

Chapter 1041

Upon saving Xavia after waking from his brief coma, Gerald had immediately ordered Welson and his men to rush over. Gerald also told him to utilize the Soul Palace's skynet technique which was the fastest way for them to trap all the Moldells within their home once the fire started. Gerald wasn't taking any chances of any of them leaving alive.

"While a few people have managed to slip through us, we can roughly estimate all of their current locations, young master," reported Welson.

"Excellent. Be sure to hunt down every last one of them. I want them to experience what true despair feels like..." replied Gerald, his body drenched in fresh blood as he turned to look at the burning manor. Watching the flames, Gerald couldn't help but curl his lips into a malicious smirk.

It was at that moment when Welson's heart skipped a beat.

'...Since the young master consumed the holy blood, he should, by right, be able to control his temperament with ease... So why do I still feel that something is off about the young master...? The aura he's currently emitting feels... different from what he usually has... How terrifying!'

Welson's train of thought was cut short by Xavia's screams of fear that pierced the night sky as the inferno continued burning all night long...

Since winter had just ended in the Logan Province, the weather was freezing when morning finally came.

"Here, Mr. Yuvan... Have some water..." said Yash as he handed the severely injured Yuvan a bottle of water along with a sleeping bag.

The pale-faced Yuvan himself was now too weak to even argue.

Yuvan and his men had been on the run throughout the night. As if having all means of their communication being cut off wasn't bad enough, there had been an

incomprehensible lack of cars within the Logan Province that night as well. That was a problem for them since they had initially planned to hail a car in hopes of getting a ride away from this forsaken place.

Eventually, they finally came across an expensive-looking luxury car and the moment Yash saw it, he immediately attempted to stop it in its tracks.

They were in dire need of shelter, anyplace to take cover while awaiting the family head to return.

To everyone's surprise, the person who stepped out of the car was Xavia!

"So it's you, Miss Yorke! How wonderful! The second young master is severely injured so please hurry and take us someplace safe!" said Yash as he looked at the slightly pale woman.

"...I... I apologize, but that would be slightly inconvenient for me..." replied Xavia.

"...Come again?"

As Yash was left stupefied, the droning of several helicopters caught his attention. Looking up, over ten helicopters were hovering above them!

"There's a restaurant not too far ahead... You may seek refuge there..." said Xavia as she secretly handed them some money before re-entering her car and immediately driving off to the restaurant without them.

"...So they're just trying to torture us to death, huh? If I had earlier known about their plans, my dad and I would've definitely exterminated the Crawfords a long time ago..." growled Yuvan who was so pissed at this point that he ended up vomiting a bit of blood.

"Please refrain from talking too much, second young master... Let's just head to the restaurant first... Your body is in dire need of nourishment... I'll bandage your wounds as well once we're there..." replied Yash.

Before long, all of them arrived at the restaurant Xavia had told them about.

Xavia herself—alongside several of her subordinates—were already inside by the time they entered. This time, however, she didn't seem to even dare to speak with any of the Moldells anymore.

“Let's have a quick meal while we can... Looking at the time, the family head should be reaching the Logan Province soon. After successfully enduring through all this pain, we'll surely be saved!” said Yash as the other Moldells agreed and immediately began dining on whatever food they could get their hands on.

As they continued eating like their lives depended on it, the restaurant's door swung open again sometime later.

When the Moldells saw the group of people who had just entered, several of them instantly began trembling. Some of them were so terrified that they didn't even dare to swallow the food in their mouths.

“Please take a seat, young master...” said one of the subordinates from the group that had just entered.

After the subordinate pulled a chair out for him, Gerald took a seat as Xavia—who had been sitting close by—turned to look at him.

Though her eyes were teary, her lips remained sealed tight.

The Gerald sitting before her now was no longer the same person she used to know. After going through immense change, he now resembled a master. A filthy rich master who only knew how to do things cruelly.

It truly was ironic since back when she was still Gerald's lover, she had often fantasized about Gerald getting rich one day. She had yearned for the day when he would suddenly gain near-endless wealth, enabling him to do whatever he pleased.

'He's no longer a humble and inferior loser... But... Though he's turned out exactly as I've always wanted him to be... Why am I feeling more afraid than anything...?'

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Xavia continued remaining silent as she lowered her head, not even daring to say a word.

"While I admit that the Moldells have definitely crossed the line for some time now, was there truly a need to go so far in your retaliation, Mr. Crawford? Did you truly have to torture and humiliate us like this? You've done enough to us so please just let us off already..." negotiated Yash as he stood up.

Gerald, however, gave no response, choosing instead to simply fiddle around with a teapot.

"That's it! I'm killing you if it's the last thing I do!" shouted one of the Moldell's men as he rushed toward Gerald, unwilling to go through any more mental suffering.

However, the man was promptly taken care of by one of Gerald's own subordinates upon receiving Welson's order.

"You know, from what I've been told, Kort has just arrived in the Logan Province... I'm sure it won't be long before he rushes over..." said Gerald with a smile.

Upon hearing that, both Yuvan and Yash couldn't help but feel slightly moved. At long last, the moment of hope they had been looking forward to was finally coming.

The family head was going to be here soon, and if anyone was to even come close to having a fighting chance against Gerald, it was Kort.

"If that's the case, then you'll definitely have to face the Moldell family's grand second master who is also the master of our family, Kort Moldell! After slaughtering so many of our family members, I do wonder how you'll explain yourself..." replied Yash.

Yuvan himself had already grabbed onto Yash's hand in his excitement. His reaction was to be expected since he had sworn to himself that he would make the Crawfords pay the price a hundredfold of what Gerald had made the Moldells suffer through.

"Eventually. Unfortunately, the rest of you won't be able to witness that fight. Have you heard of 'last meals' that death row prisoners receive before getting executed? Well, I hope you've eaten to your heart's content... With that out of the way, go ahead and end yourselves now. None of you are leaving this restaurant alive," sneered Gerald coldly.

Hearing that, Yash felt his eyelids twitching intensely as Yuvan fell into complete despair.

All Yuvan needed was a bit more time... If time was on his side, his father would definitely arrive sooner or later to save him... Yet here Gerald was, ordering them to kill themselves!

Regret enveloped Yash as well. If only he hadn't led his subordinates into Everdare Forest that day... None of this would have happened.

Regardless, since Gerald had allowed them to take their own lives, they weren't against the idea. After all, they were well aware that death was the only answer to their current situation. At least they would still be able to go with what little dignity they still had...

Once the deeds were done, Gerald and his men simply walked out of the restaurant.

Before they could get far, Xavia rushed out before calling out, "Gerald!"

"What is it?"

"You... Could... you be planning to deal with the Long family now...?" asked Xavia as she began sobbing slightly.

In response, Gerald simply grunted before nodding.

“Please... I’m begging you-”

Before Xavia was even able to complete her sentence, she was interrupted by Gerald as he raised his hand before saying, “I’ve already ordered one of my men to purchase a large property for you within the Salford Province. You and your family should be able to lead a peaceful life there without too many worries for the next few generations. There’s no need for you to bother about the subsequent affairs.”

Walking over to her, he then gently wiped her tears away before adding, “In exchange for all that, I only ask that you live a good life. I, for one, am no longer able to live the lifestyle I once did...”

“With that, I bid you farewell!”

Having said that, Gerald then turned to walk away with his men.

Xavia wanted to call out to him. To tell him that she wanted to stay by his side.

However, after hearing how resolute Gerald was, she could only cover her mouth as she burst into tears while watching Gerald’s back slowly disappear into the distance.

Meanwhile, an extremely capable-looking team of men had just arrived at the entrance of the Moldell Manor’s burnt remains.

“No... No!” roared an old man, his voice filled with agony after witnessing the state of the manor. Clenching his fists tightly, the veins in his arms were immediately revealed as extreme murderous intent coursed through them.

“...Who did this...? Who?!” howled the man as he grabbed one of the survivors in his rage.

"I-It was Gerald Crawford! He was the one who ruined the Moldells! I-I was only able to escape the crisis since I jumped into the well!" cried out the terrified youth.

"...Gerald?How... How is that even possible?!"

Chapter 1043

"I-It's true! Gerald's become truly horrifying!" cried out the youth, evidently scared to death.

"...That... That b*stard! It's only been a d*mn year! How could he have accumulated that much power in such a short amount of time?! Regardless, the Crawford family will definitely pay a heavy price for this! Where's Yuvan?!" roared Kort as he trembled in his immense anger.

"S-second master!" shouted a subordinate as he staggered over.

"I... I found them... I found the second young master's and butler Moldell's corpses!" announced the subordinate in between pants.

"What?!" yelled the pained Kort in such a loud voice that his shout could probably be heard reverberating across the entire Logan Province.

Meanwhile, Dylan was in the main living room within the Crawford manor in Northbay.

Feeling the urge to frown all of a sudden, he muttered, "...Could something have happened...? I've been feeling flustered a lot for some time now... I just feel as though something is about to happen!"

"What on earth could happen? The way I see it, you're just feeling that due to all the pressure you've accumulated ever since Gerald's disappearance..." replied Yulia in a saddened tone as she walked over to him, feeling sorry for her husband.

Sighing, Dylan then said, "To think that a year has already passed since then... If things had gone according to plan, then Gerald would've gotten married to Lyra this year! Everything was going so smoothly too at the start! It's all ruined now..."

As she looked at his grief-filled eyes, Yulia replied, "Speaking of Lyra... Hasn't she been acting a bit strange ever since she returned from that event in the Salford Province about half a year ago? I remember Bea going with her back then, and she's been acting equally as strange as Lyra has! From what I've seen, the two girls seem to enjoy being in each other's company, frequently sharing secrets with each other and laughing from time to time. Whenever I enquire them about their topic of conversation, they simply say that it's nothing!"

"Now that you've mentioned it... I remember that before attending that event, both of them had cried quite frequently... Especially Lyra. From what the servants told me, Lyra would hide in her room to cry whenever she didn't have any other tasks to do. It explained why her eyes were always so red whenever I saw her back then..."

"Right? They changed slightly after returning from the auction, though! We've been with Lyra for the longest time and though she's never really lived with Gerald, I'm sure you can agree that she loves him dearly. Bea loves him a lot as a cousin as well. Because of that, it doesn't really make any sense for both of them to suddenly change—albeit, for the better—after attending some event!" added Yulia.

Clearing his throat, Dylan then said, "There's no need to start theorizing... Let's just ask them directly to get the entire picture!"

With that said, he ordered his servants to call both the girls over.

"Mom? Dad? You were looking for us?" asked Lyra with a smile once both of them stood before Gerald's parents.

"Yes, it's regarding the auction both of you attended in the Salford Province about half a year ago... Though it may feel strange that I'm asking now of all times, I've just been so busy with the investigation team that I haven't had the time to properly ask you about it! Regardless, I remember that both of you went there to buy the Ginseng King... Why did you return empty-handed? Also, while we're at it, did anything else happen while you were there?" asked Dylan in return.

"...A-ah... About the Ginseng King..." replied Lyra as she instantly blushed.

Back then, Gerald had won against the other bidders. As a result, he was the rightful owner of the Ginseng King. However, Gerald had made Lyra and Bea promise not to tell anyone that they had met him there for fear that exposing his whereabouts would end up burdening his family.

Lyra had kept to her promise since she was well aware that what Gerald had told her to do made sense. She understood that Gerald's parents would definitely be unable to resist the urge to double their search efforts for him once they found out that he was safe. Should any of the Moldells catch wind of that news, the Moldells would probably enter high gear as well, further endangering Gerald's life.

"...While we did manage to purchase it, it ended up getting stolen!" replied Bea quickly, knowing full well that Lyra was a terrible liar.

"...I see. Did you happen to meet anyone else there?" asked Dylan with a frown.

"A-ah... Not at all!" replied Lyra as she shook her head.

At that moment, the butler approached the group before saying, "Pardon my intrusion, master, but Mr. Parker Moldell has just arrived with his investigation team. They're currently waiting at the door."

"...Oh? Well hurry and invite them in then," replied Dylan as he immediately stood up.

Due to Parker's secret assistance, the Crawfords hadn't suffered too much suppression from Kort in the past year. Due to that, Dylan treated the man quite respectfully.

Chapter 1044

"Greetings, Mr. Moldell!"

"Chairman Crawford, it's been a while!"

“It has indeed... Since you’ve come today, could it be that you’ve gained some clues about the shipwreck incident in Northbay, Mr. Moldell?” asked Dylan rather excitedly.

Taking a seat once they were inside, Parker then replied, “Nothing is impossible for a willing heart! After all that hard work in the previous year, I’m proud to say that our efforts haven’t been for naught! We’ve finally managed to gain some clues regarding the work of that enigmatic Sun League!”

Hearing that, Dylan and the others happily exchanged glances as Parker took a long map out of his bag.

Revealing its contents, the map was drawn so beautifully that it almost felt like the area that was mapped was one that had achieved utopia. Though the mountains and rivers painted across the long map were certainly eye-catching, everyone eventually had their eyes on the symbol at the top left corner of the map.

It was the symbol of the Sun League!

“What’s this then?” asked Dylan, bewildered.

“Haha! You see, the details of this map were found on a stone tablet that I managed to locate. Since it would be a hassle to bring such a large slab of stone around, I had an artist redraw the contents of the tablet onto this map. I’m sure all of you have noticed the symbol on the top left corner by now, and yes, it really is the symbol of the Sun League. Thus, it’s almost certain that the tablet had been left behind by them!” explained Parker.

“I see... Pardon me, Mr. Moldell... but doesn’t the map feel slightly incomplete...? It feels sort of... deformed? If you get what I mean,” replied Yulia.

“Quite insightful you are, Madam! Unfortunately, the stone tablet was already in poor condition by the time I found it. While we were successful in recreating the utopian-looking part of the map, we weren’t quite able to finish it since we couldn’t locate the parts of the stone tablet that had chipped off,” explained Parker with a slight frown.

“Such a pity... Still, while I’ve visited several famous places—that have mountainous areas and rivers—all across the globe, I’ve never come across such a mystifying-looking place like the one on your map...”

As Dylan and Parker continued discussing the map, Lyra simply peered at it while listening to their conversation. While the places on the map certainly felt utopian, the dense forests surrounding the area felt rather mystifying to her.

After looking at it for some time, Lyra pointed at a spot on the map before saying, “...Um... Mom? Dad? And Mr. Moldell as well... Have any of you noticed the landmark atop this mountain...?”

“...Hmm?”

As everyone instantly focused their gazes on where she was pointing at, even after a brief moment, none of them seemed to be able to tell what she was hinting at.

“...Can’t you see it, dad? It appears to be a broken stone statue of a woman! It’s toppled over around the waist area...”

Hearing that, Dylan and Parker looked at each other. From what they could see, it was merely a white rock. Why was Lyra insisting that it was a statue?

As she watched the two men shake their heads, Lyra took in a deep breath. How odd... While the image was slightly blurry, Lyra was confident that the picture portrayed a statue of a woman. After all, she would definitely be able to tell what a woman’s silhouette looked like.

Even Bea and Yulia were unable to see the stone statue that Lyra was talking about. Both of them simply saw an object resembling a white rock.

“Haha! Perhaps Miss Lyra’s eyes are more unique than ours! Who’s to say that she can’t see things that we can’t?” joked Parker with a smile.

“Please don’t laugh at me, Mr. Moldell... I may have been mistaken...” replied Lyra as she shook her head, not wanting to say anything anymore.

“Ah, speaking of which, Chairman Crawford... There’s something I’d like to ask you about...” said Parker as he looked like he had just recalled something.

“Go on...”

“Well, aside from the Moldell family, have you asked for any external help? I’d like you to answer as frankly as possible!” asked Parker, his tone oddly cautious.

“Not at all! You’re the only one I’ve hired!” replied Dylan as he shook his head.

“...How curious... I wonder who that person could be then...” muttered Parker with a frown.

Chapter 1045

“From what you’ve just asked, I’m assuming that something happened, Mr. Moldell?” replied Dylan after thinking about it for a while.

Hearing that, Parker nodded before saying, “You see, quite a mysterious incident happened to me and my team while we were looking for clues on the Sun League. It’s rather shameful to admit, but for the longest time, my team and I were unable to locate any relevant leads. The Sun League truly is extremely mysterious and powerful to be able to cover up most, if not all, of their tracks!”

“Regardless, just when I felt that we had reached a dead end, a mysterious person made his presence known... I say that since we’ve never personally met before... Regardless, from that moment on, he’s provided us with necessary hints on where to go next whenever we got truly stumped. His assistance led us to find the exact clues we needed to proceed. He’s the only reason how we were able to make so much progress in the past half-year. Due to his assisting nature, I assumed that you were the one who had sent him over, Chairman Crawford, which is why I’m currently enquiring you about it, just to make sure.”

“If I truly had sent someone over to help you, then I would’ve definitely informed you about it first. Still, that person does indeed sound mysterious... Did he at least give you a name...?” replied Dylan, finding the situation peculiar as well.

“None to speak of. Nobody even knows what he looks like. However, call it a gut feeling from my experience over the years, but I believe that he’s an extremely powerful person. In fact, it wouldn’t be a stretch to say that even the most powerful members of the Moldell family wouldn’t be able to take him on!”

“Has he truly never shown himself before?”

“As I’ve said, none of us have seen him before. He simply places coordinates near the head of my bed whenever he feels that we need the extra help. While I’d like to call myself a vigilant person, never have I been able to catch him in the act. Haha! To be more specific, he’s only made his presence known twice up till this point.”

Thinking about it, Parker remembered how frightened he had been about half a year ago when the man left the first set of coordinates near the head of his bed. After all, the person who had left the hint there definitely could’ve killed him in his sleep if he wanted to. Should that have happened, Parker wouldn’t even have known that he had been murdered, and the thought of it alone was enough to send shivers down his spine.

Dylan himself was currently racking his brains, wondering who could be helping his family out in secret.

“...Either way, to summarize, since that person has been helping us in secret, then we can assume, at the very least, that he isn’t hostile toward the Crawford family. While we did manage to gather more clues on the Sun League, the more pressing issue now is where the area drawn on the map actually is. Since the mysterious person led us to it, I’m assuming that there’s a reason behind his actions. For all we know, the secret of the Sun League could very well lie within the dense forests as seen on the map!” said Parker.

Nodding in agreement, Dylan then replied, “Very well. I’ll immediately gather my family’s apprentices and subordinates after this. Since many of them are quite knowledgeable and our family has men all across the globe, some of them may recognize where the map points to!”

“That would certainly be for the best!”

With that, Dylan signaled one of his subordinates to spread the order around and in almost no time at all, people working under the Crawfords from all over the world assembled within the Crawford manor.

Once everyone relevant was present, Dylan led them to a large viewing hall where he projected the map onto a massive screen, enlarging it for all to see.

However, even with so many great minds who had seen so much of the world, the results were barely satisfactory for Dylan. As it turned out, nobody there seemed to have ever come across such beautiful mountains amidst sprawling forests.

It was exactly because of how mystifying the place seemed that everyone there knew, at a glance, that they didn't know where the place was.

After realizing that, Dylan immediately commanded his subordinates and apprentices to look all over the world for a similar landscape.

Seconds after announcing his order, a servant rushed into the large hall before shouting, “M-master! Something's wrong!”

“What is it?” asked Dylan with a frown.

“I-It's Kort! He's brought several of his men onto the island and he's currently leading them here! He's also already killed over ten of our bodyguards!”

“What? Could he have gone mad?!” exclaimed Dylan as he turned to look at Parker.

Parker himself was frowning as he said, “Unless that old man has gained some information that could be used against the Crawfords, he wouldn't do such a drastic thing... That's just not his style of doing things. I propose that you let him in, Chairman Crawford. Let's see what he's planning to do!” replied Parker.

Meanwhile, Winnie looked at Kort as she asked, "Second master, what are you doing? Why did you kill off so many of the Crawford family's people?"

Instead of heading into the large hall with the others earlier, Winnie and her sister had been taking a stroll by the beach—at the side of the island—to relax themselves this entire time. That is, until they noticed Kort rushing toward the manor in a great fury, killing anyone who happened to be in his way!

"That's none of your business! I'm massacring the entire Crawford family today if it's the last thing I do!" growled Kort as he turned to look at the two girls with his bloodshot eyes, a hideous expression on his face.

With that, he continued leading his people over to the manor as Winnie began chasing after him while muttering to herself, "Oh god, has Kort gone insane?! Something big is going to happen soon... I can feel it... I need to see what he's planning to do!"

Chapter 1046

"Sister...!"

By the time Yselle called out for her, Winnie's figure was already a tiny speck as she swiftly continued following Kort and his men to the manor.

"With so many things brewing, I guess I should go take a look as well..." muttered Yselle to herself as she began walking toward them.

Before she could even take a step, however, she was utterly stunned by a black figure dashing past her extremely quickly!

"...What the hell was that?" said Yselle as she frowned. Whatever it was, it could wait, and Yselle continued heading toward the manor.

A brief moment later, the doors to the large hall within the Crawford Manor were swung open as a fearsome and old-sounding voice roared, "The entire Crawford family is to pay a bloody price today if it's the last thing I do!"

The shout was so loud that everyone could feel their ears ringing as an ominous wind blew into the room.

Following that, Kort led his powerful-looking men into the hall as Parker took a step forward before asking, "What do you hope to achieve by doing all this, Kort?"

"Step aside, Parker! Don't meddle in this! I'm here today to settle a bloody grudge I have against the Crawfords!" growled Kort as he clenched both his fists while glaring daggers at Dylan.

As he did so, however, Kort became slightly stunned when his eyes caught sight of the large map projected behind Dylan.

However, his shock was short-lived. Anything other than exterminating the Crawfords could wait for now, and he was delighted by the thought of it alone.

"Humph! You say you've come to settle a bloody grudge, but what has our family ever done to you to deserve that?" replied Dylan with a frown.

"So you're still feigning ignorance, Dylan? As far as I'm concerned, I've given you sufficient respect in the past year... Never had it occurred to me that such a terrible disaster would happen just because I treated you mercifully... There were over three hundred people in the Moldell family within the Logan Province, Dylan... Now almost all of them are dead! The entire Moldell family within the Logan Province is no more!" growled Kort, each word he said even colder than the last.

"...What? Someone ruined the Moldells living in the Logan Province?" asked Dylan, his eyes wide in shock.

Parker himself felt his eyelids twitching rapidly.

While Kort appeared to not approve of the Moldells living in the Logan Province, a few of the Moldells were well aware that Kort himself had established the family thereafter disobeying the Moldell family's rules and regulations.

Parker also knew that there were many powerful people in Kort's family. To think that someone had actually managed to ruin the Moldells living in the Logan Province...

"While the Moldell family in Logan isn't a secret society, there were quite a number of powerful people in their family, right? Who could've taken down the entire family? What sort of power would one even need to have to pull off such a feat? Whoever it was, don't you think that the Crawfords lack the capabilities to even come close to performing such destruction...?" whispered the surprised Winnie to her grandfather.

"She's right. In the end, while the Crawfords may be filthy rich, they're still just ordinary people. Don't you think that there could've been a misunderstanding somewhere along the line? After all, the Crawfords clearly don't have the strength to take out over three hundred of the Moldells!" added Parker as he took another step forward.

"A misunderstanding you say? Tell Dylan to hand over that rich heir of a son he has, then! Everything will surely be crystal clear once we've interrogated him! I don't need to explain anything else! Until Gerald shows himself, I'm killing anyone who dares to stop me!" retorted Kort coldly.

"Now come! Kill them all! Nobody leaves this room alive!" roared the maniacal man.

"Right away!" shouted his subordinates in unison as they rushed toward the people of the Crawford family!

Chapter 1047

Sensing the immense murderous intent from the Moldell subordinates—who were already starting to take action—Dylan felt his expression change drastically.

All this time, he had been extremely reluctant to have any forms of contact with secret societies unless he was absolutely forced to. After all, for all he knew, secret societies were usually both unruly and overbearing.

In the end, he did so in order to find out more about the Sun League. Unfortunately, all his worries were now presenting themselves before his very eyes.

He remembered, at that moment, that his father had once told him that the Crawford family would always face the risk of getting exterminated. Was what his father had said finally going to happen today?

Were they going to meet their end being slaughtered by the Moldell family's people? The thought of it alone made Dylan gulp slightly.

It was at that moment when a loud and rather wild-sounding voice shouted, "I'd like to see for myself who dares to even harm the people of the Crawford family!"

The commanding voice was so loud that any surrounding glass ended up shattering!

As a gale of wind blew across the hall, the Moldell family's subordinates—who had initially been prepared to slaughter any Crawford they could get their hands on—immediately held on to their heads.

Each of them felt like their heads were about to explode, and within seconds, most of them vomited blood before dying on the spot!

Seeing that, Kort frowned but he didn't make a move.

Seconds later, a massive group of mysterious-looking people donning black robes swiftly made their way into the large hall, surrounding Kort and his few remaining subordinates.

There were at least a thousand of them, and as Kort looked at them with doubtful eyes, he coldly shouted, "I've no idea which force you belong to. However, know that I've come here today to settle a bloody debt with the Crawford family. You better not meddle in this!"

"Even if I were to meddle, it's not like you could stop me. You're just another trivial person to be dealt with, after all," said an old man as he strode into the hall.

The moment he said that, the people donning black robes immediately knelt in line, forming a pathway in the middle as they shouted in unison, "Lord!"

"...Hmm...?" said Kort as he furrowed his brows while staring at the old man.

"I believe we've never met before, no? Since you're still planning on meddling even after I've said that I have a bloody grudge to settle with the Crawfords, pray tell what your relationship with them is, sir," added Kort.

Before anyone else could say a thing, Dylan, who had earlier been momentarily left stupefied, muttered, "...Dad?"

True enough, the person currently walking toward him was his father who had disappeared for a few decades by now. After not meeting for so long, Dylan felt himself getting slightly agitated.

"...Grandpa?" said Jessica next.

Jessica had never met Daryl before, and if anything, she was quite astonished to learn that he was even still alive!

"I assume that this is my granddaughter, Jessica. Am I correct, Dylan?" said Daryl as he stood before Jessica and gently held onto her hand, his face full of adoration for her.

"She... Yes, she is... Regardless, where have you been all these years, dad?" replied Dylan who was still utterly shocked.

"I'll tell you all about it once I get rid of these scoundrels!" sneered Daryl as he turned back to look at Kort.

"So it appears that you're Daryl! The master of the Crawford family who went missing a few decades ago! I see, I see! Well that's just perfect that you've finally decided to show yourself again today! I'll slaughter you along with the rest of the

Crawfords! That way, truly zero of the Crawfords will continue to exist!” replied Kort with a frigid laugh.

“Hah! You plan to slaughter all of us? I’m afraid that even Christopher Moldell wouldn’t talk so arrogantly before me!” said Daryl as he rested both his hands behind his back while smiling coldly.

“...What did you say?”

Chapter 1048

Upon hearing that name, both Kort and Parker were left momentarily stupefied.

“... From what you’ve said, I’m assuming that you’re acquainted with my third uncle, Christopher, who’s also the Moldell family’s elder, correct? Still, I find it odd that he’s never mentioned a ‘Daryl’ before,” replied Kort, feeling his heart skip a beat.

Even among the other secret societies, few men knew much about the mysterious Christopher who was, in a way, the totem of the Moldell family.

As far as Kort knew, the Crawfords were simply a regular wealthy family. How on earth could Daryl have gotten acquainted with that old man?

“If I recall correctly, ‘secret societies’ like yours each have their own strict rules to abide by. A universal rule for all of you is that fact that you can’t get involved with the ordinary world all willy-nilly, no? Yet that’s exactly what you scoundrels did! What more, you even built your own family from the ground up, just to be able to meddle more with the ordinary world! You’re even bold enough to declare wanting to destroy the Crawford family! Don’t you scoundrels think that you’re looking down too much on the Moldell family’s rules?” said Daryl, ignoring Kort’s question as he headed over to the seat of honor and sat there while laughing heartily.

“...Old Master Crawford, which force do you belong to, exactly? You’re just a powerful and rich businessman, no? How is it that you know what happens within secret societies like the back of your hand?” asked Kort.

“Humph. I belong to the Soul Palace. Then again, I wonder if Christopher ever even mentioned the society to you.”

“...S-soul Palace...?” replied Kort, feeling his eyelids twitch extremely rapidly.

“I-it’s the people from the Soul Palace!” stuttered Kort’s remaining men as they looked at each other in utter dismay before each taking a step back.

For anyone within a secret society, it was rather impossible to not have heard of the Soul Palace’s reputation. For context, there were once quite a few major secret societies in Weston. However, one of the more developed and prosperous secret societies—at the time—was completely wiped out by the Soul Palace in a single night.

Those from the Soul Palace usually left traces of their involvement behind so that others could come look for them if they wanted to avenge the deceased. However, nobody was daring or foolish enough to do so.

Due to that well-known incident—among the secret societies—it was natural for Kort and his men to be slightly intimidated.

“So you’re the master of the Soul Palace as you are of the Crawford family, Daryl... So that’s what you’ve been doing in the past few decades... I admit that I was unaware of all this, but I guess I finally see the bigger picture now...”

“What exactly did the realization of who I am, reveal to you?”

“Well, half a year ago, my beloved third son, Jett, was kidnapped by a mysterious and powerful person in Mayberry. Up till this point, I still have no leads on where he could be or whether he’s even still alive! Adding that to the extermination of the Moldells in the Logan Province, I wonder it’s safe to assume that you were the one in charge of all that?” growled Kort as his eyes turned bloodshot, filled with resentment.

Hearing that, the infuriated Daryl roared, “You b*stard!”

Even though Daryl didn't move an inch, Kort could feel his cheeks being slapped hard, twice! He didn't even have a chance to fight back!

"Mind you, I've already lived a long life! Your third son and family members are nothing more than trivial scoundrels in my eyes! Being as trivial as they are, why would I ever wish to waste brain cells thinking of how to properly deal with them? How frustrating!"

Kort himself simply cupped his hurt cheeks, not daring to say another word for now.

Seeing his reaction, Dylan and the other Crawfords got particularly excited.

"...I never thought that you'd have this much power, dad... Speaking of which, was it truly not our people who slaughter the Moldells in the Logan Province then?" asked Dylan who had gained near-infinite confidence now that he had seen how powerful his father truly was.

As Daryl watched as his son sat down beside him, he sighed before replying, "How do I even say this... Well, I, for one, didn't do it... However, it truly was a Crawford who did the deed. Honestly, I would've done so myself if I cared any less for seniority. After all, those b*stards are nothing but robbers who've been having thoughts about acquiring the Crawford family for over twenty years by now. With all the wicked tricks they've been using throughout the years, I'm genuinely surprised that they're still so dissatisfied, even after slaughtering the Morningstar family," explained Daryl, his anger apparent in his tone.

Kort felt the corner of his lip twitch when he heard that.

"...Oh? So it truly was done by someone from our family? But aside from you, who else has such great power?" asked Dylan, confused.

"I wonder as well, grandpa. Speaking of which, why didn't you appear earlier? Our family wouldn't have to face so much danger today if you had just done so! Regardless, kill them all today and make sure none of them escape!" exclaimed Jessica.

“Hahaha! I never thought that my granddaughter would take after my personality! I like you a lot more compared to that cowardly grandson of mine!” replied Daryl with a hearty laugh.

“Well, let’s just say that I didn’t come over earlier due to some personal issues that I’d rather not share at the moment. Anyway, I’m not even needed to deal with these mere scoundrels, my good granddaughter... Now come over here...” added Daryl as he turned to look at the black-robed men.

“Go check if the young master has returned,” ordered the old man.

Chapter 1049

“The young master’s left the Logan Province hours ago! He’s already arrived at the island!” reported one of Daryl’s many subordinates.

“...Young master? What sort of young master, dad?” said Dylan, baffled.

“Haha! You’ll know once he arrives,” replied Daryl as he shook his head with a bitter smile on his face.

“...Speak of the devil...” added Daryl as he raised his head to look out of the hall.

Hearing that, everyone turned to look in the direction Daryl was staring at. Walking toward them from the main square, was a young man donning a black suit.

As soon as he got close enough, all the previous subordinates—who were still standing by the door—bowed respectfully as they greeted, “Young master!”

“G-Gerald!” shouted both Dylan and Jessica in unison.

While Dylan’s lips twitched, overjoyed, Jessica herself was so moved that she ended up covering her mouth. As for the rest of the Crawfords, all of them stared at Gerald, excitement building within them.

"It's been a year, mom... Dad... Sister... I'm finally back!" announced Gerald as he knelt by his father's side.

"...That's... I'm... I'm so glad that you're back... It's been a whole year... And I... I even thought that you had..."

Unable to hold back her tears anymore, Yulia wailed as she finally got confirmation that her son was still alive and well.

"How... How absolutely marvelous! To think that my son would end up becoming even more promising, mature, and strong throughout your disappearance! It's fantastic...!" added Dylan who was now crying as well.

After wiping his parents' tears away, Gerald turned to look at Daryl before saying, "It appears that at long last, I've finally lived up to your expectations, grandpa..."

"Indeed you have, Gerald. I can sense that your aura is several times stronger than before as well. Your innate condition is so much better than mine..." replied the old man before turning to look at Kort.

"That scoundrel over there pressured you so much last year that you ended up in a pretty tight spot, correct? Go ahead and take your revenge on him today. Make sure not to go easy on him!" added Daryl with a smile.

"Oh, but of course I will! All our past grudges will be settled once and for all today!" replied Gerald as he stood up to look at Kort.

"So it was you, Gerald... Tell me, are you the one responsible for capturing Jett?" asked Kort as he gritted his teeth.

"Yeah, that was me. I left him in the Poisonous Mosquito Valley where he promptly got eaten alive by millions of mosquitoes swarming him. I made sure that no bones or remains were left, so I'm sure it must've been difficult to track him down," replied Gerald.

“What?! You... I truly regret not killing you long ago, Gerald! Now that you’ve admitted to killing two of my sons, I’m ending you today no matter what! I’ll avenge my boys if it’s the last thing I do!” roared Kort as he leaped into the air, ready to pounce on Gerald!

Kort’s inner strength was powerful and overbearing, which matched his temperament well. However, no matter how strong he was, at the end of the day, he was just a regular powerful champion.

Though Gerald had been terrified of him just a year ago—as he was with anyone from the Moldell family—Kort was nothing but a trivial person to him now.

Mimicking Kort, Gerald leaped into the air as well, but he was faster and had more control.

The moment Gerald’s fist collided with, Kort’s stomach, everyone watched in amazement as Kort’s body was flung backward! Crashing into a stone pillar, Kort’s body fell to the ground as a deep indent in the middle of the pillar revealed itself.

“W-what immense inner strength! Now I see how you did all that to my family!” scowled Kort as his old face scrunched up in disbelief.

As Kort readied himself to launch another attack, Dylan—who was now filled with both excitement and pride—turned to look at his father before asking, “Did you teach him that, dad? When did Gerald become this powerful?”

“Haha... Well, I only taught him half of what he knows,” replied Daryl with a slightly bitter smile as he shook his head.

Dylan himself continued watching his son’s fight in delight.

Chapter 1050

Even Jessica was happy as she shouted, “Come on, Gerald! Kill that old b*stard! Beat him to death!”

Parker, on the other hand, turned to look at Daryl before respectfully asking, “Judging from your aura, could you perhaps be one of the legends like my third uncle, Christopher?”

He was asking since he had been stunned by how much of a disadvantage Kort had actually been placed in despite fighting the young Gerald. Parker could only imagine what level of strength Daryl truly had as Gerald’s mentor.

“Hah! Are you saying that Christopher hasn’t been wasting his time in the past few decades? What, has he arrived at the realm of legends as well?” asked Daryl in return.

“He has!”

“What? Didn’t you say that Great Old Master Moldell passed away, grandpa?” asked Winnie—who was still in a state of shock—as she continued watching Gerald and Kort fight.

“Nonsense! That was just a rumor. After all, how could we expose Great Old Master Moldell’s identity so casually? Still, you’re just a junior so it’s natural for you not to know a thing about this,” replied Parker.

“...Then... Is Gerald a champion as well now? He’s extremely strong!” asked Winnie again, her heart brewing with complicated emotions.

After all, Gerald had been the one who had saved her back when he had first gone to the Moldell family in search of help. Back then, Winnie was severely injured and suffering from anemia. Thanks to Gerald’s blood donation, she made it out alive.

Even so, she had always looked down upon him since she just considered him to be a regular person from the ordinary world.

Now that he was so strong, however, Winnie was having complicated thoughts.

“...How puzzling... Correct me if I’m wrong, but after observing Gerald for a while, I’m assuming that he’s no champion, sir. Could my guess be correct?” asked Parker who wasn’t making any effort to hide his slight agitation as he turned to look at Daryl in disbelief.

“Hahaha! You seem to be quite insightful!” replied Daryl with a proud smile.

“... My god...” mumbled Parker as he staggered a few steps backward, his face now extremely pale.

Thankfully, Winnie managed to support him in time. Finding it odd, she then asked, “What do you mean, grandpa? Despite his rapid growth in terms of strength, I see no issue with him having the title of champion. After all, he must have gone through extreme training to get to where he currently is!”

“He isn’t one! Now that the elder has answered my question, I can safely say that Gerald is no champion!” replied Parker.

“...Are you suggesting that he has an even higher title...?”

Holding his breath, Parker then stared wide-eyed at Gerald as he trembled while muttering, “...He... He’s a great master...”

The realm of legends was the most mysterious of realms when it came to ancient martial arts. Many have failed to get there even after spending their entire lives trying to achieve it, and this included people from within secret societies.

“...W-what...? You can’t be serious, can you, grandpa?” stuttered Winnie as her jaw dropped.

“He truly is a great master!” replied Parker, still trembling all over as he nodded.

“Still... A great master at his age... Aside from that man, Gerald’s the only other person to achieve the title of great master at such a young age!” added Parker.

“What’s a great master, dad? Gerald’s one now?” asked Dylan who had no idea what a great master was. However, from what he heard, he knew that it must have been an extremely high achievement.

“Haha! Indeed, Gerald truly has arrived at the realm of legends! It’s the reason why I was so surprised when I met him earlier. From what I had estimated, Gerald needed at least a decade or two in order to achieve that realm, and that was only if he was extremely talented and had exceptional biological advantages!” replied Daryl who appeared to be carefully hiding key facts in his explanation, despite being able to see everything clearly.

“Yes, lord. Ever since the young master drank the holy blood, he seems to have rapidly progressed in his training. From what I can personally see, he’s already arrived at the realm of legends. Even at his worst, he’ll still be at the level of half a great master. How truly rare! It seems that the holy blood worked like a charm!” said Welson who had been standing at the side this entire time.

“...No. It’s not only due to the holy blood,” replied Daryl as he shook his head.

“I’ve been observing Gerald from the moment he entered the hall... I’ll say it right now that the holy blood would’ve only helped him control his temperament better. In no way would it have helped him increase his training speed! Understanding that, I’ve come to a conclusion as to how he became a great master so quickly!” added Daryl with a slight frown.

“What have you concluded?”

“Well, it seems like someone has instilled a lot of potential within Gerald... I’m afraid that his body hasn’t been normal from half a year ago...”

Chapter 1051

“...So it turns out that the young master’s body was no longer normal for a while now! No wonder!” said Welson, feeling enlightened.

‘Still... Who exactly was Gerald’s first master...? This Finnley person...? I’ve never heard of him... If Gerald’s body was able to transform this much in just half a year, I wonder what level of training Finnley himself has...’ Daryl thought to himself.

A scream brought Daryl's attention back on Kort as everyone watched the old man fall from mid-air before vomiting blood.

"You... You've already entered the realm of legends... How... How is this even possible?!" shouted Kort, his shock evident from his tone.

As the title suggested, only legends could enter the realm of legends.

From what Kort knew, Christopher himself—who had undergone such immense training—had barely been able to enter the realm of legends. Yet here Gerald was! A young man who had managed to achieve the status of great master despite Kort previously deeming him as a person who lacked common sense! Gerald was now multiple times stronger than Kort's strongest opponents!

Kort was truly unable to reconcile with the truth, and he would rather die than accept it willingly!

"Well, you'll get to die content, Kort. If there's anyone you'd like to blame, let it first be yourself for acting out of line that day! For barely leaving me any leeway to even save myself! I'll finally have my revenge today!" shouted Gerald as he clenched both his fists tightly.

Gerald had been waiting for this day for an entire year.

After all, he had been on the run for most of that period, not even able to return home. What more, even though he knew that his family was constantly in danger, all Gerald could do back then was watch helplessly and pray for their safety.

All this happened because Kort acted out of line and refused to leave any leeway. Because of that, Gerald had suffered so much in the past year.

However, now all that suffering was going to be worthwhile.

Sensing how immense Gerald's murderous intent had become, Kort couldn't help but gulp slightly.

Kort had lived his entire life dealing with powerful businesses. He was close to uniting all the powerful people across the globe as well. To think that his life was going to end at the hands of a young man...

...No! He couldn't just die like this!

"W-wait! You can't kill me today, Gerald! I'm... I'm the second master of the Moldell family! A powerful secret society! How... How dare you even think of killing me!" shouted Kort, slowly crawling away as he covered his injured chest.

"Parker! Parker! He's going to kill people from the Moldell family! Say something!" added Kort as he turned to look at Parker.

"...When two parties start a fight with death being the indication of who the loser is, if Gerald doesn't finish you off today, then he may as well be considered to be as good as dead!" replied Parker coldly.

If Parker wanted to be even franker, he would've just told Kort that he truly hoped that Gerald ended his life today. With Kort's death, Gerald would've essentially gotten rid of one big issue.

"Haha! Even your fellow Moldells aren't willing to help you! I guess that shows what kind of conduct you usually display before those under you! Worry not, I'll give you a quick death!"

Hearing how cold Gerald's tone was, Kort continued walking backward as he pleaded, "N-no! You can't kill me, Gerald! You'll regret it for the rest of your life if you do! "

Eventually, both of them arrived at a flower bed and the pale-faced Kort ended up stumbling before falling on his buttocks. Due to Gerald's punch to his chest earlier, all his strength was nearly gone.

"Regret it, you say...?"

“That’s right! I know that you’ve been investigating the Sun League due to your fiancée and second uncle’s disappearance! I even saw the projected map earlier, and I can assure you that it’s definitely related to the Sun League!” replied Kort with a gulp.

Hearing that, Gerald turned to look at his grandfather. Daryl himself frowned slightly before eventually nodding at Gerald.

With that, Daryl walked over to the two before saying, “If you truly know where the location on the map is, I’ll consider letting you live. Now spit it out!”

“Haha... You see, sir, Gerald... I’ve seen the mountain on the map before... It’s called Warhill Mountain, and it’s an extremely mysterious location! For starters, everything within that area constantly changes formation! What more, if you don’t have a special wooden token, you’ll never be able to find the place, even if you search for it your entire life!” explained Kort, quickly.

“...A wooden token? What sort of wooden token? And how are we to locate this Warhill Mountain?” asked Gerald.

If they were able to find that place without much trouble, then uncovering the secrets of the Sun League wouldn’t take much longer either.

Chapter 1052

With any luck, that would greatly increase his chances of finally being able to find Mila and his uncle again!

Moved by the realization that there was a higher chance that he would be able to reunite with his girlfriend, Gerald then asked, “...So, about the wooden token-”

Gerald’s sentence ended prematurely since he noticed that Kort was smirking instead of displaying his fearful expression just seconds ago. However, the realization had come a second too late since the next thing Gerald knew, there were already two beads in Kort’s right hand!

Before anyone could make a move, Kort tossed the two beads at Gerald and Daryl's feet, causing the beads to explode with ear-shattering loudness!

Taking advantage of the chaos, Kort then made his escape!

"That scoundrel of an old man truly is as cunning as they say! Send people in pursuit of him, Welson! Don't let him escape!" shouted Daryl as the Soul Palace subordinates immediately obeyed.

"It's useless to do so, sir! While he's known for both his cunningness and strength, his greatest skill is his ability to make himself lighter! Even Christopher has praised his adeptness with that skill! No matter the situation, once he's made his escape, it's extremely difficult to re-capture him due to how stealthy he is," said Parker as he took a step forward while shaking his head.

With an apologetic look on his face, Gerald added, "It's my fault, grandpa... My mind wandered for a bit the moment he mentioned Mila and uncle just know... Leave it to me, I'll get him back!"

Though he knew that Gerald regretted his lack of concentration on the enemy, Daryl simply raised his hand before replying, "No, it's better if we don't press a cornered enemy too far... Even if he gets away this time, we'll catch him again sooner or later. If my guess is correct, he should be returning to the Moldell manor now. After all, I'm sure he's well aware that only Christopher is capable of saving him now! Until we go after them again, try not to be too anxious, Gerald."

Hearing that, Gerald simply clenched his fists before nodding slightly in defeat.

"Christopher... Kort..." muttered Daryl to himself at the moment.

After a brief silence, Daryl seemed to recall something, thus he added, "Come with me, Gerald. You and the others should come along as well, Dylan."

Meanwhile, Kort himself was running as swift as an arrow. As Parker had said, Kort's ability to make himself lighter truly increased his speed tremendously.

However, Kort was still severely injured from his fight against Gerald. Despite that, he continued rushing back to the Moldell manor in Yanken, refusing to stop moving his legs till he reached his destination.

Soon enough, the next dawn came, and with loud 'flop' Kort knelt as he wept with grief in front of the secluded courtyard within the Moldell manor that was located near the back of a mountain.

Catching his breath, Kort then cried out, "I, Kort, am an ungrateful descendant of the Moldell family! I kneel here today to beg my third uncle to meet me! I have some urgent issues to report to you!"

With that, Kort bowed deeply, his forehead touching the ground.

Since nobody replied even after some time passed, Kort simply lifted his head before pushing his forehead deeper into the ground, making sure to make a louder sound.

Despite that, there was still no reply.

After a few more bows, Kort's head was already bleeding. Understanding that what he was doing was futile, Kort finally got up before saying, "...I see you're reluctant to meet me, uncle... Does that mean that I won't ever be able to avenge my two children, even on my dying bed? With or without your help, I'm heading over to the Soul Palace to fight both Daryl and his grandson with all I have! At the very least, I'll die and protect the honor of our family that's existed for over a thousand years!"

"...Hold on a minute... That name... Did you say Daryl from the Soul Palace...?" said an old voice out of the blue from within the courtyard.

Eyes-widened, Kort watched as the cobweb-covered door to the room he was bowing in front of slowly creaked open.

Out stepped a trembling old man who had snowy-white hair and a body that was all skin and bones.

Chapter 1053

“Regardless, the sun’s not even fully up yet, you b*stard! Crying out so loudly here... Were you planning to cry out here till I eventually died?” grumbled the old man.

Though Christopher looked like a senile old man, both his eyes seemed extremely sharp. Aside from the many cobwebs that stuck to his bony body, he didn’t seem to look all that out of the ordinary. If anything, all that simply emphasized how old Christopher was.

Even so, Kort respected him deeply. Thinking back, it had been over twenty years since he had last met his third uncle.

Gulping, Kort then pleaded, “...I apologize, but moving on, please save me, Third uncle! Both Daryl and his grandson are hunting me down with murder in mind! What more, both of them also killed two of your grandsons! Both of them met truly terrible ends!”

“I see... I’ve come across Daryl during my earlier years... To think that he’d actually return to the ordinary world! Humph! Interesting... Well, not that interesting but note-worthy... Speaking of which, I know what he’s like so I’m sure that he wouldn’t argue against a junior like you. It’s even more improbable that he’d kill both of your sons! He’s not one to go that far! Based on what you told me, could it be that your sons went looking for trouble first and, as a result, got killed because of that?” replied Christopher rather placidly.

“While I agree that my two sons are mischievous, they didn’t have to die so terribly just because of that! Just so you know, my third son, Jett, was left to die within the infamous Poisonous Mosquito Valley! Not even bones remained after the mosquitoes were done with him! As if that wasn’t enough, my other son, Yuvan, was forced to commit suicide! You can’t just sit back and continue watching all this happen so indifferently! Daryl’s probably the most powerful person in the world right now! I, for one, certainly can’t even dream of winning against him! With nobody powerful enough to defeat him, I hope that you’ll step forward to beg him not to kill me! If you refuse, then it’s better that I just die before you now in order to protect the Moldell family’s reputation!”

After saying all that, Kort eyed a large tree before rushing toward it with the intent of bludgeoning his forehead against it till he died!

Before he knew it, however, Christopher's body had vanished from where he had initially stood, reappearing right beside Kort!

The old man then grabbed Kort's head with a single hand before shouting, "You b*stard! While it's true that the Moldells under me are all scared to death of Daryl, what do you mean he's the most powerful person there is? I'm still here, aren't I? Bold of you to say he's undefeatable... Bolder still that you even dared to suggest for me to beg Daryl to forgive you! Ridiculous!" growled Christopher as he narrowed his eyes that reflected his sheer fury.

"...Humph. With me here, that grandson and grandfather won't be able to lay a finger on you, so don't worry, Kort! In fact, rather than go on the defensive, I'll do you justice and deal with Daryl!" added Christopher in a frigid voice.

"T-thank you, third uncle!" shouted Kort as he burst into tears and leaped at Christopher to embrace him.

However, the moment both of them got into contact, Kort immediately realized that something was off. Left stupefied, Kort ended up taking a few steps backward and falling to the ground as he said, "T-third uncle! Where's your arm?"

"...Hmm? Haha! Ah yes, I forgot that you didn't know about me losing my right arm..." replied Christopher with a firm nod.

As the old man had said, his right arm was no longer there. Kort was caught by surprise by this since the long robes Christopher was wearing perfectly concealed the nub of his right arm.

"But... You still had it the last time we met some twenty years ago! When did this happen?"

"Haha! I broke my arm about ten years ago, so it's no surprise that you wouldn't know!"

"...I see... Then..."

Hearing Kort's dispirited voice slowly trail off, Christopher immediately replied, "Hahaha! What, are you worried that I can't defeat Daryl anymore since I've lost an arm?"

"I'd never doubt your strength, uncle! After all, I'm sure the way you present yourself is vastly different from what you're truly capable of!"

Upon hearing that, Christopher simply shook his head before raising his remaining hand and gently touching the trunk of a large tree beside him.

From what Kort could estimate, the trunk was so thick that it would require at least three people hugging it in order to fully surround it.

A brief silence later, Christopher unleashed an immense force that sent a loud shockwave across the area! Immediately after, Kort's eyes widened as he watched the large tree wither from its roots to the tips of its branches.

After a few seconds, the entire tree split cleanly in the middle! While the tree's surface area was mostly still intact, its innards had completely festered.

"M-my god, third uncle!"

Chapter 1054

As Kort gulped loudly, clearly terrified by what he had just witnessed, Christopher let out a chuckle before saying, "So, are you still worried about those two?"

"N-not at all! You're definitely the most powerful person in the world! With you clearly being undefeatable, we can avenge your two grandsons! I'll escort you off the mountain!" said Kort excitedly.

"Haha! Still, you honestly didn't have to come looking for me all the way up here. After all, I was going to leave the mountain before long anyway," replied Christopher with a smile.

Hearing that, Kort seemed to remember something.

“...Now that I think about it, right before you went into seclusion twenty years ago, I remember you telling me that you wanted to make preparations for the pledge of the holy water... I also recall that the pledge is held once every thirty years... From what I can tell, that day is swiftly approaching! Since you seem to have gained the title of great master for at least ten years by now—judging from your strength—you can definitely represent our family to join the pledge!”

“You remember correctly. You know, my father died when he was participating in a pledge of the holy water. On the day that happened, I swore to myself that I’d one day arrive at the realm of legends and undergo the pledge of the holy water before I died,” replied Christopher as he reminisced.

“Speaking of the pledge of the holy water, I remember you showing me a picture of Warhill Mountain back before you entered seclusion. I saw it again yesterday at the Crawford family mansion. Apparently, the Crawford grandfather and grandson wish to solve the mystery behind the Sun League!” said Kort.

“Haha! Do they, now? They can certainly try! After all, nobody’s been able to unravel the mysteries behind the Sun League for almost a thousand years by now! The league itself almost feels imaginary, and at this point, I think it wouldn’t be far-fetched to say that there’s some cursed law that prevents anyone from ever finding them! Despite my dad being so powerful back then and even going so far as to devote much of his life to solving the mystery behind that group, in the end, he still failed to do so! I must say that Daryl truly is overestimating his abilities now...” replied Christopher as he laughed loudly.

“However, according to a clue that great grandfather had left back then, the pledge of the holy water is closely linked with the Sun League...”

“Indeed it is. I had a chat with my father in a secret room before he passed away that year. He told me that those who gained the status of great master would be granted tokens of the holy water that would be used for the pledge. My dad himself had doubted that the Sun League was the true provider of the holy water which, according to rumors, granted one immortality! To prove his point, he headed out to solve the secrets behind the Sun League. However, when he finally returned, he was a shadow of his former self. It was as though he had lost all his wits, and he remained silent most of the time. Less than a month later, he passed away, leaving behind only a map of Warhill Mountain that he brought back with him!” replied Christopher in a melancholic tone.

“If that’s the case, then you’d better not go, uncle... After all, the Moldell family can’t lose you! I mean... You know, just in case any accidents happen to you... Once you’re gone, the Moldell family members will be sitting ducks!” said Kort, evidently worried.

“Haha! Life and death are ruled by fate! What more, I’ve already worked so hard for so many years just to participate in the pledge of the holy water... I can’t just give up now! Don’t worry, I’ll get rid of all the Moldell family’s obstacles before I leave. Regardless, the sun is barely even up yet and you look exhausted... Go get some rest first,” said Christopher as he smiled subtly.

“Thank you, uncle!”

Back in the Crawford Manor, Gerald was currently meditating on the floor of his room while simultaneously practicing his breathing method.

During the previous day, Gerald’s grandfather had called any relevant Crawfords over into the manor’s secret room. Once inside, he asked them to try comprehending the Crawford family’s heirloom, the picture of the sun.

After seeing that nobody was able to gather anything from the picture, Gerald tried deciphering the picture’s deeper meaning as well.

While he did manage to decipher a few things, it was only a few techniques he could use to exert his power of the blessings of the dragon.

Back in the present, Lyra herself was fast asleep on her bed. Due to how exhausted she had been, she had turned in early.

Both Gerald and her were in the same room since his grandfather already treated her like his granddaughter-in-law, similar to Gerald’s parents and sister. Knowing that they had to share a room no matter what, Gerald simply opted to remain on the floor.

Turning to look at her, Gerald was surprised to see Lyra shaking her head in her sleep.

“...Hmm?”

As he went over to check on her, he could see that she was also sweating profusely.

Realizing that she must be having a bad dream, Gerald smiled bitterly as he asked, “A nightmare...?”

Just as he was about to cover her with a blanket, he heard her nervously say, “... Who... who are you...?”

Surprised, Gerald turned to look at her, only to find that her eyes were still shut tight. Even though she was just sleep talking, her voice seemed utterly terrified. What could she be dreaming about...?

Chapter 1055

Lyra found herself walking amidst a dense forest on a large mountain. The air was filled with a thick miasma and everything felt gloomy and eerie.

The fact that there didn't seem like there was anyone else around made her feel all the more terrified.

After walking through the forest for some time, Lyra's ears twitched as the sound of a flowing stream could be heard. Looking around, she eventually came across a lit area where the stream was. However, that wasn't the only thing she saw there.

Standing beside the stream was a woman wearing white clothes. It was a no-brainer that anyone who saw such a long-haired woman standing in the middle of nowhere would be rightfully terrified.

“...Who... who are you...?” asked Lyra meekly as she looked at the woman's back.

“...Save me... You’re the only one capable of leading him here to save me...!”
replied the woman.

Though Lyra was terrified when she heard that, she could sense the melancholy in her voice, and it seemed that the woman was weeping as well.

“...W-who is this, ‘he’ you speak of...?”

“...Save me...! You’re the only one capable of leading him here to save me...!”
repeated the woman as she wailed on.

To Lyra’s horror, the woman then slowly began turning around. Lyra felt her eyes widen in fear as she saw the woman’s extremely pale face. That wasn’t the worst part either. The woman was shedding tears of blood!

Lyra instantly let out a blood-curdling scream and it took her a while to finally realize that Gerald’s voice was present.

Opening her eyes, she saw that Gerald was sitting beside her, and he currently had a concerned look on his face as he asked, “What’s wrong, Lyra?”

Throwing herself into his arms, her heart continued pounding rapidly for a while. Eventually, she managed to calm down slightly.

“Was it a nightmare...?” asked Gerald.

“It... It was... It was terrifying... I dreamed that I was stuck in a dense and gloomy forest with nobody else around... However, the moment I finally bumped into someone, it was a woman who cried tears of blood! She... She told me to send someone over to save her!” replied Lyra as she explained what she had dreamed of.

Slowly shaking his head, Gerald then said, “Maybe you’re just too tired due to the stress of everything that’s been happening recently... Regardless, it’ll still be a little while before dawn... Take the time to rest, and try not to worry too much about it. I’ll be by your side...”

"I... I don't think I'll be able to... Ever since I saw that picture of Warhill Mountain, I've constantly felt insecure... It's like I can feel that something is about to happen... Also, the more I think about it, the more I feel that that woman's back resembles someone..."

"Hmm? Do you have any idea who...?"

"...Yes. Remember that statue of a woman that I was talking about? Back when we first saw the map? That statue—that had been broken waist-down—resembled the white-clothed woman in my dream a lot! In fact, they look exceedingly similar!" replied Lyra who was so scared that her cheeks became flushed.

"I see... Regardless, everything's fine now... It's normal to get nightmares of unnerving images... Again, I'll be here so do rest for a little longer..."

After some persuasion, Lyra eventually lay down on her bed again. Gerald himself didn't take the incident to heart.

Once dawn came, both of them got up separately. A little while later, a servant knocked on the door before saying, "Young master and young lady, the old master ordered everyone in the family to get themselves cleaned up at the break of dawn. After all, you'll all be studying the picture of the sun again."

"Very well!" replied Gerald with a nod.

Even from the previous day, his grandfather had prioritized the picture of the sun above all else, telling the other Crawfords to study it.

After all, he was well aware that alone, one's power was limited. With so many family members there, they were bound to eventually find out more about it.

Gerald knew that his grandfather was simply worried about the prophesized curse of the sun picture. The curse where the Crawford family would eventually end up getting wiped out for good. It was why they had been making preparations to face the calamity from time to time.

Regardless, by the time Gerald and Lyra arrived at the secret room after cleaning themselves up, they found that though it was still very early in the morning, many, if not all, of the Crawford family members were already gathered there.

The room was so silent that Gerald felt that even a toddler would be pressured to study along silently if one was present.

Deeper inside, Gerald's grandfather could be seen studying the map with many others. They seemed to have been doing so for a while now.

Seeing that, Gerald pulled Lyra along to the side before sitting down beside her. He then whispered, "That picture of the sun is our family's heirloom, Lyra. Do have a look at it too since grandpa called you over as well."

"Will do!" replied Lyra as she nodded firmly.

The picture itself was as cryptic as ever, and nobody had been able to discern anything meaningful from it.

As Gerald started studying the image as well, several other thoughts were swimming in Lyra's head. Essentially, she was just feeling pleased that Gerald was finally starting to accept her more.

It was great news for her, and quite honestly, nothing else was more important to Lyra at the moment.