

## **Chapter 1976**

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 longwords in hand!

Despite being outnumbered, Gerald barely even looked fazed.

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

## **Chapter 1977**

Upon seeing that, Johnny's face immediately went pale. To think that Gerald was this powerful... How unexpected!

"...Who the hell are you?! State your name!" growled Johnny as he glared daggers at Gerald.

"As if you even have a right to know my name!" retorted Gerald, a wry smile on his face. As if he'd reveal his identity so easily when he wasn't even from this world!

Hearing that, Johnny couldn't help but feel disappointed. Still, he knew that he and his men were no match against Gerald. Johnny, for one, was well acquainted with the saying, 'A wise man never continues fighting when the odds are clearly against him.'

With that in mind, Johnny then yelled, "Men! Retreat!"

Hearing that, the four men obeyed and quickly fled the scene with Johnny...

Once they were out of sight, Gerald walked toward Zianne, helping her up as he asked in a concerned tone, "Are you alright...?"

Now that he was standing so close to her, Gerald couldn't help but feel that she looked absolutely beautiful... Even so, he knew better than to have feelings for her. After all, he was already married to Mila, and he would never forgive himself if he cheated...

Either way, Gerald snapped out of it when the blushing Zianne shook her head before saying, "I-I'm fine... Regardless, thank you for saving me, young warrior!"

Nodding in response, Gerald then asked, "So... Why did they assault you?"

What was so special about Zianne that made five grown men want her dead...?

"Well... It's because I'm from the Whitehaar Abbey while they're from the Purplefog Abbey! Their abbey hates mine, which is why they attacked me!" explained Zianne.

Upon hearing that, Gerald began realizing just how complicated things actually were in this realm...

After staring at Gerald for a while, Zianne—who found his appearance and clothing to be quite foreign—couldn't help but ask, "Um... If I may, where do you come from, young warrior...? You don't exactly look like you're from around here..."

Hearing that, Gerald was momentarily at a loss, unsure of how to even reply.

After a brief awkward silence, Gerald came up with an idea, prompting him to say, "I'm... uhh... A traveler from a far-off land! I just happened to be passing by when I saw them attacking you, which is why I stepped in! The name's Gerald Crawford!"

"Zianne Landis!" replied the woman, barely even registering that what Gerald had said was a lie...

Realizing that he had managed to dodge a bullet, Gerald breathed a bit easier as he asked, "Either way... Where are you headed off to now, Miss Landis?"

"Oh, I'm going down the mountain to get some supplies in Heavenstar Town. What about you?" replied Zianne.

Chuckling in response, Gerald then said, "What a coincidence! Me too! Let's head there together!"

Since Zianne was the first person he had gotten to know here, following her around would certainly be convenient. At the very least, he wouldn't end up getting lost.

Either way, upon hearing that, Zianne simply replied, "Sure, why not?"

Following that, both of them began heading to Heavenstar Town...

When they finally arrived, Gerald's attire instantly became the talk of the town. After all, not only were they unfamiliar with this person, but his garments were completely different from theirs! The awkwardness of it all made Gerald consider changing his outfit to blend in better with the locals... After all, who was he to be dressed so differently?

## **Chapter 1978**

After telling Zianne about his plight, she immediately got him some new clothes in town...

Thankfully, after putting them on, Gerald no longer looked out of place among the other inhabitants of the Autremonde Realm.

Now that he could blend in with the crowd, Gerald took the chance to ask, "Speaking of which, what specific supplies are you hoping to get here, Miss Landus?"

"Oh, I'm here to get some medicinal herbs for my master!" replied Zianne with a smile.

Watching as Gerald nodded, Zianne went silent for a while before eventually saying, "Actually... Why don't you follow me back once I'm done with this errand, Warrior Crawford? I still need to thank you properly for saving my life earlier! Who knows what those b\*stards would've done to me had you not stepped in!"

While Gerald knew that she was just trying to be appreciative, he couldn't help but ask in a worried tone, "Are... you sure I won't end up being a bother...? And will your master get mad at you for bringing me over...?"

Gerald, for one, knew for a fact that sects didn't really welcome outsiders. With that in mind, he was worried that Zianne would end up getting chastised if he followed her back. If that truly came to be, then Gerald would surely feel immensely guilty...

"Well, while my master does emphasize all the time that we shouldn't bring outsiders into the abbey, you aren't exactly an outsider. After all, you saved me! Due to that, I believe that my

master will understand me bringing you over. Besides, my master always tells us to repay the kindness of others!” replied Zianne in a sincere tone.

Upon hearing that, Gerald went silent for a moment before finally saying, “I see... Well... alright, then. Since you’ve so graciously invited me, I guess I’ll follow you back! I don’t have any place to be today anyway, so I may as well stay overnight in your abbey!”

Hearing that, Zianne could hardly hide the joy on her face. After all, if Zianne was going to be completely honest, she was slightly attracted to Gerald. It was simply the common trope of ‘the beauty falling for the hero’ in play.

Even so, Zianne knew that she and Gerald would never be able to be together. After all, all disciples of the Purplefog Abbey were prohibited from falling in love. Hell, they couldn’t even hold hands with men or they’d end up getting severely punished or even getting expelled!

Whatever the case was, after Zianne bought the medicinal herbs she was looking for—together with Gerald—the duo left the town and headed straight for the Purplefog Abbey...

The Purplefog Abbey itself was located at the peak of the mountain east of Heavenstar Town. As for why the abbey was called that, it was essentially due to the fact that the mountain it was on was always enshrouded in a magnificent-looking purple mist...

Either way, after about half an hour of ascending the mountain’s many steps—under Zianne’s lead—the Purplefog Abbey could be seen in the distance. By this point, Gerald had realized that the entire area looked quite similar to a place on earth called Mount Skygate...

Regardless, as the duo neared the gates of the Purplefog Abbey, two female disciples—who were standing guard there—instantly shouted, “Eldest sister! You’re back!”

After Zianne nodded with a smile, the two girls—who had noticed Gerald’s presence—couldn’t help but ask, “...Um... Eldest sister...? Who’s that...?”

They were rightfully wary since outsiders couldn’t just enter all willy-nilly. What more, this outsider was a man...!

## **Chapter 1979**

Not even waiting for Ziane to reply, the other disciple quickly added, “Have you already forgotten the rules of our sect? Master has told us time and again that we can’t bring outsiders into our abbey, especially men! With that in mind, what you’re currently doing is clearly against the rules, Eldest sister! You’ll definitely be punished if you bring him in!”

As the chief disciple of the Purplefog Abbey, Zianne had a rather high reputation in the sect. What more, she was also an idol to many of the sect's disciples. With that in mind, the two girls were simply stepping in out of concern.

Understanding that they only meant well, Zianne then calmly explained, "He's no outsider... He's my savior! Just so you two know, without his help, I would've surely perished earlier!"

Upon hearing that, the two girls were instantly caught in a dilemma...

Seeing that, Zianne then added, "Don't worry, you two! I'll explain all this to master, and if anything happens, I'll be sure to take full responsibility! You can both be sure that you won't end up getting into trouble!"

Before either of the girls could reply, Zianne was already leading Gerald into the abbey...

Gerald himself couldn't help but feel that things would only continue getting even more awkward after this. With that in mind, he reached out to grab Zianne's wrist—to stop her from going any further—and said, "I... think I'd better leave first... After all, it'll be bad if I cause you any trouble!"

However, the second his hand touched her's, Zianne instantly froze and her cheeks went beet red. After all, ever since she joined the Purplefog Abbey, she had never been touched by a man!

Only seconds later, several yells could suddenly be heard, saying, "Release our Eldest sister!"

"Unhand her, you b\*stard!"

Before the two knew it, they were already surrounded by at least a dozen female disciples!

Since all of them had swords pointing at him, Gerald quickly realized that he had been rude to touch Zianne out of the blue.

Releasing her hand, Gerald then yelled, "I apologize, I didn't mean to do that!"

Finally snapping out of it, Zianne herself ordered, "Lay down your swords!"

"Don't do as she says!" yelled another voice almost immediately after!

Following that, a woman donning the same purple garments as Zianne walked out from the crowd... Unlike Zianne, however, a veil covered her face, so Gerald couldn't see what she looked like.

Either way, the woman then mocked, “So, not only did you bring back medicine, but also a man! Have you forgotten our master’s words?!”

“What slander! As if I would ever forget master’s teachings! You aren’t even giving me room to explain myself!” retorted Zianne.

The daring woman that had just shown herself was known by the name of Yoona Landis. Within the Purplefog Abbey, she was the second most senior sister, and she was also Zianne’s junior.

Even so, she had always been extremely jealous of Zianne, and had tried time and again to drive her out! After all, with Zianne out, she would finally be able to attain the position of chief disciple!

Since Zianne had made such a blunder today, perhaps it was finally Yoona’s chance to achieve her goal!

With that in mind, Yoona then snorted disdainfully before yelling with a smirk, “Hah! Is there even anything to explain? That man held your hand and we all saw it! To think that you’re still trying to argue after all that!”

Raising a slight brow, Gerald finally decided to step in and say, “I have no idea what your relationship is with your Eldest sister, but I assure you that I’m just her friend. Again, if I’m causing all of you more trouble than needed, I’ll just leave!”

## **Chapter 1980**

“Bullsh\*t! Men can’t be trusted and all of them deserve to die! Also, did you honestly think that we’d just allow you to come and go as you pleased?” retorted Yoona as she glared at him while unsheathing her blade!

Leaping forward extremely quickly, Yoona then aimed her blade straight for Gerald’s chest!

Seeing that, Zianne immediately pushed Gerald to the side while yelling, “Careful!”

Naturally, Gerald could’ve easily dodged Yoona’s attack. After all, she was no match for him. Regardless, since he got pushed to the side, he could only watch as Zianne drew her own sword and clashed it with her junior’s!

Following that, a swordfight commenced between the two girls... However, since Zianne had earlier gotten hurt, she ended up falling to the ground when Yoona kicked her in the stomach!

Watching as Zianne covered her stomach in pain, Yoona took the chance to sneer, "Hah! Since when have you become this weak, Eldest sister? I guess having a man has truly made you lose yourself! No matter! I'll teach you a lesson on behalf of master!"

Just as Yoona was about to launch another attack at Zianne, Gerald bolted toward Zianne, picking her sword up and sending an aurablade straight for Yoona!

Due to the immense force, Yoona was sent flying backward, causing the disciples who were right behind her to topple to the ground as well!

As Yoona fell to the group—spitting a mouthful of blood out in the process—, Zianne herself could only stare wide-eyed at Gerald. To think that he had such terrifying power...! No wonder Johnny and his friends couldn't win against him!

Whatever the case was, Gerald then stabbed the blade into the ground before glaring at Yoona as he growled, "What ignorance! To think that you'd dare to fight your Eldest sister even after I've told you time and again that there's nothing between us!"

At that exact moment, a sword suddenly flew out of one of the houses!

Though it came dangerously close to piercing through Gerald, the youth himself simply turned his body, causing the blade to fly right past his eyes!

Once the sword stopped moving—after stabbing through a door that was in its way—, everyone turned to look at the direction the sword had been thrown from...

Watching as a white-haired woman—donning an equally white robe—walked out the house, everyone except for Gerald immediately knelt before calling out, "Master!"

As it turned out, she was Fayth Quenelle, the matriarch of the Purplefog Abbey...

Glaring at Gerald, Fayth yelled in a furious tone, "No man has ever dared to step foot into the Purplefog Abbey... Who are you? And how dare you come over to cause trouble!"

Hearing that, Zianne quickly replied, "I was the one who brought him over, master! I sincerely apologize!"

Turning to glare at Zianne next, Fayth then retorted, "Zianne, are you not my chief disciple? You, of all people, should know the rules of the sect! How could you commit such a grave sin!"

Bowing low, Zianne then replied, "I'm well aware of my mistake, master!"

Before any of them could say anything else, Gerald took the chance to yell, "Hold it! Just you know, if it wasn't for me, your chief disciple would've died by now!"

### **Chapter 1981**

Momentarily stunned to hear that, Fayth quickly snapped out of it before saying, "...Elaborate."

"As she was heading to Heavenstar Town to get medicinal herbs, she was assaulted by a few men from the Whitehaar Abbey! Had I not stepped in to save her, your sect would've surely received a major loss in the form of your chief disciple!" explained Gerald.

Eyes widened, Fayth then turned to look at Zianne before asking, "Does he speak the truth?"

"He does! The assailants were Johnny and four of his Whitehaar Abbey friends! If you need proof, just have a look at the wounds they inflicted on me! Regardless, it was I who invited Warrior Crawford over to show my appreciation for saving me! Even so, I know I've done wrong, so do punish me if you feel the need to!" replied Zianne.

Hearing that, Fayth immediately calmed down before walking over to Zianne and helping her up...

Turning their backs to Gerald, Fayth then slid Zianne's clothes off—up till her shoulders—before realizing that there really was a bruise there. Zianne had been telling the truth!

Now that she realized this, Fayth instantly growled, "I recognize this bruise pattern... It was caused by a Dark Cloud Palm attack, an attack that's exclusively used by those Whitehaar b\*stards!"

Breathing a sigh of relief now that she knew that her master believed her, Zianne took the chance to hand Fayth the medicinal herbs—that she had stored safely in the inner layer of her clothes—before saying, "Speaking of which... here are the herbs you told me to buy, master!"

Nodding in response, Fayth then replied, "Thank you... Regardless, since you've already suffered enough, there won't be any additional punishments! Come with me... and you as well, kind warrior! We'll have a talk inside!"

Fayth, for one, wasn't an unreasonable person, and she made sure to cast apologetic gazes at both Zianne and Gerald.

After hearing what their master had to say, the other disciples immediately began leaving the scene, though a few stayed to help Yoona up.

Yoona herself had a bitter expression on her face. To think that Zianne would escape punishment...!

Whatever the case was, Zianne and Gerald were promptly led into their abbey's great hall...

Once inside, Fayth retrieved a bottle of ointment and handed it to Zianne before saying in a caring tone, "Here, this will help treat your wounds. Apply it for a few days and your wounds will be gone in no time!"

"Thank you, master!" replied Zianne almost instantaneously.

With that done, Fayth then gestured for both of them to sit as she asked, "Alright then... Now that that's settled... May I know your name, young warrior?"

"I go by Gerald Crawford!" replied Gerald.

"A fine name... Regardless, I apologize for misunderstanding you earlier, Warrior Crawford! I hope you'll forgive me for that. Also, thank you for saving my eldest disciple today!" said Fayth in an apologetic tone.

"Don't worry about it, Madam. I was only doing what was right. There was just no way I could ignore the fact that five men were attacking a single woman!" replied Gerald rather modestly.

"Speaking of which, could you perhaps be a foreigner...? After all, from your speech patterns and the way you look, you don't seem to be a local... In fact, it feels like you don't even come from our world! I wonder if I'm right about that..." asked Fayth.

"Well... let's just say that I come from a far-off land!" replied Gerald with a chuckle.

"I see... Whatever the case is, I have to admit that your skills are astounding... Could I know who your master is...?" said Fayth who seemed to be trying to investigate further into his background.

After all, how had such a young man attained such a high level of cultivation?

## Chapter 1982

“...About that... My master told me never to reveal his identity to anyone... Due to that, I apologize in advance, Madam!” replied Gerald as he came up with an excuse on the spot.

After all, there was no way he could tell her that he had come from another world, right? Then again, even if he did tell her, she probably wouldn't have believed him...

“I understand... Regardless, Zianne! Lead Warrior Crawford to one of our rooms so that he can take a rest...” instructed Fayth, no longer trying to pry any further.

Hearing that, Zianne quickly nodded before leading Gerald out of the great hall...

Shortly after, the duo arrived at a small house... This was where Gerald was going to stay the night.

This was the first time a man had ever been allowed to stay the night in the abbey, so the Purplefog disciples were understandably surprised by their master's decision. Still, they knew better than to question her, so they simply went on with their day...

After a good night's rest, Gerald got up early to bid farewell to Zianne and Fayth. After all, he still had an important task to do, and he didn't want to waste any more time here.

Besides, he was the sole male in an abbey full of women, and knowing that made him feel increasingly awkward the longer he stayed there.

Whatever the case was, after leaving the abbey, Gerald soon came across a town known as Heavencloud Town...

It was around then that he realized that he had one major issue. He didn't have any local currency! All he had on him was money that could only be used on earth and a dead phone that was as functional as a brick now... How annoying!

Still, he did recall Zianne paying—for his clothes—yesterday with some blue stones...

Those holy stones were probably this realm's form of currency. But where could he get them? Without any, he couldn't even buy himself breakfast!

Just as Gerald was wondering how to get around this issue, the corner of his eye noticed a thin man—who seemed to be muttering every profanity in the book—getting dragged into an alley by three other men.

This was his ticket to breakfast!

Quickly heading to the alley, Gerald saw that the thin man was already getting beaten up by the trio!

Immediately stepping into the alley, Gerald then shouted, "Halt!"

Hearing that, the men then turned around... But when they saw Gerald, they didn't look afraid at all. In fact, they had scowls on their faces as they yelled, "Huh? Who the hell even are you? Get lost and mind your own business!"

"I'm saying it one final time. Stop all this!" retorted Gerald as he pointed at them.

"...You asking for trouble, kid? Fine then! Let's beat him up!" yelled one of the men, prompting all three of them to charge toward Gerald!

Despite being outnumbered, it didn't change the fact that these men were nothing before Gerald.

It barely took him a second to pummel all three of them to the ground!

To think that Gerald was this strong... If they had known earlier, they wouldn't have provoked him in the first place!

Whatever the case was, once they were done groaning in pain, the leader of the group looked up to Gerald before begging, "P-please spare us, big brother...! We know we've done wrong so please let us go...!"

Scoffing in response, Gerald simply warned, "If I ever catch you three bullying others again, I'll make sure to have your heads!"

"L-loud and clear!" whimpered all three of them as they quickly bolted away...

None of them dared to stay there for a second longer for fear that Gerald would suddenly change his mind...

### **Chapter 1983**

With the trio now gone, Gerald then walked up to the thin man and helped him up.

"T-thank you for saving me, brother...! I, Yale Zachrey, am indebted to you!" said the man.

"Don't worry about it. I just happened to see you getting bullied while passing by, and there was no way I was going to leave without helping! Regardless, if you feel indebted, why don't you just treat me to breakfast and we'll call it even?" replied Gerald with a smile as he patted Yale on the back.

Though he was momentarily surprised by that simple request, Yale quickly snapped out of it before nodding as he said, “Sure thing! Speaking of which, what should I call you, brother?”

“You can just call me Gerald!”

“Got it! I’ll be calling you brother Gerald then! Also... You don’t seem to be a local... Where do you hail from, brother Gerald...?” asked Yale who could already tell that Gerald was no ordinary person. After all, aside from his immense strength, Gerald looked rather different from the others in town as well.

Chuckling in response, Gerald simply replied, “Indeed! Let’s just say I’m a traveler from afar!”

“I see!” said Yale, not doubting Gerald’s statement in the least...

Following that, Yale led Gerald to a food stall—by the street—and ordered him some buns as well as a bowl of noodles...

After quickly finishing his breakfast, Gerald looked at Yale as he asked, “Say... Do you know any ways of earning holy stones quickly?”

“Hmm? You’re in need of them?” replied Yale in slight surprise, not expecting that question.

“Yeah... I ended up spending all of mine, which is why I asked you to treat me to breakfast! While I now have breakfast covered, I’ll still need more holy stones for my following meals!” muttered Gerald, feeling slightly embarrassed.

Though that was mostly a lie, he couldn’t just tell Yale that he was from earth! The secret needed to be maintained...

“I see... Well, there is one place, though I’m not sure if you’ll be willing to go!” mumbled Yale after hesitating for a bit.

“Oh? And what place is that?”

“Well... It’s a casino in town! You can definitely get holy stones quickly there, though it’ll be through gambling... Still, I’ll say it right now that you’ll need quite a bit of skill or you’ll simply end up losing even more holy stones!” explained Yale.

Hearing that, Gerald realized just how similar this place’s casinos were when compared to regular casinos back on earth. Well, aside from the different forms of currency. Still, the way the casinos were run were pretty much the same.

Regardless, he knew that gambling there was his best shot of obtaining lots of holy stones quickly.

With his mind made up, Gerald then said, "...Alright, do lead me there! Speaking of which, could you lend me some holy stones? I'll pay them back to you once I make it big!"

After all, he couldn't gamble without having any holy stones on hand, and he didn't really know anyone else who would be willing to help him either.

Either way, upon hearing Gerald's request, Yale hesitated for a moment before slipping his hand into his pocket and taking out a single holy stone...

"I... don't have too many so I can only lend one to you!" muttered Yale.

"One is plenty!" replied Gerald with a firm nod as he took the holy stone.

Gerald was no stranger to gambling. To be quite honest, he was a rather competent gambler! With that in mind, he had no doubts that he would win big by the end of the day!

#### **Chapter 1984**

Either way, the two soon made it to the extremely crowded casino... As it turned out, gambling was something that many looked forward to, regardless of which world they lived in...

After using quite a bit of effort to squeeze through the crowd, the two eventually managed to inch their way to one of the gambling tables. With that, Gerald quickly began paying attention to how the games were played...

To his surprise, however, he realized that the games were exactly how one would gamble back on earth! Due to that, Gerald knew he could get started right away.

Placing the only holy stone he had on the table, Gerald then silently nodded at the casino owner, prompting the owner to begin shaking the dice in his hands...

To win the game, Gerald had to choose between the high slot and the low one... While he only had one chance, he would surely win big if he chose correctly.

Either way, after the owner stopped shaking the dice, he placed them on the table, prompting the rest of the gamblers at the table to start picking their slots.

While everyone else immediately bet on the high slot, Gerald made no attempt to rush his bet. After all, this was his only shot of winning.

In the end, Gerald ended up betting on the low slot. This was the risk he had chosen...

With that, the dice were revealed... and with the results now out, Gerald and Yale instantly cheered!

Gerald had won the bet!

"My god! You made a fortune with the single shot you got!" exclaimed the excited Yale.

Nodding happily in response, Gerald then quickly slid all the holy stones he had won into his pouch. All in all, the gamble earned him over a hundred of them, and Gerald was sure that that amount would be able to sustain him for quite a while...

"Alright, let's go! I've won enough!" said Gerald, content with all the holy stones he had just earned. He, for one, knew that it was always best to stop gambling once fortune was earned...

Whatever the case was, he then grabbed Yale's arm and began heading toward the casino's exit.

However, leaving a casino was never easy if one had just won money. This proved to be true when a few tough-looking men stopped them from leaving.

Following that, a man—with a scar on his face—walked up to Gerald and Yale before saying in a sinister tone, "Gentlemen! You can't just leave after winning so much!"

Gerald knew that this was just the casino's way of making sure that they always profited from their customers. After all, he had witnessed similar tactics being used when he entered casinos back on earth.

Regardless, Gerald then glared back at the scarred man before replying, "It's only fair that we get to leave whenever we want! Or are you trying to play dirty here?"

"Hah! It's simply the rules of this casino! Look, you've got two simple options. Either you hand us the stones you just won, or you play till you have none!" sneered the scarred man before snorting disdainfully.

Being a timid man, Yale quickly whispered, "Let's just leave the holy stones behind, brother Gerald! These people can't be messed with...!"

Of course, Gerald was never going to agree with that. After all, he had won these holy stones fair and square, and though Yale was frightened of these men, Gerald wasn't.

With that in mind, Gerald then tied the pouch of holy stones around his waist before sneering, "If you want it, come and get it!"

## **Chapter 1985**

Hearing that, the scarred man then signaled his subordinates to grab hold of the duo.

However, before they were even able to get close to him, Gerald took the initiative to attack! Within seconds, all of them were lying on the ground, unable to even get up!

Upon seeing that, the scarred man found himself stunned. To think that Gerald was this powerful!

Following that, Gerald glared at the scarred man, prompting him to immediately gulp before moving to the side. He wasn't about to stop them from leaving after witnessing all that!

With that, the two successfully left the casino...

Eventually stopping by a riverside, Gerald then grabbed a handful of holy stones before handing them to Yale.

"As promised, I'm returning the holy stone I've lent! Consider the other stones as a form of appreciation for putting up with me till now!" said Gerald.

Staring wide-eyed at all the holy stones Gerald was giving him, Yale quickly knelt before excitedly yelling, "B-brother Gerald! Please allow me to be your follower! I'll be subservient to you if my name isn't Yale Zachrey!"

Naturally, this surprised Gerald. He, for one, hadn't expected to take in any subordinates here, especially not Yale. After all, he still needed to return to earth one day.

With that in mind, Gerald took a moment to think about it before calmly replying, "While I'm flattered to hear that, I'll be leaving this place soon. With that in mind, just take the holy stones and live your life well!"

## **Chapter 1986**

"I insist, brother Gerald! After all, I don't have a family to return to and I'm always alone... I've been living aimlessly for the longest time, yet you've managed to reignite my hope in life! With that said, please bring me along...!" begged Yale.

With how pitiful Yale looked, Gerald couldn't help but feel sorry for him...

After thinking for a little while more, Gerald then sighed before saying, "...Fine! You can come along on one condition! You'll have to be more courageous! After all, I have no use for a coward! Do I make myself clear?"

"...L-loud and clear!" exclaimed Yale, absolutely delighted that Gerald changed his mind.

For Yale, changing himself was nothing if it allowed him to become Gerald's follower...

"Then it's settled! With that out of the way, let's find a place to stay first and have a meal while we're at it!" said Gerald, prompting the duo to return to town...

Since they now had so many holy stones, looking for someplace to stay in was naturally what needed to be done next. Thankfully, inns were aplenty back in town.

After checking into a room, both of them then ordered some good food and wine before chatting while enjoying their meal...

To be quite honest, Yale had never been treated so nicely before. Since he was able to enjoy all this now, he felt that he truly had made the right choice in following Gerald.

What more, Gerald was extremely powerful, so with Gerald by his side, he would surely be able to stay safe...

Still, as the saying went, good things never lasted long.

Unfortunately for the duo, the saying turned out to be right this time. After all, the scarred man from before was now actively hunting them down with his gang!

Since Gerald had earlier beaten up his men, there was no way he was going to let Gerald and Yale off that easily. He needed revenge...!

## **Chapter 1987**

It didn't take long for the scarred man to locate the inn that Gerald and Yale were staying in.

Thankfully, upon hearing quite a racket outside their inn, Yale popped his head out of their room's window... and immediately recognized the scarred man!

His face now fully pale in fear, Yale quickly turned to look at Gerald—who was lying on the bed—before whispering, “B-brother Gerald...! It's the gang from the casino...! They're here looking for us...! What should we do...?!”

Hearing that, Gerald headed to the window to have a look... and he was just in time to see the scarred man rushing into the inn with his men!

Frowning slightly, Gerald then turned to look at Yale while ordering, “Come quick!”

Just as Yale was wondering what Gerald meant, his eyes went wide when Gerald began climbing out the window!

Though Gerald then easily leaped onto the roof—from the windowsill—, Yale was far weaker than him. With that in mind, though Yale eventually managed to get to the windowsill, he simply couldn't get up the roof! In the end, Gerald could simply sigh as he yanked the man up... and just in time, too.

After all, the second Yale got beside Gerald, the duo heard their door being kicked open! Of course, the deed was done by the scarred man.

Regardless, after the scarred man and his subordinates entered, they immediately began searching the room... To their surprise and annoyance, the two were nowhere to be found!

Frowning, the scarred man then glared at the innkeeper before growling, “Where the hell are they?”

“H-huh...?! B-but they never left their room! After all, I was downstairs the entire time and I never saw them leave!” exclaimed the astonished innkeeper.

Raising a slight brow, the scarred man noticed—at that moment—that the room's window had been left open. Squinting his eyes, he then headed to the window and looked out...

Meanwhile, Gerald and Yale—who were still hiding on the roof—made sure not to make a single sound... In fact, neither of them even dared to breathe for fear that it would expose their location.

Thankfully, it didn't take long before the duo heard the scarred man shout, “D\*mn it all! They must have escaped through the window! Give chase! We're getting them if it's the last thing we do!”

Following that, the group of angry men then bolted out of the inn...

Seeing that, Gerald then lifted Yale up and brought both of them back into their room...

By that point, the innkeeper was already cleaning the room up... When he saw Gerald and Yale jump in from the window, however, his eyes instantly widened.

Though the innkeeper's first instinct was to yell in surprise, Gerald swiftly covered the innkeeper's mouth before growling, "Hush. Just pretend we aren't here...! Listen, no matter who comes over asking about us, tell them that you don't know anything. If word about us gets out, I'll make sure to end you before they take me away. Got it?!"

Hearing that threat, the innkeeper immediately nodded. After all, he was simply a businessman trying to make a living. He would very much prefer following Gerald's orders rather than losing his life!

Before the innkeeper left, Gerald made sure to say, "Again, if you say even a word about us, you and your inn are vanishing off the surface of the planet! Understand?"

Gulping in response, the innkeeper then replied, "Y-yes! I got it the first time...!"

With that said, the innkeeper then left the room, making sure to properly close the door behind him... For his sake, he knew it was best to just pretend that nothing had happened...

Either way, now that the innkeeper was no longer here, the worried Yale couldn't help but ask, "A-are we going to have to hide here forever, brother Gerald...? Also, are you sure those men won't come back...?"

While Gerald couldn't say for sure, their best bet of losing their trail was to stay here for now. After all, as the saying went, the most dangerous places were usually also the safest....

### **Chapter 1988**

After thinking for a while, Gerald eventually said, "...Don't worry, we'll leave first thing in the morning!"

Hearing that, Yale instantly agreed. To him, the sooner they left the town, the better...

Fast forward to nighttime, Gerald and Yale didn't dare to sleep. After all, there was always the chance of getting attacked in their sleep. Still, Gerald couldn't help but feel that this truly was an ancient place.

After all, once night fell, not a soul could be seen on the streets. The people of the Autremonde Realm didn't really have a nightlife, and he had to admit that the quietness felt rather unusual...

Regardless, the duo instantly set off once dawn broke. The earlier they left, the less likely they were to accidentally bump into the scarred man...

Thankfully, all it took was about an hour for Gerald and Yale to successfully leave the town...

Now that they had made it out safely, Yale was prompted to ask, "So... Where to now, brother Gerald...?"

Yale was naturally curious to know since he was going to be following Gerald around.

Upon hearing that, Gerald couldn't give an immediate response. After all, was new to the Autremonde Realm, and he didn't really know this place well.

With that in mind, Gerald simply replied with his own question, "...Tell me, where can we get to from here? Also, among the options we have, which would you pick?"

"Um... Well, we can get to Shontell if we head east... If we head west, however, we'll arrive in Yahath. As for which I'd personally choose, I'll have to say Shontell!" replied Yale.

Hearing that, Gerald then nodded before declaring, "Hmm... Well, it's decided then! We're heading to Shontell! Lead the way, Yale!"

With that, the duo began their journey to Shontell...

As they journeyed on, Yale made sure to detail everything he knew—about Shontell—to Gerald. After all, it was always good to know what to expect in new places. Regardless, Shontell was apparently a large country in the Autremonde Realm, and it was also the home of Gardale City, a large and prosperous area...

Fast forward to a few hours later, the duo—who had taken a few short rests in between—finally arrived at a small jungle located near Gardale City...

By this point, it was already a little after noon, and since the duo hadn't had their breakfast, they were practically famished by this point. Thankfully, they came across an inn while traversing the jungle. From the looks of it, the inn had been built there specifically for weary travelers who were in dire need of rest...

Whatever the case was, the duo immediately entered and ordered some food.

While they were eagerly waiting for their meals to arrive, both of them couldn't help but notice a horse cart—that was heavily guarded by a group of men—that had just stopped before the inn...

Even from inside, the two could see that the cart was loaded with chests of all sizes, each of them labeled with seals...

Guessing that the chests contained valuable items, Gerald then turned back to look at Yale before asking, "Any idea what they're up to, Yale?"

"Oh! They're just a delivery team, brother Gerald! Since the seals on the chests are labeled, 'Shontell Treasury,' it's only fair to assume that they're from the Shontell Delivery House, and that the chests contain holy stones!" explained Yale as Gerald nodded in response.

As it turned out, the people of the Autremonde Realm were still using delivery services, just like how people—back on earth—used to do in the olden days...

Either way, Gerald and Yale were just about to resume talking about something else when all of a sudden, a dozen men—dressed fully in black—leaped out from the bushes!

Seeing that, Yale's eyes instantly widened as he hid under the table before yelling, "R-robbers!"

## **Chapter 1989**

Gerald himself didn't move an inch, and simply sipped on his tea. By this point, scenes like this were completely normal to him...

Whatever the case was, there appeared to be over a dozen men in black, and all of them looked fully prepared to attack the bodyguards.

From what Gerald could tell, the men in black looked quite strong and skilled. With that in mind, he doubted that the bodyguards would be able to take them on... and after a while, it was made apparent that Gerald's guess was right.

With most of the bodyguards either heavily injured or already dead, one of the middle-aged ones turned to glare at the men in black before growling, "Who are you people?! I'll have you know that I'm Tanner Junas! The head of the Juans' Bodyguard Institute in Shontell! Daring to even attack the bodyguards of Shontell... Do all of you have a death wish or something?!"

"Cut the cr\*p and just hand us the holy stones if you want to live!" scoffed what appeared to be the leader of the men in black.

Upon hearing that, Tanner couldn't help but frown. To think that these men would attack them when they were still pretty close to Shontell! No wonder his men had made it through the rest of the journey without issue! The enemy had been hiding in plain sight!

"F\*ck off! If you haven't already noticed, we're only a few miles away from Shontell now! I'm sure the Armored guards of Shontell will be arriving any second now, so if you don't beat it, you're all going to be dead by the end of the day!" roared Tanner with an unwavering glare.

"Hah! We'll see who dies first!" sneered the leader of the men in black.

Hearing that, the other men in black took that as their cue to begin attacking again! With that, the battle resumed...

Unfortunately, Tanner and his men were already in pretty bad shape. With that in mind, it wasn't long before Tanner ended up having his arm almost getting sliced clean in half!

Seeing his chance to strike the weakened man, the leader of the men in black was just about to deal the finishing blow... when all of a sudden, a figure bolted forward and stood right before him!

Before the leader could even register what was happening, the figure—who was obviously Gerald—launched a force palm attack right into his chest, causing the sinister man to instantly vomit a mouthful of blood as he was sent flying a good distance away!

Watching as their leader then crashed to the ground, dead, the other men in black were prompted to charge toward Gerald next!

Even so, as usual, none of them were anywhere near as strong and capable as Gerald. With that in mind, it only took him a few seconds to finish off the rest of them...

By that point, Tanner and Yale were already staring wide-eyed at all the dead men in black lying all over the ground...

Tanner, for one, hadn't expected someone like Gerald to take on all those powerful men on his own...!

Quickly snapping out of his astonishment, Tanner then walked up to Gerald before respectfully saying, "T-thank you for your help, young man...!"

Hearing that, Gerald simply gave a casual smile as he replied, "Don't worry about it. I'm just doing what's right!"

"Such humility... Please tell me your name, young man!"

“You can just call me Gerald!”

“I see! I go by-”

Before Tanner could finish his sentence, Gerald cut him off with a chuckle before saying, “I heard you declaring it earlier. Tanner Junas, the head of the Juans’ Bodyguard Institute in Shontell, right? It’s an honor to meet you!”

Momentarily stunned to hear that, Tanner then quickly snapped out of it before placing his fists together and praising, “It’s an honor to meet you too, Gerald! Still, to think that a young man like you would be so agile and powerful! It’s simply astonishing!”

### **Chapter 1990**

Simply chuckling in response, Gerald then said, “No need to be so modest, captain Juans! Either way, you should really tend to your wounds first!”

Upon hearing that, Tanner realized that he was still pretty badly injured. With that, he then sat down and began treating his wounds...

Shortly after, a troop of horseback soldiers arrived at the inn. From the looks of it, these were the Armored guards of Shontell that Tanner had previously mentioned about...

Seeing them, Tanner immediately got to his feet and greeted one of the armored men, “General Lucarl!”

General Kay Lucarl was the commander of the Shontell’s Armored guards, and upon seeing how wounded Tanner was, he couldn’t help but say in astonishment, “Captain Juans! That’s a pretty nasty-looking wound there!”

“It’s only a scratch!” replied Tanner with a chuckle.

Instead of laughing along, Kay simply got off his horse and began looking at all the dead bodies on the ground... While he was definitely sure that a fierce battle had been fought here, he couldn’t help but notice that all the enemies were dead.

With that, Kay was prompted to ask, “Did... any of the bandits get away, Captain Junas? And are the holy stones safe?”

“Negative. All the bandits are dead! Also, none of the holy stones got stolen!” replied Tanner.

“What? You managed to kill all of them?” exclaimed the astounded Kay.

“Well, it wouldn’t be fair to claim all the credit. Truth be told, this young man here is the one who took most of them out! If it wasn’t for him, I’m pretty sure I wouldn’t have lived to tell the tale!” explained Tanner as he gestured toward Gerald.

Raising a slight brow as he looked at Gerald, Kay then replied, “You’re... saying that this lad here killed most of these men?”

“Indeed! I witnessed all of it with my very own eyes!” exclaimed Tanner as he nodded.

Naturally, this surprised Kay. After all, how powerful did one need to be in order to single handedly take out so many men? Kay, for one, knew that not many in Shontell were this capable...

After a brief pause, Kay shook his head before ordering, “...Men! Go through their bodies and see if we can identify them!”

Doing as they were instructed, it was only a short while later when one of the soldiers returned to Kay’s side before reporting, “General! Those men in black seem to be from Mount Tygress!”

“Mount Tygress? So, it’s them again...!” growled Kay.

Mount Tygress was the name of a group of bandits that had been terrorizing Shontell for ages. They specialized in robbing escort cars and due to the fact that all of their members were extremely capable, not only had they successfully robbed several escort cars before, but Shontell’s army was unable to permanently shut them down. It definitely didn’t help that the path to the bandits’ lair was so winded and windy...

Thinking about it for a while, Kay then walked up to Gerald—who was currently enjoying his tea—before saying, “...I heard from Captain Juans that you took all these people out... If I may, who exactly are you, and where did you come from?”

Hearing that, Gerald then calmly replied, “I’m merely a vagabond who just so happened to be here when all this was happening. As for why I helped, isn’t it common courtesy to help those in need?”

Gerald’s response simply made Kay more and more curious. In all honesty, he still hadn’t gotten over the fact that Gerald had taken out all those strong men—from Mount Tygress—on his own...