

Chapter 1113

It was now extremely late at night and a cool ocean breeze blew across Halimark City.

Despite the time, the Minshall family manor was still brightly lit. Inside, all of them were having a family meeting.

“You did a truly swell job today, Zoey! Now that we have these herbs, we can continue refining the eternal pellet!” declared the old master of the Minshall family. Though he looked to be over ninety, he still looked quite strong for his age.

“You living to be over a hundred would already be a blessing to me, grandpa!” replied Zoey with a wide smile on her face.

“However, what does deserve congratulating is the fact that I barely made any effort to obtain the herbs this time around! What more, I even earned three hundred million dollars from that idiot without having to lose anything!” added Zoey as she laughed out loud.

“About that... It'd be best if you did less of this kind of thing in the future... It's not good for our family's good fortune... This applies to the rest of us here as well. Remember, Master Ghost calculated three years ago that the Minshalls could face some sort of disaster this year!” replied the old master with a slightly bitter smile.

“I know, grandpa... Speaking of that idiot, he's just some foreigner yet he wanted to strike a deal with us in exchange for the herbs and the money! Haha! Now that I think about it, why don't I send someone over to capture him? By doing so, we can blackmail and drain more cash from him!”

“You're old enough to make your own decisions, Zoey...” replied the smiling old master as he shook his head in resignation.

The old master had already painstakingly managed his family for decades, and he had long lost any sort of fear for foreign forces. Due to that, his family members openly robbing others no longer surprised him.

At that moment, a servant walked in from outside. Carrying what looked to be some kind of document in his hands, he stopped before the old master before saying, "Old master!"

"What is it?"

"There's a young man waiting outside and he told me to present this document—signed by the young lady—to you! He said that he's here to claim what was agreed upon!" replied the servant.

"Humph! That fool! To think that he actually came over to us! Well that's even better then! We don't need to hunt him down now!" sneered Zoey.

Shaking his head with a smile, the old master then said, "Regardless, I'm interested in seeing what he actually intends to take from us..."

After picking the paper up and reading through it, however, the old master's eyes immediately widened, immense anger reflected in them!

Slamming the document onto a nearby table, he then shouted, "That b*stard! He's courting death for sure!"

"...What's wrong, grandpa?" asked Zoey as she and several other members of the Minshall family looked curiously at the old man.

Rather than waiting for a reply, Zoey picked the document up for herself and looked at it. On it, Gerald had written 'I wish to claim the entire Minshall family!'

"Humph! What an utter moron! I'm afraid he truly is unaware of how strong the Minshalls are! To think he would dare ask for our family!"

"Just let him in! We'll let him have a taste of our family's great power! We won't allow this incident to just slide unless he coughs up a billion dollars!" roared one of the Minshall family's apprentices as many others began doing the same.

With everyone agreeing to do so, Gerald was soon led into the manor by the same servant from before.

He was greeted by the sight of all the Minshall family members—alongside their guests—seated on either side of the room, with everyone scanning Gerald from head to toe with contemptuous eyes.

“Is everything ready? If it is, then you can just sign here! Once I’m done with my work tomorrow, I’ll call my family members over to take over your family!” said Gerald.

Hearing that, an exceptional-looking man—who was one of the Minshall family’s guests—ran up to Gerald’s back before shouting, “You b*stard! You’ll have to get through me first!”

Immediately after, he grabbed onto Gerald’s shoulders with the intent of executing a shoulder throw. Seeing how thin and weak Gerald looked, the man had no doubts that Gerald would be unable to withstand his attack.

To his surprise, no matter how hard he tried to lift Gerald, he simply couldn’t make him budge at all! Unwilling to give up, the guest’s face soon turned purple due to all the force he was exerting. Despite that, Gerald remained pinned to the ground!

“You’re going to vomit blood if you continued doing that, you know...?” said Gerald.

“W-what...? The hell did you say?” replied the guest, stunned.

“You know, I still don’t know what you’re trying to do... Here, I’ll show you how it’s done!” said Gerald rather placidly as he grabbed onto the guest’s shoulders and instantly tossed him toward the door like he was nothing!

Crashing sounds ensued just seconds later...

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The sounds had come from the door smashing into pieces when the guest’s body collided with it! Even after that, the body continued flying until it hit a pillar,

resulting in the pillar getting destroyed as well! The guest's path of destruction only halted once it struck a replica mountain that was located close to yet another destroyed door! By then, his twitching body was all bloody.

"...W-what?" muttered everyone in unison.

Though they were all smiling earlier, all their expressions were now stiffened. To think that the young man had such ungodly strength!

After witnessing that, all the other Minshall family apprentices—who had earlier roared to have Gerald beaten up—took turns retreating to the side.

"...M-masters! Combine your forces and get him!" ordered Zoey, her slight fear evident in her voice. She hadn't anticipated for any of this to happen!

Hearing that, the Minshall family's distinguished guests—who were all sitting at the end of the table—exchanged glances with each other before quickly running over to surround Gerald!

Before they were able to attack, however, Gerald simply lifted a hand before flicking a finger onto a stone pillar beside him. After a split second of silence, blinding rays of light suddenly emitted from where he had flicked, and—after an explosive sound—a hole soon appeared at the other end of the pillar as light shot out of it!

By that point, cracks that looked similar to spider webs had already formed on the pillar. Staring in horror, the masters watched as the entire pillar exploded before their very eyes! Most of the area was momentarily clouded in white debris, and when it finally cleared again, the masters could all be seen with both hands raised.

Utterly terrified, all of them kept their hands firmly in the air, not daring to even move an inch. If Gerald could do that to a pillar, all of them were too scared to even imagine what would happen if he used the same move on them.

The masters who recognized this level of power were even more terrified.

'This power... This man is undoubtedly a great master!'

Seeing how terrified even the masters were, the other members of the Minshall family remained frozen in place as well, all of them terror-stricken.

With everyone seemingly petrified in fear, it made for a rather strange scene.

Gerald, however, didn't look too bothered about it as he walked over to the old master. Once he was in front of the old man, he placed the agreement form—that he had prepared—in front of the old master before saying, "Do have a look at it first. If there aren't any further problems, just sign it! Then again, even if there are problems, you still have to do it..."

Smiling 'innocently', Gerald then added, "...Otherwise, I'll kill everyone in the room!"

The old master instantly gulped as his heart continued beating wildly. Now drenched in cold sweat, the old man then said, "...S-sir... It's my granddaughter's fault for failing to realize how strong and influential you were...! On her behalf, I apologize for her infuriating you! Please accept my apology!"

"No apologies needed. Regardless, you'll only have a few more seconds to consider. Once I finish this sentence, you'd better sign it immediately. Otherwise—"

"I-I'll sign it! I'll sign it right now!" nodded the old master, who was now feeling—aside from terrified—both remorseful and angry.

They had such a beautiful and enjoyable life before this... Why did they have to offend such a reckless and unreasonable person?! Just why...

"...S-sir... Do understand that I'll need at least two days to gather all the Minshall family's properties... I'll prepare everything nicely by then so I hope you permit the slight delay..." pleaded the distressed old man.

"I'm fine with that. I'll come over and take everything at nine at night in two days! Once I return, you'll need to list out all the assets for me. Regardless, I still need to claim some interests first!"

"...What do you fancy...?" asked the old man as he gulped.

"I've heard that the ancestors of the Minshall family once dug up and stole a pair of jade charms from the king of the ocean's tomb!" replied Gerald.

"...While it's true that our ancestors had passed down the charms to our generation, believe me when I say that they were recently stolen by a woman! As a result, we currently don't have the charms-"

"I don't need them. What I want is the map you used to head to the king of the ocean's palace!" interrupted Gerald.

"...H-huh?" replied the old man, his expression now displaying how nervous he was.

The map to the king of the ocean's place was the Minshall family's most valuable heirloom. Several of their family's ancestors ended up losing their lives just to obtain it. The map alone could be considered to be the foundation of the Minshall family...

"If you don't hand it over, I'll just kill everyone!" said Gerald, his tone still as frigid as before.

Gerald was well aware that the Minshalls had always dealt with things unreasonably. As a result, he felt no need to beat around the bush with them.

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"I-I'll hand it over...!" shouted the old master, his immense grief evident. However, he really didn't have much of a choice but to obey.

"...Men! Retrieve the map for him!" ordered the old man as he gestured for a few subordinates to do so.

Soon enough, they returned with the map, handing it over to Gerald.

“Speaking of which, I’ll also be taking the herbs I gave you tonight,” added Gerald.

“R-right away...!” replied the old master extremely bitterly.

They had only blackmailed three hundred million dollars and the herbs from him... To think that he would retaliate by snatching away everything that the Minshall family owned!

While all the other Minshalls were definitely brimming with anger and resentment as well, none of them dared to say a word, choosing instead to keep their dissatisfaction to themselves.

Once he obtained the herbs as well, Gerald turned around to leave.

However, he had only taken a few steps when a young Minshall apprentice jumped out while shouting, “You b*stard! Who the hell do you think you are?! Rot in hell!”

Following that, he raised his gun, aiming it at the back of Gerald’s!

Instantly pulling the trigger, the sound of a gunshot immediately followed...

However, Gerald remained standing. Everyone stared wide-eyed when they realized that he had caught the bullet between his fingers without even having to turn around!

“...What?”

As the apprentice stared in utter disbelief, he watched as Gerald flicked his wrist slightly... And that was the last thing he would ever see.

The apprentice's head exploded on the spot, creating a disgusting 'splotching' sound as fresh blood flew in all directions!

Now trembling in immense fear, the other petrified Minshalls watched as Gerald simply continued walking forward without saying a word.

As he walked past the masters who still had their hands raised, not daring to move a muscle, Gerald stopped in front of one of them.

Observing the middle-aged master's palm, Gerald wondered if the master had earlier planned to smash his palm into the side of Gerald's head.

"...Could this be the result of mastering the iron palm?" asked Gerald curiously.

"Y-yes, master!"

"I see... How long have you trained for this? And what can you do with the skill?"

"I've painstakingly trained for twenty years to master it! With it, I'm able to split even the hardest rocks in two!" replied the master before gulping slightly.

"...Not bad!" said Gerald, displaying slight admiration as he patted the master's shoulder that was now drenched in cold sweat.

Once he did that, Gerald then left the premise...

The second he was gone, everyone immediately released sighs of relief. As for the old master, his face was now filled with tears as he fell to the floor in a sitting position.

"G-grandpa!" shouted the still terrified Zoey as she ran over to his side.

However, the moment she was beside him, the old master immediately gave his most adored granddaughter a tight slap to her face!

“Look... Just look at what you’ve done...! To think that you offended such a person under the Minshall family’s name...! What’s worse is that he had every right to do what he had just done! This... This was what Master Ghost had predicted three years ago... This is the disaster that he had warned us about!” cried out the old master.

Meanwhile, Gerald continued walking back to the Yarne family manor.

Now that he had obtained the map to the king of the ocean’s palace, he could set off once his family sent a few teams over.

He still truly believed that heading there would be the key to him solving the mysteries of the woman in white, the ancient tomb, and the divine general.

Gerald had to meet up with the legendary Master Ghost as well, a person rumored to be extremely skillful. Knowing that Wagner had already set an appointment for him to meet Master Ghost tomorrow, Gerald was secretly excited to see whether that person truly was as skilled as many had claimed.

As he continued walking on, his train of thought was cut short when he heard a faint, feminine voice coming from one of the bushes by the roadside.

“...Hmm?” muttered Gerald, frowning slightly as he walked over to investigate.

Once he was there, he confirmed that the voice had come from a woman. The woman herself was dressed fully in black and her stomach was bleeding profusely. From what Gerald could tell, her injuries were extremely serious.

What surprised Gerald even more, however, was how extremely fair and charming her face was. Even though she was terribly injured, her shut eyes gave the illusion that the graceful-looking woman was at peace.

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In a way, her face—at least to Gerald—was a textbook example of an oriental beauty.

Shaking the thoughts off, Gerald quickly ran over to her and checked her pulse while asking, “Are you alright?”

Getting no response, Gerald deduced that she had fainted from losing too much blood.

‘This wound would’ve been fatal if I hadn’t found you any sooner!’ Gerald thought to himself as he immediately rushed her over to the Yarne family manor.

It was early the next morning when Yume Gunter slowly opened her eyes to the lingering scent of medicine. Looking around, she saw that she was in some sort of luxurious room.

The moment she tried to sit up, however, she immediately let out a yelp.

Someone had dressed her up in pajamas!

Her immediate response was warranted since it was natural for women to be particularly sensitive toward being changed by strangers. This was especially so for Yume who was quite traditional-minded.

However, she did notice that the person had also bandaged the injuries around her stomach. Even so, she knew she needed to get out.

Forcefully dragging her still injured body off the bed, she eventually managed to get to her feet. Upon opening the door, she saw a small portion of what seemed to be a courtyard and her old clothes hanging on a rack that a young man was currently standing beside.

The man himself was facing the courtyard while looking at some kind of picture.

Hearing the door open, Gerald sipped his tea before putting the picture down and turning around to say, “So you’re finally awake...”

“...Were you the one in charge of putting me in these pajamas?” asked Yume as she glared at Gerald while biting her bright-red lower lip.

Gerald simply nodded slightly in response.

“You! Who allowed you to touch me?!” shouted Yume as she glared daggers at him.

“You’d have died if I hadn’t touched you! If you hadn’t bumped into me last night you would’ve died not long after!” replied Gerald.

“Then... My current innerwear...”

“Would you have preferred to remain in blood-drenched clothes? And it’s not like I could tend to your wounds with your clothes on!”

“You... You b*stard!” roared the woman as she threw a vase directly at him!

Catching it with his free hand, Gerald then sighed before replying, “Look, I just made this tea... Could you calm down for a bit...?”

While the woman was undoubtedly charming—possibly even as pretty as Lyra—she had an extremely short fuse.

At that moment, the door leading outside—from Gerald’s side—was opened and a few maids stepped in.

One of them then said, “Mr. Yarne has invited you over to the living room to discuss some affairs, sir!”

"I see," replied Gerald.

Gerald was currently within a top-notch manor that Wagner had arranged for him in order for the youth to avoid any disruptions from unnecessary people.

After hearing his reply, the maids turned to look at the woman next as another maid exclaimed, "Alas! Why did you get out of bed, miss? We've just bandaged your wounds so you have to refrain from moving around too much!"

"...Come again? Were you the ones who bandaged my clothes? ...Then... About my clothes..."

"Well of course we were the ones who changed you into them! We did so immediately after the master brought you back!" replied another maid.

Upon hearing that, Yume took a brief glance at Gerald while thinking, '...If that's the case, then I've accused him of something he hasn't done...!'

"...Why did you admit to doing all that if you hadn't done any of it?" asked Yume.

"I didn't. You were the only one assuming what had happened!" replied Gerald as he shook his head with a bitter smile.

"Regardless, you there. It's about time to reapply medicine on her. Remember to apply it every three hours so that no scars will be left behind on her stomach once her injuries heal," added Gerald as he smiled subtly at one of the maids.

"Yes sir!"

Following that, he smiled while nodding at Yume before heading off to meet Wagner.

Watching him walk off, Yume couldn't help but think, '...Why does that person feel so familiar... I wonder if it's just because he saved me...'

The moment Gerald was gone, the maids instantly gathered around her before sincerely saying, “Pardon us, miss, but you’re extremely beautiful! Truth be told, you’re probably the most beautiful woman any of us have ever seen on this planet!”

Hearing their words of admiration, Yume instantly lowered her charming face to hide her reddened cheeks.

“I appreciate the compliments... Also, thank you for saving me!”

“No problem, miss! Speaking of which, how did you get hurt, miss...? You were seriously injured last night and from what the master told us, your stomach wasn’t hurt by an ordinary blade!” asked another maid in surprise as the group of maids slowly supported her back into the room.

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As for Gerald, Wagner had called for him so that both of them could head over to meet Master Ghost in Langvern Church—which was located in Langvern Mountain—as appointed by Wagner the day before.

In the past, Gerald hadn’t really believed in so-called ‘masters of fortune-telling’. He simply considered them to be people who were keen on deceiving others.

However, from the moment he first found out about the remarkable old beggar in the mural, his views on fortune-telling began changing.

Aside from all the mystifying new experiences he had gone through, Gerald also had another reason to believe that Master Ghost was the real deal. After all, Master Ghost had successfully predicted events that would befall Alice, Wagner, and even the Minshall family. Everything that he had said eventually came true.

Since Master Ghost had been able to predict that both Wagner and Gerald would eventually meet, Gerald knew that there existed a chance that he would be able to learn about Mila and his uncle’s whereabouts upon meeting Master Ghost.

With that in mind, Gerald was quite anticipated to meet the master.

Located on a mountain ridge north of Halimark City, Langvern Mountain itself was an area surrounded by cliffs and old pine trees. If one were to stand atop the mountain, they would be able to see the entirety of Halimark City. Since the city itself was pretty large, anyone looking at it from the mountain would see it stretching into the horizon, so much so, in fact, that the end of Halimark City sometimes looked like it was converging with the sky.

Staring down from above, even a space that could fit tens of thousands of people gave the impression that it was only the size of a matchbox. Anyone who saw such a scene would undoubtedly be reminded of how insignificant humans were.

One could normally find lots of people at the foot of the hill. After all, several people went to Langvern Mountain to pray, and many others headed there to pay formal visits to Master Ghost in hopes of getting their fates foretold.

As for Langvern Church, it was a simple but ancient-looking building that, from afar, gave the impression that it wasn't overly spacious. While churches nowadays were usually refurbished quite exquisitely and luxuriously, from the day it was built—many, many years ago—the Langvern Church had retained its mottled, greyish-white walls as well as its reddish-brown bricks and tiles that could be found all around the building.

Despite many people constantly visiting Langvern Mountain, the mountain was still able to maintain its lightness and delicateness, making it quite a unique place.

Returning to Gerald and Wagner, by the time both of them arrived at the foot of the mountain, the path from the foot to the very top of the mountain was already crowded with people.

Looking around, Gerald ended up momentarily freezing. He wasn't even sure if he was just imagining things, but standing quite a distance away from him, was an extremely graceful-looking woman. Well, at least her back was graceful-looking, from what Gerald could see.

Watching as the woman's maids led her into her car, Gerald was unable to catch even the slightest glimpse of her face due to one of the maids holding a parasol—that completely blocked his view of her—as she entered the vehicle.

Eyes-widened as he gulped, Gerald could only stare as he watched the car drive off.

'...She... She looked so similar...!'

If it wasn't for the fact that he knew his girlfriend was missing, Gerald would've easily have thought that the woman he had just seen was Mila!

After all, the back of that woman's fair neck looked incredibly similar to his girlfriend's.

The sudden shock of the scene almost made his rational side crumble for second, thinking that it truly could be her. However, he quickly gathered his thoughts again, deeming the situation as slightly odd.

He immediately reminded himself that not only had Mila gone missing for a long time now, but since she had been captured by the Sun League, it was even less possible for her to be roaming around like this!

Gerald simply shook his head, summing up the incident as being only an illusion of his. It was probably because he was missing Mila too much.

Still, Gerald couldn't help but gulp as he watched the car continue to drive further away. He was now seriously considering catching up with that car to see if it truly was Mila or not. Even if she wasn't, he could at least rest easy knowing that he hadn't missed a chance to finally find her again.

At that moment, he suddenly felt a tug on his arm before hearing a feminine voice call out, "Hey, Gerald! I've already called out to you several times! Can't you hear me?"

Pulled from his train of thought and back to the present, Gerald turned to look at the owner of the voice. As it turned out, the woman who had tugged his arm was Yasmeen!

“Who are you even looking at...? The moment you saw that beauty, your eyes widened a lot you know? I really didn’t think that you were such a person, Gerald!” said Yasmeen.

“What do you want?” asked Gerald in a clearly annoyed tone. After all, Yasmeen had interrupted him during an extremely crucial moment.

“Now what sort of tone even is that! I came over to greet you but this is how you treat me?” said Yasmeen who seemed rather adamant about continuing to talk to Gerald.

Taking in a deep breath, Gerald turned to look at the car again. However, it was now completely out of sight.

After thinking about it for a brief moment, he chalked it up as him simply thinking too much about it.

Regardless, since Yasmeen had been so enthusiastic to talk to him all of a sudden, he was now finding it quite awkward that he had treated her that way just seconds ago.

“...I was just deep in thought earlier. Sorry,” replied Gerald casually.

Covering her mouth to chuckle, Yasmeen then said, “Now that’s the Gerald I know! Haha!”

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“So tell me, Gerald, why did you come all the way out here? Could it be that you’re hoping to meet Master Ghost to have your love fortune read? They say his predictions are extremely accurate, you know!” said Yasmeen.

At that, Gerald simply shook his head.

He didn't really have much to talk to her about, and through his attitude, Gerald hoped that Yasmeen would eventually get the hint and understand that he really didn't want to continue chatting with her.

"I see... Well I certainly did! I hope he predicts nice things about my love life!" replied Yasmeen with a smile.

"Come again? Don't you already have a husband?" said Gerald.

Though he didn't show it, Gerald already knew why Yasmeen was treating him so differently compared to before. After all, he was no longer a 'poor student' in her eyes after displaying how rich he was back at the auction.

"And who told you that I'm married? Whoever you're thinking of, that man definitely isn't my husband! Regardless, since we've known each other since university, I'm sure you think that I'm the kind of woman who only focuses on money and status rather than feelings. I'll say it right here and now that I'm actually the complete opposite of that! You know, women are extremely particular when it comes to their feelings... Even I long for love, and pure love at that!"

"...I see."

"...Anyway, just so you know, I've always felt that you were a particularly nice person, even from our university days... You really give people a sense of security and warmth, you know? It's something many women, including me, yearn for! Women aren't just only looking for wealth and luxury all the time! Sometimes the best things in life for us can be exceedingly simple!" added Yasmeen as she smiled sweetly at Gerald.

Shaking his head in resignation, Gerald simply smiled bitterly before replying, "You're only yearning for the 'simple things' now since you know I'm rich... If I remained as poor as I used to be then you wouldn't be saying all that!"

By this point, Gerald had already heard other women saying similar things to him countless times. As a result, Yasmeen's motive was clear as day to him.

In the past, he would've surely been too shy and embarrassed to retort to her. Now, however, he had grown way too tired of listening to the same fake compliments over and over again.

"You!-"

Yasmeen was now blushing slightly, feeling extremely awkward at the same time. She truly hadn't expected Gerald to be this straightforward.

She was left even more flabbergasted when she saw him starting to walk off—with Wagner—without even bothering to say anything else to her!

She had initially thought that she was perfectly capable of hooking up with Gerald due to her beauty. To her dismay, he was completely unaffected by her charm!

Feeling both vexed and ashamed of herself, Yasmeen then thought to herself, '... Gerald's so much more mature now compared to how he used to be... He seems to give off an aura of security as well... I hate to admit it, but he truly has become a true man!'

Not wanting to give up so easily, she then ran after him while shouting, "S-stop!"

Naturally, they didn't and eventually, Gerald and Wagner arrived at the top of the mountain. However, there actually seemed to be even more people crowded there compared to the foot of the mountain.

As Gerald looked around, he saw what seemed to be a few apprentices of Master Ghost standing before the closed doors of the Langvern Church.

They seemed to be actively prohibiting any visitors from entering.

"Let us in! We've already waited for a long time, you know? Why are you stopping us from entering?"

“Yeah! By the looks of it, the church may deteriorate soon and we won’t be able to meet the master then!”

For obvious reasons, several of the visitors there were complaining out loud at the apprentices.

“Today, the master will only be granting audience to a single acquaintance of his who comes from afar. For the rest of you, please descend the hill and come back next time,” replied one of the apprentices.

“Then what if I pay you to see him? I intend to meet him today to have my love life foretold!” asked Yasmeen—who had been walking by Gerald’s side for a while now—as she nudged Gerald’s arm slightly.

A look of disgust on his face, Gerald simply frowned before moving his arm away from hers.

‘Still... This Master Ghost is just a fortune teller, is he not...? To think that he’d put on such airs!’ Gerald thought to himself, slightly amused.

As Gerald was thinking to himself, another visitor said, “Mister, I truly have some urgent issues to talk to him about... Please state any conditions I could fulfill to meet him today!”

“There aren’t any. He simply refuses to meet anyone else today save for his acquaintance. Kindly leave, ladies and gentlemen....” replied the apprentice as he shook his head.

The moment his sentence ended, the church’s doors suddenly creaked open...

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Out stepped a young man draped in black robes. When the visitors saw him, all of them fell silent.

As for the apprentices, they immediately bowed respectfully before shouting in unison, “Senior!”

“The distinguished guest that master’s been waiting for has arrived...” said the man as he scanned through the crowd with a smile.

“May I know who among you goes by the name of Mr. Gerald Crawford? From Northbay?” added the man.

“That would be me!” replied Gerald as he frowned slightly. To think that the mysterious Master Ghost had even predicted that he would come over today to pay him a visit!

“Greetings, Mr. Crawford. The master has been waiting for you for the longest time, and he’s already prepared some tea for you. Please, follow me,” said the young priest as he bowed.

Astonished, Gerald then replied, “...The longest time? From when exactly had he predicted my arrival...? As far as I know, Wagner only told him yesterday that I was coming over today to pay him a visit! Does Master Ghost know about my true identity as well?”

While he had long accepted that artifacts—like the picture of the sun—were capable of predicting the future, Gerald truly couldn’t believe that a person could hold such abilities as well!

Quite frankly, the revelation was now causing Gerald to simultaneously feel envious, grateful, and resentful toward the mysterious man.

After all, Master Ghost sounded like a man who was well-versed in everything and always had everything under his control. Gerald hated such people, and he was now keen on getting to know the true extent of Master Ghost’s strength.

“The master predicted it about a year ago,” replied the apprentice calmly.

Gerald, however, felt his heart skip a beat the moment he heard that.

'...Since he's that powerful, I truly have to meet him today!'

"I see. Lead the way, then!" said Gerald as he began following the man into the church.

The first area they stepped into appeared to be a large hall with a statue of God placed right in front for people to worship. After walking past that, they entered what appeared to be an inner court of sorts.

This area was filled with fragrances that were emitted from an oil burner, and sitting cross-legged in front of it, was an extremely old-looking man. His eyes closed, the old man appeared to be meditating.

Seeing a tea table before the old man, Gerald realized that the fragrance of tea was also pleasantly mixed with the scent from the oil burner.

The moment he took a step forward, the old man—whose face was filled with wrinkles, slowly raised his head before opening both his eyes.

"It's truly been quite a while, Mr. Gerald Crawford..."

Upon hearing his master's voice, the apprentice then left the room.

Gerald himself sat cross-legged once he stood before the tea table before asking, "...Did you truly foresee everything? Truth be told, I'm not quite buying it!"

"Well, not everything... I can only see things in the form of life events," replied Master Ghost with a slightly bitter smile.

"Then I'm sure you already know why I came here today, right?"

"Indeed. You're here today to look for some missing people!" said Master Ghost.

“...You’re correct. Look, could you make the appropriate calculations and try to locate the missing people I’m still searching for? If your predictions are correct, then I’ll give you anything you want, be it money or anything else in the world that you wish for!” replied Gerald.

“Haha! There’s no need to be impatient, Mr. Crawford... Before I do a reading about them, why don’t I do a reading for you first? A reading for your future, per se. I’ll be honest and say that the slight redness around your forehead isn’t a good sign... In fact, it means that you’re about to face a great disaster soon...” said Master Ghost as he looked at Gerald with a smile.

Hearing that, Gerald felt his heart skip another beat. Master Ghost had yet again, predicted accurately. After all, the picture of the sun had predicted the same thing as well. Was the old man truly well-versed in the art of fortune-telling?

Due to the predicted disaster possibly spelling death for Gerald, he had come all the way out here just to look for the king of the ocean’s palace in hope of solving the secrets of the disaster. What exactly was the relationship between the woman in white and the deity that looked exactly like him?

“...I’m already aware of what you just told me... Even so, the more important thing for me now is to find out where the people I’m looking for currently are... And also to find out whether they’re still alive,” replied Gerald, finally choosing to believe Master Ghost.

“It seems they hold great importance to you, Mr. Crawford! Very well, then. Let the reading commence,” said Master Ghost with a slight nod.

With a wave of his hand, the drapes above all the doors and windows in the room were instantly lowered. Following that, a portion of the wooden floor in the middle of the room slid open as a giant instrument slowly rose from below.

The ancient-looking instrument itself seemed to have a frame that was made completely out of copper, and on it, were nine dragons with open mouths. While Gerald remembered seeing a picture of a similar instrument with pearls in the dragons’ mouths, these dragons had large copper coins in their mouths instead.

“Please place your hands on any two of the dragons’ heads,” said Master Ghost.

Gerald simply obeyed, and moments after touching the cold dragon heads, the eyes of all nine of the copper dragons began glowing in a green light! With how lustrous their eyes were, the nine dragons almost seemed to be alive.

As Gerald continued looking at them curiously, he soon heard 'clinking' sounds coming from the instrument.

— To be Continued... —