

The Invisible Rich Man – Chapter 2301

After updating each other and knowing that they had truly lost Gerald, the men helplessly regrouped before reporting the incident to Lucian.

At the time, Lucian was entertaining Jobson and the others as they had their tea. As expected, upon picking the call up, his smile instantly vanished. A frown now on his face, Lucian then growled, “Get back here...!”

Hearing the clear change in tone, Jobson who was enjoying some dessert was prompted to ask, “Is something the matter...?”

“The men I sent out to help Gerald and Aiden have lost track of them, Senior Jobson!” muttered Lucian with a sigh. Still, to think that they’d make such an amateurish mistake at such a critical moment when they were key personnel of his family.

Laughing in response, Jobson then replied, “And here I thought it was something serious!”

“... Is this not serious enough? Gerald and Aiden are dealing with the military here... What if something happens to them?” said the worried Lucian.

“You truly underestimate that boy,” replied Jobson as he stuffed a cupcake into his mouth.

“While I know that he’s strong, this is the military we’re talking about... Aside from the traps that Maddox has probably already prepared for him, he also has access to powerful weapons...!” said Lucian as he considered calling his friend in the military to step in.

Extending his hand and cupping it over Lucian’s phone, Jobson then replied, “That’s exactly why I said you underestimate him. Correct me if I’m wrong, but Gerald alone was able to take out the respected elders of the three major families in Yanam, right?”

Nodding slightly, the confused Lucian who had no idea how this contributed to the conversation said, “... Indeed, and several others in those families were killed as well. Without their leaders, the three families are about to completely crumble...”

“I see... I see... Now tell me, which is stronger? The military? Or the three families?” asked Jobson as he sat beside Lucian while gesturing for Fujiko to bring him more dessert.

“Well... though the military has access to modern weapons, the three families have cultivators... With that said, if they’re pit against each other, I feel the three families are definitely stronger...”

“Bingo. So if Gerald was able to take them out alone, do you really think the Yanam military stands a chance against him? Truth be told, had your men managed to tail him all the way, I feel they may have ended up burdening him more than being a help!” replied Jobson with a satisfied smile, knowing that Lucian finally understood his point.

Smacking his forehead, Lucian who was now feeling much better then said, "... I get it. To think that I'd overlook something like this! All that worry was for naught!"

"I agree. Either way, let's just wait for his return. Even if he fails to rescue her today, I'm sure he'll be able to obtain some relevant news," replied Jobson as he continued eating.

Realizing that Jobson was almost finished with his plate of desserts, Lucian turned to look at his butler before saying, "Get more dessert for Senior Jobson."

"I'm good. While the desserts are good, I'm afraid I may get tired of them if i have any more. With that said, do you have any tea?" asked Jobson.

"Of course! Green or black?" replied Lucian with an enthusiastic nod.

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"Either will do. Still, all of you truly underestimate him That boy's way stronger than any of you could ever imagine..." said Jobson as he nonchalantly waved his hand.

"... Including me?" asked Fujiko as she pointed at herself. She, for one, believed that she understood Gerald extremely well. While she didn't know why he was this strong, after spending so much time with him, she was pretty sure that she knew the extent of his capabilities.

“But of course. In fact, the boy probably isn’t aware of how strong he is either,” replied Jobson with a shrug before laughing heartily. From the looks of it, he appeared to be the one who knew Gerald best among the rest of them there. Regardless, Jobson’s tea arrived shortly after and the old man began drinking it in satisfaction.

Moving back to Gerald, he had been maintaining a safe distance from the military cars this entire time.

Feeling slightly impatient, Aiden who just wanted to know how Lindsay was doing was prompted to ask, “Where the hell are they going...? It’s been almost an hour now! All this is just too weird...”

“A bit anxious, aren’t we? Are you this impatient when you carry out other missions?” replied Gerald with a slight frown.

“But Lindsay...” muttered Aiden who knew better than to behave the way he currently was. However, he simply couldn’t help it. After all, Lindsay wasn’t someone random he had to save. Since emotions were involved, Aiden couldn’t deny that it slightly affected his professionalism.

“What about her? Also, last I checked, you’re not that emotional a person. Are you going to commit suicide if you find out that she’s dead?” sneered Gerald.

"I... No, I wouldn't go that far..." muttered Aiden who didn't dare to further anger Gerald.

"Good. Now be a bit more serious and stop saying such pointless things," replied Gerald who could sense how much Aiden liked Lindsay. Even so, Aiden's impulsiveness would only lead to their ruin, so Gerald had to keep him in check.

Recalling how anxious he had been when Mila first disappeared and his family got captured, Gerald reminded himself that he had only been able to start making rescue efforts after forcing himself to calm down and think things through. With that said, being anxious was completely useless.

"I was just venting a little..." muttered the slightly aggrieved Aiden.

Before Gerald could reply, he noticed that the military cars had suddenly slowed down. With that, he was prompted to say, "Quiet down. They're about to make a move."

"In this forest...?" muttered Aiden as he looked out the car window.

"Apparently. Still, it's a wonder what they're planning to do all the way out here..." replied Gerald who had a feeling that Lindsay may be close by. After all, why else would Maddox come to such a remote area in the dead of night? Adding that to how vigilant he had been upon leaving the military base, it was evident that his actions were nothing short of shady.

“Indeed... Regardless, just say the word and I’ll make my move!” declared Aiden rather enthusiastically as he unsheathed his army dagger.

“Relax. Let’s see what they’re planning to do first,” replied Gerald as he slowed the car down. Though they were quite a distance away, Gerald was still able to clearly see what the soldiers were up to.

Parking the car by the road, Gerald then placed a hand on Aiden’s thigh before whispering, “Let’s finally see what they’re up to. Don’t get discovered.”

After getting out of the car together, Aiden then gulped as he held on tightly to his army dagger while saying, “Loud and clear.”

As for Maddox, he had no idea that the two were keeping an eye on him. After all, to him, his plan was perfect, so there was no way Gerald would be able to learn about all this. Till he eventually released the news, he was certain that only a few people would even know about this place.

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Even those guarding the place had no idea who Lindsay actually was, which was why Maddox was so sure that nobody would be able to expose the incident till he released news about her capture. Everything was going to be perfect!

Whatever the case was, after getting out of the car, Maddox began walking deeper into the forest, making sure to carefully avoid all the traps that he had set up. Since the leader and team member who had been tasked with guarding the place had been informed that Maddox was coming over, they were already waiting for him by the time he walked over.

Watching as they quickly jogged over to greet him, Maddox who was now holding onto an umbrella looked around before asking, "So, how's the situation?"

"I mean... Nobody would ever come to such a remote place... Forget humans, both of us barely even see birds here!" replied the leader as he shook his head.

"Is that how you should report to a superior...?!" growled Maddox.

"N-no, sir! Nothing happened!" replied the frightened leader as he immediately straightened his posture.

"Good. Either way, I've brought your supplies for tomorrow so that I don't have to come over in the morning. The less I come here, the lower the chances of me getting found out," said Maddox as he gestured toward one of his soldiers who promptly walked over with a black bag in hand.

"We appreciate it, deputy captain," replied the leader as he took the bag with a nod.

Nodding in response, Maddox then turned to look at the soldiers who had just gotten out of the cars before ordering, "Alright, get to work. Everything needs to be set up within three days. I can't wait any longer!"

Following that, Maddox couldn't help but imagine Gerald falling into one of his traps upon entering the forest. Unable to move an inch, Maddox would then order his hidden men to begin shooting at the boy!

There was no way he was going to survive that!

"About time!" yelled Maddox with glee, only to realize that he had yelled his thoughts out!

Looking at his men, Maddox then cleared his throat before saying, "... Either way, it's eight now. We'll be leaving at midnight, so make haste, or I'll deduct your allowances!"

"R-right away, deputy captain!" declared the soldiers as they rushed to start work, not wanting their salaries to be cut.

Forcing a smile, the leader then walked up to Maddox before saying, "So... would you like to come in and have a seat, deputy captain...?"

Ignoring the question, Maddox simply asked, "Is she doing fine?"

"She is!" declared the leader.

"Good. Make sure to feed her the bare minimum just so she doesn't starve to death. This is a prison, not a hotel!" growled Maddox as he walked into the room and looked at the iron door.

"W-we've already been doing so... If we feed her any less, she'll die for sure! What more, the food she's been getting is worse than what strays are fed..." muttered the leader who had almost gagged when he first saw what he was supposed to feed her.

"Are you taking pity on her?" asked Maddox with a raised brow.

"O-of course, not! I'll do anything you ask!" stuttered the leader as he shuddered slightly.

Turning around, Maddox then said, "Tell me... Do you know why I chose you to guard this place?"

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“I can’t say I do...” muttered the leader as he shook his head.

“It’s because you’re smarter than the others, and I intend to train you if you do well. Don’t miss this opportunity,” sneered Maddox.

“T-thank you, deputy captain...! I won’t let you down!” declared the leader with a broad smile as he quickly began massaging Maddox’s shoulders.

Meanwhile, Gerald and Aiden were still keeping an eye on things from the forested area. Gerald, for one, had refrained from getting too close to them since he wasn’t sure whether they had installed any surveillance cameras nearby.

Regardless, after paying close attention to his surroundings for a while, Aiden was prompted to say, “... There’s a house over there I think...”

Aiden had only been able to see the building’s outline, which explained why he sounded slightly unsure of his statement. Regardless, upon hearing that, Gerald who had been sitting on a rock for a while now replied, “Indeed... Either way, what do you think Maddox plans to do? His actions have been extremely shady up till this point...”

“I don’ t know... Maybe he’s trying to hide a corpse?”

“With his rank? He could’ve just told one of his random subordinates to do the deed. With that said, he wouldn’t have come along if it was just to hide a corpse,” replied Gerald as he shook his head.

“Well... what do you think, then?” asked Aiden.

“I feel that Maddox may be hiding something important here,” replied Gerald, who was only able to clearly see the exterior of the desolate house from where he stood.

“Could it be Lindsay?” asked Aiden.

“We don’t know that yet.”

“Still... Regardless, are we going to eventually sneak in or are we just going to continue observing from here?” asked Aiden as he clenched his dagger, fully ready to heed Gerald’s commands.

“Let’s wait a bit more,” replied Gerald as he crossed his legs...

It was sometime later when one of the cars was driven away. Thankfully, Gerald had parked his car behind a few large trees, and the darkness of night made it even harder for untrained eyes to detect.

Either way, it was almost four hours later when the other cars were driven off as well. After giving the cars a good look, Aiden couldn't help but whisper, "... Something's off."

"Elaborate," replied Gerald.

"Well... it's been raining this entire time, right?" asked Aiden as he continued staring at the boots of the cars.

"For three days in a row, yes. What's your point?"

"I'm getting to that... You see, when one of the cars passed by us earlier, I couldn't help but notice that the mud traces on its tires had been raised particularly high. In other words, they had probably been transporting quite a lot of heavy things earlier. With that said, the items have probably been left behind since I was able to discern all this in the first place," explained Aiden.

"You're not half bad!" exclaimed the surprised Gerald as she patted Aiden on his back. He hadn't considered all this at all!

Feeling slightly embarrassed to be praised by Gerald, the grinning Aiden then sheepishly scratched the back of his head as he said, "It was just a basic observation..."

“Regardless, I don’t think we should make our move first. Still, we’ve definitely made quite a bit of progress just by locating this place,” replied Gerald.

“... Huh? Why?”

“As you said, they probably left a bunch of stuff here. However, if they were simply leaving things behind, why did they have to spend so many hours here? The fact that they also scattered around the area throughout their time here leads me to believe that they were probably burying traps. Let’s continue talking about this once we’re back in the car,” explained Gerald as he got to his feet.

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“... Alright...” muttered Aiden in a helpless tone. While he had a feeling that Lindsay was definitely in there, since Gerald had prohibited him from entering, there was nothing he could do about it.

Regardless, after getting into the car, Gerald immediately began tailing the military cars again. After driving for a bit, he was prompted to say, “As I said, they probably have traps buried around the area. Adding that to the fact that there are probably people guarding the vicinity, I’d rather not risk getting caught while trying to save her. If we fail and get noticed, saving her in the future is going to be increasingly difficult.”

Shortly after, they caught up to the military cars again, and Gerald quickly slowed down to keep a safe distance from them. By that point, Aiden had mostly calmed himself,

leading him to mutter, "... Well, at the very least, we now know that Lindsay is most probably in there..."

"From how shady Maddox has been, I agree," said Gerald with a nod as they continued following the cars till they eventually arrived at the military base.

Naturally, Gerald didn't follow them in, and instead began driving back to the Grubb manor. It was around two in the morning when they finally got back.

Before entering their guest rooms, Gerald made sure to look at Aiden before saying, "Try not to think too much about tonight and get some rest."

"I will..." replied Aiden with a firm nod...

Nodding in response, Gerald was just about to enter his room when the butler suddenly ran over while saying, "Mr. Crawford! Master has ordered me to lead you to him the second you return! He said it was extremely urgent."

"What's the issue?" asked Gerald as he turned to look at the butler.

“I’m not sure either. However, following a call that made the master frown, he told me to keep an eye on the surveillance system and to also tell you to meet up with him the second you return,” replied the butler as he shook his head.

Frowning slightly, Gerald then replied, “Lead the way, then.”

With that, the butler then led the duo to where Lucian was currently resting. The second they entered, they were immediately greeted by a cloud of cigarette smoke. Looking at the ashtray that was brimming with cigarette butts, Aiden who was worried that all this had something to do with Lindsay was prompted to ask, “You called for us, Mr. Grubb?”

“Indeed. I received a call from Maddox about two hours ago,” replied Lucian as he puffed on his cigarette.

“What? But he was still in a remote area located west of the military base back then...” muttered Gerald with a slight frown.

Ignoring Gerald’s statement, Aiden then said, “Well, what did he say?”

“He was inviting me and those from a few other major families to discuss the development plans of each family over a meal. Maddox also stated that he wanted to take the chance to get the families to cooperate with each other in order to improve Yanam’s economy,” replied Lucian.

Chuckling in response, Gerald couldn't help but say, "Isn't he in charge of the Yanam's seas? Why's he meddling with the economy?"

"You're telling me. Regardless, as you can probably guess, events like these were usually officiated by the ministry of finance as well as the ministry of commerce and industry. With that in mind, since Maddox is taking the initiative to run the event this time, I can only assume that he's up to no good," replied Lucian with a nod.

"No need to even assume, he's definitely planning something. Still, since he wants to hold a party so much, let's go together," said Gerald as he lit a cigarette.

"You... Want to go too?" asked Lucian, feeling slightly surprised.

"But of course! Since he wants to kill me that much, I may as well take that chance to meet him," replied Gerald with a smile.

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“... Fine, I'll bring you along. However, do keep in mind that Maddox has invited people from several other families and companies as well. With that said, even if he makes things difficult for us, we can't just fight him there...” said Lucian in a concerned tone.

Laughing aloud, Gerald simply replied, “Don't worry, I'm well aware of that!”

“I'm glad to hear that. Well, putting this aside, how did things go on your end? Did you manage to find where Lindsay is being locked up?” asked Lucian, pleased to hear that Gerald wasn't planning to do anything rash.

Hearing that, Gerald then began detailing everything that had happened in the past few hours.

Once he was done, the satisfied Lucian who now knew that Gerald wasn't the kind of person who did things impetuously, was prompted to say, “From the looks of it, Lindsay is most probably being locked up there. Still, I'm glad you didn't just rush in. I've heard plenty of bad rumors about that cruel man, and I'm pretty sure you'd have triggered one of his traps if you had attempted to save her earlier. Whatever the case is, let's resume this discussion after properly considering everything...”

Seeing that their conversation was over, the butler cleared his throat before saying, “Speaking of which, the auction is in a few days. Would you like to start making preparations, master?”

“Hmm... Has the money been prepared?” asked Lucian.

“Everything’s been prepared, including the money. We’ve sent the quota of people as well, but that’s not what I meant. If you’ve forgotten, the auction is being held on a small island within Yanam. With that said, you’ll need to make a move about three days from now in order to get there a day before the auction begins,” explained the butler.

Upon hearing that, Lucian turned to look at Gerald as he asked, “Do you have a problem with that?”

“Not at all, I can go anytime,” replied Gerald with a shrug.

“Then after joining Maddox’s party tomorrow and taking the following day off, we’ll set off early for the island on the third day,” said Lucian with a nod.

“An auction on an island...? What kind of auction even is that...?” asked Aiden.

“Long story short, it’s an auction for cultivators,” explained Gerald.

“Even if you refuse to detail it, could I come along...?” asked Aiden who genuinely wanted to learn more about cultivators from the day he learned that Gerald was one.

“Unfortunately, we only have three tickets,” replied the butler.

“I see... What a pity...” muttered the disheartened Aiden.

“However... If you really wish to go there, I don’t mind giving you mine. After all, I’ve already partaken in multiple similar auctions with master, so missing out on one won’t mean much,” replied the butler.

“Can I...?” asked Aiden as he looked at both Gerald and Lucian.

“I don’t mind. Besides, if my butler stays, he’ll be able to inform us if anything goes wrong,” replied Lucian after thinking for a while.

“But... I’m not exactly a cultivator... Is it really fine if I come along?” asked Aiden, now feeling slightly worried.

“Oh, don’ t worry about that. Plenty of the attendees aren’t cultivators, you see. After all, aside from items that cultivators can use, rare plants and minerals with various special effects will also be up for auction. With that said, many of the participants will be regular people from large families,” explained Lucian.

“Well, that’s good to hear...” muttered Aiden with a relieved sigh.

“Indeed. Regardless, it’s getting late, so go on ahead and get some rest,” replied Lucian with a yawn.

Honestly, he would’ve headed to bed ages ago had Gerald returned earlier!

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Regardless, after returning to his room, Gerald began thinking about all that had happened tonight...

As for Maddox, he could be seen sitting before a few of his confidants in a high end villa near the military base with a glass of red wine in hand. After gulping it down, he was prompted to say, “Alright, once you return, I want all of you to tell your subordinates to dress smartly tomorrow, got that?”

“We know. Don’t worry, everything has already been well prepared. Things will surely be perfect tomorrow,” replied one of the confidants after looking at the others.

“Still... Are you really sure that Gerald will come over tomorrow, deputy captain?” asked a bald confidant.

“Why wouldn’t he?” replied Maddox as he poured himself another glass of wine.

“I mean... Ever since he entered Yanam, we’ve lost all news regarding him...” muttered the bald man in a slightly worried tone. He, for one, had been by Maddox’s side for the longest time, which was why he didn’t fear talking about his worries.

“While that’s a good question, why don’t you start considering where Gerald could’ve gone to ever since he arrived? After all, he couldn’t have just been sleeping on the streets this entire time, right?” replied Maddox as he placed his wine glass down.

“Well... maybe he’s been sleeping in a hostel or guesthouse...?” said the bald man.

“Or maybe he’s at a friend’s house,” added another confidant.

“Though those are definitely viable suggestions, all of you have ignored the fact that it’s been about a week since we’ve captured Lindsay. With that in mind, I’m sure the Grubbs would’ve already heard about this. Since Gerald would’ve surely taken the chance to meet up with the Grubbs upon arriving, I have reason to believe that Lucian would’ve asked for his help to save the girl. Due to the fact that he knows Lindsay, Gerald would surely be compelled to assist. Little does he know that she’s in our possession!” declared the smiling Maddox in a confident tone.

“I understand now!”

“You truly are the smartest person within our military base, deputy captain!” exclaimed Maddox’s subordinates who hadn’t even come close to seeing the way Maddox saw things. Truth be told, they had been wondering why he wanted to organize a business

party out of the blue. After all, he hadn't done anything like that in the past. Now, everything was clear as day.

"Flattery will get you nowhere. Regardless, just follow and learn from me and I assure you that you'll all be promoted in no time! By that point, I'll expect all of you to be able to think critically and handle other affairs for me. That's the only way you'll improve!" declared Maddox as he pointed at them.

"We await our promotions!" yelled the men as they bowed toward Maddox.

"Well said. Either way, make sure to check for any imperfections tomorrow! Everything needs to be perfect! If Gerald dares to come over, we'll finally be able to capture him! Following that, I'll have Lindsay killed right before his very eyes!" declared Maddox.

After the meeting was adjourned, Maddox couldn't help but hum as he returned to his room. He, for one, was sure that Gerald wouldn't be able to escape his grasp this time, no matter how strong he was. Unfortunately for him, Gerald had already seen

through all his plans.

Fast forward to the next day, Gerald uncharacteristically remained in bed past dawn. After all, now that he had momentarily put research on Yearning Island aside and he already had quite a bit of information on Lindsay's case, he didn't have much to do but wait to participate in Maddox's party that night.

Perhaps he could get more information there.

Lying in bed, he couldn't help but think about all that he had gone through in the past few months just to learn more about Yearning Island.

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In no time at all, evening came, and Gerald got himself cleaned before changing into a nice set of clothes. Though the event was organized by Maddox, a party was a party, so he had to make sure that he was at least well dressed.

Regardless, once Lucian was prepared, both of them left the manor to head to Maddox's villa where the party was being held. The villa itself was only two streets away from the military base, so soldiers could be seen patrolling the area all daylong.

Aside from Maddox, this high-end villa neighborhood was also where most of the military leaders including Carter stayed. Rather than being interconnected, each of the villas was built individually with separate access paths and small gardens.

Whatever the case was, upon entering the car, Lucian instead of telling the driver to start the car up was prompted to look at Gerald before asking, "Honestly, do you think we should bring a few others with us? After all, if Maddox is really attempting to set us up, I'll end up burdening you since you'll have to focus on protecting me..."

“While I see where you’re coming from, in the end, I feel that I’ll have to protect both of you instead of you alone! With that said, bringing more people along is only going to be more troublesome for me,” replied Gerald who knew that he was at least capable of protecting Lucian as long as he was alone from the most dangerous of situations.

“I see.. Well, I’ll be in your care, then...” muttered Lucian before chuckling awkwardly.

“Indeed. Either way, let’s go meet him already,” replied Gerald as he leaned against his seat before closing his eyes. Hearing that, Lucian then nodded at his driver, and the car came to life just seconds later.

Meanwhile, Maddox could be seen puffing on a cigar in his villa as he stood before twenty sniper soldiers whom he had specially chosen for tonight about two days ago.

Knowing how capable they each were, Maddox couldn’t help but say, “Truly elites among elites...”

Hearing that, his confidant stepped forward before reporting, “I’ve already given them an entire day’s worth of special training for this event, deputy captain! Once Gerald appears, they’ll definitely be ready to snipe his head!”

“And who told you that I wanted Gerald dead?” replied Maddox with a raised brow.

“Huh...? But... then why did you organize this party and request for all these snipers...?” asked the puzzled confidant who had assumed that everything had been prepared this way to finish Gerald off.

“Use your head and don’t ask things you shouldn’t!” grumbled Maddox as he stubbed his cigar against his confidant’s neck!

Flinching from the searing pain, the confidant then backed away as Maddox puffed into his cigar and ordered, “Alright, enough dilly-dallying! Head to your respective positions and prepare yourselves! Remember, nobody shoots unless I give the order!”

By the time the twenty snipers got into position all around the villa, the sky was already starting to darken. More and more guests were starting to arrive as well, and all of them were discussing why Maddox had invited them there. While they were all confused, all of them had still rushed over since they were well aware of how high Maddox’s status was, being the deputy captain and all.

Standing on the Villa’s top floor, Maddox placed his hand against a window as he peered down, constantly on the lookout for Gerald’s arrival. When he finally saw the youth exiting a car, Maddox instantly smiled as he slammed his fist onto the windowsill.

Taking in a deep breath, he then said in a sinister tone, “Gerald...! So you really were with the Grubbs...!”

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Moving back to Gerald, he and Lucian could be seen walking into the villa, leaving their driver behind in the car.

Upon seeing Lucian, everyone in the villa immediately cupped their hands as they greeted, “Mr. Grubb!”

Though the Grubbs didn’t have the best properties in the country, they were still a cultivating family, so they were definitely worthy of respect.

Regardless, Lucian simply smiled as he replied, “Evening, everyone.”

“Who’s that young man, Mr. Grubb? And where’s Frey?” asked one of the members in the crowd, prompting everyone to look at Gerald. They were rightfully curious since Lucian was well known for bringing Frey along regardless of the event. Not even

his biological sons were given such a right.

Fighting the urge to frown upon hearing his son’s name, Lucian quickly managed to calm himself before replying, “This is Gerald Crawford, and he’s an important guest of my family. I brought him over in hopes of introducing him to all of you.”

“G-Gerald...?! ” exclaimed several people from the crowd, making it clear that they all recognized the name. Then again, it was impossible to forget after that person wreaked havoc in their country back then.

Sensing how tense everyone suddenly was, Gerald quickly cupped his hands before saying, “Greetings. I’m new to this place, so I’ll be in your care from now on!”)

Upon hearing that this was his first time here, everyone immediately breathed a sigh of relief. Since they had only heard about Gerald’s name, they quickly assumed that this youth only shared the same name as the other more dangerous Gerald. With that in mind, a few people from the crowd began saying, “But of course! A guest of the Grubbs is a guest of ours! Feel free to ask for help should you need any in the future!”

“Indeed! Aside from your good temperament, you look rather handsome as well! I’m sure you’ll be an even finer man in the future!”

After the duo walked through the sea of compliments, the crowd slowly began sharing details about the properties they owned, with some even starting to discuss potential collaborations.

Though the scene got rather noisy, the second Maddox showed himself, everyone instantly went silent. Momentarily looking at Gerald, Maddox then pretended not to see the youth before enthusiastically declaring, “Greetings, everyone! Please move to the banquet hall...”

While he definitely noticed Maddox's leer, Gerald simply chose to ignore it.

Either way, the two thousand square feet banquet hall was located beside the villa, and Maddox usually used the area for either organizing social activities for members of the military or for entertaining guests.

As everyone began walking toward the hall, Lucian and Gerald made sure to lag behind the group. Once most of them had walked past the hall's doors, Lucian took the chance to whisper, "Is anything wrong...?"

"What do you think?" replied Gerald with a subtle smile.

Gerald, for one, had already sensed the presence of several snipers from the moment he arrived at the villa, and he was pretty sure that there were even more that he hadn't pinpointed yet. Maddox had definitely prepared a large surprise for Gerald.

Nodding in response, Lucian then sighed before saying, "Just be careful... If necessary, notify me of any danger in advance so that I don't end up burdening you too much..."

"Don't worry, there's hardly any danger," replied Gerald with a nod.

Regardless, once everyone entered the hall including Gerald and Lucian, the doors to the banquet hall were slowly closed.

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The second that happened, the snipers who had been lying in ambush immediately rushed toward the banquet hall's exterior, efficiently surrounding the area in no time flat as they patiently awaited Maddox's command from the outside.

Meanwhile, inside the banquet hall, Maddox cleared his throat before declaring, "Thank you all for attending tonight! While some may say that the military shouldn't be involved with the country's economy, I say otherwise! We're truthfully interested in knowing how you're all developing as well! With that said, let us begin discussing the next step in improving Yanam's economy!"

Ashe said all that, Maddox made sure not to even look at Gerald for fear that his true intentions would end up getting exposed. That idiot would finally be his...!

Unfortunately for Maddox, Gerald had already seen through all his plans.

Whatever the case was, Maddox then turned to look at Lucian making sure to casually glance at Gerald in the process before adding, "Why don't we start with you, Lucian? Do share what the next step for your family is!"

“Though the Grubbs don’t have that many properties when compared to the others here, I’m honestly satisfied as long as I can keep them up and running. With that said, my family’s just going to continue doing what it’s always done. However, we aren’t against change, so do share your plans with us!” replied Lucian who had momentarily been caught off guard as he replied in a bureaucratic manner.

“Well said! What about the others?” said Maddox with a nod, clearly not planning to do anything just yet.

“I do have some things planned. Ever since ‘that’ incident, the three major families’ properties have been on the decline. If we just continue ignoring that, our economy could be negatively affected! With that said, since my family’s in the food industry, I’m planning to acquire all the food factories belonging to the Jewells. What do you think?” asked a middle aged man who was donning a suit rather loudly.

“I think it’s an excellent idea! If you need anything, do notify me and the military will try our best to fulfill your needs!” replied Maddox without the slightest hesitation. After all, he didn’t have much interest in who did the job. Still, he wasn’t against obtaining long term benefits from them by helping them now.

“I appreciate the feedback, deputy captain!” declared the middle aged man with a bow.

“As for my family, we don’t have any plans to further develop yet, so we’ll be doing the same as the Grubbs. Even so, I’d still appreciate help from the military!” said another middle aged man.

“But of course, we’ll help! Just contact my secretary whenever you need aid!” replied Maddox.

“That...” muttered the middle aged man, feeling rightfully puzzled. After all, throughout his many years doing business, not once had he gotten involved with those from the military. Yet here Maddox was, telling him to just contact his secretary. Since when had the military started getting involved with Yanam’s economy? It certainly didn’t help that Maddox sounded serious about all this!

“Hmm? Any questions?” asked Maddox.

“No, I... was just wondering how I should repay you for your help!” replied the middle aged man after quickly making something up, knowing that he’d get into trouble if he revealed his true thoughts.

Laughing in response, Maddox simply said, “We’re all people of Yanam, are we not? I’m just doing my part as a citizen! Also, I thought that this would be a good chance to get to know you guys, so don’t worry about repaying my aid!”

“Hear! Hear!” declared everyone, unable to help themselves from breathing sighs of relief...