

Chapter 1949

“Listen up! My husband’s coming over soon, so don’t you dare run!”

Upon hearing that, Gerald couldn’t help but reveal a cunning smile as he replied, “Oh, don’t worry! We won’t be going anywhere anytime soon! Let’s just hope you don’t end up getting ruined in the end!”

Of course, Zuri thought he was just talking big, so she paid him no attention.

With that said, Gerald then turned to look at Natallie before saying, “Go ahead and bring Earla to the washroom first.”

Nodding in response, Natallie then did as she was told.

Gerald himself simply returned to the bench from earlier and sat there to wait, fully confident that things would end in his favor.

Thinking about it, Gerald wondered if the duo would try to apologize to him once they realized who he truly was. If they did, he would simply tell them to beg him to let them off. Of course, even if they did, that wouldn’t actually change anything. After all, Zuri had her chance, and she busted it...

Fast forward to about forty minutes later, a suited man could be seen jogging toward Zuri... and it was obvious that it was Zachariah.

As he continued jogging, Zachariah couldn’t help but think about how much he truly loved his wife... After all, why else would he come rushing all the way over despite being quite far away when she called? He had even spent quite a bit on the ticket just to get here!

Regardless, once he stopped before her, he took in a deep breath before asking, "...Alright, I'm here... Where are those people...?"

Watching as his wife simply pointed at the trio—who had been sitting on the bench together—, Zachariah then squinted slightly in their direction... before going wide-eyed.

As Zachariah immediately began walking up to Gerald, Zuri followed closely behind him. She had been waiting for the longest time for him to arrive, and now that he was here, she was more than ready to teach those three a harsh lesson!

Unfortunately, everything was only going to go downhill from here, at least for her.

Either way, once he was close enough, Zachariah's jaw nearly dropped. So he hadn't seen wrong... it really was Gerald!

Realizing that he was now in boiling hot water, Zachariah could only stutter, "C-c-c-chairman Crawford...!"

To think that his wife had managed to offend the chairman of the Yonjour Group!

"Oh? So you recognize me, Chairman Kershaw! Regardless, how are you?" asked Gerald in a playful tone.

"A-as if I'd ever be unable to recognize you, Chairman Crawford...!" replied Zachariah, his tone brimming with respect.

Zachariah had long known about Gerald through financial seminars and auctions that he had previously attended. Even so, he never had the chance to contact him until today...

"I see. Well, even if you do know me, Chairman Kershaw, your wife apparently doesn't..." said Gerald...

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Chapter 1950

Upon hearing that, Zachariah immediately caught on that Gerald was indirectly saying that he hadn't educated his wife well.

With that in mind, he turned to glare at Zuri before yelling, "You stupid woman...! Hurry over and apologize to Chairman Crawford!"

Upon hearing that, Zuri's heart skipped a beat. After all, it hadn't crossed her mind that the one she had picked a fight with was none other than the chairman of the Yonjour Group...!

Realizing that she had really done it this time, Zuri's arrogance instantly drained as she meekly whimpered in a respectful tone, "I-I apologize, Chairman Crawford...! It was truly blind of me to not recognize who you were...! Please forgive me...!"

Of course, Gerald wasn't about to accept her apology.

In fact, he didn't even look at her, completely ignoring the ignorant woman as he said, "Whatever the case is, the damage has been done and consequences are required. However, since you seem a bit more sensible than that buffoon, I'll give you two choices to deal with this little mishap of ours. Firstly, if you really wish to protect your Zachariah Group, I want you to divorce her. If you choose the second option and refuse to dump her, however, I'll just acquire the Zachariah Group and you know I always get what I want. In case you didn't know, she slapped my nephew earlier, which is why I'm so adamant about doing this."

Truth be told, neither of the choices sounded appealing to him. Even so, Zachariah knew he had to pick one in the end. After all, he of all people knew how powerful Gerald was.

If Gerald obtained his company, then it would truly be all over for him. However, he could avoid that by making a small sacrifice...

Watching in utter horror as her husband turned to look at her, Zuri immediately began begging, "H-hubby...! P-please...! Please don't divorce me...! I-I know now that I've done wrong...! Please don't...!"

Before Zachariah could even say a thing, Zuri then turned to look at Gerald before adding, "I-I've seen the errors in my ways, Chairman Crawford...! So please be the bigger man and forgive me...! I really didn't know better...!"

Despite all her pleading, Gerald simply turned to look away. He wasn't one to tolerate people like Zuri. Since she was an adult, she had to pay for her actions. To Gerald, she was simply getting what she deserved.

Either way, after a short pause, Zachariah eventually made his decision and sighed before saying, "...I understand, Mr. Crawford..."

Turning to face Zuri, Zachariah then added, "...From today onward, I, Zachariah Kershaw, terminate my conjugal relationship with you, Zuri! I'll be telling my lawyer to prepare the divorce papers in a bit."

Hearing that, Zuri was so stupefied that she couldn't even register what she had just heard for a while. It was almost as though she had just been fatally struck by lightning...

Zachariah himself knew that he was only doing this because he had no other choice. After all, he was the one who had established the Zachariah Group from the group up. He couldn't just let his group get acquired by Gerald!

Then again, it wasn't as though Zuri was worth fighting for. Ever since they got married, all she would do was ask for money from him and create trouble. After having to step forward so many times to resolve all of her problematic issues, Zachariah felt that this was the last straw.

Truth be told, Zachariah felt thankful that Gerald stepped in. After all, it had given him the courage to finally file a divorce with Zuri.

"Oh? Please make sure you do that, then!" replied Gerald with a satisfied nod.

Nodding in response, Zachariah then turned to leave, no longer bothering about Zuri...

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Chapter 1951

Seeing that, Zuri immediately began running after Zachariah. While it was true that Zachariah wasn't as rich or powerful as Gerald was, he could at least still give her a wealthy and comfortable life, and she was content with just that.

If he really was dumping her, however, then even all that would be taken away...! She couldn't just let that happen...!

Watching as Zuri continued running after Zachariah, Gerald could only shake his head. What a truly pitiful person...

Regardless of how much wealth and prestige one possessed, as long as one didn't have manners, they'd surely be looked down upon by others...

Gerald himself made sure to always practice what he preached. When dealing with others, he made sure to remain calm and refrained from scheming, at least against those who did honest work. In fact, it was honestly his good mannerisms—when it came to managing the Yonjour Group—that earned him the respect and admiration from many others.

To Gerald, this was the reason why some people were more successful than others...

Whatever the case was, with that event done, the three of them then continued taking a short rest before they resumed having fun in the amusement park.

Thankfully, Earla—who was still a child—easily forgot about those bad incidents since there was so much fun to be had...

It was evening when the trio finally decided to leave...

By that point, Earla—who had grown exhausted after enjoying herself so much—had become so sleepy that she ended up falling asleep in Natallie’s embrace.

Seeing that, Natallie couldn’t help but smile as she whispered, “It appears that Earla had a really good time today, Chairman Crawford...!”

Nodding with a smile, Gerald then said, “Indeed... It’s been quite a while since I’ve last seen Earla this happy...”

True enough, though Earla would always smile and exclaim whenever she met him, today was the first time he saw her laughing this joyously. In other words, Gerald was finally able to see a worry-free Earla today...

“Speaking of which, I have to thank you for bringing me along, Chairman Crawford! To be quite frank, I haven’t had this much fun in ages as well!” replied Natallie.

“Truth be told, I’ve been treating you as family for quite a while now, Natallie. After all, you’ve been by my side this entire time. Without you, I may not even be where I currently am today!” explained Gerald in a sincere tone as he looked at her.

Hearing that, Natallie found his statement so sweet that it almost felt like she had just consumed a jar of honey. The fact that she was this important to Gerald simply made her feel incredibly moved...

While it was true that she harbored feelings for him, she preferred to not say it out. After all, she was happy enough just being able to be by his side...

Regardless, after driving back to the villa, Gerald told Natallie to go ahead and bring Earla back to her room to get some proper rest.

Gerald himself drove off again to Raine's place, hoping to see how Yollande's recovery was going. He also wanted to see if there was anything he could help with.

Quite honestly, Gerald's place wasn't all that far from Raine's villa, which explained why it had only taken him about ten minutes to get to her place.

Seconds after he parked his car, he heard Raine's familiar voice calling out, "Senior!"

Turning to face the source of the voice, Gerald saw that Raine was looking at him from the villa's main entrance.

Surprised to see her there, Gerald then got out and walked toward her before asking, "Raine? What are you standing at the door for?"

Smiling subtly, she then replied, "Oh, I was just throwing the rubbish out! Coincidentally, I saw your car driving by so I waited here!"

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Nodding in response, Gerald then entered the villa together with Raine...

Upon entering, Raine immediately called out, "Mom? Dad? Gerald's here!"

Hearing that, Dexter—who had been sitting on the living room couch together with Yollande—immediately got to his feet before exclaiming, “Oh? What a surprise to see you here, Gerald!”

“Indeed!” added Yollande who turned to face the youth, a wide smile on her face.

Pleased to see how lively they were, Gerald then smiled in response before replying, “Just thought I’d hop by to say hello. So... Gotten used to living here yet?”

“But of course! It’d be impossible for us not to have when you’ve given us such a magnificent villa! You were even considerate enough to stop by just to say hello!” said Yollande, having nothing but praise for the youth.

After all, he was the one who had given their family what they needed most at their lowest. This was the only way they knew how to thank him...

“I’m glad to hear that! Speaking of which, how is your recovery going, madam?” asked Gerald.

“It’s going speedily! I can now get out of bed and walk on my own again!” replied Yollande, instantly causing Gerald to breathe a sigh of relief.

When he turned back to look at Dexter, however, Gerald couldn’t help but notice that Dexter seemed to be thinking about something...

“...Is something weighing your mind, sir...? You don’t look too good... Perhaps you’ve bumped into some kinds of difficulties...? If you have, don’t hesitate to tell me about them. I’ll definitely do my best to help!” said Gerald.

Hearing that, Yollande instantly added, "Dexter, just tell him about it. After all, he's certainly no outsider! Who knows, maybe he could help you!"

Upon hearing that, Dexter couldn't help but feel slightly embarrassed. It looked like he really didn't know how to properly approach the subject...

Seeing how difficult it was for her father to find the right words, Raine stepped in and explained, "Well, the thing is, my dad had to resign from his old job since we moved quite far away from his workplace. He's currently having trouble finding employment, senior!"

And here Gerald thought that it was a major problem. As it turned out, it was simply something this trivial!

Shaking his head, Gerald then asked, "...If you don't mind, what kinds of jobs are you looking for, sir?"

After thinking for a bit, Dexter replied, "Well... I don't really have the academic qualifications for more technical jobs, but I'm willing to bear hardships and work hard! I don't even mind working as a coolie!"

As Dexter had said, he barely had any relevant education or skills for the more high-paying jobs. With that in mind, he knew that his strength was the only way he was going to be able to continue taking care of his family. He really didn't mind doing lower-paying jobs as long as he could earn a living...

Hearing that, Gerald thought about it for a moment before saying, "I see... You know, I have a job vacancy at my place... I wonder if you'd be interested in working with me...?"

Upon hearing that, Dexter's eyes instantly widened with hope. Even Yollande and Raine appeared overjoyed as Dexter immediately exclaimed, "O-of course I'd be willing to work with you! I'm willing to do anything as long as I get the job!"

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Chapter 1953

Hearing that, Gerald chuckled before explaining, "Don't worry, you won't be doing anything particularly exhausting, sir! All I ask for is that you do some things that require management. The salary itself is a thousand and five hundred dollars per month. How about it?"

"A-a thousand and five hundred dollars?! What high pay! A-are you serious about that, Gerald...?" exclaimed Yollande before Dexter could even say a word.

After all, where else would they be able to find such a high-paying job with Dexter's qualifications?

"But of course, I am! Besides, since you're looking for a job and I'm looking for someone to fill the role anyway, why not just work with me?" said Gerald.

In truth, Gerald wasn't really in need of someone to fill that position. He had only made it up just for the sake of giving Dexter a hand.

"W-well... If you think I'm capable enough, then yes! Please, take me in!" replied Dexter, not wanting to miss the chance to earn a monthly payment of over a thousand dollars...

"I'm glad to hear it! You can come report to the Yonjour Group tomorrow then, sir! I'll get someone to

help you manage the enrollment procedures. Don't worry, I'll make sure to have some people around to show you the ropes!" said Gerald.

"Got it!" replied Dexter extremely enthusiastically as Raine and Yollande squealed in excitement.

After calming down a bit, Yollande turned to look at Gerald before sincerely saying, "T-thank you so much for everything, Gerald...! Not only did you save our lives, but you're even giving my husband such a high-paying job...! We really have troubled you a lot..."

Smiling in response, Gerald simply said, "Now, now, madam, there's no need to be so courteous. This is nothing to me, and again, I just so happened to need an employee for the job!"

Though the trio felt that they now owed the world to Gerald, Gerald himself honestly didn't think that he was doing much. To be quite frank, he was simply happy that he was able to help others, and their joy was all he asked for in return...

Regardless, it was a short while later when Dexter supported Yollande up to their bedroom to get her some rest.

Gerald and Raine themselves remained seated on the living room couch.

To remove the awkward silence between them, Gerald cleared his throat before saying, "Speaking of which, I haven't had my dinner yet. Since I'm already here, would you like to join me for a meal?"

"Of course!" replied Raine without the slightest hesitation.

With that decided, the duo then got into Gerald's car before driving off...

It was honestly a rather awkward drive since neither of them said a thing throughout their journey. Thankfully, the duo soon arrived at the Schywater Night Market.

The market itself was famous for being a 'snack street' since there were so many food stalls there serving all kinds of dishes. With that in mind, the place was usually extremely lively, even after ten at night!

Those who went there were usually office workers who wanted to have fun and entertain themselves after work. Gerald himself had frequented the market in the past due to all the good food there.

However, ever since he was given a higher-ranking identity, he slowly began frequenting high-end bars and clubs instead.

With that in mind, it had been quite a while since he last came here, and he felt compelled to pay it a visit again just to reminisce while having dinner...

Either way, now that they were there, Gerald quickly led Raine to one of the stalls to have their meal.

Upon sitting down, however, Gerald couldn't help but feel that the entire night market had undergone a rather drastic change. Had he really not come here for that long...?

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Chapter 1954

Whatever the case was, the stall Gerald and Raine had chosen to eat at was established by an old couple.

After sitting down, Gerald immediately called out, "Boss!"

Upon hearing that, an old woman quickly walked over to their table, handing both of them menus as she said, "Well, hello there! Come have a look at what you'd like to have!"

Hearing that, the duo began scanning through their menus...

Truth be told, this was Raine's first time eating at a night market. With that in mind, she was rightfully overwhelmed by the immense amount of options the menu had to offer.

Gerald, on the other hand, had been a regular when it came to ordering night market food. Due to that, it didn't take all that long for him to raise his hand before saying, "Boss! I'd like to have twenty mutton kebabs, a plate of fried noodles, one roasted fish, a plate of chicken wings..."

By the time Gerald's list was done, Raine could only stare wide-eyed at him. What a lot of food...!

Turning to look at her, Gerald then asked, "What about you, Raine? Don't worry about the costs, just order whatever you like!"

Shaking her head in response, Raine simply smiled faintly as she replied, "Well... You've already ordered quite a bit, senior... Why don't we finish that first?"

Hearing that, Gerald simply nodded before saying, "Alright, that will be all for now, boss! If we need any more food, we'll tell you!"

“Got it! The food will be served in a while!” replied the old woman with a smile before quickly making her way back to her stall.

To be honest, even though the other stalls appeared to have quite a number of customers, this particular stall was barren aside from Gerald and Raine’s table. With that in mind, it was no wonder why the old couple looked so happy to serve them. After all, they were providing them with business.

Regardless, while waiting for the food, Raine noticed something which prompted her to immediately whisper, “Hey, senior! Look there! I think the one roasting the kebabs is the old woman’s daughter!”

Upon hearing that, Gerald turned to look at where Raine was staring... and true enough, the woman roasting the kebabs—who looked to be around the same age as Raine—seemed to be their daughter.

“To think that she’s already earning money at such a young age,” muttered Raine with a sigh, now feeling that she had it much better compared to her...

Whatever the case was, it was about twenty minutes later when all the dishes were served.

Since the old lady was here anyway, Gerald took the chance to ask, “That your daughter, boss?”

Chuckling in response, the old woman then replied, “She is, actually! My husband and I were around thirty when we conceived her, and we’re just thankful that she’s so responsible and diligent. You know, even though she studies hard, she still makes it a point to come help us after school! We really appreciate it since we’re too old to get things done fast enough...”

Realizing that she had said a bit too much, the old woman then smiled before adding, “...Anyway, do

enjoy your meal! I'll be attending to other things first, but if you need me, don't hesitate to call!"

Watching as the old woman then returned to her stall, the duo shrugged before starting to dig in...

Since Gerald hadn't eaten kebabs in ages, being able to eat them now brought back several joyous memories... What bliss...

However, his moment of peace was cut short when a loud 'crash' suddenly filled the air, followed by someone yelling "Beat it"!

Following that, even more smashing sounds could be heard! What kind of chaos was brewing...?

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Chapter 1955

Turning to face the source of the noise, Gerald and Raine were immediately greeted by the sight of two groups of people—wielding various kinds of weapons—intimidatingly marching toward each other. It was evident that they were about to engage in a group fight...!

Upon seeing how bad the situation was, the stall owners and customers immediately began packing up to flee, not wanting to get dragged into their fight.

Even the old couple and their daughter were panicking, and they were already halfway through packing their stall up by the time Gerald and Raine turned back to look at them.

Raising a slight brow, Gerald was prompted to ask, “Who are those people, boss?”

Hearing that, the old woman hastily replied, “They’re this area’s gangsters, and once they start fighting, they don’t care about anyone else’s lives! Just so you know, some people got dragged into their mess the last time something like this happened, so you’d better run while you can! Keep the money and consider it to be our treat!”

Naturally, Gerald was surprised to hear that. To think that these gangsters would actually duke it out in such a public area!

Regardless, though the family of three were able to finish packing and were already leaving with their cart, they had barely been able to take a few steps when the hooligans began fighting!

As the old lady had said, these people really didn’t seem to care about the wellbeing of others once they started fighting. After all, they were extremely fierce and fought like there was no tomorrow...

With ‘crashing’ and ‘clanging’ all over the place, it truly was a chaotic sight to behold...

All of a sudden, Gerald and Raine watched as a hulking and intimidating-looking bald man—who seemed to be one of the group leaders—ran over to the old couple’s stall and grabbed a ladle before rushing back to face the opposing group!

Of course, the family of three did nothing to stop him. After all, they were frightened stiff!

At that moment, something incredibly fast bolted past everyone’s view... and a split second later, the

bald man gave out a pained cry!

Upon closer inspection, his arm seemed to have been jabbed by a toothpick of all things!

With blood starting to gush out from the wound, everyone could only stare, stupefied.

While they now knew what the weapon had been, nobody knew who had tossed the toothpick.

Just as they were wondering about that, Gerald stood up before casually yelling, “Hey, now! If you b*stards want to fight so much, why not find someplace a little more vacant? Choosing such a public place to have a group fight... What’ll happen if you harm others? Huh?”

Upon hearing that, the bald man and his gang members instantly fixed their gazes onto Gerald. To think that this person would actually dare to confront them at a time like this!

Even those from the opposing faction were now looking over, both groups momentarily too stupefied to resume their fight...

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Chapter 1956

Hell, the gangsters weren’t even the only ones shocked. The spectators all had their jaws dropped as

well!

Was Gerald that keen on dying? Why was he meddling in their fight for no good reason?!

While even Raine was shocked silent, she couldn't help but feel that Gerald truly was a good person. After all, everyone else had treated the scene indifferently, none of them daring to even take a step forward to stop those hooligans...

Then again, they couldn't really be blamed. After all, that bald man and the other gangsters were extremely dangerous and intimidating. Nobody wanted to get into their bad books...

Whatever the case was, Gerald wasn't the least afraid of them. After all, they were nothing but ants to him.

Besides, Gerald enjoyed helping others, so who better than him to be a white knight in such a situation?

What more, he wanted to use this opportunity to help out that nice family of three who had even exempted him from his bill. He simply considered this to be his own way of thanking them.

Regardless, before the bald man could even say a word, a youth sporting a ducktail hairstyle walked forward and pointed at Gerald as he retorted, "Hey now, who the hell even are you to meddle in our business?!"

Following that, the youth continued walking closer to Gerald. However, before the boy could even touch him, Gerald had already grabbed onto his finger...

And with a sickening 'snap' it became clear as day what had just happened.

Instantly bending over, the youth quickly scrunched his face, not wanting to scream in agony. After all, having one's finger broken off like that definitely brought unbearable pain...!

Before the youth could even get back up, Gerald simply kicked him right in the stomach, sending him flying...!

Staring wide-eyed at the boy who couldn't even crawl back up due to all the pain he was in, the bald man immediately roared, "Get him!"

Hearing that, all his subordinates immediately began bolting toward Gerald!

Of course, Gerald remained cool as a cucumber as they got dangerously close... And in less than a minute, none of the subordinates were left standing...

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Chapter 1957

Staring wide-eyed, the bald man was left completely stupefied when he saw the terrible state all his men were in. Many of them appeared to have broken limbs, and with how agonizing their cries were, it was evident that none of them were going to be able to continue fighting...

Gerald himself simply began walking up to the bald man whose legs were already trembling in fear. If it wasn't clear enough already, Gerald saw no need to be merciful to such people.

Gulping as though the god of death was swiftly approaching him, the bald man began walking backward as he stuttered, “W-what are you planning to do?!”

Hearing that, Gerald simply smiled sinisterly as he disdainfully replied, “Does it matter? Also, are you retreating? What happened to all that courage from before?”

After witnessing Gerald’s terrifying martial arts skills, as if that bald man would still dare to act all arrogant! There was no way he was ever going to be able to win a fight against Gerald! Even so, he knew for a fact that it was now too late for him to retreat!

Just as the bald man was wondering if there truly was no hope of escaping, he suddenly felt an acute pain on his cheek... and the next thing he knew, he was already in agonizing pain as his face kissed the dirt!

With how hard Gerald’s slap had been, several of his teeth had scattered all over the ground and blood was now dripping from his deformed mouth...

Trembling as he looked at Gerald, the bald man immediately began begging, “P-please, sir... Please leave me be...! I know what I did was wrong now...! I won’t ever dare to do such things again...!”

“Oh? So you do know how to beg for mercy!” scoffed Gerald in a frigid tone.

Still, Gerald wasn’t swayed in the slightest. A person like him didn’t deserve to be sympathized on!

“S-sir, I mean it...! I won’t dare to do such things ever again-”

Before the bald man could even finish his sentence, Gerald cut him short by landing a hard kick right on his stomach!

Once the bald man landed quite a distance away, Gerald took the chance to sneer, "If you dare gather like this just to engage in group fights again, I'll make sure I beat all of you up once more! In fact, I'll teach you a lesson every time I hear someone complain about you bullying random civilians or taking their things, regardless of whether it was by accident or not! You hear me?!"

Immediately crawling to their feet and nodding in response, the bald man and his subordinates immediately nodded before limping away. Even the other group of gangsters fled the second they could! What contemptuous individuals...

Regardless, now that they were gone, a loud round of applause could instantly be heard. Naturally, the people were clapping for Gerald for being such an impressive individual.

Gerald himself simply waved his hands humbly before returning to the family of three.

Smiling as he looked at the old woman, Gerald then said, "Don't worry, it's fine now. They won't ever dare to return here anymore!"

"T-thank you so much...!" cried out the old woman in a gratuitous tone...

Had Gerald not stepped in earlier, who knows what would've become of their stall or family? With that in mind, all three of them saw Gerald as their benefactor, and they were so grateful to him that they had to actively fight the urge to kneel before the youth!

Simply chuckling in response, Gerald then replied, “You’re very welcome! Speaking of which, we’re not quite full yet, so please roast more food for us!”

Upon hearing that, the woman was momentarily stunned though she quickly recovered and nodded before saying, “O-of course! You can eat whatever you want today! Everything’s on the house, just for you two!”

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With that said, Gerald then returned to his seat as the old couple and their daughter began setting up their stall again.

The second Gerald sat down, Raine immediately said in sincere admiration, “You were so awesome earlier, senior!”

Raine, for one, felt that not many could beat up so many people alone and in such a short amount of time, no less.

Laughing in response, Gerald simply replied in a humble tone, “That was nothing. Those hooligans were just too weak!”

Of course, Raine knew he was just being modest. After all, those gangsters were definitely far from weak. Even so, they were unable to even lift a finger against Gerald! Then again, it wasn’t all that surprising. After all, even Yash—a Taekwondo expert—had been unable to take on Gerald!

Regardless, it was about ten minutes later when the old woman served a massive plate of food before

Gerald and Raine...

Smiling as she looked at the duo, the old woman then said, "Order up! Freshly roasted, just for the two of you! Again, if this isn't enough, just give me a call and I'll roast up another plate for you!"

"We'll keep that in mind! Thank you, boss!" replied both Gerald and Raine at the same time.

"Oh please, we should be the ones thanking you! After all, we could've gotten into serious trouble had you not stepped in earlier!" said the old woman as she waved her hand slightly before leaving Gerald and Raine to give them room to enjoy their food...

As time went on, the duo realized that more and more people seemed to come over to have their meals in the old couples' stall. It seemed that the incident truly was a positive turning point in the couples' business luck.

Either way, it was around eleven that night when Gerald and Raine finally finished their meals.

With that, Gerald walked up to the old woman before asking, "How much was all that, boss?"

"...Huh? I told you, it's on the house! After all, you helped us so much tonight! There's simply no way I could take your money!" replied the old woman.

Even so, there was no way she was ever going to be able to persuade Gerald against it. After all, Gerald knew for a fact that the family of three didn't have it easy. What more, he and Raine had eaten quite a bit tonight, and the ingredient costs probably weren't cheap. With that in mind, he was going to pay her no matter what!

“Boss, I know how hard it is for you to make a living, so please accept the money! Otherwise, I’m afraid I wouldn’t dare return here to eat next time!” said Gerald as he fished out several ten-dollar bills from his wallet and gently pushed them into her hands.

“He’s right, boss! Just accept the money!” added Raine—who was now standing beside Gerald—, understanding Gerald’s intent.

Hearing that, the woman could only sigh in defeat as she took the money before saying, “...Alright, I’ll take it! Come by anytime and I’ll give both of you discounts!”

Nodding in response, both of them then replied, “But of course we will!”

Smiling happily at their response, the old woman then watched as Gerald and Raine finally left the area...

As she was about to get back to work, the old woman couldn’t help but notice that her daughter’s eyes were affixed in the direction of the leaving duo.

Knowing that lovestruck gaze anywhere, the old woman was prompted to say, “...Don’t tell me you have a crush on him, Yusra...”

Her daughter’s name was Yusra Zablocki, and she was in her third year of high school.

Whatever the case was, when she heard her mother say that, the charming Yusra couldn’t help but blush...

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“What on earth are you on about, mom...?” muttered Yusra shyly.

As if her mother would buy her bluff! Shaking her head, the woman then looked at her daughter before saying, “I’m sure I don’t have to remind you that your main focus now should be your studies... Even so, I’m not really against you having relationships with others as long as your partner is nice to you...”

Upon hearing that, Yusra simply nodded. She, for one, was well aware that she already had a crush on Gerald. After all, contrary to all the other men she had previously met, Gerald simply oozed a strong sense of security that put her heart at ease...

Honestly, if the chance presented itself, Yusra truly hoped that she would get to meet Gerald again. She’d be pleased just to be able to talk with him one to one...

‘I wonder if such a chance would actually present itself though...’ Yusra thought to herself...

Moving back to Gerald, after sending Raine back to her villa, he returned to his own.

Since it was already rather late, both Natallie and Earla had already hit the hay. With that in mind, Gerald grabbed a bottle of wine and sat in the living room alone, sipping red wine late into the peace of night...

Despite being the last to head to bed, Gerald was first to wake.

After sending Earla to school, Gerald then began heading off to his group together with Natallie.

As he was driving, Natallie reported, "Chairman Crawford, Chairman Kershaw from the Zachariah Group will apparently be coming over to our group today. Would you like to meet him?"

"The Zachariah Group?" asked Gerald as he raised a slight brow.

"Indeed. He called me stating that he wished to personally apologize to you," explained Natallie.

Hearing that, Gerald recalled the incidents of the previous day... He clearly remembered how Zuri had decided to mess with them at the amusement park, eventually leading to her getting divorced with Zachariah...

Whatever the case was, since Zachariah wanted to apologize to him in person, Gerald figured that it was because he really wanted to keep his group under his name.

With all that in mind, Gerald paused for a moment before eventually saying, "...Well, since he's sincere enough to come over to apologize, sure! I'll meet him!"

Gerald wasn't exactly an inconsiderate person. After all, he knew for a fact that the event yesterday had pretty much nothing to do with him. Zacharia's wife had been the true troublemaker. Understanding that, Gerald wasn't about to make things overly difficult for the man...

Regardless, it was about half an hour later when the duo finally arrived at the Yonjour Group building...

Before entering the building, they were both greeted by the sight of a black car that had been parked close to the building's entrance. Of course, the car belonged to none other than Zachariah...

Upon realizing that Gerald and Natallie were here, Zachariah immediately got out of his car before

respectfully greeting, “Chairman Crawford...!”

Smiling as he looked at the man, Gerald then replied in a playful tone, “So we meet again, Chairman Kershaw!”

Hearing that, Zachariah couldn’t help but blush slightly in embarrassment. After all, Zuri had brought nothing but shame to him due to her actions... Thank god he finally divorced her... He had made sure to do it immediately as well. After all, he wouldn’t dare prolong the divorce after promising Gerald—of all people—to do so.

Shaking his head, Zachariah then looked at Gerald with determined eyes as he said, “I truly apologize for yesterday, Chairman Crawford! Just so you know, I’ve divorced Zuri, just as you told me to!”

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Smiling subtly in response, Gerald then said, “Let’s have a chat upstairs...”

Watching as Gerald began walking forward, Zachariah and Natallie quickly followed his lead...

After heading upstairs, the trio soon found themselves in Gerald’s office...

Upon entering, Gerald signaled for Zakariah to take a seat as he said, “Do have a seat first, Chairman Kershaw. Natallie, please serve our guest some tea!”

“Copy that, Chairman Crawford!” replied Natallie with a nod before leaving the room...

Now that they were alone, Gerald cleared his throat before saying, “First of, there’s no need to apologize, Chairman Kershaw. After all, yesterday’s incident had nothing to do with you.”

Hearing that, Zachariah was momentarily stunned. After all, he had no idea what had prompted Gerald to say that.

Starting to panic, Zakariah then said, “C-chairman Crawford... What do you-”

Seeing how panicked the man was, Gerald couldn’t help but laugh, cutting Zachariah’s sentence short.

Looking at the terrified man, Gerald then replied with a smile, “There’s no need to be so nervous, Chairman Kershaw. There’s no hidden meaning behind my words...”

Once he heard that, Zachariah found himself breathing much easier.

Gerald himself could now tell just how much Zachariah feared the thought of his group getting acquired by the Yonjour Group.

Truth be told, Gerald wasn’t even interested in acquiring Zachariah’s group. After all, though the Zachariah Group was incomparable with the Yonjour Group, it was still one of the best leading groups in Schywater City. What more, that group also made several contributions to charity, which gave Gerald even less reason to buy the group off Zachariah.

With that in mind, instead of talking about yesterday’s incident—which wasn’t even Zachariah’s fault—, Gerald wanted to talk about something else.

“Now then, since you’ve calmed down, do hear out my proposal, Chairman Kershaw... I understand that you’re an excellent entrepreneur. After all, you established your group from the ground up! With that in mind, I hope that your group will be willing to cooperate with mine,” explained Gerald who had honestly been thinking about this the second Zuri mentioned Zachariah’s name the day before.

Regardless, upon hearing that, Zachariah instantly expressed a clear look of incredulity! After all, he could’ve never imagined that Gerald would actually ask him to cooperate with the Yonjour Group instead of simply obtaining the Zachariah Group. As it turned out, he really had been overthinking!

Still, that didn’t make him feel any less surprised. With that in mind, Zachariah gulped before asking, “D-do you really mean it, Chairman Crawford...? Are you truly willing to cooperate with my group...?”

“As if I’d joke about something like this!” replied Gerald as he nodded with a smile.

“W-what wonderful news, Chairman Crawford...! I’ve always wanted to cooperate with you!” exclaimed the increasingly excited Zachariah.

For Gerald to actually initiate a talk about cooperating with his group... This was certainly something to be proud of!

“Glad to hear that! Regardless, may I know what aspect your group mainly deals with now?” asked Gerald.

“Ah, well, my group mainly deals with construction—both local and regional—and we’re also involved in the real estate scene!” replied Zachariah who was already thinking about the future of his group.

Being able to cooperate with Gerald's group was definitely going to be his best chance of developing the Zachariah Group.

"I see... What's the biggest project you currently have, Chairman Kershaw?" asked Gerald after nodding.

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Since they were going to collaborate, Gerald was definitely going after the biggest project. After all, what was the point if he didn't?

Hearing that, Zachariah then replied, "You're in luck, Chairman Crawford. I currently have a very good project regarding the development and construction around Schywater City's sea area."

Finding what Zachariah said interesting, Gerald then asked, "Could you perhaps be talking about the development of the commercial area around the city's sea area?"

Nodding in response, Zachariah smiled before replying, "That's the one. I see you've heard about the project, Chairman Crawford!"

"I won't deny that I've been keeping an eye on that place. Hmm... Why don't we do it this way, Chairman Kershaw? For that particular area, I'm planning to have my group participate by occupying a great share and carrying out the construction with your group. With that said, I think it's only fair that all the conditions and designs related to the construction should be handled by the Yonjour Group. What do you think?" asked Gerald after a slight pause.

Though he was momentarily startled to hear that, after snapping out of it, Zachariah immediately said, "Not a problem, Chairman Crawford. I already find it a great honor that you're willing to cooperate with me in the first place! Regardless, I'll be leaving everything to the Yonjour Group then!"

After recovering from his genuine shock earlier, Zachariah—for one—knew better than to negotiate any further with Gerald. After all, it would be bad if he somehow got on Gerald's bad side and ended up losing the chance to cooperate.

In the world of business, knowing how and when to act was crucial. If one didn't grab the opportunity when it appeared, failure would be the only option left...

It was at that moment when Natallie entered the room with Zacharia's tea.

Upon seeing her, Gerald immediately ordered, "Ah, there you are, Natallie. Go draft up a contract for a collaboration and show it to me later."

"Got it, Chairman Crawford," replied Natallie before leaving the room.

Once she was gone, Zachariah couldn't help but ask, "You seem particularly interested in that area, Chairman Crawford... How exactly are you planning to build it?"

The commercial area around Schywater City's sea area was a large and completely new area that was currently under construction. With the area's size in mind, it made many question how to even go about building the area up.

In fact, though it was the Zachariah Group's project, even Zachariah had been wondering how to properly navigate through the project. To think that after being vexed out of his mind—about the project—for so long, Gerald would suddenly come up with the idea of collaborating on that specific project! It truly was something to celebrate about...

After all, the funds needed for the project alone cost nearly a whopping one billion and five hundred million dollars! Even with how rich the Zachariah Group was, it was near impossible for them to take on such a large project alone. Truth be told, Zachariah had already been thinking of collaborating with several other groups—during the later stages—to have the percentage allotment.

Now that the Yonjour Group was stepping in, however, Zachariah knew that their two groups would be more than enough to take on the project. Better yet, it also meant that the project would be exclusively owned by only the Yonjour and Zachariah Groups!

As for Gerald, a billion and five hundred million dollars was nothing to him...

Regardless, it was a little over an hour later when Natallie returned with a contract.

Handing it to Gerald, she then said, "I've drafted up the contract, Chairman Crawford. Do have a look at it."

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"Thank you, Natallie," replied Gerald in an appreciative tone as Natallie smiled back before leaving.

Following that, Gerald began looking through the contract... and once he was done, he handed it to Zachariah.

"Do have a look at the contract, Chairman Kershaw, and tell me if there's anything you find dissatisfactory. I'm open to further conditions or requests as well, if you have any. Since we're collaborating, this project should benefit both our groups," said Gerald in a calm manner.

Gerald, for one, knew that in order for the collaboration to work, he needed to show his sincerity and respect to Zachariah instead of simply putting up an aggressive front. After all, at the end of the day, Zachariah wasn't exactly a small fry. He was a chairman as well, and that earned him the right to have Gerald treat him with respect.

Either way, after carefully reading through the contract, Zachariah nodded before replying, "I see no problem with the contract, Chairman Crawford!"

"I see. Then let's get it signed then!" said Gerald with a nod as both of them got their pens and signed their names on it...

With that done, their collaboration was now official.

Respectfully reaching his hand out for a handshake, Zachariah then declared, "I hope for a great collaboration between us, Chairman Crawford!"

Shaking Zachariah's hand, Gerald politely replied, "But of course! Well said, Chairman Kershaw!"

"Well then... If there isn't anything else, I'll be taking my leave first, Chairman Crawford. If you face any problems, feel free to contact me anytime!" said Zachariah as he got up to leave.

Once he was gone, Natallie walked in before asking in slight bewilderment, "Chairman Crawford... I may be stepping a little out of line, but what made you take the initiative to cooperate with the Zachariah Group...?"

After all, for Natallie, the Yonjour Group could easily have taken on the project without the Zachariah Group's help. Due to the collaboration, they now had to share the profits with the Zachariah Group, which was why Natallie found Gerald's actions to be so confusing.

"You're probably thinking why we have to share the profits with the Zachariah Group instead of just taking the project for ourselves, right?" replied Gerald, reading Natallie like an open book.

Watching as Natallie then nodded, Gerald revealed a subtle smile before saying, "Let's just say I did it to gain an ally. After all, if we keep making enemies, it'll be sure to backfire against us someday... Besides, Zuri was the one who had caused us all that trouble yesterday, not Zachariah."

"You could say that I'm returning good for evil. Through this collaboration, I'll be able to win him over, allowing him to cooperate with us in a sincere way. In the long term, that benefit will surely stick. While we could surely benefit immediately by taking the project all for ourselves, doing so will only cause us to lose a lot more things in the long run."

After hearing Gerald's explanation, Natallie simply nodded in response...

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Shortly after, Natallie then walked out of the office, leaving Gerald all alone in there...

Looking up, Gerald couldn't help but smile faintly, thinking about how much faster his properties were going to develop now. Before long, everything was going to belong to him... Once that happened, he would establish a new business empire for the Crawford Family, and that was his current major goal...

Ever since his family fell into decline, everything that his family used to own ceased to exist. Due to that, Gerald wanted to reclaim everything that had once belonged to his family...

Fast forward to nighttime, Gerald could be seen entering his study in his villa...

Taking a dust-covered box off a high shelf, Gerald couldn't help but stare at it for a while.

He had brought the box back from his family's old home, and it had remained unopened till this very day. As for why he brought it here, he simply wanted to keep it safe. After all, nobody else knew that the box was here since Gerald had been particularly secretive with it.

Regardless, the box contained items belonging to his 'grandfather', and he figured that he had put off opening it for a bit too long. It was finally time to see its contents...

After hesitating slightly, Gerald brushed the dust off the box before carefully removing its lid... and within, he saw an ancient-looking notebook.

Since the box was rather huge, Gerald couldn't help but raise a slight brow in his confusion. Why was such a large box used to keep this ancient-looking notebook...?

Then again, his 'grandfather' didn't do things without a reason. The notebook was definitely something extraordinary since that old man kept it this way. What secrets did it hold...?

Taking the tattered notebook out, Gerald then gently placed it on a table and began carefully flipping through it...

With its cover all deteriorated and the papers inside all frayed and yellow, Gerald could safely assume that the notebook had to be at least several decades old. One flip too hard and the entire notebook could easily crumble to pieces...

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Chapter 1964

After carefully continuing to read through the notebook, Gerald soon realized what it was used for.

As it turned out, his grandfather had used the notebook to record everything that had happened ever since the Crawford family was established. It even included the establishment of the other Crawford family!

Reading on, Gerald couldn't help but grit his teeth when he remembered that his family had been mere puppets, pawns to be manipulated by his grandfather...

In the end, neither of the Crawfords continued to exist...

Everything belonged to Gerald now.

Shaking the thought off, Gerald then continued flipping through the notebook... and it wasn't long after before his eyes widened as he muttered, "...The... Crawford Inheritance Power...! This...!"

Deeply interested in the matter, Gerald immediately began carefully reading through that specific page.

The Crawford Inheritance Power was a secret that his family had kept well-hidden for hundreds of years, and the power itself could only be obtained by someone who was part of the Crawford family bloodline.

As Gerald came to learn, even if that condition was met, it didn't make the power of inheritance easy to obtain. After all, the power existed only in a far-off land known as the Autremonde Realm...

So there was another world called the Autremonde Realm... Thinking about other worlds, Gerald couldn't help but reminisce about the time when he had been in the Leicom Continent, though he quickly shook the thoughts off.

Whatever the case was, the important thing to note was that the Crawford Inheritance Power was located in the Autremonde Realm.

Thinking about it, Gerald wondered if he could make a breakthrough in his strength if he obtained that Aeyegana. If that was the case, then he would truly become the most powerful person within the cultivation realm...

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Chapter 1965

As he thought about that, Gerald eventually shook his head before continuing to read, wondering if there were any records of how to enter the Autremonde Realm...

Thankfully, the exact method of getting to that place was written just a few lines below.

As it turned out, the only way to get there was by locating a well-hidden stone monument at the peak of Mount Kenloux. Even after finding it, only after chanting a specific spell could one get the portal to the Autremonde Realm to open...

The spell itself was a rare one, and only five people have ever been known to have learned it... Naturally,

Gerald's 'grandfather' had been one of them.

Reading on, Gerald found out that three of them—excluding his 'grandfather'—had already died some seventy years ago, which meant that only one remained alive till this very day...

That person apparently went by the name of Christos Hamilton, but as Gerald would come to learn, he had already left Dragonott and moved to Rico for quite a while now...

Even so, Gerald knew that he had to find that man if he ever wanted to obtain the Crawford Inheritance Power in the Autremonde Realm.

Still, Christos should already be nearing a hundred years old by now... Why did he suddenly choose to move to Rico of all places...? Was he trying to avoid something...?

It was a mystery that Gerald was equally as keen on solving...

Whatever the case was, Gerald then fished his mobile phone out and began calling Natallie...

Once she picked up, he immediately said, "Natallie? Book me a flight to Rico, pronto!"

Following that, things went rather smoothly, and it wasn't too long before Gerald was all packed and ready to go to Rico. Naturally, he made sure he had his notebook with him at all times.

While reading through it again, he found that Christos's home address—in Rico—had been jotted down in it, most possibly by the last person who had come looking for the man. Even so, Gerald really wasn't sure if his grandfather was the one who had written it there.

Regardless, everything would be made clear once he arrived in Rico...

On that very same day, Gerald boarded a plane straight to Rico, and after eleven hours, he took his first step into the foreign country...

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Following the address in the notebook, Gerald soon came across a grocery store...

To his surprise, however, the store looked like it had been out of business for years. Even the store's door was tightly closed!

Unsure how to even react to this, Gerald then began knocking on the store's door... but even after a few knocks, not a sound could be heard coming from inside...

There went his hopes that someone was living inside...

Just as Gerald was about to dejectedly leave, he suddenly heard the creaking of an opening door...!

Turning around, Gerald was quick to realize that nobody was standing at the door!

Though he momentarily froze, Gerald wasted no time and quickly entered the grocery store...

It was pitch black inside and strong musty smells emanated from every corner of the store... This place really needed a good cleaning...

Sensing that nobody was going to greet him first, Gerald took the initiative to declare, "Senior Christos Hamilton? Are you there? I'm a descendant of the Crawford family!"

"Come in!" replied a gruff voice from deeper inside the store.

Upon hearing that, Gerald was delighted. As it turned out, he really had found the right place!

With that, he quickly made his way to the room where the voice originated from... and upon arriving at the room's entrance, he was greeted by the sight of several beer bottles scattered around a seated old man who looked like he desperately needed a shower...

The entire room reeked of alcohol, and Gerald couldn't help but shiver slightly as he stared at the messy-haired old man...

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Truth be told, Gerald couldn't believe that the person before him was the actual Christos Hamilton...

After all, according to the notebook, Christos was once one of the top figures in the cultivation world. In fact, he was probably even stronger than his 'grandfather'!

How did such a powerful figure end up in such a state...?

Whatever the case was, Gerald cleared his throat before warily asking, "...I... take it that you're Senior Christos...?"

Hearing that, Christos then slowly raised his head to look at Gerald... Gerald himself wasn't able to get a clear look at the old man's facial features since his messy hair covered over half of his face...

"...A descendant of the Crawfords you say... Tell me, who is Daryl Bodach to you?" asked Christos in a calm tone.

"Daryl... Bodach?" muttered the momentarily confused Gerald, though he quickly realized that Christos was probably talking about his 'grandfather'.

To think that his 'grandfather' had chosen such a name for himself...

"He's my grandfather!" replied Gerald rather unwillingly.

He didn't really like calling that old b*stard his grandfather anymore, but what other choice did he have if he wanted to get more information about the Autremonde Realm from Christos?

“Hah! He’s your grandfather you say? Daryl has had many children and grandchildren! Why are you the only one who’s come looking for me after all these years? Cut the cr*p and just tell me what you’re really here for!” scoffed Christos in a disdainful tone.

From the looks of it, Christos really hated Daryl...

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“...Well, for one, my grandfather has died, and the Crawford family no longer exists... With that in mind, I should note that I’m here on my own behalf and not on behalf of my family. As for why I’m here, I’d like to ask you something... Is it true that you know how to access the Autremonde Realm...?” asked Gerald.

Upon hearing that, Christos momentarily went silent. Staring at Gerald for a while, the old man then asked in a cold tone, “...So what if I do?”

“Well, if you do, I’d like to learn more about that place. As for how I found out about the Autremonde Realm in the first place, I learned of its existence after reading about the realm in an old family notebook. The notebook also stated that you’ve been there before!” replied Gerald.

“...Look, I’m sorry but I can’t tell you anything about that place! If there’s nothing else, then just leave already!” yelled Christos, firmly denying any form of help.

Hearing that, Gerald felt rather helpless. Even so, he could tell that Christos must have experienced something bad there... Why else would he be so against talking about the Autremonde Realm?

Still, Gerald knew for a fact that forcing the old man to talk wouldn't do him any good.

With that in mind, since he already knew that doing things the hard way wouldn't get him anywhere, he may as well try using the soft way.

Following that thought, Gerald then left the grocery store... Though he returned soon after with several cans of beer as well as some food.

Hopefully, this would show Christos how sincere he was...

Fingers crossed that the old man would finally be willing to open up a little, Gerald then placed the beer and food before Christos.

Opening one of the beer cans and handing it to the old man, Gerald then said, "I know how powerful you are, senior Christos. With that in mind, I respect you a lot. Do have some beer and food and I hope you'll be willing to at least have a talk with me after that!"

With so many beer bottles lying around, it wasn't hard for Gerald to guess that the old man was pretty fond of drinking. It was probably to help Christos ease his pains...

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Staring at Gerald for a good minute, Christos eventually sighed before taking the beer can that Gerald had handed out to him.

After a few sips, Christos was prompted to say, "...You're very different from Daryl, you know that? You don't look or feel like his grandson at all! Regardless, despite the fact that he's been a calculative person his entire life, it seems that even that couldn't help him escape death!"

Sensing how greatly biased Christos was toward his 'grandfather', Gerald decided to change the topic by asking, "Senior Christos, could... you tell me what you know about the Autremonde Realm...? What kind of place is it...?"

Seemingly already expecting that question to come up again, Christos simply sighed as he replied, "Kid, be frank and tell me why you're so curious about the Autremonde Realm... You can't seriously be thinking of heading there, can you...?"

"That I am, senior Christos! After all, I want to obtain the Crawford Inheritance Power!" declared Gerald, no longer beating around the bush.

"So you really are after that power... You're similar to Daryl in this aspect. After all, he wanted to obtain the inheritance power as well. Regardless, I'll say it right now that the Autremonde Realm isn't as simple as you think it is! It's a place that we humans can't ever reach!" replied Christos, sounding increasingly agitated with each passing word...

Raising a slight brow, Gerald was prompted to ask, "...And why is that...?"

"You said you know how strong I am, right? Well, despite that fact, I almost lost my life there! What more, most of my face got destroyed while I was in the Autremonde Realm!"

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Chapter 1970

After saying that, Christos sighed before moving his hair to the side, revealing his completely burned face...

Save for the narrow slits of his eyes and a tremendously misshapen nose and mouth, everything else was completely charred.

Naturally, this left Gerald shocked. After all, even such a powerful person like Christos ended up getting such terrible injuries in the Autremonde Realm... It seemed that that place truly was extremely dangerous...

Regardless, Christos then added in a serious tone, "Again, I advise you against getting any further information about the Autremonde Realm. Just forget about the inheritance power and live your life well... Otherwise, you'll just end up like me!"

While Gerald knew Christos meant well, he was naturally not going to do as the old man said.

With that, Gerald then knelt before Christos before respectfully pleading, "I understand that you care for my well being, senior Christos... However, I insist that I go there, and in order to do so, I hope you'll help me unlock the stone monument so that I can head to the Autremonde Realm!"

Upon hearing that, Christos could only sigh helplessly.

"...While you don't resemble Daryl, I see you've inherited his stubbornness... Well, since you're so insistent on dying, so be it! Just understand that you're to bear all the consequences of your actions!" said Christos, much to Gerald's delight.

Truth be told, Gerald only needed Christos's help in opening the portal to the Autremonde Realm. Once he was there, he was already expecting to do everything else on his own.

While it was true that he thought that way so that Christos wouldn't have to risk dying again by following him, Gerald was honestly more worried about having to deal with Christos's drinking problems along the way if the old man came along...

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Whatever the case was, it was only seconds later when both Gerald and Christos's expressions turned grave.

Both of them had sensed an immense murderous intent rapidly approaching them from the outside!

"...It seems that you've been followed, kid! You got a lot of enemies or something?" grumbled Christos.

Since Christos had been laying low in here for decades, there was no way the enemy was coming for him. With that in mind, Gerald understood that it only made sense for the murderous people to be after him...

Still, to think that news about him arriving in Rico would spread so quickly... Gerald, for one, hadn't expected others to be coming after him so soon! Had his enemies been observing him this entire time...?

Regardless, Gerald could only lower his head in embarrassment as he said, "I apologize for the trouble, senior Christos...! Allow me to deal with them first!"

Following that, he walked out the grocery store and stood by the door...

By this point, night had already fallen and it was quite dark. Adding that to the fact that not a single soul could be seen walking the streets, the scene was undoubtedly creepy...

It almost felt like danger lurked in every corner...

A split second after Gerald had that thought, several knives began flying toward him!

While Gerald was able to dodge all of them—resulting in the knives getting embedded into the door behind him—, it was too dark to see his assailants.

However, it didn't take long before a few murderous-looking men—all of them donning black suits—emerged from the shadows!

All of them had longswords in hand, and they quickly surrounded the youth...

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Chapter 1972

While the armed men weren't exactly weak, to Gerald, they were nowhere close to being his opponents.

Before anyone—including Gerald—could make a move, however, a blurry figure suddenly bolted out of the grocery store!

Stopping right in front of Gerald, the figure then released a powerful shockwave from his palm, sending all the men in black flying!

By the time they landed, all of them were already dead!

Of course, the one who had done the deed was none other than Christos, and his power was certainly a surprise to Gerald. Then again, Gerald was more startled by the fact that Christos had helped him take those men out in the first place.

Whatever the case was, Christos then looked at Gerald rather disdainfully before saying, "Hey, why are you even wasting time with those morons? You said you needed my help to head to the Autremonde Realm, no? Let's get going then!"

Upon hearing that, Gerald was rightfully embarrassed. After all, while he could've taken those men out just as easily, he hadn't done so immediately just as Christos had...

Regardless, since Christos had dealt with them, he had one less thing to bother about...

Still, Gerald had to hand it to that old man. After all, he still maintained his strength after all these years...

Either way, the two then left for Dragonott...

Once they had boarded their flight, Gerald couldn't help but ask, "Senior Christos... According to the notebook, the stone monument which leads to the Autremonde Realm is located atop Mount Kenloux... Is that true?"

“Bingo. Upon activation, it’ll open a portal to the Autremonde Realm!” replied Christos, prompting Gerald to nod...

Once they got to Dragonott, the duo then got into a car before heading straight for Mount Kenloux...

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Chapter 1973

As the duo made their way to Mount Kenloux, a man dressed fully in black could be seen kneeling in the middle of a room located on the far end of Dragonott.

The man himself was kneeling before another robed man who had a scepter of sorts in hand...

Shortly after, the kneeling man then quickly reported, “From what we’ve heard, Gerald has already left Rico and is now back in Dragonott, chief! Apparently, he’s already well on his way to Mount Kenloux!”

Upon hearing that, the robed man then asked in a frigid tone, “...Mount Kenloux? Why on earth is he headed there?”

“We can’t say for sure yet, but we do have something else that’s noteworthy! There’s an extremely powerful man with Gerald now, and all our men—who were sent out to attack Gerald—were killed in a single attack by that person!” said the kneeling man while shaking his head.

Hearing that, the robed man then snorted before scoffing, “What are you up to this time, Gerald... No

matter. Get me a car now! I'm heading to Mount Kenloux!"

"Loud and clear!" replied the man in black before getting to his feet and walking out the hall...

Moving back to Gerald and Christos, it wasn't long before they both arrived at the foot of the mountain...

Seeing no reason not to start scaling it immediately, the duo did just that.

It took them about three hours, but they eventually arrived at the mountain peak...

Looking around, Gerald soon saw a greenish-white stone monument at the highest point of the mountain... It looked just as Christos and the notebook had described it...

Upon closer inspection, several patterns and undecipherable words seemed to have been carved into the stone monument...

Either way, Christos wasn't about to waste his time waiting for Gerald to finish inspecting the place. With that in mind, he went straight to the point and said, "Here we are, kid. The stone monument that'll get you to the Autremonde Realm... Are you ready?"

"I am, senior Christos! Let's begin!"

Chapter 1974

Watching as Gerald then nodded confidently, Christos began walking over to the stone monument before placing his hand onto it...

As he began chanting a spell, the stone monument quickly began emitting a gentle glow... However, the longer he chanted, the brighter the glow became, until eventually, the entire mountain peak was as bright as a beacon!

Watching wide-eyed as a portal began forming, Gerald snapped out from his amazement when he heard Christos call out, "Everything that happens from this point on will fully be on you, kid! My help ends here, got that?!"

With how serious Christos's tone was, Gerald nodded respectfully before replying, "Loud and clear! Thank you for all your help, senior Christos!"

Following that, Gerald then ran into the portal... and the second he went through it, the portal vanished into thin air!

Rest assured that Gerald had safely made it past the portal, Christos then began descending the mountain through a well-hidden footpath...

His job here was done, and as he had said time and again, it was now all up to Gerald whether he succeeded or not...

Whatever the case was, shortly after Christos left, the robed man arrived at the scene with a few of his men...

Though they immediately began scouring the mountain top, they eventually realized that Gerald was nowhere to be found.

Due to their lack of clues as to where Gerald had gone to, one of the subordinates proposed, "...Chief, remember that beam of light we saw from the foot of the mountain earlier...? It disappeared shortly after and so did Gerald... Do you think...?"

"...Indeed. I don't like how fishy this area is... Regardless, go find that man who came here with Gerald! He should know what happened!" ordered the robed man, his expression grim...

Naturally, Gerald had no idea that all this was happening, and he simply continued walking until eventually, the light from the passage—that had been part of the portal—subsided... Leaving Gerald staring wide-eyed at the sight before him.

From the looks of it, he had successfully entered the Autremonde Realm, and the other end of the portal had led him to a stream in some sort of valley...

Regardless, what truly amazed him was how beautiful the nature in this world looked. From the thriving greenery on the mountains and the crystal-clear water in the stream, this place looked absolutely picturesque...

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To think that his first impression—upon entering the Autremonde Realm—would be how lovely this place's near-pristine nature appeared...

While he would've certainly liked to enjoy the view for a bit longer, Gerald knew he had more important things to do.

With that in mind, he left the stream and began walking till he eventually came across a town of sorts...

Just as he was about to enter the town, however, the familiar glint of a blade's reflection caught his eye.

Realizing that it had come from the nearby jungle, Gerald raised a slight brow before sneaking over to investigate...

Shortly after, he was greeted by the sight of a woman—wearing purple clothes—getting attacked by five men who were dressed wholly in white.

Naturally, this made Gerald incredibly angry. After all, how could so many men go up against a single woman! Had they no dignity?!

Whatever the case was, though the woman—who had a longsword in hand—was clearly outnumbered, Gerald was honestly surprised that she was able to fend the men off quite efficiently. He had to admit that she was quite powerful...

Even so, in the end, there was strength in numbers, and the lady in purple eventually found herself falling to the ground, her sword flung to the side as she coughed out a mouthful of blood...

Snickering when he saw that, one of the five men then walked up to the injured woman before scoffing with a wicked smile on his face, "You're dying by my hand today, Zianne Landis! Since you're going to perish soon anyway, allow me to savor your warm and soft body first!"

"Don't even dare, Johnny Babbs! You're not having your way even if I am to die!" growled Zianne as she glared at the sadistic man.

Hearing that, Johnny simply laughed loudly before sneering, "Oh please, as if you're in any position to say that! Men, grab her! Once I'm done with her body, you'll each have your turns before we kill her!"

Grinning lustfully when they heard that, the four men then began encircling Zianne, inching closer to her with every step...

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With her immense beauty and voluptuous body, most men would grow lustful upon seeing her...

As the four men grew uncomfortably close to her, Zianne roared, "If you dare to even lay a finger on me, my master will surely destroy Whitehaar Abbey, you b*stard!"

"Hah! As if I'm afraid of him! In fact, I wonder if she even dares to come to our abbey!" scoffed Johnny, completely unfazed by the threat.

Following that, the sinister Johnny was just about to reach out to touch her body... When all of a sudden, a dagger flew out from the bushes and pierced right through his wrist!

Instantly screaming in pain, Johnny watched as blood began dripping out his fresh wound...

Before anyone could even register what was happening, Gerald walked out from the bushes, glaring contemptuously at all five of them as he jeered, "Five men against a single woman... Do you even have the right to call yourselves men?!"

“W-who the hell are you?! Meddling with our business... Are you that keen to die?! Men, finish him!”
roared the pained Johnny as his men immediately rushed toward Gerald with their longswords in hand!

Despite being outnumbered, Gerald barely even looked fazed.

With a single swipe of his hand, all four of them were sent flying...!

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