

Chapter 1141

Both Lord Fenderson and Joshua were sent back to the apartment less than an hour later. By that time, however, Lord Fenderson was already seriously ill and Mindy was still in a coma.

Seeing this, Gerald skipped the pleasantries with Joshua and immediately provided him with new prescriptions for the two individuals.

Once he was done with that, Gerald headed out into the streets. Since it was already evening, it was only logical for the young lord to have returned home by now.

As he walked on, Gerald saw how lively the streets currently were, with many pedestrians getting immersed in the exciting atmosphere.

'Hearing the name of the Holy Witchcraft alone usually prompts people to associate it with feelings of wickedness... What did that group of people do? And why are there so many who have come over to worship them?' Gerald thought to himself.

It wasn't long before he arrived at the door of Linus's Yonwick Manor.

Since the manor was the reception point for the young lord's arrival, there was already a near-impenetrable crowd by the time Gerald got there.

Standing at the manor's entrance, were several young apprentices of the Yonwick family who had been tasked with receiving the important guests.

Due to that, it was no wonder why Gerald's path was blocked by them when he tried to enter.

"Hey now, you can't just enter the manor all willy-nilly! Who even allowed you entry?"

"Oh? Didn't Linus tell you I was coming?" replied Gerald.

“Who the hell even are you? How dare you address my uncle by his name! I’ll have you know that all the guests present today are both influential and powerful people, many of whom are well over the age of fifty! Nice try, but I’ve had my share of opportunists like you!” shouted the youth coldly in return.

“There’s no need to talk to him that way... After all, a single glance is all it takes to be able to tell that he comes from foreign lands! Maybe he just wanted to enter to have a look after seeing so many people going in and out of the manor! The extravagance of this place could also have piqued his interest! So again, there’s no need to be so fierce!” said a charming woman as she smiled subtly while looking at Gerald.

From the way she spoke, it was evident that the woman had a good first impression of Gerald. After all, not only did his body seem to be in tiptop condition, he also looked extraordinarily friendly. The combination of the two gave Gerald the look of a learned gentleman. It was the reason why she had spoken up for him.

Just like how men were susceptible to helping beautiful women, women—like her—were also prone to aiding handsome men.

“Regardless, do you truly wish to enter...?” asked the woman, continuing to smile.

Looking more closely at her, Gerald could see that she seemed to be in her twenties. Her hair had also been tied in a ponytail and her smile was particularly sweet.

Seeing that he wasn’t answering her question, the woman then added, “...You know, we’re a little understaffed right now... Why don’t you come along inside with me?”

Before Gerald could even reply, the woman was already dragging Gerald into the manor like how a parent would drag their child.

“Humph! That younger sister of mine is way too kind... Since Queeny’s cried before just by seeing small animals die, it wouldn’t surprise me that she felt compassionate toward him just because I scolded him a little earlier! Sometimes I wonder if she

truly is a Yonwick!” muttered the man to himself as he watched Queena Yonwick lead Gerald deeper into the manor.

After walking for a while, Queena eventually stopped before saying, “Well, this is the place! That, over there, is Mr. Yonwick, and I’ve already notified him about your presence. If any of the guests require any help, just head over to them and lend them a hand! I’ll be heading out there myself to serve them as well!”

Flashing him a smile, she then waved at him before leaving.

“...That young woman really is nothing like the other Yonwicks—at least the ones I’ve come across before—at all! What an enthusiastic person!” muttered Gerald to himself as he couldn’t help but smile in resignation. Regardless, that woman truly was rather interesting.

As he had said, however, she was a little too enthusiastic as well. It made him embarrassed to admit to her that he was actually here to assassinate people. Some people were certainly harder to reject than others.

“Hmm? Hey, you there! You were the one Mr. Yonwick called over, right? Come over here already and serve us some drinks!” shouted a young man rather unceremoniously.

The one who had called out to Gerald was seated—around one of the many tables that had been placed outside the manor—alongside a few other young men and women.

Since they had noticed that it was Queena who had brought him here,—and they knew for a fact that Mr. Yonwick had put her in charge of miscellaneous tasks—putting two and two together, they figured that Gerald was under her, which meant that he had the same tasks that she did.

Hearing that, a frown formed on Gerald’s face.

While he was slightly angry by the order, he knew that since he hadn’t rejected Queena’s enthusiastic offer earlier, it was akin to him agreeing with her suggestion.

With that in mind, Gerald knew that it would be imprudent of him to vent his anger out just like that.

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Calming himself, he then walked over to the group while occasionally glancing at the entrance.

As he picked up a teapot to refill the empty cups at the table, one of the women who had heavy makeup on—as did the others—said, “You know, you look pretty handsome up-close! Still, you’re not quite my cup of tea! Only Queena would fall for someone like you!”

“Oh? Could you actually be Queena’s pretty boy?” asked another woman.

“Humph! As if someone like him would ever be qualified to be hers!” replied a third woman rather contemptuously.

After saying that, the women seemed to lose interest in him and they quickly found themselves resuming their previous topic of conversation.

“Anyway, I’m very happy now! Haha! At long last, someone finally took the blame for me!” said another woman from that group who looked to be slightly older than Gerald.

“Oh? What sort of blame, Freya?” asked one of her friends.

“Just some incident none of you were probably aware of... Actually, I think it’s fine for me to tell you about it now! You see, the Yonwicks have always had a secret deal with the young lord of the Holy Witchcraft!”

“...A deal?” asked the women who were now growing increasingly curious.

“Indeed! You see, according to the deal, over ten beautiful women have to be sent to the young lord yearly. As you may have already guessed, some of them come from the Yonwick family as well!” replied Freya.

“What? You’re not pulling our leg, are you?”

“Is there even a reason for me to do that? Regardless, my dad told me some time ago that I was initially one of the chosen beauties to be sent over to him! However, since a beauty from the Fenderson family came over about three months ago, my dad betrayed her just to protect me!” explained Freya as she laughed.

“How unexpected... To think that the young lord was actually such a person! It’s quite hard to even imagine!”

“I know right? Even I used to think that the young lord was both pure and flawless. Never could I have imagined that he was this disgusting in reality! Either way, this is a major secret that, if exposed, would ruin him for sure! As a result, it’s a great taboo for the people from Montholm Island to talk about this! Aside from the members of our family and a few other people on Montholm Island, I’m pretty sure that nobody else knows about this secret! I’m just sharing this with you because I’m so happy today!” replied Freya.

“Well, I’ve heard rumors about this a few years back myself, so I wouldn’t call it a tightly kept secret...” muttered one of her friends.

“Oh? Well I’m sure that you’ve definitely never heard of what I’m about to tell you! It’s something that my dad’s been hiding from my family! I’m pretty sure that I’m the only other Yonwick who knows about this!” whispered Freya in a slightly saddened tone.

“What are all of you talking about, cousin?” asked Queena as she led a few rich, young heirs over from the door. As the newcomers smiled at those from the initial group, Queena took the chance to wave at Gerald while greeting him.

“You interrupted Freya just as she was about to share some secrets with us! Come over and sit with us! Quickly!”

“Secrets?”

“Yeah! You see, an incident happened this afternoon... You all know Layton, right? My incapable younger brother? Well, something happened to him! Before I go on, though, do all of you know who Master Moldell is?” asked Freya.

“But of course we do!”

It didn't come as a surprise for any of them that Freya called her younger brother 'incapable'. After all, those from the Yonwick family were well aware that she didn't have a good relationship with Layton.

This was mostly due to the fact that Layton was the only male descendant of the family. As a result, Linus adored Layton a lot and tended to spoil him. With Freya, Linus usually only gave her a cold shoulder, which explained her clear dissatisfaction with Layton.

“Excellent. Moving on, I earlier saw Master Moldell and my younger brother being carried into the manor from the backdoor... It was sheer coincidence that I saw them back then since I was planning to sneak out the backdoor to have some fun!”

“Oh, d*mn! How did Layton get hurt? Actually, the more important question is how did Master Moldell get hurt? We've all seen his immense skill before! To think that someone would actually manage to defeat him on Montholm Island!”

Everyone clearly found that news hard to believe. Some of the young men were even exchanging terrified glances with each other as Freya continued whispering, “While I'm not too sure about the details of what actually happened, after eavesdropping on my dad while he was talking to a few of his subordinates, I heard the name, 'Mr. Crawford' being mentioned. Apparently that person has an extremely powerful background!”

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“Mr. Crawford?” muttered the women in surprise.

“...Now where have I heard that name before... I can't recall much about that person...”

“Humph! I’ve done some investigating on him, and trust me when I say that you’ll all be terrified to death upon hearing what I found out about him!” replied Freya.

“Go on...”

“As I’ve said before, after asking around, I heard from some people that this Mr. Crawford person has an extremely powerful background! The fortune he owns is near-unimaginable for ordinary people, you know? In fact, he’s the kind of person who would be able to hand you any amount of money immediately should he allow you to request for any!” explained Freya as her eyes were filled with jealousy.

“What? Could there truly be a rich heir like that?” asked a few of the present men with resentment in their voices, clearly jealous as well.

“It’s all true! Not only is he rich, but he’s extremely capable as well! I’ll say it right now that he’s nowhere near comparable to any of you hedonistic rich heirs!” replied Freya while looking at the group of men—who were all younger than her—as she shook her head.

“So what if we’re incomparable? It’s not like we want to be compared to him either!” replied one of the men as they all took turns lowering their heads.

“Well, even if he’s the richest person in the world, I believe that no human will truly be able to live life without having any worries, regardless of how much wealth one owns... I’m sure he has to deal with different kinds of issues that normal people like us can’t even hope to comprehend... Regardless, problems definitely still exist for him so there’s no need for all of you to feel ashamed just because we’re all a little inferior to him,” said Queena at that moment as she smiled.

Her words were like music to the men’s ears, and they instantly found themselves feeling much better.

Gerald himself turned to look at Queena. Since he was so used to seeing materialistic women like Alice and Xavia by this point, he knew that women like Queena were rather rare in today’s world. With that in mind, he found himself liking her a bit more after hearing what she had to say.

After all, what she had said was true. So what if he owned half of the world's fortune? He still couldn't change both his and his family's destiny... He couldn't even protect the woman he loved. No matter who it was, humans would always have worries.

As he was deep in thought, the tea he was pouring into Freya's cup ended up over spilling, causing quite a bit of it to spill onto Freya's clothes!

"What- You... You b*stard!" screamed Freya who immediately stood up as she felt the scalding tea on her body.

Looking greatly offended, she then glared daggers at Gerald before shouting, "Are you blind or something?!"

By then, her roars of fury had attracted the attention of several of the guests there.

Clearly still dissatisfied with Gerald, the aggressive woman then raised her palm, fully prepared to slap him! After all, Gerald was just a mere servant for all she knew. To think that he would dare offend her before everyone!

The others knew better than to step in. After all, they were all aware that once Freya got into a bad temper, she wasn't someone who could be easily trifled with.

However, when her hand was just inches away from Gerald's cheek, she immediately retracted it the moment she felt an immense pain on her palm that felt like a pinprick!

"Ow! M-my hand! I-it hurts!" wailed Freya as she burst into tears while holding onto her now bleeding hand.

"You b*stard! How dare you attack Freya?! You're courting death for sure!"

While the men didn't really know what Gerald had used to injure Freya, they at least assumed that he had secretly attacked her. With all of them coming to the same conclusion, it was natural for all of them to be infuriated!

Just as they were about to make a move on him, however, a—simultaneously—wrath-filled and terrified voice shouted, “Cease this immediately! What are all of you doing?!”

Hearing that, the men who were about to deal with Gerald immediately froze in place. Everyone else at the scene went silent as well.

After all, the person who had shouted was none other than the Yonwick family's master, Linus!

Following that, the pale-faced man quickly rushed over to where Gerald was standing. Gerald himself had been standing there with his hands behind his back, an indifferent expression on his face.

Seconds later, three loud and distinct slaps could be heard... And the three men who had initially planned to retaliate against Gerald ended up falling to the floor due to the immense impact of the slaps!

“D-dad?! What are you doing?! They were just trying to seek justice for me! Just look at that lowly servant! He's the one who hurt my hand!” shouted Freya as she stomped a foot on the ground in her frustration after seeing her cousins being slapped instead.

The immediate response she got from Linus, however, was a tight slap to her face!

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“How daring can you be?! A lowly servant? It seems that all of you are truly oblivious as to how much you're just begging to die!” roared Linus as his lips twitched.

Now crying even harder after receiving the slap, Freya—who simply couldn't reconcile with the fact that she was getting punished instead of the servant—then

retorted, “But it’s the lowly servant’s fault for hurting me, dad! Why are you hitting us instead?!”

She instantly received a second slap from Linus as he roared, “How dare you continue speaking so ruthlessly! If you know what’s good for you then quickly apologize to Mr. Crawford!”

After fiercely warning her, Linus immediately bowed at Gerald before saying, “I apologize if this ignorant young woman offended you, Mr. Crawford! Please forgive her!”

“...H-huh...?” muttered Freya who truly hadn’t expected her father to actually bow to that servant.

She wasn’t the only one stupefied either. Everyone present was now utterly flabbergasted and in disbelief at what they were currently witnessing.

“I won’t hold it against her just because I wish to show Queena some respect. However, I strongly suggest that you advise your daughter against slapping anyone as she pleases!” replied Gerald coldly as he glared at Freya.

Hearing that, Freya found herself blushing as she said, “...Y-you... Could you be... the mysterious Mr. Crawford from Northbay...?”

Gulping, she then thought to herself, ‘He’s the legendary rich heir...?’

“You silly girl! Thankfully, Mr. Crawford didn’t take your actions to heart! The rest of you better hurry up and apologize to him as well!” ordered Linus.

While the others had earlier assumed that Gerald was just a very rich person—after hearing Freya’s description of him—none of them had expected him to be this terrifying, face to face!

“...I-I’m sorry!” shouted Freya as she immediately lowered her head while blushing as she apologized. Though it simply felt incredulous, Freya knew that the man before her was the real deal after seeing how respectful her father was toward him.

As she did that, she snuck a few peeks at him—with her beautiful eyes—to observe his reaction to her apology.

In her mind, she was wondering if their simple dispute could end up with her having a romantic affair with that filthy rich man. To her utter dismay, he didn’t even look at her!

The fact that Gerald was looking to the side while she was apologizing made Freya feel deeply disappointed.

As for the others present, none of them even dared to say a word.

Queena herself was currently looking at Gerald rather curiously, occasionally blinking her large eyes.

At that moment, some noise could be heard coming from a crowd outside. Hearing the commotion, both Gerald and Linus turned their attention toward the sound’s direction.

Soon after, both men watched as thirty-two peculiar-dressed people made their way toward them. On their shoulders, was a massive palanquin that honestly looked like a living room of sorts.

Sitting atop a large chair on the palanquin, was a young man donning black robes, and following the group on both sides were two old men.

Any pedestrians whom they passed by instantly bowed at the magnificent procession.

It was Gerald's first time seeing such a dominant array as well. After all, even emperors during ancient times didn't travel about atop palanquins carried by thirty-two people.

"Is he the young lord?" asked Gerald with a frigid tone.

"Y-yes, Mr. Crawford!" replied Linus as he wiped the sweat off his forehead, knowing that he was truly between a rock and a hard place at the moment.

Currently standing between what could very well be two gods of death, he knew that offending any one of them could result in his entire family getting exterminated. There was no way he could afford to offend either one of them.

With that in mind, he immediately bowed and welcomed the young lord after respectfully answering Gerald's question.

Everyone else present did the same as well, bowing as respectfully as they could.

Seeing that, the two men standing by the palanquin nodded in satisfaction. However, the moment they looked at Gerald, they couldn't help but furrow their brows.

After all, Gerald was simply standing there while looking at them coldly, both his hands in his pockets.

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"How dare you refuse to bow and greet the young lord when you see him!" shouted one of the old men.

Gerald, however, didn't respond to that. Instead, he simply continued staring at the young lord who was still sitting atop the palanquin. Throughout this entire time, the young lord had had his eyes closed, seemingly enjoying himself as he rested.

"Hey, now! I asked you a question, didn't I? How imprudent of you not to answer!" shouted the same old man as he took a step forward, ready to make a move.

However, before he could even do anything, the old man's eyes widened in astonishment as Gerald's body disappeared into thin air!

"...Hmm?!" grunted the old man as he was suddenly filled with immense fear.

The next thing he knew, he felt a palm being placed on his shoulder extremely forcefully! The force was so overwhelming that he was unable to endure it for long.

Seconds later, the old man fell to his knees, causing the ground under him to be crushed under Gerald's immense force!

"You said I should bow, no? I didn't see you bowing toward me, though!" sneered Gerald.

"Brother!" shouted the other old man as he rushed over while revealing a clay teapot from under his sleeve.

Though he had planned to use witchcraft to deal with Gerald, Gerald was simply too fast for him. Before he could even do a thing, Gerald had already slapped him several times!

Following that, the second old man fell to the ground. He was no match for Gerald at all.

It was at that moment when the mighty young lord finally opened his eyes slowly.

Looking at Gerald with a bitter smile, he then said, "Your strength isn't bad, I must admit! However, you really shouldn't offend us today!"

"And what if I do?" retorted Gerald.

"Then don't blame me for ending your life!" shouted the young lord extremely coldly.

Hearing that, everyone close by immediately began retreating from the area, knowing full well that the young lord was about to kill people.

“Due to the rules, I’m not allowed to lift my feet off the ground till I arrive at the large hall... However, it’s best that you don’t assume that I won’t be able to kill you just because of that!” added the young lord in an indifferent tone, making it clear that he was looking at Gerald as though he was a mere nobody.

Gerald himself had been quite serious toward the young lord this entire time. However, even after observing the young man’s aura for a while, he still couldn’t detect anything extraordinary about him. Even so, the young man sounded extremely confident with his abilities... Could the young lord secretly have powerful tactics under his sleeves? Or maybe he had a way to escape no matter the situation!

“So what you’re saying is that you can kill me without even standing up? Fine then! I’d like to witness your true capabilities for myself!” replied Gerald as he immediately made his move.

While Gerald usually only used thirty percent of his power, he made sure to use at least sixty percent this time.

With the Lightbane in hand—which glowed as densely as heavy rain and bore a free-running aura that made its wielder truly feel invincible—Gerald aimed its force at the gigantic palanquin!

While the young lord’s eyes had earlier only been half-open, they were now as wide as two full moons.

His expression immediately paling, he muttered, “What?”

Since he had defeated a lot of powerful people from the Holy Witchcraft before, the young lord was usually an arrogant person. The two old men were only his slaves so he hadn’t thought much about Gerald defeating them earlier.

As a result, he had already been thinking of how to kill Gerald for a while now. By doing so, not only would he get rid of a potential threat, but he would also be able to create fear among the ordinary people watching.

To his utter dismay, Gerald was actually much more powerful than he had initially anticipated!

'No! I can't get hit by that!' The shocked young lord thought to himself in the nick of time as he immediately used all the energy in his body to dodge the attack! There was no way he was still going to follow the rules and remain seated there in this situation!

With an explosive sound, the palanquin was smashed into pieces, sending debris flying all over the place!

Due to the immense force of energy that Gerald had sent in his direction, the young lord found himself being thrown off the now broken palanquin, barely able to endure the Lightbane's impact!

His face now bloodied, the young lord instantly began vomiting blood, feeling as though all his internal organs had simultaneously been destroyed.

'H-how terrifyingly powerful!' Thought the young lord to himself, now extremely afraid.

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Gerald found himself furrowing his brows as he walked over the young lord whose limbs were now trembling vigorously.

"...Do you not have any other tactics to show?" asked Gerald in slight disbelief.

"P-please spare my life... I'm the young lord and the entire Holy Witchcraft is on my side...!" replied the young lord as he began crawling backward rather pitifully due to his legs going limp from fear.

“...Is that really all you’ve got?” said Gerald, stupefied but also slightly amused by the turn of events.

He was, of course, laughing at himself. After all, to think that he had actually fallen for the young lord’s taunts earlier! Gerald had to admit that he had initially thought that the young lord was truly a mysterious, powerful person. Why else could the young lord behave so recklessly?

As it turned out, the young lord was actually just a young warrior who had just gained his inner strength!

“You know, I’ve heard plenty about you, young lord... It seems that you’ve done a lot of wicked things in the past few years...” said Gerald as he glared at the youth.

“I-I...” stammered the terrified youth... However, the young lord’s eyes suddenly went fierce as he swiftly waved his long robes!

Seeing that, Gerald’s reflexes caused him to take a step back in anticipation of an attack. However, he realized a split second later that no attack was coming. As a result, Gerald immediately dashed toward the young lord, his arm stretched out to grab onto him!

However, the moment Gerald grabbed onto the black robe, he realized that the young lord was no longer there!

“...Oh? Golden escape? Now things are getting slightly more interesting!” muttered Gerald as he smiled faintly.

Feeling his ears twitch, Gerald was able to hear where the young lord was currently escaping to. Knowing that he had locked onto his target, Gerald immediately gave chase.

By the time night had fallen, Gerald found himself running in the middle of a dense forest as he continued chasing after the young lord.

Without any street lamps around, light was getting scarce and the bewildered Gerald found himself saying, “How odd... His aura is definitely present, but where could he be hiding...?”

With that, Gerald closed his eyes momentarily before opening them again. This time, however, there was a green sheen on his irises.

Scanning through the area, his eyes finally stopped when he noticed a small cask—one that was typically used to water seedlings—near one of the trees.

Smiling subtly, he then walked toward it. Seeing a lid on the cask, he kicked it open and took a look inside. While it only seemed to be filled with water, the water itself appeared to be shaking slightly.

Squatting down, Gerald then stared at the cask while muttering in slight astonishment, “Golden escape and bone crush, huh? Both tactics used to escape battle... I’m good at witchcraft too, you know? However, I’ve yet to see any true skills from you. I do wonder what the Holy Witchcraft has taught you... After all, you don’t seem like you’ll be mastering these two tactics without practicing them for at least a few more decades!”

By the end of Gerald’s sentence, the water suddenly began quivering even more.

Shaking his head in resignation, Gerald then placed his hand in the water. Soon enough, his finger touched one of the hidden young lord’s acupuncture points...

The moment that happened, the young lord’s body was forced to spread out, resulting in the cask busting open!

After coughing vigorously for quite some time while lying on the ground, the young lord finally found his voice and said, “...You... Who the hell even are you...? We’re both probably around the same age...! How are you even more powerful than my grandma?!”

Following that, the young lord then looked at Gerald with fearful eyes, looking like he was ready to burst into tears at any second.

“There’s no need for you to know who I am. All you need to know is that if you don’t answer my questions honestly, a terrible death awaits you!” warned Gerald as he gently patted the terrified youth’s shoulder.

“...Y-your statement earlier... I didn’t learn these skills from the Holy Witchcraft... Angelica was the one who had taught me how to escape while I was out having fun at sea when I was eight...” said the terrified young lord hurriedly.

“...Angelica?” asked Gerald, surprised.

True to what the young lord had earlier said, both he and Gerald were around the same age. Logically, one would need to train for decades in order to master the two tactics he had mentioned earlier. In fact, many people would probably spend their entire lives training to get better at those tactics, yet fail to even reach the young lord’s proficiency in them.

With that in mind, it was certainly surprising for Gerald to find out that there was another person like Finnley—his master—out there who could help others gain twice the training results with only half the effort.

“Y-yes!”

“Then after teaching you those skills, was it also Angelica who had told you to do all those evil deeds? Evil deeds like rape and robbery? You know, if I hadn’t come to Montholm Island, my friend would’ve probably been ruined by you now!” growled Gerald, a hint of murderous intent in his eyes.

Hearing that, the young lord knew that if he hadn’t used his two skills earlier, there was a high chance that he would’ve already become a corpse by now.

“...I-I know I’ve done a lot of evil things in the past few years... But know that I didn’t mean to do them! I... I just really hate women! All of them without exception!” declared the young lord who was still lying on the ground as he grabbed tightly onto some grass on the ground...

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From how pained his voice had sounded as the young lord continued lying on the ground, it was almost as though he was thinking about some unspeakable grief.

“...You... hate women?” inquired Gerald as he couldn’t help but stare coldly at the young lord.

“You probably wouldn’t believe me even if I explained it to you... After all, from the moment I was born, I’ve always only been known as the high and mighty young lord of the Holy Witchcraft... While everyone tends to get jealous of me, I can safely say that throughout the years, I’ve never truly been happy... You know, I’ve hated that woman ever since I was young... Because of her, I ended up hating all other women! The woman in question... She was my mother!” explained the young lord.

Upon hearing that, Gerald felt his eyelids twitch slightly.

He had never heard of anyone claiming to resent their mother as strongly as the young lord had... After all, who on this planet wouldn’t love the one who had birthed them? However, Gerald could sense that the young lord wasn’t lying due to the immense pain reflected in the youth’s eyes.

Could it truly be that this cruel and unscrupulous man was only the way he currently was due to difficulties he had previously encountered?

“...Why exactly do you hate her?”

“...I was three when my first memory came to be... I... I witnessed that scene right before my very eyes... My mother... She killed my father in front of me!” said the young lord, his voice sounding even more pained than before.

“...I still remember my father’s expression back then... Before he died, he had wanted to hold my hand one last time, you know...? As a mere child, I was beyond terrified back then... She didn’t have the slightest regret in her at all... Hell, she didn’t even care about me! Even after all these years, that scene keeps playing back in my mind... It’s like a curse that wishes to continue torturing me till the end of time!”

“And she wasn’t the only one either! Grandma disliked me as well! She kept scolding me... Calling me an illegitimate child... If I wasn’t the only child of the Tindall family, I truly believe that I would’ve already been beaten to death long ago by those two monstrous women... In the end, I took up their surname so I now belong to the Tindalls of the Holy Witchcraft... It’s an immense pity that even till this very day, I still don’t know what my father’s surname is...!”

Following that, the young lord looked up before adding, “You must be thinking how chaotic the relationships within my family are, correct? Humph! ...You see, my father was a live-in husband... I took up my mother’s surname and my grandma is actually from the maternal side of the family...”

“Regardless, since I was treated that way by both of them, I’ve always had an innate feeling that all women are wicked! ...However, I’m also aware that the women I’ve hurt before this were innocent. You can choose not to believe me, but every time I hurt a woman, I end up repenting for a very long time... Hell, I even wish to compensate the families of the women I’ve hurt... However, as the young lord, I simply can’t do that... I have to constantly obey my grandma’s orders... After all, we from the Holy Witchcraft are far more superior compared to anyone else... Due to that, we are expected to be decisive when killing others when we do so!”

“But... I just can’t! I can’t be decisive when taking an innocent life! However, my grandma keeps wanting me to learn how to kill others! You know, I was already starting to turn wild and evil before my attempt to run away when I was eight...”

“It stemmed from an event that had happened when I was still in first grade... Back then, I got to know a particularly kind girl who went by the name of Lola Leeman... She was the reason why my views began wavering back then... She showed me that such good girls existed in the world as well... While I tried to resist thinking that way for the longest time, eventually, her enthusiasm and kindness ended up touching me. From that point on, we began learning and playing together... Such simple times...”

Laughing slightly bitterly as he reminisced, the young lord then continued, “...We made a promise, you know? That we would marry each other once we grew up... I distinctly remembered her telling me that while we were on our way home from school one day... Upon hearing that, I asked if she would kill me in the future, which resulted in her chuckling all the way home... Naturally, we were just fooling around back then... What would we know about love at that age... That, however, was the last evening I ever met her... She had been killed, and it was only sometime later when I came to learn that the murderer was my grandma!”

Upon saying that, the young lord began crying as he dug his fingers into the ground, holding on to whatever dirt he could, tightly.

“After that happened, I told myself that I would run away as far as I could to distance myself from those two women... With that in mind, I rowed a boat out into sea together with Lola’s cremated remains... After all, Lola once told me that she loved the idea of watching the sunset while riding a boat... Granting her wish was the least I could do...”

“After rowing for quite a while, I realized that I could no longer tell where the shore was. With the sun quickly setting, I thought that I was definitely going to starve to death out at sea back then. However, it was then when I first bumped into Angelica... She looked extremely beautiful and gentle, and to be frank, her character was very similar to Lola’s... At the time, she had been standing atop a wooden boat all dressed in white as she played her flute... She honestly looked like a fairy, now that I think about it...”

Hearing that, Gerald couldn’t help but focus more on the young lord’s story.

Finnley had previously taught Gerald the mind-reading tactic. After learning it, Gerald found that as long as someone was weaker than him, he would definitely be able to see through them. It was because of that, that Gerald knew that the young lord hadn’t been lying this entire time.

What caught his attention, however, was the young lord’s mention of a woman dressed in white. How intriguing...

A woman playing a flute atop a wooden boat out at sea when it was nearing dusk... Gerald’s mental image of the young lord’s description made him feel that the woman in white was definitely an extraordinary person...

“...Regardless, she was the one who had saved me... She was also the one responsible for teaching me a few skills such as bone crush, golden escape, and turtle breathing tactics... She told me to continue training the skills in secret, making sure nobody knows about them... According to her, the skills would eventually help me manage my destiny!” added the young lord as he wiped his tears away.

“...I, Chester Tindall, have said everything that I’ve needed to... After letting out all of this, I can’t deny that I’m feeling better than ever, knowing that once I’m dead, I won’t have to bear this heavy burden anymore... Thank you for taking the time to listen to my story... Before you kill me, please allow me to ask for one final favor from you!” said Chester.

“What is it?” asked Gerald.

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“Throughout the years, I’ve hurt a total of seven women... Before I die, I wish to beg for their forgiveness... Only then will I be able to rest in peace... Perhaps I may still be able to meet Lola after doing so...” said Chester extremely sincerely.

Hearing that, Gerald simply nodded slightly without saying another word, a clear sign of his approval.

Gerald was fine with granting him his request since it truly seemed like Chester wished for repentance. The fact that Chester remembered where every single one of the seven women he had hurt lived made Gerald even more sure that Chester was serious about his request.

Soon enough, Chester and Gerald made their way over to a farmer’s house. Once the door was opened, the pale-faced Chester kneeled before the family of three which consisted of the daughter he had hurt alongside her parents.

“Y-young lord?! T-to what do we owe the pleasure...?” stuttered the father, as all three of them trembled in fear.

“I have come to beg for your forgiveness! While I’m well aware that I probably can’t ever compensate for all the mistakes I’ve made, I promise to do anything you ask me to in an attempt to make up for what I’ve done! I don’t mind taking my life either!” declared Chester.

“T-there’s no need for any of that!” squealed the daughter—who had previously been his victim—in a terrified tone as she hid behind her parents while shaking her head rapidly.

“I beg of you! Please, allow me to do something to show my sincerity!” pleaded the young lord as he continued kneeling there.

“As he’s said, you can tell him to do anything. Even telling him to kill himself isn’t out of the option! Go on, take your pick...” added Gerald—who had been standing beside Chester this entire time—as he looked at the family of three.

“T-there’s no need for any unnecessary deaths! ...Regardless... If you truly wish to do something, young lord... um... T-then help us fill up that water tank over there!” replied the daughter as she pointed at a water tank.

“...Huh?” said Chester, momentarily stunned. However, he quickly returned to his senses before nodding and heading over to the well to begin his task. Soon enough, the water tank was completely filled.

“That’ll do!” said the family who were clearly still afraid of him, but not as terrified as they initially were. After all, the young lord didn’t seem to have his usual awe-inspiring aura surrounding him at the moment... It made them feel that they could at least relax a bit more around him.

Hearing that, Chester then stood before them again before saying, “I... don’t have much saved, but here’s a hundred and fifty thousand dollars! Please, accept it!”

With that, Chester held out the money to the trio until they finally gave in and accepted the cash.

Following that, Chester and Gerald left the family’s house to repeat the process with the other six families on Montholm Island.

Eventually, Chester kneeled before Jasmine once they arrived at the manor where Gerald was currently staying at.

Seeing the young lord, Jasmine quickly hid behind Gerald before shouting, “A-ah! He’s here, Gerald!”

“...While I didn’t physically hurt you, Miss Fenderson, I’ve still hurt Lord Fenderson and your family member... Both of them nearly died because of me, and I truly hope that you’ll be willing to forgive me...”

— To be Continued... —