawfords, this is your duty! Are you afraid?"

"No!"

Their conversation lasted until midnight.

Seven days later, the grandmaster of the Soul Palace, Daryl, brought along his grandson, Gerald, and entered the mysterious space.

The grandmaster had commanded everyone that within this half a year, nobody should disturb them.

...

Half a year later.

Heavenly City's Triangle District.

There were rows of cars parked at the roadside, and there were few hundreds of people.

Everyone was waiting for their leader as if they were waiting for their hero to return.

Whoosh!

Soon, a helicopter drew closer, and it stopped in front of everyone.

The door of the helicopter opened, and a bald guy walked out of it with a group of people following him.

Chapter 990

The bald guy had a scar on his face, and he looked very fierce.

"Boss Sven, you're finally back!" Someone shouted.

"Sven! Sven!" Everyone cheered. They were all expressing their overdue emotions after half a year. Their king, Heavenly City's king, was finally back.

Who else could it be if it was not Sven Westmore?

"Boss Sven, you've been away to further your studies in the culinary arts field for so long, and now, Heavenly City has changed! Your brother..."

Sven waved his hand coldly to ask everyone to keep quiet. "I know about everything that has happened. Leif has been killed, our sites have been intruded, and the Ginseng King is gone. I know everything!"

“Royal Dragon Group? They really think that there is no Westmore left in Heavenly City?” Sven’s eyes were cold and sharp.

The Royal Dragon Group.

“Where did the boss go? There is still no news?”

“We only know that he went north, and he’s in Weston. Even the people from Japan have sent people to look for him, but there is no news regarding the boss!”

“Continue to search for him!” Drake was furious.

Drake, Tyson, and Whistler were walking up and down the office anxiously.

It had been half a year, and Royal Dragon Group had been one of the strongest organizations in the Triangle District. They had the most sites as compared to the other organizations around them. However, the news about their missing boss would soon be spread out, and the other organizations would start to target them.

“Mr. Jay, Mr. Sankey, things are bad!” One of their subordinates came in terrified.

“Why do you look like someone just died?”

“It’s Sven! Sven is back, and he has brought along his people. They are outside!” The man said.

“What?” The three of them looked at each other and ran out hurriedly.

As they reached the door, both parties were already fighting.

Many people from Royal Dragon Group were lying on the ground.

They saw two men trying to strike Sven with their machetes, but Sven did not even bother to dodge it.

The machete landed on Sven's body, but it immediately broke, and the two men backed off.

"I was thinking what's so great about Royal Dragon Group. It seems like their people are just very ordinary!" Sven sneered as he shook his head.

"Oh? There are even two losers here. I think you guys have lived long enough!" Sven said.

Drake shouted, "Let's kill him!"

The three of them charged toward Sven.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The three of them soon lay on the ground after taking three punches from Sven.

Sven wiped off the blood on his hands and smiled. "Bring them back and take back what's ours..."

Everything happened in the glimpse of an eye, and the three of them were brought away, leaving the ground splattered with blood stains...

Chapter 991

Though winter in Colonel Island had passed, the entire area was still very cold. After all, it had previously snowed heavily for three consecutive days before it finally stopped.

As a result, the chilly island was enveloped in a layer of silver.

Despite the cold, several men donning black clothes could be seen standing respectfully by the stone entrance of a cave on the island. The men consisted of people who held high-ranks in the Soul Palace.

“Judging by the time, it should be almost done by now,” said grandpa Welson to a few leaders as a sudden strong breeze blew snowflakes—which were beginning to fall again—into everyone’s faces.

Seconds later, rumbling could be heard as the heavy stone door was pushed open.

As everyone turned over to look, they saw an old man exiting the cave alongside a much younger one.

“Lord! Young master! Welcome back from your training!” shouted all the present men in unison and with utmost respect.

Daryl then laughed loudly before replying, “That’s quite enough! Go prepare the party immediately! Everyone from the Soul Palace will enjoy ourselves thoroughly today!”

Seeing how great his mood was, Grandpa Welson simply nodded before turning to look at Gerald. It was evident that the current young man standing before him was completely different from the one he had met half a year ago.

Gerald now had a beard and his hair looked much messier than before. His torn clothes also revealed the many well-defined muscles on Gerald’s now greatly strengthened body.

However, those weren’t the reason why Grandpa Welson had such a fierce-looking expression on his face.

No, what he was currently feeling had stemmed from the fact that though snowflakes melted quickly upon skin-contact for all the others there, any snow that fell on Gerald remained intact.

Grandpa Welson’s realization of that made the corner of his eyelid twitch rather rapidly.

Initially a Crawford, he had been together with Daryl for the longest time. He could still distinctly remember Daryl’s hellish transformation all those years ago.

However, the impression Grandpa Welson now had on Gerald felt different from that distant memory. To him, Gerald currently exuded an even greater power compared to the lord all those years ago.

Gerald's eyes, in particular, reflected how strong, dignified, and calm he was as a person. However, by contrast, they simultaneously hinted at a constant bloodlust as well.

As Grandpa Welson felt a chill run down his spine, Daryl himself gently patted Gerald's shoulder as he said, "Just head there once you're done cleaning yourself up, Gerald."

"Alright," replied Gerald as he nodded before heading off to clean himself.

On his way to the bathroom, any leader of the Soul Palace whom he walked past would bow their heads to greet him.

Upon opening the door to the large bathroom, Gerald was instantly greeted by warm steam. Inside, more than ten women—both young and old—could be seen attending to their chores at the side.

Closing his eyes, Gerald stretched both his arms out, prompting a few of the women to go over to him and begin massaging his shoulders. The others got busy as well, trimming his hair and giving him a well-deserved shave.

With how masculine Gerald was, none of the women could hold back from blushing.

Once he was all clean, the women then blow-dried Gerald's body with hairdryers before sliding a bathrobe onto him.

"The suit you asked for has been prepared, young master..." said one of the women shyly.

"Alright. You may leave now," replied Gerald quite placidly.

After suiting up, Gerald found himself heaving a long sigh. He had gone through great pain in the past half-year, and after enduring through all that, his suffering could finally end today.

As he fixed his tie, Gerald suddenly heard a soft and gentle voice behind him saying, "Allow me to help you, young master."

Turning around to look at who had spoken, Gerald immediately found a fair and demure-looking hand reaching out to touch his body. The hand itself belonged to a woman who was dressed rather seductively.

As Gerald gently lifted her by her chin, the woman seemed to be eagerly awaiting something.

In her mind, she was thinking that if she was able to bewitch the young master, then she would definitely be able to improve her position in the Soul Palace. Once that happened, she would surely rise above the other beauties!

"Get. Lost!"

His immediate response was far from what she had anticipated, and it was evident that it hadn't occurred to her that the young master could be this aloof.

Chapter 992

His sudden shout frightened the woman so much that her entire body immediately trembled as though she had just been struck by lightning.

"Y-yes, young master!" replied the woman awkwardly as she quickly left the room.

It was only three days later when the party in the Soul Palace finally ended. On the morning of the day after, everyone from the Soul Palace gathered at the island's public square.

"You've successfully made it through your hellish transformation, Gerald, and I have to say that your final results have far surpassed my expectations. However, while you're currently able to better control your temperament, it's still extremely unstable. If you wish to perform the blessings of the dragon to its maximum degree, you'll need to drink the holy blood of the holy fox. Once you do, it'll assist in helping you control your temperament. I'll have Grandpa Welson stay by your side to aid you when you return there."

"I'm aware, grandpa. Speaking of which, when will you be returning there to have a look around? My dad honestly misses you too," replied Gerald casually

Nodding, Daryl then patted Gerald's shoulder as he said, "I'll return when the time is right."

It was evident that Daryl had high expectations of Gerald.

Not long after, thirty black helicopters could be heard starting up at the base.

Placing a firm gaze on his grandfather, Gerald then said, "Do take care, grandpa. We'll be leaving now."

With that said, he then turned to board one of the helicopters.

As the helicopters took off with Grandpa Welson, over three hundred experts from the island, and Gerald himself, their loud droning slowly faded from the island as they flew south.

Meanwhile, the night was getting darker and darker within the suburbs of the Triangle District within Heavenly City.

There, a pitiful looking woman hugging onto a document folder could be seen desperately trying to escape over ten cars that were driving slowly behind her.

Though her face was pale and wounds could be seen covering her body, it was clear that the woman found the document folder she had in hand to be much more important than her life.

The cars themselves continued moving slowly as a few people sitting inside stretched their heads out the cars' windows and began shining their flashlights on the woman.

"Haha! That's right! Go on and continue running! Run faster! We're going to catch you soon!" yelled one of the men, causing the others to get increasingly excited as well.

As the woman ran, and ran, she eventually tripped and fell to the ground. However, gritting her teeth, she immediately crawled back up and continued running.

It wasn't long before one of the cars then immediately drove up to her. Shining his flashlight directly at her face, the person sitting beside the driver then said, "We've got you now! Honestly, you'd better run quicker than this if you don't want to fall into Tucker's hands. After all, once he has you, you'll definitely be ruined! Hahaha!"

Hearing that, the others began laughing loudly inside their cars as well, teasing the woman's poor attempt at escaping.

Eventually, the woman found herself falling again. However, she had reached her limit and she simply wasn't able to get herself off the ground anymore.

Knowing that, the woman immediately tried tearing the contents of the document folder apart with the intent of swallowing whatever scraps she could so that they couldn't be recovered.

"You mother*cking bitch! Do you really think we won't kill you?!" roared Tucker Westmore himself as he jumped out of his car alongside a few other of his men. It didn't take long for him to brutally land a slap on her cheek, causing the woman to drop the document folder in her state of dizziness.

Picking it up, Tucker then sneered, "It would be a pity for a beauty like you to just die like this... Bring her back! I'm going to be enjoying myself with her tonight! All of you can have your turns with her once I'm done!"

"Hahaha! Affirmative, Mr. Westmore!"

Glaring daggers at Tucker, the woman immediately revealed a hidden short blade.

However, before she was even able to take her life, Tucker simply slapped the blade out of her hands.

“Oh? Did you honestly think I would allow you to die that easily? Haha! You’ll only be able to once I’ve sufficiently tortured you!” announced Tucker as he laughed maliciously.

As the woman cried out in despair, a distant droning could suddenly be heard.

It wasn’t long before the droning grew louder and louder. The next thing they knew, over thirty helicopters had appeared, and they now hovered over Tucker and his men!

“What the hell is happening?” demanded Tucker, shocked by the turn of events.

After the helicopters landed, several men dressed in black came out and immediately glared at Tucker and his men extremely coldly.

Seeing how extraordinarily imposing they all were, Tucker quickly added, “Hey now, which side do all of you belong to? I don’t think I’ve seen any of you before! Just so you know, my father is Sven from Heavenly City!”

Immediately after he said that, the door to one of the helicopters—that had landed right in the middle of the others—was opened by one of the opposing party’s subordinates.

Turning to look in that direction, Tucker saw a suited man sitting inside as he sipped on red wine.

Before he could even say anything, the woman—who had clearly seen the man in the helicopter as well—immediately cried out, “S-sir! You’ve finally returned!”

Chapter 993

The person she was referring to was, of course, none other than Gerald.

The woman herself was Yukie, the one who had stayed by Gerald’s side for some time back when he had first established the Royal Dragon Group.

Watching the teary-eyed woman run toward him, Gerald felt an acute pain in his heart as he realized how terribly Yukie had suffered.

“You’ve already suffered so much, Yukie... Fear not, for I have returned!” declared Gerald as he led her into one of the helicopters.

Yukie clung on tightly to Gerald’s arm as they walked on, clearly unwilling to part. After all, she had yearned for Gerald from dusk till dawn ever since the day he left half a year ago.

Still, what was this peculiar feeling welling within her upon reuniting with Gerald...? Momentarily shaking the thought away, Yukie knew that there were more serious matters to attend to first.

Holding out the document folder to Gerald, she then said, “Sven is back, sir... As a result, Drake, Tyson, Mr. Whistler... They... They’ve all been captured! Even Lucy and many others have been taken away by him! As if that wasn’t enough, he even snatched away many of our properties! The ones in this document folder are the final properties that we have left...”

Seeing how desperately she had tried to protect the properties, Gerald wiped a tear off the corner of her eye as he replied, “I’ve earlier told Grandpa Welson to investigate the incident so I already know most of the details. It’s my fault for disappearing on all of you for over half a year...”

“F*ck! So that’s Tyson’s boss! Also you two, don’t go acting all intimate in front of us! Still, it’s high time that you finally make your reappearance! Once we’re done with you tonight, Boss Sven won’t need to even bother about any of you anymore!” growled one of Tucker’s men, fiercely.

However, the moment his sentence ended, the same man barely had any time to register what had just happened when he felt his eyes widen.

Seconds later, a ‘thud’ could be heard and everyone could only stare as Gerald’s subordinate stood before the now headless man.

Upon registering what had just taken place, Yukie let out a brief yelp before covering her mouth in utter fear.

Tucker himself grew increasingly frightened and anxious as well. It was now clear that the group of people standing before him now were not only frightening, but they also had great martial art skills to boot.

Quickly understanding that he held no chance against them, Tucker immediately said, “M-Mr. Crawford, there seems to be a few misunderstandings between us. I suggest we get my dad over so that you can talk to him in person! After all, I’m only doing all this in accordance with his orders. Killing me would be useless! So how about it? Should I call my father over?”

When he got no reply, Tucker’s fears spiked and the anxious man immediately got to his knees. As his last resort, he gulped before pleading, “P-please spare my life, Mr. Crawford!”

Watching as the terrified man quivered before him, Gerald slowly poured a glass of red wine before replying, “Honestly, I had earlier been wondering whether I should prepare a gift for your father upon meeting him. While thinking about it, I realized that you had quite a few subordinates and some of them are even carrying cameras around! Thanks to that, I now have an idea!”

“A-an idea...? What could you possibly be thinking of, Mr. Crawford...?”

As for why Tucker’s subordinates were carrying cameras around in the first place, it was because Tucker had a rather perverted habit. He simply enjoyed taking videos of himself doing immoral things, just like what he had done with Yukie earlier. He saw his actions as something that should be commemorated, which was why some of his subordinates made it a habit to bring along cameras wherever they went.

“Indeed. I’ll be needing your cooperation to shoot a short video. I’ll present it to your father as a gift upon meeting him,” replied Gerald.

“O-of course I’m willing to cooperate! I’ll do it, Mr. Crawford!”

Hearing that, Gerald turned to look at one of his subordinates. The subordinate in question immediately got the cue to enter the cabin.

Moments later, Tucker’s eyes widened as he saw the subordinate carrying a fuel container out with him. He understood what Gerald was planning to do.

“P-please don’t kill me!” pleaded Tucker as he immediately crawled back up and attempted to run away.

Before he could even take a step forward, however, he felt a stone piercing through his chest. Blood now spurting out of his fresh wound, Tucker fell to the ground again, twitching violently.

His subordinates could only stare in horror, completely paralyzed as Gerald’s subordinate doused Tucker’s entire body with fuel.

“Cover your eyes, Yukie,” said Gerald as he blocked her view with his own hand as a safety measure.

With that done, Gerald then ordered, “Light him up!”

A piercing scream filled the air shortly after.

Chapter 994

After some time, the cries of agony slowly died down. With that, Gerald, Yukie, and his men returned to the manor.

Upon arriving there, Gerald told Yukie to lie down and get some rest first. Turning to look at Welson next, he then asked, “So, where’s Sven currently at?”

“After looking into it, we found that he’s organizing a party at Heavenly City Hotel at the moment. He’s invited several big shots from Heavenly City over since he wants them to welcome his return. Also, we’ve found that though Drake, Tyson, and Whistler have been tortured, their lives aren’t in any danger yet, at least for now.”

“From our investigation, we’ve also learned that Sven had gone to a Southeast Asian country half a year ago to toughen himself up. Due to that, he now has top-notch skills in his arsenal,” replied Welson as he smiled rather bitterly.

“I see. Then we should deal with him now before he has a chance to cause any more trouble in the future. Remain here and take care of Yukie for me while I go rescue my men, Welson,” said Gerald.

“But young master, you haven’t consumed the holy blood yet... With your temperament currently still unstable, I’m afraid that...”

There was a good reason why Welson sounded so concerned. After all, if Gerald had no problem with killing others the moment he left training, Welson was afraid that he would only grow to become more and more aloof.

“I can control it.”

With that, Gerald selected around thirty people to go with him before setting off for the hotel.

Meanwhile, at the hotel itself, a sudden chill could be felt as the night further darkened.

Despite the gloomy mood, a female’s voice suddenly shouted, “Why are you still running around? Mom’s been trying to find you everywhere! With Boss Sven back today and the recent terrible event in Heavenly City, it’d do you good to be more careful!”

The owner of the voice was a rather mature and seductive looking woman who looked to be around twenty-four. Her tone alone also suggested that she was, in a way, an intellectual beauty.

As for the other girl she was talking to, she seemed to be slightly younger, at around the age of twenty. Even so, she was equally as charming as the older woman.

Both of them were currently standing at the hotel’s entrance, and realizing how loud they were being, the older woman instantly straightened her hair before saying, “Now come along and let’s get inside already!”

“Fine... Actually, you go on ahead first. I came out here in the first place to get some fresh air, you know? I’ll head back up there in a bit,” replied the younger woman.

“...Alright, but you’d better not be lying to me... Promise me that you’ll head up again once you’re feeling better, okay?” said the woman in a slightly anxious tone before finally leaving.

It was evident, however, that the young woman wasn't too enthusiastic about going back inside. Crouching to the ground, she picked a few stones up before tossing them all over the place, one by one.

Eventually getting bored, she pouted before dragging herself back into the hotel.

Upon arriving at the lobby, the girl was shocked when she saw a group of men exiting what seemed to be a secret passage from behind a wall mirror. As if the shock wasn't enough, that feeling soon turned into a cocktail of fear, surprise, and joy the moment she saw who was leading the men.

"...Huh? Isn't that...?"

It had been half a year since she had last met him, so the girl was eager to greet their leader. Before she could do so, however, a gruff voice said, "What are all of you doing here?"

The voice had come from one of Sven's bodyguards stationed at the hotel's entrance. Thanks to the girl's odd comment, he and several other of Sven's guards were able to catch the infiltrating men in their act, and they were now completely surrounded.

Instead of a verbal reply, the men from the opposing group chose to swiftly dash toward each of Sven's present guards instead. With breakneck speed, multiple snaps could be heard as Sven's guards all fell to the ground, all of their heads tilted at awkward angles.

Seeing all the dead guards with broken necks, a waiter—who just so happened to be in the lobby—immediately let out a terrified scream.

The girl herself had gone pale by the sight of so many corpses. In her utter shock, she instantly began running up the stairs to seek safety.

When the frightened girl finally came into view of a family member, the older woman quickly said, "There you are! Hurry up and sit down already!"

Following that, the old woman sighed before adding, “With Boss Sven finally back, big changes are bound to happen in Heavenly City... Because of that, we Yowells will need to grab any opportunity that presents itself. Since you and your sister take after me, both of you are extremely beautiful. Due to that, please be on your best behavior once Mr. Tucker arrives. Who knows, one of you could end up charming him! If that were to happen, then our family will definitely be able to rise up the ranks extremely quickly!”

It was obvious at this point that the three women were none other than Tulip, Juliet, and Heidi.

Since Juliet had grown more mature compared to the person she had been half a year ago, she was able to fairly easily catch on that something was amiss with her younger sister’s mood.

Worried, she then asked, “What’s wrong, Tulip? Why’s your face so pale...?”

Gulping, Tulip then took in a deep breath before slowly saying, “...Earlier... When I was downstairs... I... I think I saw him...!”

“Him?” asked Heidi.

With how keen her mind was, Juliet immediately had a hunch of who her sister had met.

Feeling her heartbeats quicken, Juliet then added, “Who exactly did you see, Tulip?”

Finally unable to hold back her tears, Tulip quivered in fear as she cried out, “It’s him! He’s finally back!”

Chapter 995

“For the love of god, give us a name!” replied Juliet who was now extremely nervous.

“I met Gerald!” exclaimed Tulip.

“...What?” replied both Heidi and Juliet as their eyes widened.

“...So what if you met him? Why are you so afraid?” asked Heidi.

“...B-because-”

However, before Tulip could say another word, Sven—the organizer of tonight’s event—stepped atop the high stage before saying, “Do be silent for a brief moment, ladies and gentlemen.”

Raising a hand to signal everyone to keep quiet, the entire hall fell silent.

“I’ve finally returned today, ladies and gentlemen. First off, allow me to express my gratitude since despite my half-year absence, so many of you still chose to show your support by attending this party. During the time I was away, many things have happened. Thankfully, everything is finally over. On another note, the Sven Westmore Group’s territory has now doubled in size compared to half a year ago! I hope you’ll all continue to lend me your support from here on out,” announced Sven.

Though his tone sounded friendly, his vicious gaze suggested otherwise. Nobody within the hall even dared to look at him in the eye, and that was exactly the effect Sven had wanted to achieve that night.

From tonight onward, only the Sven Westmore Group would remain in Heavenly City, and Sven wanted to make sure that everyone bowed down to him.

Understanding that everything was going to plan, Sven couldn’t help but smile subtly as he briefly clapped his hands. Hearing their cue, his subordinates marched into the hall—from another hall beside it—leading over ten beautiful women in with them.

“Humph! As you can see, these are the female servants who used to work under Mr. Crawford from the Royal Dragon Group! All of them are certainly attractive! Haha! However, I don’t think I’ll be able to properly appreciate them... Because of that, I’m going to be auctioning all of them off tonight! Do bid all you want for any of the women that you fancy!” announced Sven as he let out a roar of laughter.

“How absolutely cruel! Not only did he ruin the entire Royal Dragon Group, but to think that he would even go so far as to auction off Mr. Crawford’s female servants! What a brutal man!”

“Indeed! While Mr. Crawford upheld morality and justice, Sven himself is just an inhumane beast! Looks like we’ll have to get prepared to be exploited by him again!”

“Speaking of which, have any of you heard about what happened to the Westleys? Since they had a good relationship with Mr. Crawford, Sven completely took over their family. What more, he even kicked all the Westleys out of their own home! We’ll certainly lack any sense of security with a person like this being our leader!”

Several rich businessmen—who were sitting further away from the stage—were now whispering among themselves about how unacceptable Sven’s behavior was. Though many of them were certainly angry by how much Sven had crossed the line, nobody dared to say anything against him.

Snapping his fingers, Sven then said, “Without further ado, let the auctioning begi-”

Before his sentence could even end, however, the hall suddenly turned dim as half of the lights in it were turned off.

Following that, the projector came to life, forming a white rectangle on the large screen in the hall.

“What the hell is happening? Are the staff courting death or something?” scolded a butler as the people offstage exchanged glances with each other before turning to look at the screen, unsure of what was even happening.

Their puzzlement immediately turned to shock when the projector began playing a video that displayed a man pleading, “P-please don’t kill me!”

Their silence was warranted since everyone there could clearly see the face of the man in the video. It was none other than Mr. Tucker Westmore himself! What more, he was crying while kneeling!

“I suggest we get my dad over so that you can talk to him in person! After all, I’m only doing all this in accordance with his orders. Killing me would be useless! So how about it? Should I call my father over?” said Tucker in the video, clearly terrified.

“Tucker!” shouted Sven, his eyes widened as he clenched both his fists tightly.

While nobody knew who Tucker’s assailant was, everyone was sold that whoever it was, the person must have been extremely terrifying for Tucker to look so frightened.

As the video played on, the audience watched as Tucker crawled up and attempted to escape. However, before he could even take a step forward, he looked like he was hit by something.

Though nobody knew what the weapon was, blood instantly began gushing out of his chest, resulting in Tucker falling back to the ground as he twitched violently!

The true horror, however, came when someone approached the struggling man and poured fuel all over his body! A match could briefly be seen being tossed in his direction and the next thing they knew, Tucker’s entire body was engulfed in flames!

As his screams of agony filled the hall, one of the attendees immediately ended up vomiting! Several others soon did the same and their legs shook violently even as they sat in place.

The few women who didn’t were so shaken up that they held onto their heads while screaming hysterically!

Once the video finally ended, the lights were switched on again.

Chapter 996

“Who... Who is responsible for all this?!” roared Sven, enraged as he slammed his fists onto the table before him, sending it smashing into pieces! Even the muscles on his face were twitching uncontrollably as the angered father growled.

Though Sven’s current state was certainly terrifying, many of the businessmen were secretly rejoicing after they realized how much pain Sven was now in. What went around, came around, and it was high time that Sven finally received the punishment he deserved.

The Yowell mother and daughters themselves were now huddling close to each other in fear.

“My, my! I wasn’t expecting it to be so lively in here!” said a voice out loud as the hall’s large doors swung open.

As everyone turned to look at who was daring enough to say that, they were all shocked to see Gerald entering the hall together with a group of men.

Though still astonished, several of the influential forces in the hall immediately stood up and bowed, submitting to Gerald’s authority as they simultaneously shouted, “Mr. Crawford!”

“...Gerald?” muttered Juliet as she looked at him with a dumbfounded expression on her face. Her heartbeat quickened as she recalled the last time she had met him six months ago.

Back then, Gerald had revealed that his true identity was the boss of the Royal Dragon Group. That had been an extremely humiliating moment for her.

As if that wasn’t enough, he didn’t even say a word to her once he got his hands on the Ginseng King! Due to that, she came to resent Gerald, and was secretly pleased once she found out that Gerald had gone missing.

After all, the person who had brought her so much misery was finally out of the picture. However, Tulip had told her that he was finally back before the video even began, and Juliet had been nervous from that very moment.

Now that she knew that he truly had returned, she was filled with complicated feelings as she observed how different Gerald’s demeanor and appearance was from half a year ago.

“Are you the Crawford from the Royal Dragon Group? You seem quite young. Pray tell, were you the one responsible for my son’s death?” growled Sven as he gritted his teeth.

As he glared at Gerald with his eyes dyed red with murderous intent, Gerald simply nodded before replying, “Bingo.”

Hearing that, Sven's imposing aura seemed to amplify as he roared, "If that's the case, how dare you come all the way here?! Fine, then! We'll settle all our grudges today! I'll make you suffer terribly if it's the last thing I do!"

As soon as his sentence ended, he stretched out both his arms and flexed his muscles so hard that his shirt exploded into shreds! Now topless, his bulging muscles made him look as impenetrable as a tank!

Tucker was his only son and Sven deeply adored him. Sven even already had plans to begin educating Tucker on the right ways to be his proper heir once Tucker grew a little older.

After watching his son being burnt alive, it was no wonder why Sven was driven mad. Now looking like a complete maniac, the hulking man rushed toward Gerald with surprising swiftness.

"Get away from them! Hurry!"

"Sven's gone completely mental! Be careful not to get caught up in their battle or you'll accidentally get hurt!"

Shouts filled the hall, warning everyone to retreat to the corners and sides of the room.

By the time everyone was at a relatively safe distance away from the two men, their eyes immediately widened as Sven swung his fist directly at Gerald.

While there certainly was a loud collision, that wasn't why everyone was staring with stupefied looks on their faces.

No, they were all flabbergasted by the fact that Gerald had casually grabbed Sven's fist before it could even land! In fact, he made it look easy!

Though Sven immediately tried to release his fist from Gerald's grasp, no amount of struggling allowed him to free it.

“You’ve made three terribly wrong mistakes,” said Gerald rather casually before closing his eyes.

When he opened them again, however, his eyes were tinged red and his entire body gave off an aura akin to a demon’s.

Turning to look at each other, the subordinates who had been standing behind him this entire time took turns taking three steps back.

Sven himself felt a chill run down his spine as his imposing aura grew weaker, now almost completely overshadowed by Gerald’s murderous intent.

He couldn’t even deny that he was now feeling frightened as he stared at the demon of a man standing before him.

“...Firstly, you should’ve kept your hands off my group!”

After saying that, Gerald placed both his hands on Sven’s shoulder blades.

“Secondly, you shouldn’t have done things to my men!”

As Sven’s eyes widened in terror, Gerald gnashed his teeth viciously before growling, “And thirdly, you shouldn’t ever have humiliated my subordinates right in front of me!”

Now that Gerald was done lecturing him, he took in a deep breath before yanking both of Sven’s shoulders forward! The disgusting sound of skin and flesh being torn apart filled the room and soon after, and with one final ‘rip’, there was a momentary silence.

However, the silence didn’t last long as many of the people within the room instantly began screaming. Their screams of pure fear were so high-pitched that several of the wine glasses ended up shattering!

While many others found themselves having severe nervous breakdowns, some of the women present simply fainted on the spot!

What a cruel demon of a man!

Chapter 997

The entire hall fell into chaos as the people within it frantically tried finding ways to cope with what they had just witnessed.

While many were able to maintain their sanity by curling up into balls near the corners of the room, those who were less lucky ended up foaming on the floor due to the immense fear they were feeling.

Juliet herself was so terrified that she had already burst into tears by this point. However, due to utter fear, she didn't even dare to say a single word.

On the contrary, Gerald simply closed his eyes before taking in a deep breath. Completely silent, he stayed that way for a brief moment before finally opening his eyes again. By then, the terrifying redness in his eyes had already disappeared.

Slowly walking up to the butler form before, he then asked, "Where did you lock my comrades up?"

Instead of giving a reply, however, the butler instantly began trembling vigorously before ultimately vomiting blood and falling to the floor! Though the butler's body continued twitching for a brief moment, in the end, he stopped moving for good.

Due to Gerald's medical expertise, he was able to tell that the butler must have been so terrified that all his blood went up to his brain, causing a rupture in his blood vessels there. In short, the butler was now brain dead.

Looking at the fresh corpse by his feet, Gerald simply turned to face the subordinate standing behind him before ordering, "Go look for them!"

"Right away, young master!"

After his men went off to investigate, Gerald was just about to leave when he caught a glimpse of the mother and daughters from the Yowell family huddling closely together in fear. However, he simply averted his gaze before leaving the place for good.

Despite his absence, nobody dared to even move a muscle, even after an hour had passed! Throughout that time, an almost ungodly silence had filled the room.

It was evident that from now on, everyone in Heavenly City's Triangle District would be fear-stricken whenever they heard the Royal Dragon Group's name being mentioned.

Three days later in Gerald's mansion, Welson came up to him before saying, "After being told by the lord to look for the holy fox, I've glad to say that I've finally located it, young master! As it turned out, someone came across the holy fox about a year ago within the dense forest west of the Logan Province."

"I'm sure you're aware of why the lord is so keen on you locating the hold fox. Let me remind you that if you fail to nourish yourself with the fox's holy blood, there exists a chance for your temperament to be influenced by your hatred. Once that happens, it'll be incredibly difficult to salvage your old personality," added Welson before sighing.

Hearing that, Gerald frowned slightly though his expression contrasted how touched he was feeling from Welson's words.

After all, he had to admit that though he was easily able to control his bloodlust in the beginning, from the moment he made his move on Sven, his hatred intensified so much that it was akin to a tiny spark turning into a bush fire. Once a single bush was ignited, it was extremely difficult to stop the flames from spreading to the rest of the forest. In other words, Gerald was well aware that he could potentially lose control of himself due to his overwhelming hatred.

Since he had resolved the issue with such brutality the other day, a near irresistible urge to kill had constantly lingered around Gerald throughout the past three days.

"I get where both of you are coming from, Welson... I don't want to end up becoming a killing machine either. Very well, relay my command to the others that we'll be heading off to the west of the Logan Province immediately in search of the holy fox," ordered Gerald.

“Right away, young master!”

After giving his order, Gerald stood up and walked toward a window where a flower pot—with fresh flowers inside—had been placed. As he gently held on to one of the flower’s petals, he muttered to himself, “If I’m not mistaken, the Moldell family base established by Kort is located in the Logan Province...”

As Gerald thought about the possibility of exacting his revenge on Kort when he arrived in the Logan Province, his grip tightened slightly. At that moment, all of the flowers within that pot immediately wilted!

Welson was watching as the incident happened, and he felt his eyelids twitching. As was expected, it was right for the lord to be worried about the young master.

The hellish transformation had greatly improved the young master’s strength, and from what Welson could remember, the young master was actually even stronger than the lord had been all those years ago when the lord had just completed his own transformation.

The old man was also well aware that if the lord hadn’t been worried about Gerald falling into immortality, he wouldn’t have told Welson to follow the young master around in the first place.

“There’s something I’d like to say, though I’m not sure whether I should actually say it, young master...”

“Go on, Welson.”

“Well, we may need a few days to locate the holy fox. Due to that, I’m afraid that there’ll be a chance that you’ll get controlled by your inner demon if you fail to hold yourself back properly. See, when the lord himself was learning the blessings of the dragon back then, he found a solution to mediate his bloodlust. I was wondering if you’d like to give it a try...” said Welson.

“What sort of solution?”

Chapter 998

“Well, back then, the lord himself was feeling troubled by his inner demons. As a result, he searched high and low for a way to better control his temperament. After all, he was fully aware that until he could easily and skillfully manage the blessings of the dragon, he wasn’t going to be able to truly achieve the status of a legend.

“He began by visiting several monks and other religious people. The lord secretly went to Weston as well to search for a few renowned masters in hopes that he would be able to gain more insight into his issue. However, it wasn’t all that long after his search began when one day, the lord ended up killing someone on the spot just because the person said something wrong!”

“Due to that, he stopped trying to seek out help out of fear that he would end up killing another innocent person. Oddly enough, he found the answer to his question himself one day. In his moment of enlightenment, he sealed his strength away and reverted to living life as a regular human. Once that happened, he looked just like a lonely, old man. The lord kept a low profile for quite a while but once he perfected his skills, he broke the seal again, and from then on out, he knew he had truly become one of the legends.”

“Since this way of doing things will require an extremely high resolution, it isn’t exactly for everyone. However, since you’ve led a poor life before and you’re an actual kind-hearted person, I think you should give it a try,” explained Welson.

Hearing that, Gerald nodded slightly before replying, “Well, Grandpa did teach me a method to seal my strength... I’ll do it. After all, I’ll be trying my best to stay away from disputes and fights anyway since I don’t have the holy blood yet. Besides, by sealing all that power, I should be able to manage my strength with greater ease sooner. With any luck, I’ll be able to enter the mysterious realms of legends earlier as well.”

“Thank you for the suggestion, Welson!” added Gerald as he smiled.

As soon as his sentence ended, however, a knock came from the door. After getting permission from Gerald to enter, Yukie immediately rushed in before saying, “Sir!”

“What’s wrong, Yukie?”

"I... I heard that you're leaving again... Is that really true?" asked Yukie.

"Indeed it is," replied Gerald with a subtle smile.

"I... see... Could I at least know where you're headed to?" asked Yukie again as her eyes grew slightly teary.

From the moment she had met Gerald and was given permission to leave alongside the other maids, Yukie had given all her heart to Gerald.

She had missed him dearly throughout his half-year absence, and now that he was finally back, she found it difficult to just accept that he would be leaving again so soon.

"I'll be heading over to the Logan Province!" replied Gerald.

"The... Logan Province...?"

The moment Yukie heard that, she averted her gaze for a second as both her hands became slightly restless.

As the two men wondered why those two words unsettled her so much, Yukie took in a deep breath before saying, "...Could I please be allowed to come along, sir? I really don't want to leave you anymore!"

"You can't Yukie. He will have to travel separately from us to get there anyway. What more, if a beauty like you stays by his side, you may attract the attention of villainous characters! As a result, he may have to unseal his strength to save you, causing the entire effort to be wasted! Which is why you're not allowed to come along," replied Welson as he shook his head.

"Well... You'll eventually still need to meet up with each other again, right? When that happens, someone needs to be by sir's side to take good care of him! No offense, but could you be more sensible and considerate than a woman, Mr. Freed?" said Yukie in reply.

Welson was speechless after hearing that. After a while, he simply shook his head before laughing bitterly.

“I suppose what you said did make sense... However, if you’re coming along, you’ll have to follow us. You’re not allowed to disturb the young master’s endeavor to quietly discipline himself. If you refuse to agree to that, then you can’t come along,” said the old man.

“I... I agree!” replied Yukie as she smiled broadly.

And just like that, the affair was decided there and then.

That afternoon, Gerald returned to Weston before getting on a green train to the Logan Province.

The journey itself took two whole days, and Gerald finally stepped out of the train on the morning of the third day.

Feeling hungry, Gerald then headed to a small restaurant that had been built along the train station.

As soon as he opened the door to the restaurant, however, he immediately heard a man’s voice saying, “Just order whatever you want, sisters! Everything will be on me!”

Following the source of the voice, Gerald saw a man and two women seated at a table. With all three of them looking equally charming, it was no wonder why they had attracted the attention of several of the restaurant’s customers as well.

As the man smiled on, one of the women simply replied, “Are you the only rich one here? Regardless, we’ve had enough fun out there so it’s high time we return home. Otherwise, we may end up getting scolded or even punished!”

“That’s quite enough... We’re already back here anyway after all that fun, right?” said the other woman as she too, smiled.

“...Hmm? Say sister, look over there... That’s the young man who sat beside us on the train earlier, right...?” said the same woman as she pointed at the man standing at the door.

— To be Continued... —