

An Understated Dominance by Marina Vittori Chapter 821 -

Chapter 821

Zephyr Lodge, on the outskirts of town, was now the base for Kirin Gang.

Dustin had gone there to lay low after he left the Hill family residence.

The Hills were upset. So, there was no point in trying to explain himself to them. The best course of action was to uncover the truth to prove his innocence.

Who was the one who murdered Paul? Why did the murderer set him up?

With those questions in mind, Dustin ordered everyone in Kirin Gang to uncover the truth. Everyone available was sent out to gather information.

Time was of the essence. They had to stabilize the situation before things got worse.

“Sir Rhys!” Nelson barged into the meeting room with sweat running down his face. “Sir Rhys! We’ve got trouble! The Hills and their men are headed for Zephyr Lodge!”

“So soon?” Dustin frowned.

They had just started using Zephyr Lodge as their base. Only a handful of people knew its location. He never thought they would be able to track him down within mere hours. It was obvious that someone had been keeping an eye on him and his whereabouts.

“It’s not just the Hills. The higher-ups in the alliance and many martial artists have joined them!” Nelson said anxiously.

“Sir Rhys, things aren’t looking good for us. You should escape while you can. I’ll hold them up!” “I’ll stand my ground, come what may,” Dustin said.

“Escaping will only make me look guilty. I’ll have to face them sooner or later.”

After a moment of hesitation, Dustin finally stepped out the door. Running away wasn’t going to solve anything.

If he didn't clear his name, he'd become the public enemy of the entire martial world in the future!

"Get the hell out here, Dustin! You murderer! Get out and accept your fate!"

By then, there were hordes of people gathered outside Zephyr Lodge. At a glance, there were more than a thousand of them.

The Hill family stood at the center, with the Balerno martial arts alliance on the left and the Glenstead martial arts alliance on the right.

Behind them were martial artists who came after hearing about Paul's death. They were ready to seek justice on his behalf.

"Dustin! I know you're inside. Come out, or I'll burn this place down!" Autumn, known for his temper, shouted angrily.

The doors of the lodge were slowly pulled open with a resounding creak. Soon after, Dustin and Nelson stepped out and faced the thousands of furious gazes.

"You've finally decided to come out, Dustin!" Autumn huffed indignantly.

"I'll give you a chance to atone for your sins by killing yourself right here in front of everyone. At least this way, you'll die a more honorable death!"

"Kill yourself! Kill yourself!" The crowd clamored and shouted.

Their voices thundered across the skies, echoing over Zephyr Lodge. It was a long time before the voices died down.

"Sir Paul's death has nothing to do with me! Someone tried to frame me! Please be reasonable," Dustin said seriously.

"Nonsense! So many of us saw it! How could we all be mistaken?" Autumn yelled.

"You only saw the surface of things," Dustin explained, "I planned to meet Sir Paul this morning. But when I got to the bamboo house, he was already dead.

"Then you guys charged in when I was examining his body. I'm sure everything was deliberately

set up to frame me!”

“You claim that it’s a setup? Very well. Look here and tell me what this is?”

With a cold expression, Spring whipped out a bloody dagger.

He shouted, “This was a gift Sir Reeds presented you yesterday. It’s also the weapon that

murdered my father! What do you have to say about this?”

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Chapter 822

Dustin was surprised by the dagger that clattered noisily by his feet.

The dagger was indeed the one that Ronald gave him. But after a few drinks last night, he had put

it in his room.

He hadn’t paid the dagger much attention this morning when he left for the Hill family residence. He hadn’t expected it would be the weapon that killed Paul!

And because of that, he was now the prime suspect!

“Well? Do you have anything else to say? Are you going to tell me that the dagger had been stolen?” Spring asked darkly.

Dustin furrowed his brow. He swallowed back the words on the tip of his tongue.

It was true. He indeed wanted to say that the dagger had been stolen. But at this point, no one was going to believe that.

“Rascal, we’ve got solid evidence now. Let’s see how you get out of this!” Autumn roared.

“Dad! Don’t waste your breath on him. Just kill him right now to avenge Granddad!” Torben egged him on from behind.

“Dustin! Did you really kill Sir Paul?” Ronald, who had been quiet the entire time, finally spoke up. “Why did you do it? He had always viewed you as his successor. Why would you do that?”

“We trusted you so much! How could you kill Sir Paul? You beast!” Many members of the alliance shouted.

Paul was a respectable figure. Many of them in the alliance had received kindness and guidance from him. With his death, they were both saddened and angry.

“Sir Reeds, I’m innocent! Someone framed me. Think about it. I hold no grudges against Sir Paul! Why would I do this?” Dustin frowned.

“You’re the only one who can answer that. Who exactly are you?” Spring shouted.

“I know who he is!” Just then, a masked lady stepped out of the crowd. It was Lexi, the one Dustin had gone up against just the day before.

She pointed at Dustin and said venomously, “This man is from Kimboku. He’s an assassin from Shadowslayer. He has been staying undercover in Dragonmarsh to assassinate Dragonmarshian experts!”

The crowd was sent into an uproar.

“What? An assassin from Kimboku?”

“Damn it! No wonder the rascal killed Sir Paul! He’s a traitor!”

“He’s an enemy of the state! People like him deserve to die!”

Everyone was riled up. They had assumed that it was just a personal grudge, until now. But this was tied to the entire nation!

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“I have shown you mercy and spared your life. Why are you spreading lies about me?”

Dustin’s gaze shot over to Lexi. He hadn’t used all his strength in the punch yesterday and had spared her. He didn’t expect his kind gesture would put him in trouble.

“Stop denying it! I heard you clearly yesterday! You’re a spy from Kimboku! You were the one who poisoned all three of us from the Glenstead martial arts alliance!” Lexi yelled.

“So that’s what happened! I was wondering how the experts got poisoned! So this bastard was behind it!”

“We can’t let him get away with this! Take him down*!”

“Charge! Slay the national traitor!”

As the shouts rang out, many martial artists charged forward with fury.

They had already lost all sense of rationality. It no longer mattered to them who was in the wrong.

They were convinced that Dustin was the murderer and were out to kill him!

“Calm down, all of you!”

With a forceful stomp, an explosion sounded. A large crater formed at Dustin’s feet where he had

stomped.

He unleashed a burst of energy. Then, all the martial artists rushing toward him were swept off

their feet.

“This person is powerful! Attack together!”

As tens of the men fell, more of them charged toward Dustin with bloodlust.

Dustin frowned. Just as he was about to channel his energy again, a large group of men appeared.

Their numbers were vast, and they appeared from all around. It was the disciples of the Kirin

Gang!

“Hold it right there! Who dares harm Sir Rhys?” Cornelius, from the Darklaws, shouted. He was at the forefront of the men, leading them forward.

Then, along with the four major guilds, they surrounded all the people from the Balerno and

Glenstead martial arts alliance.

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There were just slightly more than a thousand people from the alliances. However, the disciples of the Kirin Gang added up to over five thousand people.

Skills aside, just their numbers alone were enough to scare their opponents. Those clamoring to kill Dustin earlier on now kept their mouths shut.

The people from Kirin Gang not only had knives with them. Some of the elites even had firearms. Unless one was a grandmaster, they could not hold up against those weapons.

“Sir Rhys, are you alright?” Cornelius and a group of elites from Kirin Gang rushed up to Dustin. They formed a circle around him, protecting him from the crowd.

“I’m fine.” Dustin shook his head.

If he wished to leave, no one could stop him. But he might have to live with the label of a murderer and be hated by everyone for the rest of his life.

“Dustin! Do you honestly think your underlings can fend off the Hill family’s hidden guards?” Spring took a step forward aggressively.

Though the Kirin Gang had the numbers, the hidden guards could easily wipe them all out. Of course, they would also suffer a great loss.

“And it’s not just the Hill family’s hidden guards! There’s also us, elites from the alliance!” Several elders from the alliance stepped forward with stern gazes.

So what if Kirin Gang had the numbers? In the face of true experts, these weaklings amounted to nothing!

“Dustin, surrender yourself if you do not wish to sacrifice innocent lives,” Ronald warned.

“Sir Reeds, I have no intention of making an enemy out of everyone.” Dustin waved his hand, signaling for the disciples of the Kirin Gang to disperse.

Then, he continued, “I know I’m the prime suspect, but please give me a chance to prove my innocence.

“Sir Paul’s death is odd, and there are too many points of suspicion surrounding it. I hope to investigate it.”

“Investigate my foot! You’re the murderer!” Autumn shouted.

“If I were really the murderer, would I just wait for you to catch me? Wouldn’t it be better for me to escape immediately?” Dustin countered.

“Well...” Autumn was at a loss for words.

The rest of the people also exchanged puzzled glances. Things did seem strange.

“Hmph! Maybe you were just trying to luck out, hoping we wouldn’t find you!” Torben said.

“Fine! Then tell me, who would leave behind a weapon that carried their identity after killing someone? Do you think I’m that stupid?” Dustin challenged.

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That was enough to shut Torben up. Even the crowd also seemed to show a thoughtful expression.

They had only followed what others said without giving it much thought. Their anger had completely clouded their judgment.

Now that Dustin pointed it out, there were indeed many points of suspicion.

“What you said makes sense, but that doesn’t prove your innocence. You were the only one present when my father died!” Spring said frostily

“That’s why I said I need time to prove my innocence. I will certainly find out who the real murderer is!” Dustin said solemnly.

“How long will you need?”

“Seven days,” Dustin blurted. “I’ll uncover the truth within seven days!”

“Fine! I’ll give you seven days. If you can’t prove you’re innocent by then, be prepared to face the consequences!” Ronald declared.

“Sure!” Dustin agreed.

“Sir Reeds! What are you doing? This is the man who assassinated my father!” Autumn lost his cool.

“There’s something fishy going on. We need to get to the bottom of things. If he really is the murderer, I’ll kill him to avenge Sir Paul!” Ronald said sombrely.

“Sir Reeds, what if he escapes?” Autumn frowned.

“That’s right! How will we find him if he escapes?” Torben echoed.

“If I set my heart on killing someone, they won’t be able to escape death, no matter where they run to!” Ronald said coldly.

“There’s no need for such hassle.” Conrad stepped forward.

He said with a smile, “This here is a Septemortis. If you don’t take the antidote within seven days, you’ll surely die. You can have this.”

Then, with a flick of his finger, he sent a black pill flying toward Dustin. It landed squarely on his palm.

Septemortis was one of the ten deadliest poisons to ever exist. It was capable of poisoning even grandmasters!

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Chapter 824

“Septemortis?”

Everyone looked wary of the black pill.

It was an extremely poisonous substance. Once consumed, death was certain if one didn't have the antidote.

No one could resist the poison's effect, regardless of their cultivation. It was something that struck fear in everyone's hearts.

“Dustin! If your conscience is clear, then take the pill!” Spring shouted at him.

“That's right! If you don't take the pill to show you're innocent, we won't let you go!” the Hills clamored.

They weren't happy to let Dustin go. But now that they had the Septemortis, things were different. No matter what tricks Dustin had up his sleeves, he couldn't escape death unless he gave them a satisfactory explanation.

“Fine. I'll take it.” Dustin nodded and placed the pill in his mouth.

“Sir Rhys! No!” Nelson immediately stopped Dustin when he saw what he had done. “This is highly poisonous! You'll die!”

“If he doesn't take it, he'll die too!” Autumn yelled.

“Damn it! I'll fight it out with you!” Nelson roared.

“We'll fight it out!” The disciples from Kirin Gang drew their weapons, ready to fight till the end.

They couldn't stand to see their leader forced into taking poison.

“That's enough!” Dustin raised a hand, stopping them in their tracks.

He said calmly, “All this commotion is because of me. I'm willing to take the risk. I'll give everyone an explanation in seven days.”

Then, he swallowed the Septemortis.

“Alright. I’ll let you off today for Sir Reeds’ sake. But you better bear in mind that you have only seven days! Let’s go!”

Seeing that Dustin had swallowed the pill, Spring didn’t want to stay any longer. With a wave, he led the Hill family’s elite guards away.

“Uncle Spring, wouldn’t it be better to kill him now? Aren’t we being too generous to give him seven days?” Torben was still displeased.

He held a grudge against Dustin and wanted to see him dead.

“We don’t know how powerful he is. And those around him aren’t ordinary people, either. Unless Sir Reeds helps us out, I’m afraid we won’t get anything from going against that brat,” Spring explained.

Then, he added, “We might as well do Sir Reeds a favor now. After all, the rascal has taken the

poison He won’t live more than seven days.”

“Hmph! Then we’ll let him live his last seven days!” Torben said, gritting his teeth.

Though he wasn’t happy with the outcome, he had to admit that Dustin was very powerful. They’d suffer significant losses if they insisted on going against him.

“Sir Reeds, I’ll entrust the antidote to you.” Conrad flicked a white pill into Ronald’s hand.

Then, he said, “I have always respected Sir Hill. I am truly saddened by his passing. I trust you’ll handle things fairly and give the murderer the punishment he deserves!”

“This isn’t something you should be worrying about, Sir Melling. We’ll handle things at Balerno martial arts alliance our way,” Ronald said calmly.

He knew very well that Conrad was just gloating over their misfortune. He wasn’t in the mood to entertain him now.

“Since you already know what to do, I won’t comment further. I’ll take my leave now.” Conrad nodded at Ronald and left with his men.

He looked cheerful and full of energy.

Paul's death meant the Balerno martial arts alliance would lose significant support. And most importantly, Dustin, their up-and-coming genius, would soon fall too.

Those were two great pieces of news to the Glenstead martial arts alliance.

He decided to get himself several celebratory drinks once he returned.

"Dustin, I know that you're not the murderer. But I have no choice. If I didn't do what I did, they wouldn't back off. I hope you can understand where I'm coming from." Ronald's expression was complex.

"It's fine as long as you trust me," Dustin said respectfully.

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If Ronald hadn't calmed the crowd and bought Dustin some time to investigate, violence would've erupted. Things would be vastly different if that happened.

"Dustin, I can't help you openly. But if you ever run into any problems, you may come to me in private," Ronald told him sincerely.

"Thank you, Sir Reeds." Dustin was thankful.

"Now that things have come to this, you should watch your back." Ronald shook his head and sighed before walking away.

The crowd came quickly and left just as quickly.

Once they saw Dustin swallow the Septemortis, they knew he would die. It no longer mattered to them whether he was guilty.

"Sir Rhys, you were too rash to take the poison! Why would you risk your life like that?" Cornelius sighed heavily. He really couldn't understand why Dustin would take the pill.

“All the elites from Balerno and Glenstead martial arts alliance were gathered here. Even with all of you here, you won’t be able to stop them,” Dustin answered calmly.

“Even if we can’t defeat them, we can take a few down with us. I refuse to believe that all of them aren’t afraid of death!” Cornelius retorted defiantly!

“Alright. There’s no point discussing this anymore. Your main focus now should be to find the culprit as soon as possible!” Dustin said seriously.

“What about you, Sir Rhys?” Cornelius asked with his brow furrowed.

“I’ll be fine. Don’t worry about me. Go on.” Dustin waved his hand to dismiss them.

“Yes, sir!” Cornelius answered and led his men away.

“Sir Rhys, your nose is bleeding!” Nelson suddenly exclaimed.

“What?” Dustin touched his nose and saw blood on his fingers. “Damn it! The Septemortis is truly extraordinary! Who’d have thought that I would experience a reaction so soon?”

He was practically invincible. However, his body was unable to withstand the ten deadliest poisons.

The residual venom from the Deadly Slither before was enough to make him unconscious.

Now that he had taken an entire Septemortis pill, it weakened his immune system.

Most importantly, the Septemortis poison couldn’t be expelled by a person’s cultivation. There was absolutely nothing he could do as the toxin slowly entered his bloodstream. Once that happened, it would move on to attack his organs.

Though the process would take time, it was deadly. And the scariest thing was how complicated it was to clear out the poison completely.

Dustin had excellent medical skills. But his hands were tied if he didn’t have the relevant

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medications.

“Seems like we’ll have to get our hands on the culprit this time, no matter what,” Dustin mumbled to himself. He was starting to feel the pressure building up.

“Sir Rhys, are you alright? Do you need to go to the hospital?” Nelson asked.

It was concerning to see Dustin’s nose bleeding right after he had swallowed a poisonous pill.

“I’m fine. That wouldn’t be necessary.” Dustin shook his head. If he couldn’t get rid of the poison,

the hospital couldn’t either.

“Are you sure you’re alright? The bleeding isn’t stopping. In fact, it looks like you’re bleeding even more now,” Nelson asked anxiously.

“It’s just a nosebleed. It’s nothing serious.” Dustin smiled, trying to appear calm. “Besides, just a little poison won’t be enough to harm me.”

The moment he finished talking, the world before him turned black.

Dustin had collapsed.