

Chapter 2264

Yazmin watched Erwen sew Zeke's clothes with jealousy. To think you are my best friend! You didn't even notice the big hole in my clothes! The tear in Mr. Williams is so small in comparison, but you fixed his clothes instead of mine!

You hiberdating brat!

Meanwhile, Sole Wolf ran at top speed all the way to Durbaine.

He slipped into Don's house unnoticed as if he were a ghost.

Don was completely unaware of Sole Wolf's arrival. He was praying in front of a portrait of the Great Marshal and muttering an apology.

Sole Wolf knew that Don had guessed Zeke's identity and realized that he was the Great Marshal, or else he wouldn't be regretting his actions in front of the Great Marshal's portrait.

Sole Wolf snorted, "Now you regret your actions. You should have known." Startled by the voice, Don turned around immediately.

Upon seeing Sole Wolf, he cried out loud and fell backward to the ground.

It's one of the Great Marshal's general! He must be powerful as well!

Don scurried over to Sole Wolf and knelt before him.

"I'm sorry for offending you, Sir. It's all my fault! I deserve to die!"

Voice trembling, he continued, "I am willing to die as punishment. I just hope that you will spare my family and the villagers. Please have mercy on them, please have mercy on them..."

Don thought Sole Wolf was there to kill him.

Sole Wolf replied coldly, "Zeke wouldn't bother to kill a nobody like you. Get up. I'm not here to kill you. I'm here on Zeke's orders to bring you somewhere."

What?

turned away and vomited on the ground.

Rolling his eyes at Don, Sole Wolf muttered, "Useless man."

After throwing up, Don felt slightly better.

When he glanced around, he saw Zeke.

Terrified, he knelt down in front of Zeke and pleaded, "I deserve to die! I shouldn't have offended you. I'm willing to die as punishment, but I beg you to have mercy on my family. I will take full responsibility for what I did. Please don't hurt my family, please..."

Sole Wolf scolded, "Get up! I told you that Zeke wouldn't be bothered to kill you. We brought you here because we need a favor from you."

Don hurriedly replied, "I'm willing to do anything!"

"All right," Sole Wolf muttered, "Let's begin, Zeke."

Zeke nodded slightly and glanced at Andres.

After getting Zeke's hint, Andres took the antidote and gave it to Don. "Drink this."

With trembling hands, Don took the antidote from Andres and said, "Great Marshal, can I do it in my own way? I don't want to die of poison. I'm scared of pain."

Sole Wolf snapped, "Are you even listening to what I said? I told you that you are not even qualified enough for Zeke to kill you. This is an antidote. It can save you."

"Don't worry, chief. It is safe for consumption," Erwen explained patiently. "What we told you is true. You and your villagers have been controlled by trine worms. If you don't kill the trine worms in time, you will die. This antidote will kill the trine worms, thus freeing you from their control."

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Have I heard wrongly?

Don looked at Zeke gratefully.

Instead of punishing him and the villagers, Zeke tried to save their lives.

He never expected Zeke to be so forgiving.

Don was about to thank Zeke when Sole Wolf ordered, "Shut up and drink it quickly!"

Don hurriedly swallowed the antidote.

Zeke and the others fixed their gaze on Don attentively as it was their only way of knowing whether the antidote worked.

After finishing the antidote, Don suddenly clasped his chest and moaned, "Ouch! Ouch..."

Andres heaved a sigh of relief as it was what he was expecting. If Don was in pain, the antidote must be working,

At least they knew that they were in the correct direction although they couldn't that the trine worms were killed. prove

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At least they knew that they were in the correct direction although they couldn't prove that the trine worms were killed.

If Don didn't react at all, it meant that the antidote didn't work on the trine worms.

The pain became more excruciating as every second passed.

In the end, Don lost every ounce of strength he had.

Crumpling to the ground, he lay convulsing, foaming and wailing. It looked like he might get into shock anytime.

Everyone witnessing Don's reaction to the antidote was nervous.

Will the antidote overpower the trine worms, or will the trine worms win?

Hopefully he can survive.

Seeing that Don was in pain, Zeke used his energy and deployed Ammo Needles to alleviate Don's pain.

As time passed, Don's pain subsided. Half an hour later, Don didn't feel pain anymore. Slumping on the ground, he was panting heavily.

His clothes were soaking wet from sweating in pain.

Sole Wolf gave Don a kick. "Are you dead?
Get up if you're still alive."

Despite the agonizing pain, Don heeded Sole Wolf's instructions and stood up. Gasping for breath, he looked at Zeke.

Zeke asked, "How are you feeling now?"

Don responded, "I feel... I feel much better. The suffocating chest tightness that I always have is gone. I can breathe better now."

Zeke nodded. "Come forward and let me take a look."

With trembling legs, Don approached Zeke carefully.

Zeke grabbed Don's wrist and took his pulse.

After a moment, a smile formed on Zeke's face. "Not bad. The poison from the trine worms has been removed. The antidote worked."

Andres and the others were relieved to hear that.

Grateful for Zeke's help, Don knelt before him again.

"Thank you, Great Marshal. I will never forget how you've helped me. This is the second time you've saved my life, and yet I repaid your kindness with malice. I'm a shameless man who deserves to die!"

Don continued, "The priest is to be blamed for this! If not for him spreading lies about you, I will never have misunderstood you!"

Priest?

The others were confused. "What priest are you talking about?"

Don explained, "Well, a priest came to our village today. He said a lot of ominous stuff and even cursed the villagers. We didn't believe him at first, but after his predictions came true one by one, he managed to trick us into trusting him."

"He told us that those two women and a man did something to our ancestors' graves, bringing bad luck to the village. He made us believe that they are the reason for our recent strange encounters and that we have to get rid of them if we want things to go back to normal. We were too stupid to realize that the priest was lying, so we attacked..."

What?

Zeke looked at Don with interest. "Who is the priest? Where is he? Bring us to him quickly."

However, Don shook his head. "I don't know his real identity or where he is now. He came and left in a hurry after injuring my men in a fight."

Zeke started to analyze the situation calmly. "Why is he aiming at Andres and the others? Why does he want to kill Andres?"

"Zeke, I think he wants Andres dead because he doesn't want him healing the villagers and killing the trine worms," Sole Wolf said grimly.

"If not, why would he strike right when Andres is experimenting on the antidote for the trine worms?"

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Zeke said, "It makes sense. That was what I thought too. Who was most likely to stop Andres from killing the trine worm?"

Killer Wolf and Andres answered at the same time, "It's the master of the trine worm!"

Zeke nodded. "That's right. The master of the trine worm is Dullioud's sorcerer."

Don asked cautiously, "Do you mean that old priest was the culprit behind the plot to harm us?"

Zeke replied, "You're right. It was he who implanted trine worms within your bodies."

"Damn it!" Don clenched his fists. "It is bad enough that he is the thief who cries foul. How dare he turn us into his tool? I will make him pay. Great Marshal, I am willing to hunt him down to redeem myself."

Zeke replied, "You are not strong enough to face him alone. Now, bring me to where you met him. I have my way to capture him."

Don immediately nodded in agreement, "Yes, sure!"

Then, Don brought Zeke and a few others to the front of the village and stopped at the place where Don and the others met the old priest.

Zeke closed his eyes. He could vaguely sense the residue of dark energy from there.

One could only find such dark energy in those adept in dark means.

Zeke ordered, "Andres, Erwen, and Yazmin, the three of you are to stay and help the villagers remove trine worms from their bodies."

Andres and the two others nodded. "Yes, understood."

Then, Zeke continued, "Sole Wolf, Killer Wolf, both of you shall come with me to pursue the sorcerer."

"Yes, Sir!" Sole Wolf and Killer Wolf answer in unison.

After that, Zeke, Sole Wolf, and Killer Wolf dashed off and turned into a blur as they disappeared into the distance.

Erwen watched them leave and mumbled, "Please stay safe..."

Yazmin grumbled, "Seriously, he didn't even say goodbye. What a heartless man. Erwen, there is no point wasting your feelings on that man. Forget him."

She said that to advise Erwen to give up. After all, she could see Zeke did not wish to get too close to Erwen.

Erwen nodded at Yazmin in a daze. "Sure, let's help the people."

Yazmin shook her head and smiled bitterly. "What is love that people are willing to die for?"

Meanwhile, Zeke, Sole Wolf, and Killer Wolf followed the trail of dark energy. He soon realized that something was wrong. It was because the dark energy trail was leading toward Vauxgan Pavilion.

Damn it! Could the sorcerer be heading to Vauxgan Pavilion? Why does he want to go there? Could it be due to Fortuna? It means Fortuna is in danger!

The realization made their hearts beat rapidly, and they could not help but run faster.

Soon, they came near Vauxgan Pavilion.

They could see a man in a black robe leading Rick and a few others to survey the Yellow Sand River.

Zeke was sure that the man in the black robe was Cesar, the sorcerer from Dulllioud.

Meanwhile, Sole Wolf gritted his teeth. "Damn it, that b*stard Rick betrays us in the end. I will bash up that trash for good this time."

Killer Wolf said, "Sole Wolf, don't be quick to jump to conclusions. I don't think Rick has betrayed us yet." Sole Wolf replied, "Nonsense! If Rick has not betrayed us, why is he working with our enemy?"

Killer Wolf replied, "You should look closely. Rick and the others look dazed and move stiffly. They seemed unnatural and similar to the villagers in Durbaine when they were under the influence of trine worm. Therefore, I think the sorcerer must have infected them with trine worm and turned them into his puppets."

Sole Wolf shouted, "I don't care whether they have the trine worm. Anyone who betrayed us must die!"

At this moment, Zeke did not care whether Rick had betrayed them. His only concern was Fortuna.

It was because he sensed not just Cesar's dark energy. There was another wave of intimidating energy.

It felt like negative energy from the Netherworld and was immensely powerful.

It is the negative energy from Daemonium! Zeke's heart sank at the realization. It seemed Daemonium is involved in this too.

Furthermore, he might even be the main culprit.

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That sorcerer from Dulllioud might merely be a minor pawn in this matter.

Zeke had suspected this previously and thought that a mere sorcerer from Dulliod could not carry out such a grand plan by himself. It meant he had someone powerful supporting him..

It seemed his suspicion was founded.

Daemonium was most probably here for Fortuna.

Thus, Fortuna could be in danger!

Zeke immediately contacted Fortuna through his consciousness. "Fortuna, how is your condition?"

Soon, Zeke received a reply from Fortuna. "I feel powerful. The aura here is powerful and beneficial to me. Zeke, you should hurry here and bath yourself in this aura. It is good for your body."

Zeke asked, "I'm asking whether you came across any dangerous people or something dangerous happened!"

Fortuna said, "It's so nice. Damn, this feels so good. I'm willing to stay here forever. Zeke, are you coming here or not? If you're not, stop bothering me as I absorb the energy here."

Zeke was relieved.

Although Fortuna did not answer his question, Zeke could hear from its tone and speech that Fortuna was safe.

Therefore, Zeke focused his attention on Cesar again.

Zeke did not dare to make himself known. He feared that Daemonium could be hiding nearby. Furthermore, Cesar might only be a bait to lure Zeke out.

Thus, to test whether Daemonium was nearby, Zeke patted Sole Wolf's shoulder and said, "Sole Wolf, may I trouble you to make a run,"

Sole Wolf, "Sure, Zeke, do you want me to kill or immobilize them?"

Zeke replied, "Your purpose is to test whether Daemonium is nearby. Therefore, don't beat them too hard."

Daemonium?

Sole Wolf and Killer Wolf were stunned and looked at Zeke with confusion. "Zeke, are you talking about that Daemonium from the Netherworld? Zeke, do you mean..."

Zeke scolded, "Have neither of you sensed a wave of familiar energy residue around here?"

Sole Wolf and Killer Wolf immediately closed their eyes to sense their surroundings.

Soon, they reopened their eyes, showing the burning fury within them.

Killer Wolf said, "There's a residue of Daemonium's negative energy in the surrounding. It seems he is the true mastermind behind this!"

Sole Wolf added, "Damn those b*stards from the Netherworld! They can't defeat us, but they keep harassing us. We must grab hold of them and exterminate them once and for all!"

Zeke said, "Netherworld had been around for hundreds, or perhaps nearly a thousand years. It is not that easy to destroy them fully. "Sole Wolf... Forget it. Killer Wolf, go sound Daemonium out instead. You are more astute than Sole Wolf and better able to adapt according to the situation."

Sole Wolf's mouth twitched unhappily.

I have a brain too. How can Zeke say I am less astute? I only didn't bother to use it. If I start using my brain, not just Killer Wolf, even Zeke might not outsmart me.

Meanwhile, Killer Wolf took off his jacket and covered half of his face before walking with swag toward Cesar.

Cesar quickly saw Killer Wolf and asked, "Who the heck are you?"

Killer Wolf replied coldly, "This is my territory. Leave your valuables if you wish to pass through here."

Cesar responded mockingly, "Oh, you're just an annoying bandit. Get out of my sight. I'm warning you not to anger me. Otherwise, I will make you suffer!"

Killer Wolf said, "How dare you look down on us bandits? I will show you how powerful I am!"

After saying that, Killer Wolf charged at Cesar.

Cesar refused to be outdone. He sneered and released a trine worm.

The trine worm flew toward Killer Wolf.

Killer Wolf reacted swiftly. When the trine worm had reached in front of him, he pretended to trip on a rock and successfully evaded it.

The pretense was necessary because Zeke and the others suspected Daemonium was observing from his hiding place. If Killer Wolf displayed his abilities, it would trigger Daemonium's suspicion and alert him to escape.

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Cesar sneered and said, "What the heck? You're lucky enough to dodge my trine worm! Don't get ahead of yourself. I can still defeat you in a direct fight!"

Killer Wolf and Cesar soon fought each other head-on and were embroiled in a fierce battle.

The battle put Killer Wolf in a difficult position. He could not reveal his true strength or show any of his technique. Therefore, he could only fight Cesar with punches and kicks.

Of course, even as he fought with his bare fists, he had to be careful not to use too much strength. Otherwise, he could kill Cesar.

Cesar was no match for Killer Wolf and soon became bloody with numerous injuries.

Furthermore, he kept screaming, "Let go of me. I demand you to let me go now! Otherwise, I will make sure that you die a horrible death. I'm not kidding you!"

Killer Wolf responded, "Hmph, come at me with all you have! I won't even bat an eye!"

He was implying to Cesar that if his master, Daemonium, was nearby, he should call him out.

Otherwise, Killer Wolf would kill Cesar.

However, Cesar felt conflicted and hesitated whether to call Daemonium for help.

If Daemonium were nearby, Cesar would call him for help immediately.

Unfortunately for him, Daemonium had left a long time ago. If Cesar used a special method to summon Daemonium, Daemonium would be furious.

Furthermore, it was a random bandit who delayed his plan.

Nevermind, I will deal with this myself.

In the end, Cesar decided against calling Daemonium for help and continued to fight Killer Wolf.

Killer Wolf and Cesar had been battling for some time, but Daemonium still had not appeared.

Therefore, Killer Wolf understood that Daemonium was not nearby.

Thus, Killer Wolf stopped holding back and released massive energy, forcing half of Cesar's body into the ground.

Cesar was stunned.

What the heck? What in the world is this?

Wasn't this b*stard an ordinary bandit? His fighting skills were not much better than mine. I managed to hit him a lot of times just now. But why did he suddenly burst out that colossal power and force me into the ground? Did he release his energy? Damn it. He is a warrior, but he hid his true abilities just now. It is all a trick. That is blatant trickery!

Cesar felt a sense of danger and struggled with all that he had. However, he could not get himself out of the ground. He looked at Killer Wolf with fear in his eyes. "Who... Who the heck are you?"

Killer Wolf smirked and took off his scarf.

Cesar was shocked to see Killer Wolf's face.

It's him! He is one of the followers of the mighty warrior that appeared in Durbaine! Since he is here, where is that warrior that appeared in Durbaine? Does this mean he is here too?

Cesar looked around in panic.

As expected, he saw the dreaded warrior walking toward him from nearby.

Cesar instantly lost all hope. Damn it, why can't he have appeared earlier? Why does he have to show up now that Daemonium had left?

Zeke seized up Cesar with a glance and said, "Are you Cesar, the sorcerer from Dulllioud?"

Cesar took a deep breath and pretended to be calm as he said, "Who are you? I have done nothing wrong. Why did you attack me?"

Zeke replied, "Are you sure you have done nothing wrong? If I'm not mistaken, you're behind the incident at Durbaine, isn't it?"

Cesar feigned ignorance. "Where is Durbaine? What the heck did I do? I think you've got the wrong person. Let me go! Or else, I will call the police!"

"Pfft!" Sole Wolf could not remain silent anymore. "Call the police? Don't worry. We can send you to the police station. What you did is enough to garner you a few execution sentences."

Cesar replied, "Hmph, what nonsense are you saying? I am an upright person and have never done any evil. My conscience is clear. I'm not scared of going to the police station."

Zeke did not wish to waste time arguing with him. Thus, he went straight to the point, "Tell me, what is your relationship with Daemonium?"

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Cesar shook his head. "Who is Daemonium? I've never heard of him."

"Fine!" Killer Wolf chuckled ambiguously. "I enjoy playing with stubborn b*stards like you!"

Then, Killer Wolf drew out a flying sword and waved it. The cold gleam of the sword sent shivers down Cesar's spine. "My flying sword can be used as a sword and a whip. Let's see how many whips you can take."

Then, Killer Wolf raised the flying sword high.

Cesar shouted suddenly, "Stop, please stop. I'll show you something. Then, you can decide whether to hit me."

Killer Wolf paused and asked, "What is it?"

Cesar suddenly grabbed a fistful of soil and threw it at Zeke and the others. "It's this! Haha!"

As the soil clouded their vision, Cesar quickly jumped out of the ground and jumped into the nearby Yellow Sand River.

"A*shole!" Sole Wolf was so furious that veins popped up on his forehead. "How dare you trick me! I will show no mercy!"

Thus, Sole Wolf prepared to jump into the Yellow Sand River to chase after Cesar.

However, Zeke stopped Sole Wolf and said, "You don't need to catch him yourself."

Then, Zeke shouted toward the river, "Fortuna, a fellow jumped into the river. He's planning to snatch your divine energy."

"What?" Fortuna was furious. "How dare he covets what is mine. I will kill him now."

Zeke said, "Can you do me a favor? This man is important to me, so please capture him alive."

However, Fortuna did not reply. It swung its tail and triggered a massive wave in the Yellow Sand River.

The wave was around ten meters tall. There was a black spot in the middle of the colossal wave.

It was Cesar.

The wave carried Cesar and dumped him onto the ground. Cesar vomited blood and kept groaning in pain.

He broke a rib. The broken bone pierced through his skin. It was a frightening sight."

Cesar looked at the Yellow Sand River and shouted in fear, "What is that? What the heck is that thing? It's unbelievable!"

Cesar vaguely saw Fortuna while he was in the Yellow Sand River.

He saw that it had a large body and glittering scales. It seemed immensely powerful, sending fear straight to his heart.

How can there be such a scary creature?

Cesar began to doubt what he knew about the world.

Sole Wolf laughed and said, "Why? Don't you know what is in that river? Let me tell you. It's the legendary dragon called Fortuna!"

Cesar's face turned pale. "There is no way a dragon really exists in this world! No way! I don't believe it!"

Zeke said, "It doesn't matter whether you believe it. I will ask you questions now, and you better answer honestly. Otherwise, I will make you regret it for the rest of your life! First question. Did you order Dullioud to kill Lacey and Dawn of the Linton Group? Why did you target Dawn?"

Zeke paused and continued, "Second question, you turned the Dulliouds into spider men and ordered them to dive into the river. What did you ask them to guard? Third question. You controlled the villagers to plant soybeans. Why? Fourth question. Your master is Daemonium-"

However, Cesar interrupted Zeke and said, "Stop asking! I won't answer anything you ask.

"Marvelous!" Zeke's chest burned with fury. "No one has ever dared to refuse me like this! I believe you dare to refuse me because you don't know much about me. Now, I will let you see what I'm capable of! I categorize human pain into ten levels. Ordinary people can only withstand up to level four or five. I am curious up to which level you can stand."

After saying that, Zeke pulled out an Ammo Needle and was prepared to use it on Cesar.

Cesar looked at the Ammo Needle indifferently. "Haha, acupuncture is nothing to a sorcerer like me. It is as easy as eating and drinking! Do you think you can threaten me with acupuncture? Are you looking down on me?"

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Giving Cesar a thumbs-up, Sole Wolf complimented sarcastically. "I'm in awe of you. What the heck! Nobody else has the audacity to disregard the Ammo Needle technique like you!"

In a split second, Cesar's face turned ashen. He asked hesitantly, "Wait a minute! The Ammo Needle technique? Isn't the Great Marshal the only person who knows about this acupuncture technique? D-Do you mean to say that you're the Great Marshal?"

"You're right!" Zeke nodded slightly. In a blink of an eye, he had poked the first silver needle into Cesar's skin.

"Argh!" the latter let out a series of bloodcurdling yowls.

Zeke snickered. "How's it? Are you willing to spit it out now?"

Unable to endure the excruciating pain, Cesar squealed at the top of his lungs, "Stop it! Please stop it! I'll tell you everything now!"

Meanwhile, Sole Wolf and Killer Wolf could not help feeling disappointed. Initially, they presumed Cesar would be able to break the record by enduring up to the sixth stage of the pain level.

Evidently, the sorcerer was not as mighty as he seemed. It never came to their mind that he could not even endure the first stage of the pain level! Pfft! What worthless trash!

Zeke stated grimly, "If you answer my four questions honestly now, I might consider sparing your life!"

Cesar took a deep breath before replying, "Okay! Let me show you something before that. After that, I bet you'll have a clear insight into everything!"

Seconds later, he whipped out a mini basket. The moment he opened the lid, a fiery-red worm flew out. He opened his mouth hastily, and the mysterious worm vanished into it.

Right that instant, an alarm bell started ringing in Zeke's mind.

Sole Wolf snapped, "Old bugger, didn't you say you want to show us something? What's that?"

Cesar flashed him an ambiguous smile. "Didn't you see my Heart-Bound Worm justnow?"

Sole Wolf snorted. "D*mn it! Why did you show us a worm?"

Cesar uttered resolutely, "Heed my words. You'd better forget about it. I'll never betray my master!"

What?Zeke and the others were flabbergasted.

He knows Zeke's identity as the Great Marshal, isn't he? Now that he can't even endure the first stage of the pain level, how could he have the gut to get on Zeke's nerves? He must be having a death wish! Sole Wolf snorted inwardly.

Without a second thought, he stretched out his palm to slap him. "Hmph! You're asking for it! Zeke, it's pointless to let go of him. Let's throw him into the sea to feed the shark!"

Flustered, Zeke sniggered. "It seems we've underestimated him. Since he gives no hoots to the first stage of the pain level, I'll let him go through the sixth stage right away!"

Next, he whipped out the Ammo Needle and was about to strike at Cesar again.

The latter shrieked apprehensively, "Stop that! You can't hurt me. Otherwise, you'll be sorry for that!"

"Haha! Give me a reason why I can't hurt you!" Zeke mocked.

Cesar replied matter-of-factly, "If you hurt me, Dawn Castaneda will be injured too. In other words, if I'm dead, she'll meet her end too!"

Zeke sneered, "Do you think that I'm an idiot? How's it possible that Dawn will share the same fate as you!"

Cesar retorted, "If you don't believe, you can check with her if she was in pain just now. The worm I swallowed just now is one of the Heart-Bound Worms that normally appear in pairs. As for the other one pairing with it, I'd let her swallow it earlier. Thus, Dawn Castaneda and my lives

are tied to each other now. If I'm injured, she'll sustain the same pain as me. If I'm dead, she will meet her end on the spot too!"

D*mn it! Zeke's heart thumped. At the sight of Cesar puffing out his chest triumphantly, his gut instinct told him the latter was telling the truth.

Oh my! What am I supposed to do now? I mustn't put Dawnie in deep water just because I intend to force him into spitting the information out! Wearing a look of sheer grimness, he whipped out his phone and gave Dawn a call at once.

She answered the call within seconds.

"Zeke, good morning. Have you taken your breakfast?" Dawn's voice sounded from the other end of the line. Somehow, Zeke could sense a hint of gloominess in it.

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He questioned anxiously, "Dawnie, you seem to sound low in spirits. Is there anything wrong?"

Dawn let out a deep sigh. "Argh! I'm clueless about what happened moments ago too. There was a sudden stabbing pain on one side of my cheek. I can still feel the burning pain now. It seemed someone had slapped me."

Sole Wolf and Killer Wolf stiffened instantaneously. D*mn it! That old bugger's telling the truth!

Sole Wolf got all fired up and felt like bashing Cesar's brain out, but Killer Wolf stopped him at the eleventh hour. He had no choice but to do so, fearing that Dawn would be tortured by pain if Sole Wolf beat Cesar up.

Unable to stifle his indignance, Zeke vented his anger by kicking Cesar on the arm.

Nevertheless, he did not kick him hard so he would not hurt Dawn badly. His main intention was to verify the latter's claim about the Heart-Bound Worms.

"Ouch!" Right after he kicked Cesar's arm, Dawn let out a yowl of pain on the other end of the line.

Zeke asked hastily, "Dawnie, which part of your body is in pain now?"

Dawn held onto her arm and wailed piteously, "My arm hurts! It seems as if someone had just kicked on it."

Zeke could not help gasping inwardly. Hmm! Apparently, he's telling the truth about the Heart-Bound Worms!

Even so, he consoled Dawn, "I guess it could be that you seldom work out lately. You should make an effort to work out more often from tomorrow onwards. Okay, that's all. I'll hang up now."

Before hanging up, he overheard Dawn grumbling doubtfully, "What's the matter with me? I've been working out consistently all this while. By right, I shouldn't be having any health issues. After all, if there's something wrong, it can't be causing the sudden sharp pain here and there. How weird!"

Glowing at Cesar, who was grinning triumphantly, Zeke could only restrain himself from finishing the latter off on the spot.

He had no choice but to hold himself back for Dawn's sake. No way! I mustn't act impulsively so Dawnie won't be hurt. Gosh! I can't even beat him up!

No words could describe how frustrated Zeke was at the moment. In fact, he was never overcome by such helplessness before.

Laughing gleefully, Cesar piped up, "Hey! How about we make a deal? If you let me off now, I promise to expel the Heart-Bound Worm from Dawn Castaneda's body after ensuring I'm sound and safe. After that, she'll still be able to live healthily for the rest of her life. What do you think?"

Glaring at him, Zeke snapped, "You must be assuming that there's nothing I can do but to bow to you. Am I right?"

Wearing a look of sheer insolence, Cesar sneered, "Of course not! If you happen to pay no heed to her life, I'd have met my tragic end! Anyway, it's still worth it if I'm fated to meet my end any time now. After all, you'll sustain a great loss too, as I won't be the only one losing my life! Haha!"

Fine! Just you wait! Tamping down his simmering fury, Zeke whipped out his phone to give Andres a call.

After a short while, the latter picked up the call. "Elder, is there anything?"

Zeke cut the crap. "How's the progress over there now?"

Andres replied respectfully, "Elder, everything goes smoothly here. The antidote is effective in eradicating trine worms. So far, it has been working perfectly well!"

Heaving a sigh of relief, Zeke responded, "Well done. Andres, have you ever heard about the Heart-Bound Worm?" Andres replied, "Yeah! I know about it. It's deemed a highly complicated cursed parasitic worm of the Black Muraco Clan."

Shortly after, something came to his mind, urging him to ask apprehensively, "Elder, why are you asking about this? Could it be..."

He was worried sick Zeke was poisoned by the Heart-Bound Worm. My goodness! If Elder is poisoned and affected by others, Eurasia will be doomed!
Before he could finish his words, Zeke cut him off. "Not me, but one of my relatives is poisoned by it. Andres, do you know how to get rid of it?"

Andres uttered sheepishly, "Elder, I can only give it a try, and the chances are slim. Please spare me for my incompetence. Even if it can be expelled, there will still be side effects. I'm afraid your relative might even end up in a vegetative state. I guess the best way is to get the owner of the HeartBound Worm to expel it from your relative's body."

In an instant, Zeke's heart sank. It never occurred to him that even Andres could not get the matter resolved. Nevertheless, he tried to get a grip on himself so Cesar would not sense his helplessness.

Andres asked quizzically, "Elder, did someone from the Black Muraco Clan poison your relative?"

Chapter 2272

Zeke explained, "His name is Cesar Muraco, a sorcerer from the Dulllioud. He's an elderly and weak man dressed in a black robe."

Astounded, Andres mumbled to himself, "Cesar Muraco from Dulllioud dressed in a black robe? Could it be him?"

Zeke asked anxiously, "Do you know him?"

Andres responded, "I've heard long ago that the elder of the Black Muraco Clan has pledged loyalty to the bandits. Isn't Dulllioud one of the largest bandits organizations in Eurasia? Apart from that, the elder of the Black Muraco Clan loves to dress in a black robe. Thus, there's a big possibility they are the same person!"

In a split second, Zeke was enlightened by his words. It never came to him that Cesar would turn out to be the elder of the Black Muraco Clan.

Since he had assimilated the Black Muraco Clan after eradicating their progenitor, he was not surprised that Cesar would bore wrath against him.

At the thought of that, he stated placidly, "Okay! I got it."

"Elder, do you need me to go over and assist you?" Andres asked.

After pondering for a while, Zeke nodded. "Okay, come over here now."

After hanging up, he turned to look at Cesar. "Let me tell you some bad news. I've just contacted Andres Muraco, the clan leader of the White Muraco Clan. He's able to get rid of the Heart-Bound Worm in Dawnie's body."

Smiling ambiguously at Zeke, he stated casually, "Oh, is that so? Why don't you request him to get rid of the Heart-Bound Worm in her body now?"

Taking a deep breath, Zeke threatened, "Cesar Muraco, I'm giving you the final warning. If you're willing to turn over a new leaf and volunteer to get rid of the HeartBound Worm in Dawnie's body, I'll spare your life! However, if it ends up with anyone on my side getting rid of the HeartBound Worm, I can assure you that you'll die a horrible death!"

Nonetheless, Cesar was not the slightest bit intimidated by his threatening words. In fact, he retorted sardonically, "Pfft! It never comes to me that the Great Marshal would trick people with underhanded means. Let me be frank with you. Nobody can expel the poison of my Heart-Bound Worm in this world, let alone you, the formidable Great Marshal. As for the so-called clan leader from the White Muraco Clan, it's your wishful thinking that he's able to do so."

Irrked by his mockery, Zeke clenched his fists tightly. However, his hands were tied and there really was nothing he could do.

Veins protruded on Sole Wolf's forehead. Needless to say, it would be utterly unbearable for him if Zeke had to admit defeat. In fact, it was even more frustrating than he himself being humiliated by anyone

Gritting his teeth, he snarled, "Very well, Cesar Muraco. You're going to pay the price for your insolence. Undeniably, we can't do anything to you now. But it doesn't mean that we can't lay a finger on your family and relatives. Don't blame us for being coldhearted. We're only paying you back in your coin. You only have yourself to blame for stepping on our toes first!"

There was a slight change in Cesar's countenance, but he regained his usual composure within seconds.

To him, his family members' lives were incomparable to his. Let it be if he threatens to annihilate all my family members. Anyway, I can still remarry and have other children again!

When Zeke caught sight of Cesar's expression, he had a feeling the latter would not be bothered even if his family members were hurt.

Nevertheless, he insisted on giving it a try regardless of how low the success rate was. By hook or by crook, I must save Dawnie's life soonest possible!

For the time being, Rick and the others were the ones who knew Cesar the best. Without hesitation, Zeke let him and the others take the antidote for the trine worm.

Right after taking it, they collapsed on the ground, yowling and wriggling in pain.

Five minutes later, they finally started to quiet down and come to themselves after the trine worms in their bodies were expelled.

Right after they came to their senses, they could barely wait to teach Cesar a lesson. Unequivocally, the latter was hopelessly hard-hearted.

Even so, Zeke stood in their way immediately. Since Cesar and Dawn's lives were tied to each other in a way, he was worried stiff. No way! Dawnie will have to endure the pain if they bash him up!

Kneeling in front of Zeke, Rick and the others pleaded with him, "Great Marshal, please don't get angry. We only lost our minds and ended up exploited by him after being poisoned by his trine worm." "Great Marshal, we had no choice but to give in to him earlier. Please spare us."

"Great Marshal, we vow to be faithful to you!"

Zeke waved his hands at them instantly. "Quiet, please. There's something I need to ask you. If you can tell me the truth, I'll consider it as you redeeming your mistakes."

Chapter 2273

Rick nodded hastily. "Great Marshal, feel free to ask us anything. We won't keep anything mum from you!"

Pointing at Cesar, Zeke cut to the chase. "Does he have any family members?"

"His wife and two kids are staying in the village nearby," Rick replied right away.

"Go and bring me his family members," Zeke instructed solemnly.

Rick asked quizzically, "Great Marshal, why do you intend to meet them?"

Sole Wolf snarled at him, "That's none of your business. Just follow Zeke's instruction!"

Rick nodded at once. "Okay! I'll go bring them here now." and

To play safe, Zeke instructed, "Sole Wolf, go together with them. No matter what, you must get this mission accomplished!"

Sole Wolf reassured him, "Zeke, you can count on me. I'm sure as h*ll there won't be any problem bringing them back!"

Soon, he left together with Rick and the others.

After stealing a glance at Cesar, Zeke was astounded that the latter seemed to be unfazed. D*mn it! He seems oblivious to the threat! I bet he won't relent even if we threaten him with them in hand!

He was overcome by another wave of helplessness, not knowing what he should do if that was the case. The next moment, he closed his eyes and started to contemplate.

After a while, something came across his mind. At the thought, he hurriedly communicated telepathically with the White Muraco Clan's Progenitor without hesitation.

Soon, Zeke's lips curved into a faint smile.

Hmm! If Cesar Muraco still doesn't give in even after we threaten him with his family members, we can only get the matter resolved through the White Muraco Clan's Progenitor!

In the meantime, Sole Wolf reached a village nearby with Rick and the others.

Shortly after, they came across a woman watering the vegetables in a vegetable garden.

At the same time, her two sons were squatting on the ground, giggling as they were trying to catch the grasshoppers.

Moments later, the woman straightened her body, massaging her waists to ease the soreness. The moment she threw a glance at her two sons, the frown on her face was prevailed by a loving smile.

She reminded the elder boy gently, "Gavin, keep an eye on your younger brother. Don't go too far, okay?"

"Okay, Mom!" the two boys replied mellifluously.

The scene was just like a beautiful painting with a harmonious blend of familial warmth and peacefulness of the village life.

Sole Wolf suddenly did not have the heart to carry out his mission.

However, when Dawn's innocent smiling face flashed across his mind, he talked himself into getting a grip of himself and stepping into the compound.

The woman was caught off guard when Sole Wolf came into sight.

Nevertheless, she heaved a sigh of relief after catching sight of Rick and the others standing behind Sole Wolf. "Ah! Rick, it's you! Why're you guys here?"

"Hmm!" the latter only murmured briefly without uttering any words.

Meanwhile, the two kids darted toward him in high spirits. "Mr. Baker, why haven't you visited us for a long time? We miss you so much!"

"I'm busy lately." Rick had to give an excuse; his heart wrenched at his innocence.

Gavin scanned the surroundings eagerly but cast his eyes down when his father was nowhere to be seen. "Mr. Baker, where's my dad? Why isn't he coming back together with you?" There was a sense of unmissable disappointment in his voice.

Rick uttered casually, "Your dad is occupied and can't come by himself. That's why he requested me help fetch you to meet him."

"Really?" Tickled pink, they applauded. "Yeah! We can finally go and meet Daddy!"

"Really?" Tickled pink, they applauded. "Yeah! We can finally go and meet Daddy!"

"Mr. Baker, let's go now. Don't keep my dad waiting. I miss him so much!" Gavin urged him excitedly.

Rick smiled bitterly. "Okay!"

No doubt, the two innocent kids could not sense anything awry. Nevertheless, their mother could smell a rat just by looking at Rick's expression.

Hence, she sent the kids away wittingly. "Go in to pack your things first and change into your new clothes."

"Okay!" The two kids darted into the house jubilantly.

Fastening her gaze on Rick, she asked earnestly, "Rick, be frank with me, Something happened to Cesar, right? Is that why he's unable to come himself?"

Chapter 2274

Rick shook his head. "No."

"Don't lie to me. Rick Nina said. "I can tell when you're lying.

Rick could not pretend any longer. "All right. I'll be honest with you. Something did happen to Cesar. Don't bother asking about the specifics. You will learn about them when the time comes. Save your breath."

The color drained from her face at her worst fears coming true. "We'll go to him now." she announced.

Packing up her things hastily, she followed with her children as Rick led them to Cesar.

The two children were so excited that they skipped ahead of the adults and laughed throughout the journey.

Rick noticed that Gavin had his hand in his left pocket. "What do you have in your left pocket there, Gavin?" he asked curiously. "Can I see it?"

"It's a candy, Mr. Baker," Gavin said mysteriously. "The candy my mother bought us was so sweet that I'd thought to save my father a piece. I'll share some with you the next time my mother brings back more, okay?"

Rick nodded sadly.

Even Sole Wolf looked a little uncomfortable.

How unfair is the world for a vile person like Cesar to have such sensible children and an understanding wife?

He decided to persuade Zeke not to harm Cesar's innocent wife and children.

Knowing Zeke as well as he did, Lone Wolf was confident that the Great Marshal would not harm women and children.

The group soon arrived at Vauxgan Pavilion, where Cesar was still on his knees with Zeke standing over him.

Zeke frowned at the sight of the new arrivals.

Initially, he was under the impression that Cesar's wife and children would look as fierce and evil as he did. Zeke could never have imagined they were simple and kind folk after all. Suddenly, getting rid of them seemed like the hardest decision he had ever made.

When the boys saw their father on his knees, they trotted to him. "Hello, Dad. We finally got to see you. We miss you."

"I brought you some candy, Dad. Here, try one!"

"Why are you on your knees, Dad? Let me help you up."

Unexpectedly, Cesar shoved the children aside. "Who're you calling 'Dad'? Get lost, kids!"

The children fell to the ground on their buttocks and looked at their father in astonishment before bursting into bitter tears.

What happened to him? Why is he so rough with us? "Did we do something wrong, Dad?"

"Please don't be angry with us, Dad. Gavin and I are sorry. We will be good."

"Gareth and I saved some candy for you, Dad. We hope that the delicious candy will make you smile again!"

Cesar slapped the candy out of the boy's outstretched hand. "Go away! What would I do with your leftover food?"

Nina's face and ears were burning with anger from witnessing her two beloved sons being bullied before her. Even worse, the perpetrator was their father.

That's it!

Walking up to them, Nina took both children in her arms as she yelled at Cesar. "Are you mad? How could you treat your sons like this?"

"Leave me alone," Cesar said indifferently. "From now on, you are no longer my wife; they are no longer my children. I want nothing to do with all of you, and I don't even care if you live or not."

What!

The woman gritted her teeth, her face the color of ash. "Say that again if you dare!"

"I said, I don't care whether you live or not," Cesar repeated. "I won't even shed a tear if you dropped dead in front of me right now."

Chapter 2275

Nina was dumbfounded. She never expected the father of her children to say such horrible things.

Brute! Scoundrel!

Rick could not stand it anymore. He made to slap Cesar across the face but was stopped by Lone Wolf.

Not daring to defy a direct order, Rick swallowed his anger.

Lone Wolf did not stop Rick out of altruism. In fact, he wanted nothing more than to kill Cesar for the way he spoke to his wife and children alone.

However, Cesar and Dawn's inextricably linked fates stayed his hand. If I kill Cesar, Dawn will also die.

Nina pulled her children up. "Listen carefully to me, Cesar. We three formally disown you. As you've made abundantly clear, our survival will have nothing to do with you. I don't ever want to see you again. Come, boys!"

The children did not understand what was going on. They sobbed, unwilling to desert their father.

Nina gritted her teeth and tried her best to drag the two boys forward.

Zeke looked at Cesar. "What a cruel way to spare them a painful death. Do you think this little charade will stop me?"

Cesar shrugged. "You overthink, Great Marshal. It's not a trick. I've had enough of them. You can kill them right now, and I won't feel an ounce of guilt. We men should stand tall and aim high, shouldn't we? Why should women and children weigh us down? Having a family is the surest sign of cowardice! Over the years, they've been doing nothing but dragging me down with them. You're doing me a favor by killing them, you know. I'll have nothing holding me back anymore."

Judging from his expression, it did not look like he was lying.

Zeke never imagined that there existed such ruthless people in the world.

He's not even fit to be human.

Zeke gazed at the departing silhouettes of the woman and children and felt the soft spot in his heart twinge.

He sought Lone Wolf's opinion wordlessly with a glance at the latter.

Sole Wolf sighed and shook his head lightly.

Zeke had no choice but to abolish his original plan.

He took a deep breath. "Well done for managing to stay my hand, Cesar. Nobody has ever done that before."

Cesar smiled proudly. "Only through your grace, Great Marshal."

"Leave now and never let me see you again

Cesar smiled. "I appreciate your mercy, Great Marshal."

Without another word, he turned and ran away for fear of Zeke changing his mind.

Though Rick and the others were not clear about the situation, they grew anxious upon seeing Cesar being released that easily.

"Great Marshal, he is a rebel and a sinner. How could you just let him go? In my opinion, even imprisonment of his descendants isn't enough to-

"Hold your tongue!" Killer Wolf scolded. "How dare you question the depth of the Great Marshal's wisdom? You're endowed with his experience now, do you?"

Rick was forced to keep his mouth shut, albeit most reluctantly.

Zeke spoke up. "Killer Wolf, hear me!"

Killer Wolf fell to one knee. "Yes, Sir!"

"Have Cesar followed in secret," Zeke ordered. "If he escapes, be prepared to suffer my wrath!"

"Don't worry, Great Marshal. As long as Cesar still exists, I promise to deliver his location within a day!"

After speaking, Killer Wolf disappeared in a flash toward where Cesar fled.

Zeke's gazed deeply at the river again.

What is under the river that captures Daemonium's attention so?

Zeke contacted Fortuna with his mind

What is under the river that captures Daemonium's attention so?

Zeke contacted Fortuna with his mind.

How are you doing, Fortuna?

Fortuna was brimming with excitement. The aura here is so concentrated that it feels almost dense. Since being here, my strength has seen an increase of ten percent! It's only a matter of time before I double in power!

Chapter 2276

Zeke was a little shocked.

The ten percent increase claimed by Fortuna was deceptively underestimated. As the saying goes, every inch of advantage is magnified in the hands of a master. Fortuna's strength increase of a tenth in magnitude was enough to defeat the vast majority of opponents whose strength was similar to his.

An increase in ten percent of Fortuna's strength essentially elevates him to the level of a deity.

I'd advise you to leave with me, Fortuna, Zeke said.

Fortuna was perplexed.

Haven't you noticed Daemonium's presence recently? Zeke continued. He would have already deployed his scouts here who are most likely staring at you at this moment.

What? Fortuna exclaimed in surprise. I'm sure I would have noticed the presence of Daemonium of the Netherworld.

Zeke was struck dumb with disbelief. You probably had your head so far up the dense cloud of yours that you couldn't see what was going on outside.

I suppose that's likely, mused Fortuna. So what if Daemonium has his eyes on me? I hardly take him seriously anyway!

Sounds like you and he would be better friends than you and I, retorted Zeke. Daemonium is treacherous, despicable, and without honor. Are you not afraid of having a target on your back by the insidious tricks up his sleeves?

In the face of absolute power, any insidious tricks are futile, Fortuna replied haughtily.

I advise you to reconsider, Fortuna. Just in case, that's all.

Fortuna's patience was exhausted. When did you become such a naggy wench? I'm staying. You can stay if you want, but if you were leaving, I would like you to do so at once. I want to continue my cultivation in peace.

Zeke was outraged.

I am the Great Marshal, and you call me a

naggy wench? Unacceptable! I only said it for your own good and now you think you can dictate terms around here!

Having been strongarmed by Cesar earlier that day, Fortuna's insult felt like a sharper jab than most days.

Zeke was sullen for a while before deciding he would rather not waste his time on Fortuna. He ordered Rick and the others to stay. "Continue keeping watch here, but don't patrol openly. Hide and watch from the shadows. Notify me at once if anything out of the ordinary happens. Of course, your safety is of the utmost importance. You have my permission to escape if your lives are under threat."

Rick and the rest bowed. "Yes, Great Marshal."

Zeke departed with Sole Wolf, who was a little gloomy. "Are we just going to let Cesar go, Zeke? This doesn't seem like your style."

Zeke laughed. "Let him go? You should know me better by now. I'm just loosening the leash, so to speak. Everything is still under my control."

Sole Wolf's expression relaxed. "I knew you weren't a pushover. Where are we going next, by the way?"

"Back to Linton Group!" Zeke announced.

With full speed, the pair headed toward Linton Group.

Along the way, Zeke mentally contacted Progenitor.

"How are the preparations, Progenitor?"

"Everything is in place and awaiting your order," the Progenitor replied.

"Good. The plan officially commences. Meet me at Linton Group."

"Hold on a minute," Progenitor said. "You're asking for my help and insisting that I come to you? I am disappointed in your sincerity. Have one of your men receive me instead."

Zeke's temper, already so close to the surface, began bubbling again. "Defying me, are you? Consider the consequences of disobedience carefully."

Progenitor scoffed. "And what consequences does that entail exactly?"

Zeke grinned wickedly. "This."

Harnessing a burst of energy, Zeke lashed at Progenitor with his telekinetic whip who screamed as though he had been struck by lightning.

Chapter 2277

The progenitor was worn down after several instances of mental whipping.

"Fine, I'll join you at Linton Group. God, how could such shameless people like you exist in the world!"

Not long after, Zeke and Sole Wolf arrived at Linton Group.

Despite being peak working hours, the vast headquarters of Linton Group was almost deserted of employees.

The few that remained behind were not even at work. Instead, they were either on their phones or wandering around.

Linton Group was nearing its end, and they knew it.

Zeke knew their predicament was caused by the unfair competition between

Intercontinental Group and Linton Group, which had led to the latter's decline.

He grimly resolved to deal with

Intercontinental Group when he had the time to tide Linton Group over its difficult period.

However, getting rid of the Heart-Bound Worm from Dawn's body remained the top priority.

Zeke came to the CEO's office on the top floor, which was also empty.

He frowned. Lacey should be in the building no matter how badly Linton Group is doing. After all, she is the soul of the company. Something must be wrong if she isn't here.

Zeke's pulse quickened as he ran toward the vice CEO's office. "Dawnie, Nancy, are you there?" he shouted.

Only the echoes of his voice answered him.

D*mn it, where are they?

Zeke took out his phone and prepared to contact Lacey,

Suddenly, a woman's voice sounded behind him.

"Are you the CEO of Linton Group?"

Zeke turned around suspiciously and found a blond woman smiling at him in a way that looked more like a leer.

She was tall and slender. The tight skirt she had on was split almost to her waist, revealing her fair and lithe thighs.

Even her open-toed heels were provocative.

Zeke frowned. "Who are you?"

The blonde woman smiled. "You can call me Daisy."

"Can I help you, Daisy?"

Daisy nodded. "Are you the CEO of Linton Group?"

Zeke shook his head. "No."

Daisy looked disappointed. "Never mind then," she said as she turned and walked away.

Zeke called after her. "However, I am the founder of Linton Group. I have the final say in the group's affairs."

Daisy's smile grew broader. "You will do just fine. There is something I would like to discuss with you."

"You have my attention."

"I want to buy Linton Group," Daisy proclaimed.

Zeke immediately pieced together the implications of her intention.

For a long time, he suspected that the mastermind behind the fierce competition with Linton Group was to weaken it enough for easy acquisition.

Now that Linton Group is on the verge of bankruptcy, this woman's appearance and her talk of acquisition could only mean one thing. She is most likely sent by the mastermind orchestrating the relentless attacks on Linton Group.

"How much are you offering?" Zeke asked. Daisy held out a hand with five outstretched fingers in response.

"Fifty billion?" Zeke asked.

Daisy giggled. "It's very bold of you to think that your company is worth that much, Mr. Williams, given the current situation of Linton Group,"

"Five billion, then?"

Daisy shook her head again. "No, Mr. Williams. Five hundred million."

What? Five hundred million!

Zeke scowled. "At its peak, Linton Group was valued at a hundred billion. Don't you think that your offer of half a billion is rather insincere and frankly a little insulting?"

"You said it yourself, Mr. Williams. Linton Group was worth a hundred billion only at its peak. Look around you. Linton Group is now a shadow of its former self. My offer is an act of kindness, you know."

"It's a flat no to your pathetic offer, Daisy."

She shrugged. "Linton Group will go bankrupt and be forced to be liquidated whether you choose to sell or not. By then, you won't get a penny."

Chapter 2278

"Linton Group is just a tool for me to make money," Zeke replied. "Money is the one thing I do not lack. I'll be fine with or without Linton Group. Even if we go bankrupt, I will never sell to you."

Daisy smiled. "You have integrity, Mr. Williams. I like that. Let's see if you're as proud as you are now when the time comes. Here is my business card, by the way. You can contact me whenever you want if you change your mind."

With a final charming smile, Daisy turned. to leave.

Zeke glanced at the business card which indicated that Daisy was the founder of Eminent Group.

"Have you heard Eminent Group?" Zeke asked Lone Wolf.

Lone Wolf looked confused. "Is that a legion or a company, Zeke?"

Having dealt with the military all his life, he was ignorant of the civilian industry. Zeke grabbed hold of another employee. "Have you heard of Eminent Group?"

"Yes, Mr. Williams," the employee said. "It's a company that makes leather purses. In fact, they opened a couple of days ago down this very street."

"A couple of days ago, you say? They didn't exist before then?"

"No, Mr. Williams. Not to my knowledge."

Zeke smiled grimly.

Mall

The establishment of Eminent Group at this juncture is too much of a coincidence. Its sole purpose is probably to annex Linton Group. The mastermind behind Eminent Group must be the culprit!

"Have your men conduct a thorough investigation of Eminent Group and its founder, Sole Wolf," Zeke ordered. "Report back to me as soon as you find anything."

Lone Wolf nodded. "Understood, Sir." Without daring to delay another moment, he took out his phone and relayed the instructions to his subordinates.

In the meantime, Zeke dialed Lacey's number to ascertain her location.

"I'm at Heartland Hospital, Zeke," Lacey said. "Come over quickly."

Zeke felt nervous at the anxious note in her voice. "Is something wrong, Lacey?"

She sighed. "It's Dawnie. She has encountered some trouble, it seems. Come quickly, please. Nancy and I don't know what to do."

"I'll be right over, Lacey," Zeke said at once. "Don't worry."

After hanging up the phone, Zeke made his way to Heartland Hospital as quickly as he could.

Before he arrived, Lacey entered ward 302 with a bag of fruit.

Nancy was fussing over Dawn on the hospital bed when Lacey leaned in to ask in a low voice, "How is Dawnie doing, Nancy?"

Nancy heaved a sigh. "There's been no sign of improvement."

Lacey's expression grew sadder at the news.

The sound of her pushing the door open had woken up Dawn, who turned her pale face toward her visitor.

"Lacey, Nancy," she called in a shaky voice, "you should head back to the company. I'll be fine."

"Just focus on getting better for now, Dawnie," Lacey said gently. "Don't you worry about anything else at the moment."

"I'm fine, Lacey," Dawn murmured. "I've been overworked, that's all. I'll be right as rain again with a little rest. Linton Group is on the verge of bankruptcy. It needs you."

Lacey smiled bitterly. "We can rebuild the company if we lose it, silly girl. But if anything happens to you, I don't think I'll ever be able to forgive myself."

"Besides," she added, "we wouldn't be of any use even if we are there right now. Given the current situation of Linton Group, it wouldn't change a thing even if we were all hands on deck. Don't worry about us or the company. Just focus on getting better."

Dawn gave up at the sight of Lacey's firmly set jaw. The latter proceeded to peel an apple. "Here, Dawnie. Have an apple."

Dawn shook her head. "I have no appetite right now."

"Have half of it," Lacey coaxed patiently. "The doctor says it's good for you."

Dawn reluctantly received the fruit and took a bite.

Chapter 2279

Suddenly, Dawn's attending physician knocked on the ward door and said, "May I know which one of you is the patient's family member? Please come with me. I'll explain her current conditions."

Instantly, Dawn suggested, "Doctor, please explain it here so I can listen to it too."

Deep down, Dawn worried they wouldn't tell her the truth about her illness.

Nonetheless, Lacey said, "It's okay. We will go with the doctor. You should get some rest."

With that, Lacey and Nancy left the ward without giving Dawn the chance to refute.

After taking them to his office, the attending physician explained, "The results have come out. Her condition doesn't look good."

The ladies' expression turned grim when they heard it.

Lacey got nervous and asked, "Doctor, what kind of illness does she have?"

The attending physician answered, "It's a rare disease called Horzdo-hidrosis. I'm not sure if you have heard of it."

Lacey and Nancy shook their heads in unison and said, "No."

The attending physician continued, "It's all right. It is indeed a rare disease. So far, there are less than ten cases across the world. Hence, it's normal that you haven't heard of it."

Meanwhile, Lacey and Nancy frowned deeply.

What? There are less than ten cases of Horzdo-hidrosis across the world!

The severity of Dawn's illness was beyond Lacey and Nancy's expectations.

After coming to her senses, Lacey asked, "Doctor, how likely can her illness be treated?"

The attending physician heaved a sigh and responded, "I believe you've brought her to other hospitals for checkups before coming here, right?"

Lacey nodded. "Yes."

With that, the attending physician asked, "Did the doctors from other hospitals find out the patient has Horzdo-hidrosis?"

Lacey and Nancy shook their heads. "No, they couldn't identify Dawnie's illness."

Upon hearing the answer, the attending physician added, "Well, if she receives treatment in other hospitals, the chances of getting cured are next to zero. Nonetheless, in my hospital-

At that instant, he held his tongue.

Lacey and Nancy fixated their gazes upon the physician. "Doctor, please go on. How likely can her illness be treated?"

After taking a deep breath, the attending physician said, "The likelihood of the patient getting cured depends on your sincerity." Lacey and Nancy were perplexed by the reply.

Moments later, Nancy said, "Doctor, Dawnie and I are like sisters. Hence, I sincerely hope that she can be cured."

The attending physician interrupted, "You didn't get what I mean... Let me rephrase it. There are not more than ten doctors in the world capable of curing such patients. I happen to be one of them. Moreover, I'm the only doctor with such expertise in Eurasia."

It's great news!

Lacey and Nancy were overjoyed. "Doctor, I beg you to save Dawnie."

The attending physician said apathetically, "Well, as I've said, it depends on your sincerity. Treating this kind of disease is extremely expensive."

Without hesitation, Lacey said. "Doctor, please name your price. I can arrange to transfer the fee to you."

The next moment, the attending physician lifted his hand.

Lacey asked for clarification. "Is it five hundred thousand?"

The attending physician shook his head.

Lacey immediately proposed a higher offer. "Is it five million?"

Much to Lacey's surprise, the attending physician shook his head again.

"Fifty million?"

The attending physician said, "It's only a conservative estimate. The exact medical fee might be higher."

Nancy couldn't help but grumble, "Doctor, it sounds a little outrageous to me. I've never heard that medical fees can be that exorbitant. I mean, even the wealthiest man on Earth doesn't have to spend that much for longevity."

They knew that the attending physician intended to take advantage of them. As expected, the attending physician seemed pissed off. "Well, there is nothing I can do if you don't trust me. Good luck! By the way, you don't have to think about transferring the patient to other hospitals. Instead, just bring her home and spend the rest of the days with her. After all, no doctors can cure her illness even if you transfer her to other hospitals."

Chapter 2280

Lacey looked at the attending physician with pleading eyes. "Doctor, can you please show us mercy? Our company is in bad shape now. I'm afraid I can't fork out fifty million."

Unperturbed, the attending physician argued coldly, "Everyone has their price, including me. I can cure her only if you can pay. Think about it, and let me know your answer as soon as possible. For your information, I might be departing to America tomorrow because an important patient would like to make an appointment with me."

With that, the attending physician wanted to leave his office.

Lacey gritted her teeth and quickly stopped the attending physician from leaving. "Doctor, I'll get fifty million as soon as possible. Please save Dawnie."

The attending physician nodded in satisfaction. "All right. You'd better make the full payment by tomorrow afternoon. Otherwise, I can't guarantee you that I'll stay in the country."

After the physician left, Lacey gazed at Nancy and asked, "Nancy, how much money do you have now?"

Nancy heaved a sigh and responded, "Lacey, I think I can get five million by selling my house and car. As for my savings all these years, I have invested them into Linton Group as its operating funds."

Scratching her head, Lacey said, "I can only fork out ten million now. In other words, we still lack thirty-five million. If worst comes to worst, we might have to sell our headquarters."

Nancy got nervous upon hearing it. "Lacey, if we sell the headquarters now, it will be equivalent to shutting down the company entirely. We can't do it."

Unperturbed, Lacey argued, "So what if we sell the company? All I want is to save Dawnie, All right, Nancy. You don't have to persuade me because I've made up my mind. We can earn the money back but not her life."

Nancy lowered her head, not daring to say a word.

She's right. Nothing matters more than Dawnie's life.

While Nancy was deep in thought, Lacey said, "Nancy, didn't someone contact you and propose to acquire Linton Group's headquarters? Do you have his contact number?"

Nancy nodded. "Yes, I have his business card,"

Then, Nancy gave Lacey a business card with a few words. CEO of Eminent Group, Daisy,

Lacey carefully kept the business card and asked Nancy, "Make an appointment with her tonight to discuss the acquisition."

Nancy murmured an affirmative response.

Meanwhile, Zeke had arrived at Dawn's ward in a rush.

Initially, Dawn was half-asleep. However, she was instantly full of energy upon seeing Zeke. She stood up and shouted, "Zeke, you're here!"

Zeke's heart wrenched when he saw Dawn's pale face.

Zeke came closer and consoled her,
"Dawnie, don't move. You should lie on the bed and rest well."

Dawn forced a smile. "Zeke, I'm all right. You worry too much. I feel sorry that I disturb your work."

Zeke immediately replied, "I'm the one who should apologize."

Cesar, the sorcerer, wouldn't have targeted Dawn if it wasn't for me.

Later, Zeke held Dawn's wrist to take her pulse.

Dawn blinked her eyes adorably as she stared at Zeke.

After Zeke finished taking her pulse, Dawn probed impatiently, "Zeke, am I all right? You can cure my illness, can't you?"

Zeke caressed Dawn's hair and replied, "Don't worry about it. Your illness is like an ordinary fever and can be cured easily."

Once Zeke assured her, Dawn heaved a sigh of relief. "That's good. Since Lacey and Nancy were secretive about my illness, I thought I had contracted a terminal illness and was scared!" Zeke flashed Dawn a smile and asked, "By the way, where are Lacey and Nancy?"

Dawn replied, "The attending physician asked them to head to his office to discuss my conditions."

"I see. Lacey said there's something important that I should know. In that case, I guess it's about your illness," Zeke said.

Chapter 2281

Dawn said to Zeke, "I think so. It's either about my condition or matters related to Linton Group. By the way, Linton Group is in a mess now and might even go bankrupt. Zeke, do you think Linton Group can make a comeback?"

Zeke chuckled and responded, "No worries. Linton Group is the testimony of love between Lacey and me. I won't let Linton Group vanish into thin air."

Feeling relieved, Dawn said, "Zeke, I believe you."

Just then, Lacey and Nancy opened the door and came in.

Both of them were more at ease once they saw Zeke. Unknowingly, they also felt that the burden on their shoulders had lessened lot.

Lacey put on a bright smile they hadn't seen for some time. "Zeke, I thought you wouldn't arrive so early."

Zeke nodded in response. "Yes. Lacey, Nancy, I'm sure you guys are exhausted. Now that I'm here, you can get some rest."

Lacey was straightforward with her words. "Indeed! I might die of fatigue if you didn't come."

After a while, Dawn probed, "Lacey, did the doctor say what kind of illness I have?"

Pretending to be calm, Lacey answered, "It's nothing serious."

However, Dawn didn't buy it. "There is a name to every disease. What kind of illness do I have? Please don't keep it from me."

Lacey quickly made up something to palter with Dawn. "Well, you're fatigued. People refer to such symptoms as part of the suboptimal health status. Nowadays, a lot of people are sub-healthy, with the only difference being the intensity of the symptoms. The doctor has said you'll recover by getting enough rest and keeping yourself in a good mood."

However, Dawn was a little doubtful. "Lacey, why do I feel like you're fooling me?"

Lacey calmed herself down and said, "Why do I have to fool you? You can ask Nancy if don't believe me."

The next moment, Dawn glanced at Nancy, hoping to get an honest answer.

Nancy immediately nodded and stammered, "Right, right. Suboptimal health... Remember to eat more and smile a lot. You'll recover very soon."

Apparently, Nancy was rather tactless and not good at lying. Dawn couldn't help but feel suspicious.

Even Lacey and Zeke could instantly tell that something was wrong with Nancy.

Dawn begged Nancy. "Nancy, I know you have never lied. Can you please tell me the truth?"

"I... I..." Nancy was at a loss.

The next moment, Zeke took a deep breath and interrupted, "Nancy, Lacey, tell us the truth. Let's see if the doctor's diagnosis is the same as mine. No worries. Regardless of the type of illness Dawnie has, I can cure it. Even if she has contracted a terminal illness, I promise that I can help her."

Zeke paused for a while and added, "Don't forget that I'm the Great Marshal who can mobilize all the resources in Eurasia. Hence,

I can surely cure Dawnie's illness."

After glancing at Zeke, Lacey sighed helplessly and said, "All right. I'll tell you the truth. Zeke, I'm afraid that even you can't cure Dawnie's illness this time. "However, don't worry about it. The attending physician happens to have the expertise in curing the illness. Dawnie will be all right."

Oh?

Zeke felt intrigued by Lacey's revelation.

The Cygnus Room nearly had top elites from every sector. In other words, it represented the highest level of expertise across various sectors.

Is there something the elites from the Cygnus Room can't do, yet a hidden master can do it? Zeke was full of doubts.

"Lacey, tell me about it. Let's see if the doctor is indeed an expert."

With a stern expression, Lacey explained, "All right. Dawnie's illness is called Horzdo-hidrosis, which is a rare disease. Currently, there are not more than ten cases around the world. So far, only a handful of doctors can cure the disease. Fortunately, it happens that Dawnie's attending physician has the expertise."

When Lacey was explaining, Zeke couldn't help but furrowed his brows.

Horzdo-hidrosis? What kind of a disease is it?

Despite his years of experience in medicine, Zeke had never heard of such a disease.

There are not more than ten cases around the world... It's ridiculous! From a medical point of view, a symptom with not more than ten cases recorded won't be considered a disease at all.

Chapter 2282

Could it be a newly found disease? After all, I haven't paid close attention to the latest development in the medical field for several years.

After giving it some thought, Zeke took out his phone to call the person in charge of the Cygnus Room.

Soon, a man with an elderly-sounding voice answered the call. "Great Marshal, good morning."

Without wasting time, Zeke asked for the information he wanted. "Mr. Ladkins, may I ask if you've heard of Horzdo-hidrosis?"

Mr. Ladkins was dumbfounded once he heard the term. "Did you say Horzdo-hidrosis? What is that? Please don't tell me it's a disease."

Zeke replied, "Yes, someone told me it's a rare disease."

Instantly, Mr. Ladkins rebutted, "Nonsense. It's a complete bullsh*t. I know every type of disease in the world and have never heard of it. I'm confident that such a disease doesn't exist. I've only heard of hyperhidrosis. Anyway, Horzdo-hidrosis sounds too lowly."

Meanwhile, a thought flashed across Zeke's mind when Mr. Ladkins mentioned hyperhidrosis.

Could the attending physician make up a disease's name with the term hyperhidrosis?

He purposely claimed that it's a nearly incurable disease to con us!

Later, Zeke asked Lacey, "Lacey, how much did the attending physician ask for the medical fee?"

Lacey answered honestly. "Based on his conservative estimate, it would cost fifty million!"

Fifty million!

Zeke nearly jumped in alarm.

Now I can confirm the attending physician wants to scam us of our money!

As Zeke was deep in thought, Dawn took a deep breath. "Fifty million! I don't want to get the treatment-"

Lacey interjected, "Dawnie, I won't talk to you if you spew nonsense again. If something happens to you, I'm better off dead as well! Even if the surgery costs five hundred million, I'm willing to spend it to make sure that you recover."

Dawn heaved a sigh and said, "Lacey, considering our company's situation, I think we can't even withdraw five million in cash from it."

Although Lacey understood the difficulty, she reassured Dawn, "No worries. I've thought about the way to get the money. I've decided to sell the company building."

Nancy quickly interrupted, "Well, you guys don't have to be that pessimistic. Didn't Zeke say he could cure Dawnie's illness? If Zeke can do it, we don't have to worry about getting the money to foot the medical bill."

Lacey nodded in response. "You're right. Dawnie, Zeke can cure your illness. Don't worry about it."

While they were talking, Zeke frowned deeply, for he had sensed that something was off in Lacey's words.

Lacey is forced to sell Linton Group's headquarters!

Once Linton Group sells its headquarters, it will also declare bankruptcy.

Now, who wishes to see Linton Group go bankrupt the most?

No doubt, it's Daisy from Eminent Group.

Zeke began to suspect that it was Daisy's plot to force Lacey to sell the headquarters.

After a while, Zeke asked Lacey tentatively, "Lacey, did anyone contact you and ask to acquire the headquarters of Linton Group?"

Lacey replied, "Someone contacted Nancy and proposed it to her."

Immediately, Zeke queried, "Who is that? Do you know her name? Which company is she from?"

Lacey nodded and said, "It's Daisy, the CEO of Eminent Group!"

Daisy!

Zeke clenched his fists tightly; veins were bulging from his arms.

He believed that it was Daisy's doing. In addition, the attending physician and Daisy were likely to be on the same team.

They are forcing Lacey to sell the headquarters.

After giving it some thought, Zeke said to Lacey, "Lacey, can you ask the attending physician to come here? I have some questions to ask him."

Lacey replied affirmatively, "Sure. I'll call the attending physician right away."

Not long after that, the attending physician came to the ward. After scanning everyone arrogantly, he asked, "What is it? Have you scraped together enough money?"

Zeke asked, "What if we can't get enough money?"

Chapter 2283

The attending physician said, "Sorry, there's nothing I can do then. After all, I'll have to use the best medicine and machinery to treat the patient, and that will cost a hefty amount. You can't possibly hope that I'll pay for that. By the way, Ms. Hinton, I know that you're the boss of Linton Group. Although Linton Group isn't as glorious as it used to be, your building is still worth a lot. Please mull over whether a building or a human life is more important."

As Zeke stared at the attending physician coldly, he uttered, "You're finally revealing your true colors."

The physician fumed. "What nonsense are you talking about? What do you mean by my true colors? If you want me to treat the patient, then let me do that. If you don't, then leave! Stop wasting the resources of the hospital!"

With that said, the physician turned to leave.

Zeke shot Sole Wolf a look, who immediately understood what he meant.

He then kicked the physician behind his knees, making the physician fall to the ground, kneeling.

The physician nearly went mad at that. "D*mn you, how dare you hit me? I'm warning you now. Unless you kneel and apologize to me, I'll never save that patient!"

However, Zeke only gave him a lazy glance. "That's enough. Stop pretending.

"I know the Horzdo-hidrosis you diagnose is just pure nonsense, and so is the fifty million treatment fee. You're only doing this to force Lacey into selling the company office."

The physician's heart lurched.

Darn it. How did he figure that out? Could it be that he has found out about the plan?

Nevertheless, the physician managed to keep his cool despite the accusation.

"Hmph! I have no idea what you're talking about. If you can get enough money for the treatment, then do that. If you can't, then leave! I don't care about you all at all."

With that said, he stood up, intending to leave.
However, just as he stood up, Sole Wolf kicked the back of his knees and made him kneel again.

F*ck!

The physician was truly about to lose his mind.

They've gone way over the line! I'm still the head physician of the hospital, but you're making me kneel in front of my subordinates in my hospital. This is unforgivable! Can't you see that numerous nurses and doctors are secretly looking in our direction?

The physician then gritted his teeth and hissed, "Just you wait. I'll make you pay a bloody price for this!"

Nevertheless, Zeke's tone was much colder than the physician's. "If you don't tell me right now who instructed you to do this, I'll make sure that you pay with your life instead of a bloody price!"

The physician snapped, "Scram! Why do I need someone to tell me what to do in my hospital? My kindness is being repaid by cruelty!"

Zeke continued in an icy tone, "Are you sure you don't want to say anything?"

"I didn't do anything wrong, so there's nothing for me to say!"

"Very well. I hope you'll remain as stubborn until the very end," Zeke said.

He then walked over to Sole Wolf and whispered a few words to the latter.

After hearing Zeke's words, Sole Wolf nodded and went out of the window.

Lacey, Dawn, and Nancy were confused, so they turned to Zeke and asked, "Zeke, what's going on?"

Zeke explained, "This is just a trap. Dawnie never got Horzdo-hidrosis. It's just pure nonsense he came up with."

"His aim is to scam a huge amount of money from you by saying that it's the treatment fee. If you can't fork up the money, he'll force you to sell the office building.

Coincidentally, Daisy of Eminent Group has been thinking of acquiring Linton Group. I'm suspecting that Daisy has formed an alliance with the attending physician for this show. It's so that you'll sell the company's office building at a low price."

"What?"

Upon hearing the truth, Lacey and the other two women were furious. They glared at the physician and snarled, "You b*stard. You're coveting my company, aren't you?"

Chapter 2284

The physician immediately lied, "Nonsense! I'm a doctor, and my duty is to help the sick and the injured. There's no way I would not care about those materialistic things. You're slandering me! I'm going to bring this to court!"

Zeke replied, "Don't worry. I'll definitely have the court figure out what really happened."

Soon, Sole Wolf was back.

Zeke and Sole Wolf then shared a look before the latter nodded, a gesture telling Zeke that things were going smoothly.

Zeke then turned back to look at the attending physician to say, "You have one last chance. Will you tell me the truth?"

The attending physician responded, "The truth is that I want to treat the patient, but you decided to bite the hand that fed you. Not only did you think that my kindness was part of a scheme, but you even hit me!"

Zeke hummed. "Okay. You're a tough nut to crack. Sole Wolf, you'll do it."

Sole Wolf nodded before taking out a huge file.

He then began reading it in a loud voice, "Ernest Sharpe, head physician of Heartland Hospital. He has had three cases of medical malpractice and has caused two deaths. However, as he has people backing him up, he never received any severe punishment and continued staying as the head physician. This crime of his is more than enough to warrant his death. The total amount of bribery Ernest received from his patients' families and medical businesses for the past three years is ten million. This crime of his will cost him ten years of imprisonment. Furthermore, Ernest is engaged in illegal human organ trafficking. For that, he would be imprisoned for at least twenty years. I'm currently gathering evidence of his crimes. In two hours, I swear I'll be able to deliver to you all the concrete proof."

By then, the attending physician's back was already drenched with cold sweat, This is terrifying. Who in the world are these people in front of me? How do they know so much about me? How did they find out about the medical malpractice which took place more than ten years ago?

Despite the overwhelming fear, he continued to keep a calm facade. "You're making baseless accusations! This is defamation! Just you wait. I'm going to make sure that all of you suffer the wrath of the law!"

Zeke scoffed. "That's exactly what I want. Why don't you start using all the tricks you've kept up your sleeve and start making calls?"

Zeke wanted to know who exactly the prominent figure behind Ernest was. He wanted to rid them all so that they would not be able to keep stirring up troubles.

After taking a deep breath, Ernest said, "I hope that you've thought this through. The one behind me is a big shot that can easily crush you all!"

Zeke only gave him a small smile. "If I'm scared of them, I wouldn't have crossed you in the first place."

That made Ernest hesitate. The one behind him was truly powerful, and he saw no point in asking for help from that person just to deal with the trivial people in front of him.

Therefore, he quietly suggested, "Let's not be in a haste to make any final decisions. I'm telling you this now: The one behind me is genuinely powerful and busy. I don't wish to disturb him because of something minor like this. What about this? Transfer to another hospital, and I'll stop trying to make things difficult for you. How does that sound?"

Zeke shook his head. "No. You only have two choices right now. One is to be punished by the law. Of course, if you choose this one, you'll be meeting your end with the number of crimes you've committed. Your second choice is to seek help from the one behind you. If the one who's supporting you is more powerful than me, maybe they'll be able to save you. If not, then I'm sorry, but you and your backup will have to die!"

Sole Wolf chuckled at that, thinking, He's got a mean streak. The only person who's more powerful than Zeke in Eurasia is the Colonel. Could the Colonel be Ernest's support? That's such a joke.

Therefore, Ernest would be meeting his end no matter what he chose.

Ernest then angrily looked at Zeke. "Are you sure you want to drag me to hell with you?"

Zeke hastily said, "No, no, you've misunderstood, there's only one person going to hell today, and that's you."

"Haha!" Ernest burst out laughing. "We wouldn't know who's going to hell just yet. Since what you want is death, that'll be what I'll give to you!"

Ernest then took out his phone and made a call.

Chapter 2285

"Uncle Preston, it's me, Ernest! You have to stand up for me. Someone has hit me, and they're even slandering me! Also, he said that you're nothing but a worm around him and that he can easily crush you just by lifting a finger. Yes, yes, hurry up and come. I want you to punish them with the law and bring justice to me!"

After ending the call, Ernest gave Zeke a threatening look. "In half an hour, my uncle will be here. When he comes, it's time for you all to go to jail. Haha!"

Zeke then snatched Ernest's phone. Subconsciously, Ernest rose to his feet and reached for his gun, but Sole Wolf kicked him down with another kick.

Zeke then glanced at the number Ernest called earlier and dialed the number.

The call went through rather quickly.

In the next second, a deep voice traveled into Zeke's ear. "Didn't I say I'll be going over right away? Why are you calling me again?"

Zeke uttered, "I have Ernest with me right now, so give me your full name immediately."

After a moment of silence, the other man asked, "Who are you?"

"Sorry, but I'm the one asking questions here. All you need to do is answer me. Otherwise, Ernest will be dead, and there'll be no need for you to come."

The other man then said, "Fine, I'll tell you. I'm the presiding judge of the court, Preston Sharpe. I'd advise you not to do anything silly. You're still young, so don't walk down the road of crimes."

Zeke replied, "All right. I'll be waiting for you to come."

After the call ended, Zeke turned to Sole Wolf and instructed, "The presiding judge of the court, Preston Sharpe. Deal with him."

Zeke was not even going to dirty his hands for a minor character like Preston,

Sole Wolf nodded. "Okay!"

He then called the Provincial Military

District.

The moment the call was picked up, Sole Wolf said, "The presiding judge of the court, Preston Sharpe has crossed Zeke. You know what to do. This is an urgent task, so prioritize it and deal with Preston first."

After hanging up the call, Sole Wolf nodded at Zeke. "Zeke, the arrangements have been made."

"Pft-" Ernest snorted. "If not for my education and experience, I'd believed in you. Go on, keep up with the act. I'd like to see how well you can act!"

Lacey, Dawn, and the others only smiled in silence.

They all knew that Zeke was not acting.

He was the Great Marshal, and all he needed was a word before someone trivial like Preston was dealt with.

Meanwhile, Preston was speeding toward Heartland Hospital in his car.

If it was any other time, he would not have bothered with something insignificant as this.

However, he had racked up debts from gambling, and he had to find a way to pay off those debts. In other words, helping Ernest was one of his ways of earning money.

Although Ernest was just the head physician of a hospital, he was filthy rich. Every time he received monetary gifts from Ernest, it was in millions.

Anyone who was not a fool would be able to figure out that Ernest money did not come from legal means. However, as long as he could spend the money he received, Preston would not care about how Ernest had gotten that money.

Just as he reached a junction near Heartland Hospital, a military troop suddenly blocked off the road.

Preston frowned and wondered, Who's the big shot who's coming? Is that why they've sealed off the road?

Initially, Preston thought of taking another route around the blocked-off road, but he could not suppress his growing curiosity in him. Thus, he went over to the troops and asked about the situation.

In the end, curiosity had indeed killed the cat.

Preston asked, "Are you welcoming some kind of big shot by putting up roadblocks?"

The soldier gave Preston a foul look. "Don't ask questions that you shouldn't ask. Hurry up and take another road."

Immediately, Preston's expression darkened.

He was a man well-respected by everyone no matter where he went, and thus, he was displeased by how a mere soldier was treating him with disdain. Thus, he revealed his identity by saying, "Hey, I'm Preston Sharpe of the court. I have the right to find out why you've blocked off the road."

Chapter 2286

The soldier then looked at Presiding judge in surprise. "You're the presiding judge of the court, Preston Sharpe?"

Preston nodded. "I am. Do you know me?"

All of a sudden, the soldier waved his hand and cried out, "Men, our target's here. Arrest him!"

That took Preston aback.

What the hell is going on? Why are you arresting me? They can't have set up the roadblock to get me, right? What have I done?

Without wasting another second, the soldiers began forcibly dragging Preston out of his car and into a military vehicle at the side.

Preston never even got the chance to defend himself.

Half an hour later, Ernest was running out of patience waiting for Preston's arrival. If everything went well, Uncle Preston should be here by now, but he isn't. Could it be that something happened to him?

Worried, Ernest then secretly sent Preston a message: Uncle Preston, why aren't you here yet? They're killing me. I'll give ten million. I'll give you ten million this time. This is really urgent! Please come and save me right away!

Sole Wolf noticed what he was doing, and he quickly snatched the phone away from Ernest. After a glance at the message, he grinned, his teeth baring.

"Ha. A nobody like you can actually give out ten million just like this? It seems like you've done a lot of terrible things, huh? How can someone like you be a doctor? You're a f*cking robber!"

Infuriated, Zeke kicked Ernest to the floor.

After all, Zeke, too, was someone in the medical field. What he could not stand was doctors throwing aside their principles for money.

Ernest could not catch his breath from the agony he felt from that kick.

Silently, he swore to himself that he was going to teach Zeke a lesson once his uncle arrived. At the very least, he was going to make Zeke be at the verge of death.

Right as he was contemplating his revenge, his phone abruptly rang. It was a call from his uncle, Preston.

Ernest was overjoyed. Undoubtedly, Uncle Preston is here and have called to ask my whereabouts!

Thus, Ernest promptly picked up the call and said, "Uncle Preston, you've reached, right? I'm at Room 302, so come over quickly."

Unexpectedly, Preston began shouting and cursing at him.

"You b*stard, who the hell did you cross? Are you trying to drag me down with you?"

Ernest was speechless for a moment.

What? What's going on? Why is Uncle Preston cursing at me? He was not like that a while ago.

Hence, Ernest swiftly asked, "Uncle Preston, what's going on? Where are you right now?"

Preston snapped, "Where am I? Are you asking me where I am? D*mn you, I'm in the Military District's cell right now. I'm in deep trouble, all because of you!"

Ernest's heart nearly leaped out of his throat. "The Military District's cell? Why did you go to the Military District's cell?"

What a f*cking idiot!

Preston then cursed, "Do you really think that I came in here with my own free will? Obviously someone threw me in here! Here's a warning for you: You better confess all those horrible things you've done. If you drag me to hell with you, I'm going to make a mess of your family's graves!"

Preston was so furious he had forgotten that he shared the same family with Ernest, and thus, he was cursing at himself as well. Realizing that something was amiss, Ernest quickly lied, "Uncle Preston, I've never done anything horrible. What am I supposed to confess about?"

What answered Ernest was Preston's screams of pain.

"Argh! Stop! Don't hit me anymore! I'm sorry! I really am! I- I'll tell you everything! That b*stard Ernest would kill his patient for money!"

Click.

The call ended.

Gulp.

Ernest began swallowing as he turned to look at Zeke in fear.

At that moment, Zeke and the others were all staring at him with amused looks on their faces.

Ernest stammered out, "W-Who are you? How are you capable of getting the Provincial Military District to help you out?"

Sole Wolf scoffed. "The Provincial Military District? Ha. Aren't you looking down on us? We can even command Glasbury's Military District!"

Chapter 2287

Thump!

As if all bones were taken out of him, Ernest immediately slumped onto the ground.

He did not think that they were joking, for the expressions on Sole Wolf and the others' faces seemed serious.

It was then he realized he had gotten into deep trouble.

I'm screwed. I'm doomed. There's no way out of this.

Therefore, Ernest began pleading, "I'll tell you. I'll tell you everything! Please have mercy on me. Please let me go... It's true that I have had three incidents of medical malpractice in the past. One of them was truly a mistake, and the other two were because... I took bribes."

As Zeke tried his best to tamp down the rising anger, he uttered, "Save that for the court. What I want to hear from you right now is about Horzdo-hidrosis."

Ernest then confessed, "Honestly, this is just a fictional disease I came up with. There is no such thing in the world. To be frank with you... I can't figure out what kind of problem the patient is suffering from."

D*mn it!

As rage quickened her blood, Lacey fumed, "How dare you treat your patient's life lightly? You're an animal!"

Ernest continued, "I did this... because I want to scam some money from you. I really need money right now..."

Sole Wolf gritted out, "Are you still not going to speak honestly? Are you not going to tell us the truth yet? Did you really do this just for money?"

Ernest hastily replied, "Money is just one of the factors. There's another reason behind this. Someone has offered me a large sum of money to do this."

"Who is it?" Zeke questioned.

Ernest replied, "It's... Ms. Daisy, the CEO of Eminent Group! Ms. Daisy said that the best result she wants is pressuring you into selling off the office building. That way, she'll reward me with fifty million. Of course, the fifty million that you'll give me will remain mine as well."

Irked, Lacey clenched her teeth and hissed, "I knew Daisy wasn't anyone good. She could have used normal ways to acquire the office building if she wanted it. Why did she have to use dirty tricks like these?"

At that, Zeke took a deep breath and said, "Lacey, Daisy is a much more complicated person than you think she is. I strongly suspect that she's the mastermind behind these all."

Lacey then curiously asked, "What do you mean by the mastermind behind all of these?"

Zeke explained, "The mastermind behind the unfair competition against Linton Group and forcing Linton Group to be on the brink of bankruptcy.""

Lacey gasped. "Isn't Intercontinental Group the one who's targeting us? What does Eminent Group have anything to do with this?"

"Think about it, Lacey. Why did our enemy force us to this point?"

Lacey sighed. "Isn't it just an act of revenge in the corporate world? We stole Intercontinental Group's chance to work with Mitxel Group."

Zeke shook his head. "Of course not. Even if this is an act of revenge in the corporate world, this isn't the way to go about it because they'll suffer quite a bit in executing this. I strongly suspect that someone's trying to acquire Linton Group, so they're trying to stir up chaos in the shadows. Once Linton Group is on the verge of collapsing, they'll then come forth and acquire Linton Group."

Lacey inhaled sharply. "That's very likely. But I have to ask. Why can't it be Intercontinental Group trying to acquire Linton Group? Isn't that why they targeted Linton Group?"

Zeke replied, "Intercontinental Group isn't any more powerful than Linton Group right now. They'll need purchasing power to be able to acquire Linton Group in the first place. I'd say that someone must be using Intercontinental Group. There's someone else behind them. As a matter of fact, this person might be Daisy or someone else behind Daisy. Now that Linton Group is facing insolvency issue, it's time to start acquiring the company, and it's also time for the mastermind behind this incident to show themselves. Coincidentally, Daisy appeared and seems to have a strong desire to acquire the company."

Lacey nodded. "Zeke, the chances of you being right are high. Who in the world is Daisy? I heard that her Eminent Group has just been established."

Zeke then told her, "I've already sent people to look into her. Once they find out anything about her, they'll relay the information to us."

Chapter 2288

Lacey nodded. "Zeke, so what if we find out who Daisy really is? I doubt that Linton Group will be able to survive this incident."

However, Zeke beamed at Lacey. "Lacey, a question for you. Do you want the Linton Group to return to its former glory?"

Lacey replied, "Of course I do. Linton Group is the product of both our blood, sweat, and tears. How can I be fine with watching it disappear from the surface of the earth?"

"Okay. As long as that's your wish, I'll make the Linton Group survive. Don't worry and leave this to me."

Lacey nodded.

She had trust in Zeke.

A beat later, she said, "Zeke, let's talk about Linton Group's matters later. What we need to prioritize right now is Dawnie's illness. Say, what kind of illness did she get? Are you really confident in treating her?" If he had to be honest, Zeke could not be sure that he would be able to treat Dawn.

He knew that Dawn's illness was caused by the Heart-Bound Worm.

Although he and White Muraco Clan's Progenitor had discussed the method of resolving that, even the White Muraco Clan's Progenitor was not completely certain of the method's success.

All he could do at that moment was to give it a try.

Despite those thoughts in his mind, he consoled Lacey, "Be at ease, Lacey. I'll treat Dawnie even if it means using all of the resources I have in Eurasia."

At that, Lacey somehow managed to squeeze out a weak smile.

She could hear from his tone and words that he was not fully confident in treating Dawnie successfully.

What Zeke was going to say next were the details of Dawn's condition, but Ernest was there.

Thus, Zeke said to Sole Wolf, "Send him to the police station and have the officers interrogate him."

Sole Wolf suggested, "Zeke, why don't I send him straight to the military court instead?"

Ernest used to be a combat medic, so he once worked as a doctor in the army. Maybe he has done something to our soldiers in the past. Someone like him has to undergo strict investigation."

Zeke's gaze turned colder. "Then send him to the military court and look into him properly. If he refuses to speak the truth, hand him to the Cygnus Room and let them interrogate him."

"Understood!"

Sole Wolf then dragged Ernest away.

Ernest was devastated. He, too, had come from the military, and he had heard about Cygnus Room. He would be doomed even if he lived to tell the tale after ending up in Cygnus Room's hands.

I can't believe these people can give orders to the Cygnus Room.

They must be someone powerful.

What kind of god have I crossed today?
Once Ernest was gone, the ward fell silent.

After taking a deep breath, Zeke said, "Dawnie, it's time for us to talk about your condition."

"All right."

The people around him then turned to fix their burning gazes on him.

Another deep breath later, Zeke started, "Have you ever heard of the cursed parasitic worms?"

Lacey and Nancy were confused, but something flashed past Dawn's eyes.

"I've heard of that before. There are descriptions of them on television and in books. It's a kind of poison unique to the Muraco Clan. In fact, I heard that the poison can even affect the gender of the baby."

Zeke nodded. "The poisonous worm does exist, and it's far more complicated than you can imagine. As a matter of fact, it's one of the most complicated forms of poison in the world."

Dawn mulled over his words and hummed. "Wow, it's that impressive? I'd like to keep one for fun."

Zeke was rendered speechless for a moment.

As you wish. You now have one in you-the Heart-Bound Worm.

Dawn continued, "Right. Zeke, why are you telling us about this? It can't be that..."

Dawn then lowered her head to look at her body.

Zeke nodded. "Indeed. Dawnie, someone has poisoned you, and a cursed parasitic worm is in you right now. All the changes in your conditions are because of that cursed parasitic worm in you. That's why the hospital can't figure out what's wrong."

"What?" Both Lacey and Nancy leaped in shock. "There's a worm in Dawnie's body? Darn it. Who's doing this to Dawnie? Zeke, you really have to get rid of the worm in her!"

Zeke nodded. "Don't worry. I won't let anything happen to Dawnie."

However, not only did Dawn not show a sign of fear, but she was even excited.

"Zeke, quick, tell me where the cursed parasitic worm is at? Is it as fat and cute as the cursed parasitic worms on television? Can you not kill it after removing it? Can you let me keep it as a pet? I have to say that I've been dreaming to keep a cursed parasitic worm of my own!"

Zeke was in disbelief.

It never crossed his mind that Dawn would enjoy thrilling things like this; he certainly never thought that she would love cursed parasitic worms.

Lacey then chided her, "Dawnie, what are you on about? What do you mean by you want to keep a cursed parasitic worm? That's no pet; that's poison. Zeke, hurry up and think of a way to kill the cursed parasitic worm in Dawnie."

Dawn was instantly upset. "Lacey, you're so ruthless. The wormie is so cute. What can it possibly do? How can you be so cruel to it?"

Angry, Lacey flicked Dawn's forehead. "Silly girl, do you know what you're saying? That thing is just like a maggot. Fat and cute? How could you have thought of the worm as that?"

Dawn pouted. "But it is."

Zeke ignored their argument. What he did instead was communicate with the White Muraco Clan's Progenitor.

"Whitey, where are you?"

The White Muraco Clan's Progenitor replied, "Whitey? Who?"

Zeke replied, "You. From now on, this is my nickname for you."

"No!" The White Muraco Clan's Progenitor snapped. "I am the high and mighty Progenitor, and no one is allowed to disrespect or befoul me. How can you call me 'Whitey'? This is insolence!" Zeke then said, "Okay, Wormie. Where are you now?"

The White Muraco Clan's Progenitor responded, "I'm reaching- Pah! Stop calling me Wormie!"

Zeke hissed, "Hurry the f*ck here, Wormie. I'm in a rush!"

The White Muraco Clan's Progenitor grumbled, "Argh! You're making me so mad. Do you not have ears or something? Stop calling me Wormie!"

"Cut the nonsense and tell me where you are. If you don't say it right now, you're going straight to heaven!"

At that, the White Muraco Clan's Progenitor immediately said, "Zeke, there's something strange. I actually sensed someone with the Dragon Bloodline around me earlier. By nature, cursed parasitic worms are attracted toward Dragon Bloodline, so I'd like to find the one with the Dragon Bloodline first."

However, Zeke disagreed, "Shut the f*ck up and stop thinking about looking for the one with the Dragon Bloodline. Come to me first and solve my issue before thinking anything else."

"No. Your matter is trivial. What's important is to look for the one with the Dragon Bloodline. It's a rare occurrence, and it's very important to us cursed parasitic worms. How do I explain this to you? Anyway, this Dragon Bloodline might be the key to changing the cursed parasitic worms' lives! Therefore, I'm going to search for it now, so don't disturb me anymore!"

The continuous mentions of the Dragon Bloodline made Zeke curious about it. "What in the world is the Dragon Bloodline? Please don't tell me that dragons actually exist in this world."

The continuous mentions of the Dragon Bloodline made Zeke curious about it. "What in the world is the Dragon Bloodline? Please don't tell me that dragons actually exist in this world."

"No way!"

The Progenitor then explained, "I'm not pulling your legs. Supposedly, dragons existed a long time ago. However, the Dragon Race split up. A portion of them bonded with humans and blended into the human world. The descendants of those dragons are then referred to as the ones with the Dragon Bloodline. However, the Dragon Bloodline has been missing for close to a thousand years! The rest of the Dragon Race then regressed and became cursed parasitic worms. In other words, cursed parasitic worms and those of the Dragon Bloodline share an ancestry. Their bloodline has a nourishing effect on us cursed parasitic worms."

Zeke snapped, "Nonsense. Descendants of the Dragon Race? I'd say you've turned dumber."

Chapter 2290

"Come to me for this instance!"

However, the Progenitor was stubborn, "No. I want to look for the Dragon Bloodline first!"

At that, Zeke whipped the Progenitor with his mental energy.

Promptly, the Progenitor said, "Nothing you say will change my mind. Nonetheless, what's most important right now is your matter, so I'll come to you right away"

Good!

After waiting patiently for around ten minutes, the Progenitor finally flew in through the window.

The Progenitor had short arms and was plump and translucent. At the same time, it had a pair of transparent wings and cute eyes. In other words, it looked adorable.

Upon seeing the White Muraco Clan's Progenitor, not only did Dawn not feel scared, but she even began looking at it with a doting look. Subconsciously, she reached out to touch the White Muraco Clan's Progenitor.

"Wow, this is so cute. I'd like to hug it!"

The Progenitor went along with her and jumped into Dawn's arms before rubbing its head merrily.

Dawn began giggling. "It's cute. It's not afraid of strangers at all."

Lacey and Nancy were not afraid of the Progenitor as well. Perhaps it was because the Progenitor looked far too cute.

The two women then reached out, hoping to touch the White Muraco Clan's Progenitor. However, the White Muraco Clan's Progenitor instantly struggled and flung itself off the two women's hands.

It even nearly bit Nancy's hand.

Both of them were stunned.

The Progenitor then began communicating with Zeke. "Get these two foolish women away from me! Don't let them touch me. Hmph! How can peasants like them touch my sacred body?"

Immediately, Zeke's expression darkened.

How dare it insult my wife and my sister-in-law? I'll let you know what the consequences of not having a filter for your mouth are!

In the next second, Zeke gave the Progenitor a mental whip. It then began thrashing and begging, "Okay, okay, stop hitting me! I'll let them touch me."

Nancy then smiled at the Progenitor and commented, "It seems like this little guy has quite the temper. It won't let us touch it at all."

Zeke turned to Lacey and Nancy. "Just touch it. It won't dare to resist anymore."

Lacey shook her head. "Forget it. Can't you see that this little guy likes Dawnie and no one else?"

It was then Zeke realized that something seemed amiss. Why is the White Muraco Clan's Progenitor so friendly with Dawnie and so cold to the others?

Thus, Zeke quickly asked the Progenitor what the reason for its actions was.

The Progenitor replied indignantly, "It's because she's of Dragon Bloodline!"
What?

Zeke gasped. "Dawn is of the rare Dragon Bloodline?"

The Progenitor affirmed, "There's no way I'm wrong about this. The ones of the Dragon Bloodline are best suited to become Holy Maidens. If she becomes the White Muraco Clan's Holy Maiden, then the White Muraco Clan will surely soar to greater heights and return to its former glorious state!"

At that moment, Zeke fell silent. It seemed like he had recalled something.

According to Andres of the White Muraco Clan, the sorcerer Cesar should be the longlost black Muraco Clan's elder.

Now that Zeke had decimated Black Muraco Clan, the elder of the Black Muraco Clan would certainly want to rebuild the Black Muraco Clan. If he wanted to rebuild the Black Muraco Clan, he would need a Holy Maiden.

So, is it possible that Cesar has targeted Dawn because he wants Dawn to become the Black Muraco Clan's Holy Maiden? After all, Dawn is of the Dragon Bloodline, and she's most suited to become the Holy Maiden. If she becomes the Holy Maiden, the Black Muraco Clan will surely revive like a phoenix!

Zeke was glad that he had figured that out early. If Cesar really rebuilt the Black Muraco Clan, a bloodbath would be unavoidable.

Zeke then said, "All right, Whitey. Stop the nonsense and quickly kill the Heart-Bound Worm in Dawn."

The plan that Zeke and the White Muraco Clan's Progenitor had come up with was that the Progenitor would force the HeartBound Worm in Dawn to think of it as the master before having the Progenitor order the Heart-Bound Worm to kill itself.

The White Muraco Clan's Progenitor uttered, "Let me repeat my stance. You can call me White, but you must not call me Whitey."

Zeke replied by giving it another mental whip.

Chapter 2291

The Progenitor pleaded, "Master, please have mercy. I admit my mistake."

Zeke explained to Dawn, "Dawnie, I brought the worm to help treat your sickness. The process might hurt, so please bear with it."

Dawn nodded.

As the Progenitor flew into the air, it flapped its wings vigorously as if to resonate with the Heart-Bound Worms in Dawn's body.

As it wasn't easy to forcefully achieve resonance with other worms and compel them into obedience, the Progenitor wasn't confident in doing so.

With its head drenched in sweat, it was finally exhausted. However, it still wasn't successful despite running out of energy to flap its wings.

Consequently, Progenitor had no choice but to give up. "I-I can't do this anymore. I can't hold it any longer. It seems I have underestimated the Heart-Bound Worm. You had better find someone else who's more capable."

Furrowing his brows, Zeke ordered, "No, Dawn is the last living person in the world who is of the Dragon Bloodline. Can you bear to see her die?"

Progenitor replied, "Don't worry, she won't lose her life. At most, she will be controlled by someone else, just like a puppet. Besides, I've tried my very best and have reached the limit of my powers. The person who implanted the worm in her is definitely not someone to be trifled with."

Zeke insisted, "You're not allowed to give up. Continue trying."

Progenitor snapped, "Try your a*s! I have no way of achieving resonance with the Heart-Bound Worm in her body."

Dawn suddenly clarified, "Wait, are you trying to match the frequency of your vibrations to those of the Heart-Bound Worm?"

The Progenitor nodded. "Exactly."

Dawn suggested, "That's simple then, for I can control the frequency of its vibration. All we need to do is to coordinate with each other."

The Progenitor was surprised. "That's impossible. How can you exert such control?"

Dawn retorted, "Don't you believe me? Let me prove it to you."

Zeke suddenly interjected, "Dawnie, can you hear the Progenitor's voice?"

The moment Zeke brought the matter up, the Progenitor realized the significance of what just happened.

I have just communicated with Dawn telepathically!

It looked at Dawn with glistening eyes. "That's right, you can actually hear my voice?"

Dawn made a cutesy face. "Why? Am I not supposed to hear it speak? Its voice is so loud that I can hear it clearly. Nancy, Lacey, can't you hear the worm's voice?"

Lacey and Nancy threw her a confused look. "Hear what? How can the worm speak?"

All they heard just now was Zeke talking to himself.

As Zeke and the Progenitor exchanged glances, both of them arrived at the same conclusion.

Dawn was of the Dragon Bloodline, which shared the same ancestors as the Progenitor. Since both of them evolved from the Dragon Race, it wasn't unexpected for them to be able to communicate telepathically.

Dawn patted her head at the sudden realization. "That's right, how can a worm talk? It's really strange. Do you have a voice box? How did you manage to speak so loudly with such a small mouth? If I bring it to the pet market, I'm sure I can sell it for tens of millions! By the way, Lacey, Linton Group can now be saved. Why don't we sell the worm and use the proceeds to help the company out of its crisis?"

The Progenitor was stumped.

Damn it! How dare you! How dare you insult my holy honor by attempting to sell me off?

Lacey asked, "Dawnie, don't you like small pets? Why do you want to sell it?"

Dawn replied, "It's true that I have a softspot for them, but I love money more."

Lacey nodded thoughtfully. "Mmm-hmm, if the worm does know how to speak, it would definitely fetch a good price."

At that moment, the three ladies turned toward Zeke to hear his opinion.

Chapter 2292

Zeke was utterly speechless, for it never crossed his mind that the three ladies would want to sell the Progenitor off for money.

If they do that, the White Muraco Clan will definitely hunt them down for generations!

Zeke interrupted them at once, "Enough, stop thinking about selling it. The priority now is to treat Dawnie's sickness."

The Progenitor complained, "I'm so pissed that I don't feel like curing her anymore. She has truly gotten on my nerves!"

Zeke reminded, "Don't forget she is of the Dragon Bloodline. If she dies, it would be a huge loss for the worms."

The Progenitor cursed, "F*ck!"

It then added, "Dawn, just follow my instructions and I'll be able to save your life, do you understand?"

Dawn nodded. "Mmm-hmm."

The Progenitor continued, "Didn't you say that you can control the frequency of the Heart-Bound Worm's vibration? Do that, and maintain resonance for about three minutes with me."

Dawn nodded. "I understand."

The Progenitor warned, "By the way, it will hurt when you do it. So, brace yourself."

Dawn suddenly grew anxious. "I hope it isn't too painful. Will I die from the pain?"

Progenitor shook its head at once. "Don't worry. You won't."

Despite its reply, the Progenitor felt extremely nervous, for the ensuing pain was intense enough to be life-threatening.

It didn't help that Dawn was a feeble little girl.

Therefore, it gave Zeke a worried look to express the concerns it felt.

When Zeke saw the look in its eyes, he gave it a reassuring nod, indicating that he would be there to provide support.

At the crucial time, he would deploy his Ammo Needles to alleviate Dawn's pain.

With Zeke guaranteeing Dawn's safety, Progenitor's concerns were largely allayed.

Even though Zeke is bad-tempered and is always harsh on me, he's still someone capable. With him monitoring the situation, everything should be fine.

Subsequently, the Progenitor began to flap its wings to achieve resonance with the Heart-Bound Worm.

At the same time, Dawn closed her eyes to feel the Progenitor's vibrations. After that, she tried to control the Heart-Bound Worm's vibration frequency to resonate with the Progenitor.

Standing by the side with his Ammo Needles ready in his left hand, Zeke was prepared to take action the moment something untoward happened.

In truth, even Zeke wasn't entirely confident.

Five minutes passed in the blink of an eye.

Suddenly, Progenitor let out a breath before slumping onto the ground, hanging its head in exhaustion.

At that moment, Zeke's heart sank.

Damn it, from the Progenitor's response, it doesn't look like a success.

He asked the Progenitor, "Why has it failed? What did we miss? Is there still a chance to make up for it?"

The Progenitor replied, "What makes you think that it failed? I have succeeded in bending the Heart-Bound Worm's will to recognize me as its master."

Zeke was shocked. "Are you kidding me? Didn't you say that Dawn would go through a lot of pain during the process? However, there's no reaction from her at all."

It's impossible!

The Progenitor gasped, "Even if she didn't die from the pain, she would still be suffering immensely."

Just as it spoke, it opened its eyes with a struggle and looked at Dawn.

Sitting steadily, Dawn's eyes were closed. With her face flushing red, her calm expression made her look as if she was still sleeping.

The Progenitor broke into a wry smile, "Amazing, the Dragon Bloodline is truly strong. I am utterly exhausted while she didn't even break a sweat. The Dragon Bloodline within her has suppressed the Heart-Bound Worm and stopped it from causing damage to her body."

As Dawn gradually opened her eyes, she gave Zeke and the Progenitor a curious - look. "Did we succeed?"

The Progenitor nodded, "Mmm-hmm, we did."

Dawn snapped, "You lied to me saying that it was going to hurt. However, I barely felt anything at all."

Chapter 2293

The Progenitor was speechless.

After giving my all, do you think I'm out to fool you?

Zeke interrupted, "Enough. Progenitor, get the Heart-Bound Worm to leave Dawn's body."

Mmm-hmm.

After nodding in acknowledgment, the Progenitor used its will to instruct the Heart-Bound Worm to exit Dawn's body.

Now that Progenitor was its master, the Heart-Bound Worm didn't dare disobey.

Subsequently, Dawn opened her mouth and threw up a mouthful of dark-colored blood. Within it was a medium-size creature which was obviously the Heart-Bound Worm.

The sight of it gave Lacey and Nancy goosebumps. In fact, their hair stood on end just thinking about how something like that was living in Dawn's body. Nonetheless, Dawn stared curiously at the Heart-Bound Worm, "This is such a bizarre worm to be able to move freely within one's-

Just when Zeke was about to stomp the worm to death, the Progenitor stopped him.

"Wait "

Zeke gave the Progenitor a baffled look. "Why?"

The Progenitor explained, "If you want to seek revenge on the person who implanted the worm, I suggest that you keep the Heart-Bound Worm alive."

Zeke asked, "What do you mean?"

The Progenitor added, "Since the perpetrator controls the Heart-Bound Worm, you can control the perpetrator through the worm too. As long as you do it right, you will be able to easily annihilate whoever it is."

Zeke asked, "Oh, in that case, what do I need to do in order to achieve that?" The Progenitor continued, "You don't have to worry about that. All you need to do is let me know, and I can control the perpetrator through the Heart-Bound Worm."

Zeke nodded in acknowledgment. "Mmm
hmm. In that case, I'll leave the matter to you."

The Progenitor quickly suggested, "Of course, but I'm not going to do it for nothing. You have to agree to a condition of mine."

Zeke retorted, "Hehe, do you think you're in a position to negotiate?"

The Progenitor calmed him down. "Don't be so harsh on me yet, let's discuss this properly. At the very least, you should hear me out before deciding."

Zeke relented. "Fine. I'll reject you after you state your condition."

The Progenitor was speechless.

What difference is it going to make? You might as well reject me outright. How can humans be so shameless?

The Progenitor took a deep breath and declared, "I want to take Dawn back to the White Muraco Clan."

Zeke replied, "I'm not—"

The Progenitor pleaded at once, "Don't reject me just yet. Dawn is of the Dragon Bloodline and is extremely important to the worms as a species. I'll be honest with you. For the last hundred, in fact, a thousand years, worms have been in decline. As birth rates continued to drop drastically, the species is in danger of extinction.

At the current pace, worms will die out in less than a hundred years. As for the Muraco Clan that relies on us, they too will gradually vanish from this world. Therefore, Dawn doesn't just represent herself but carries the hopes of the entire worm species and that of the Muracans.

"Also, there's no need for you to worry, as we'll not hurt Dawn at all. At most, we want to leverage her Dragon Bloodline to improve the physical attributes of worms. Once we have done so, I promise to return Dawn unharmed."

At that moment, the usually cheerful Progenitor looked a lot more serious than usual.

After deliberating on it, Zeke answered, "You will have to seek Dawn's permission to do that."

Full with anticipation, the Progenitor turned toward Dawn. "Dawn, I hope you will be willing to come with me to my hometown, for we really need you. In fact, the future of our species lies entirely in your hands."

Dawn was shocked. "Are you joking? What has the survival of your entire species have anything to do with me? I won't and can't go with you, for Linton Group still needs me."

Chapter 2294

The Progenitor appealed, "I beg this of you, for I cannot stress how important you are to us."

Dawn responded in a half-threatening tone, "From now on, you had better keep quiet. Or else, I'll really put you on sale!"

The Progenitor was stumped.

There's no f*cking way I can get through to her. Women are difficult animals indeed.

Consequently, the Progenitor had no choice but to give Zeke a pleading look, hoping the latter would help him.

Since Zeke also felt that Dawn had gone overboard with her threats, he persuaded her, "Dawnie, listen to what the Progenitor has to say first before deciding whether you want to go with him, all right?"

Dawn nodded. "Fine, Zeke. Whatever you say."

With that, Progenitor continued, "Ms. Castaneda, let me give it to you straight. Actually, you're not an ordinary human, but one that is born of the Dragon Bloodline, Your bloodline holds the power to revive us worms as a species because you can significantly change our fate for the better.

"If you are willing to help us, the worms will be able to soar high and achieve glory again. Otherwise, we will be extinct within the next hundred years. Furthermore, our extinction will also lead to the annihilation of millions of Muracans."

Dawn looked at the Progenitor with shock splashed across her face. "Are you kidding me? What Dragon Bloodline? Why don't I know anything about it? Don't tell me that I'm a descendant of dragons?"

The Progenitor explained, "You might not be able to accept it, but you are indeed a descendant of the Dragon Race."

Anger crept into Dawn. "Get lost! I'm my parents' daughter. Not a descendant of some Dragon Race, You're the one who's descended from them. In fact, your entire family is!"

The Progenitor agreed, "Mmm-hmm. You're right to say that, for I and my entire family are indeed descendants of the Dragon Race. The reason we can communicate telepathically, is due to the fact that we share the same ancestry."

Dawn was dumbstruck.

Regardless of what the Progenitor said, she refused to believe that she was descended from the Dragon Race.

Overwhelmed by her exasperation, Dawn turned to Zeke. "Zeke, the worm is spewing nonsense. Can you get rid of him? Or else, I'm really going to sell him off for a princely sum."

Unable to bring himself to allow the worms to go extinct, he persuaded, "Dawnie, to be honest, what the Progenitor says is true. The survival of their species and the lives of tens of thousands of Muracans are indeed in your hands. If you extend your help to them, they will be able to overcome their crisis. If not, pardon me for being blunt, you will be responsible for the deaths of countless lives."

Dawn was blown away, for her trust in Zeke was unconditional.

Therefore, if Zeke vouched for the matter, it was naturally an undeniable fact to her.

At that moment, a sea of emotions flooded into her, as she was unable to accept the cruel truth.

After falling into a brief silence, she looked toward Lacey and Nancy. "Lacey, Nancy, what do you think I should do?"

Lacey answered patiently, "Dawnie, regardless of the choice you make, we will support your decision. Nonetheless, I need to let you know that if you do decide to go, you don't have to worry about the Linton Group at all. To be honest, for the company to have fallen into such dire circumstances, your presence won't make much of a difference."

Nancy nodded. "Dawnie, I, too, will support any decision you make."

Left without a choice, Dawn relented. "In that case, all right, worm. I agree to go with you. However, you aren't allowed to restrict my freedom in the sense that I can return whenever I want."

The Progenitor was filled with ecstasy. "That goes without saying. Anyway, if there's nothing else, we can leave now. I want to let my fellow worms know that I have found the Dragon Bloodline. They will definitely be elated to hear the news."

With that, the Progenitor prepared to leave together with Dawn.

Chapter 2295

Meanwhile, Zeke gave the Progenitor a solemn warning. "Progenitor, now that Dawn is in your care, you are responsible for her safety. If she so far has a scratch on her, I will make sure you pay for it."

The Progenitor reassured Zeke at once, "Don't worry. I swear upon my life that if anything happens to Dawn, my entire species will pay for it with their lives. Also, if I deploy the Myriad Worm Formation, few in this world will be able to stand against me."

It was only then that Zeke allowed the Progenitor and Dawn to go.

Once they were gone, Lacey gave Zeke a worried look. "Zeke, now that Linton Group is in a mess, there's no chance of recovering from it. Worse comes to worst, let's just forget about it."

Breaking into a slight grin, Zeke tousled Lacey's hair. "Lacey, don't you worry. With me around, Linton Group will not fall. In fact, I have put in place a plan behind the scenes. However, the time isn't right now. Once the opportunity arrives, the plan I have arranged will automatically be set in motion. When that happens, I will hand Linton Group back to you in all its glory."

Lacey's eyes sparkled. "Zeke, is what you say true?"

He beamed. "Since when have I lied to you before?"

Lacey nodded. "Mmm-hmm. I knew that you would never disappoint me."

Zeke added, "Lacey, as of now, I have an important task for you."

Lacey nodded. "Sure, whatever it is, just tell me. I promise to do my best to complete it."

Zeke explained, "You should take a break and not worry about Linton Group's affairs anymore. Look at what it has done to you? Your eyebags are starting to appear."

Lacey nodded. "Mmm-hmm. All right then, I'll take your advice. By the way, Zeke, when will you be home to visit Missy? She has been missing you a lot."

The thought of Missy's adorable smile warmed Zeke's heart.

Despite the urge to go to her side, he was

forced to keep his distance from her.

Now that he was faced with a huge group of enemies, they might set their sights on Missy if he got too close to her. Therefore, it wasn't worth the risk to do so.

Zeke gave Lacey an apologetic look. "Lacey, I'm sorry. I can't be too close to both of you at the moment. Or else, I'll be putting the two of you in danger due to my special status."

Lacey cracked a smile. "Zeke, don't worry. I understand. There's no need for you to explain. Also, you don't have to worry about Missy, for I'll take good care of her."

"As for Linton Group and whatever else, there's no need for you to worry about them. All I care about is that you and Missy are safe."

Zeke pulled Lacey into his embrace. "Lacey, you can rest assured that once I'm done with everything, I'll take you and Missy on a holiday,"

Lacey nodded.

At the same time, Zeke noticed a figure flash past the window and disappear. Furrowing his brows, he grew vigilant at once.

He instructed Lacey, "Lacey, go home with Nancy now, and don't go back to the office. As for Daisy from Eminent Group, just ignore her. I will go and see him when I'm free."

Lacey nodded. "All right. I'll do as you ask."

After Lacey and Nancy had left, Zeke gave chase to the figure that had flashed past the window earlier.

G After pursuing the figure to a quiet place in the southwest corner of the hospital, he finally caught sight of it.

It turned out to be Sole Wolf who had just sent Ernest to the tary court.

Zeke demanded with a frown, "Sole Wolf, why are you running? Why didn't you show yourself to me?"

After hesitating a few times, Sole Wolf used his energy to communicate instead. "Zeke, I felt someone powerful following me. Hence, I didn't dare reveal myself for fear of exposing Lacey to the enemy."

Chapter 2296

Hmm?

Knitting his brows, Zeke closed his eyes and began to expand his awareness to everything around him.

Just as expected, he detected a strange presence in the air.

As he closely examined the aura, he noticed that it wasn't the negative energy from the Netherworld, nor the vibe that the Kush Clan gave off. Instead, there was an evil presence to it.

Ghoul energy! This is unmistakably ghoulish energy! Damn it, why is such energy appearing here? Can this be the residual energy left by the mysterious enemy? Do they harbor hostile intentions toward me just like those from Netherworld and Mount Kush?

Zeke questioned Sole Wolf immediately, "Sole Wolf, since when and where did you feel this aura following you? Tell me everything about the circumstances surrounding your encounter with ghoulish energy."

Sole Wolf replied, "I felt its presence not long after I left the military court. By the time I noticed it, I figured that it had been tailing me for quite some time. Also, I know nothing about it. By the way, I feel really intimidated by the aura. Realizing that I'm no match for it, all I could do was flee instead of investigating."

Zeke nodded. "You're right. From the residual aura, I can feel that the enemy's strength exceeds that of an Ultimate Class. In fact, it might even have reached Celestial Class! Perhaps, even I am no match for him."

Gasp!

Sole Wolf couldn't help but caught his breath.

If even Zeke appraises him so highly, it's obvious the enemy isn't one to be trifled with. Looks like fleeing was the right decision after all. If I had stayed and confronted the enemy, I would likely have been turned to dust.

Sole Wolf inquired, "Zeke, do you think the enemy is from the Netherworld or Mount Kush?"

Zeke replied, "I don't know, but it's unlikely he belongs to those two factions, for the aura he emitted is different from theirs."

Sole Wolf clarified, "In other words, there's another mysterious faction targeting us right now?"

Zeke confirmed, "I'm afraid so."

The news disheartened Sole Wolf, causing him to sigh. "We have stretched ourselves to the limit just to annihilate the Netherworld and Mount Kush. If we are to face a new enemy, tough days are what lies ahead of us."

Zeke was surprised. "Only the dead have the luxury of enjoying life. How can a ferocious warrior like you be looking forward to a peaceful existence?"

Sole Wolf chuckled mischievously. "Fine, Zeke. To be honest, I'm actually filled with excitement despite what I just said. In fact, I wish we had even more enemies, as I just can't wait to scratch this itch of mine."

Zeke ordered, "Come, let's follow the trail of ghoulish energy and see if we can track down its owner. In the event we do, I'll let you deal with the enemy so that you can get it out of your system."

Sole Wolf's expression darkened. "Zeke, stop messing around with me. If I could stand up against him, I would already be fighting tooth and nail instead of fleeing just now."

Haha!

Zeke didn't respond further as they continued to follow the trail of ghoulish energy.

After pursuing for half an hour, they finally arrived at a busy part of the city. There, the traces of ghoulish energy were overwhelmed by that of the crowd. Hence, it was difficult to proceed any further.

Zeke was extremely disappointed. "Damn it, we lost him."

Sole Wolf remarked, "Zeke, I think this is a good sign. Since the enemy doesn't dare show himself, it means that he is weaker than you. Therefore, why should we fear him?"

Zeke shook his head and explained, "It's not that simple. I'm worried that he is hiding in Atherville and will threaten Lacey and the will threaten others."

Sole Wolf gasped at the possibility, for it was a real risk indeed.

Sole Wolf suggested, "Zeke, do you want me to get Northern Wolf and his men to protect Lacey from the shadows?"

Zeke nodded. "Mmm-hmm, I'm afraid that will be necessary."

Sole Wolf acknowledged, "All right, I'll contact Northern Wolf at once."

Just when Sole Wolf gave Northern Wolf a call, Zeke's communicator suddenly rang. When Zeke realized it was Killer Wolf, his eyes lit up as he answered it anxiously.

Chapter 2297

Given that Zeke had arranged for Killer Wolf to tail Cesar from the shadows, he was certain that Killer Wolf must have some updates for him.

Hence, he answered at once, "Killer Wolf, you-"

Killer Wolf's feeble voice over the line interrupted Zeke, "Ghoul Cliff at the Golden Sands Mountain, Zeke... Come... Hurry..."

Thump!

Zeke's heart began to beat furiously. Something has happened to Killer Wolf!

Zeke asked at once, "Killer Wolf, what's going on? Answer me!"

The only thing that could be heard was the sound of howling wind.

Zeke raised his voice, "Killer Wolf, respond! This is an order!"

Unfortunately, his order elicited nothing but silence.

Subsequently, a hissing sound rang out from his communicator, indicating that the device at the other end was destroyed.

Putting his communicator away, Zeke desperately tried to suppress his emotions, but his gritted teeth and clenched fist gave him away.

Sole Wolf returned quickly, "Zeke, I have given Northern Wolf and his team the order. They are on their way to protect Lacey from the shadows."

Zeke nodded in acknowledgment.

Nonetheless, Sole Wolf furrowed his brows curiously. "Zeke, what's wrong? You look unsettled."

Zeke threw the communicator to Sole Wolf. "Killer Wolf just called."

Is it?

Sole Wolf quickly picked up the device to check its call history, as the device had an automatic recording function.

When he heard Killer Wolf's frantic plea for help, Sole Wolf's expression drastically changed. Seething, he lamented, "Damn it, Killer Wolf is in danger."

Sole Wolf and Killer Wolf were comrades that were forged through battle. Back then, both of them buried themselves within a mountain of corpses for three days and nights to escape detection from their enemies. Only by doing so did they manage to survive.

Throughout the years, the bond they built was stronger than that of real brothers.

Therefore, Sole Wolf couldn't help but feel devastated over the fact that Killer Wolf was in danger.

Sole Wolf anxiously suggested, "Zeke, let's go and rescue Killer Wolf. His life hangs by the thread at every moment!"

Zeke remarked with a grim voice. "Our biggest problem right now is that we don't have Killer Wolf's exact location."

"Didn't he just say that he was at Ghoul Cliff, Golden Sands Mountain? Where is that?"

Zeke shook his head. "I've not heard of it before. What about you?"

Sole Wolf, too, shook his head.

With that, Zeke contacted Cygnus Room and ordered them to find out where Ghoul Cliff or Golden Sands Mountain was.

Soon, he received an answer.

"Great Marshal, our investigations yielded two Golden Sands Mountains in Eurasia. One is located at the southernmost point of the country, while the other is located in the northernmost point."

"However, both those mountains are not big, especially the one in the south, which is only a hundred meters tall. At the same time, there are no cliffs nearby those two locations. Hence, something like the Ghoul Cliff doesn't exist there."

"Taking into account your current situation, we deduce that this Golden Sands Mountain might actually be Gold Mountain near Atheville. It's massive in scale and forms a small mountain range on its own. Furthermore, it contains many cliffs."

"Due to the mountain being shrouded in darkness all year long from the flying sand and gravel, the locals refer to it as Golden Sands Mountain. As for Ghoul Cliff, the map doesn't show it, but it should be one of the cliffs there."

Zeke nodded at once. "Alright. Send me the location of Gold Mountain at once."

"Understood!"

"By the way, there's one more thing," Zeke asked, "are there any factions nearby that are related to ghouls?"

Zeke suspected that the ghoul energy left behind by his pursuer was deeply connected to Ghoul Cliff.

Ghoul Cliff, as its name suggests, is a cliff that is filled with corpses. Cygnus Room replied, "The data we have doesn't indicate any such thing, but I'll get someone to investigate at once."

"Mmm-hmm," Zeke grunted, "update me immediately once you find something."

"Understood!"

After ending the call, Zeke contacted Ares, Tyler, Nameless, and the others, ordering them to return at once.

Even though they were sent on their respective missions, the priority now was to rescue Killer Wolf.

As Ares and the others were all powerful warriors who were at least King Class and above, the speed of their travel came close to breaking the sound barrier.

Despite being assigned to different corners of Eurasia, all of them were gathered in front of Zeke in just half an hour.

Even Sole Wolf's mount, Tiger Lord, had rushed to the scene.

Ares asked curiously, "Great Marshal, why have you summoned us with such urgency?"

Taking a deep breath, Zeke explained,
"Killer Wolf is in danger, and we are going to rescue him now."

What?

Ares and everyone else was shocked.

They were well aware of how dear Killer Wolf and the others were to Zeke. If anything untoward were to happen to Killer Wolf, Zeke would undoubtedly go on a rampage.

On top of that, they, too, had formed a close friendship with Killer Wolf as time went by. Now that the latter was in a lifethreatening situation, they were equally distressed.

Hence, the group asserted, "Great Marshal, there's no time to waste. We have to save Killer Wolf at once."

"That's right, Great Marshal. Only the most powerful of enemies can pose a threat to Killer Wolf. Under such circumstances, every second must feel like torture to him."

"The earlier we set off, the greater the chance of his survival."

Zeke nodded in agreement. "Let's roll!"
With that, the group sped off at breakneck speed.

At that moment, Zeke's power was equivalent to that of Celestial Class, while Nameless and Tiger Lord belonged to Ultimate Class. As for the rest, they were all King Class warriors. As a result, all of them could travel faster than the speed of sound.

Even though Gold Mountain was five hundred miles away, they arrived in its vicinity in the blink of an eye.

Instead of charging up the mountain, they settled in a small town nearby to rest and prepare.

Firstly, they might be up against an immensely strong enemy. Thus, they had to make sure they were in their best condition for battle.

Secondly, they had to replenish their supplies with food and medication.

Even though they could go on for a few days without food or water, Killer Wolf would likely be in a weakened condition due to his grievous injuries. Therefore, they had prepared supplies for him as a precaution.

Once the procurement was completed, Zeke led his men to a small restaurant and ordered some food.

Obviously, their priority wasn't the food. Instead, they were looking for more information with regards to Golden Sands Mountain.

After all, written reports could never beat local knowledge in terms of accuracy.

Once they finished their meal, Sole Wolf went to establish a relationship with the restaurant owner when he went to settle the bill.

"Boss, I gave you an extra ten. You can keep the change. Just take it as a sign of our friendship."

As the proprietor was an honest man, he frantically refused, "No, no, I can't accept this. As our prices are clearly stated, doing so would be considered as taking advantage of our customers. If word gets out, our reputation would be ruined!"

Sole Wolf reassured him, "Don't worry. Our lips are sealed. No one will know."

The owner insisted, "No, no, I must give you your change back. I don't charge for nothing."

Sole Wolf suggested, "Why don't we do this? Just keep the money but think of it as payment for information, all right?"

SANA The owner pondered for a moment. "Mmm-hmm. Fine, ask away. I'll definitely tell you whatever I know." standards AO? k

Sole Wolf continued, "Tell me everything about Gold Mountain, as we're here for a sightseeing trip."

The moment the owner heard that they were on holiday, a nervous expression descended upon his face. He persuaded them against it. "Young man, heed my advice, you had better not go sightseeing at Gold Mountain. It's not a place for the living."

Sole Wolf asked curiously, "Oh? Why do you say that?"

Chapter 2299

"Don't go to Gold Mountain if you don't want to die. Seriously, why must you go there when there are so many mountains around for you to visit?" The restaurant owner could not understand their decision.

Sole Wolf urged, "Come on, Sir. Tell us all about it. Otherwise, I'm sure that we'll stick to the plan and head to Gold Mountain."

The owner sighed. "Hmm... What a bunch of insolent fools! Fine, let me tell you the story. There are two main reasons why I'm adamant that you all shouldn't go there."

He explained, "First, as the name suggests, the entire Golden Sands Mountain is covered with loose yellow sand. When the wind blows, an ensemble of sand will form a storm often so dense as to obscure the sun and reduce visibility almost to zero. If you go, there's a high chance you will be engulfed by the sandstorm and end up being buried alive. In the past, similar tragedies have befallen the local residents. Now, no one dares to go near it."

"I see, so that's the first reason. I'm certain there's a second or a third reason?" Sole Wolf pursued further.

The owner responded, "Absolutely. The second reason is..."

Suddenly, he lowered his voice to a whisper as he continued, "The second reason is because there's a demon living there."

Demon?

"What demon?" Sole Wolf frowned.

"A type of demon who devours human souls," explained the owner.

Oh?

Sole Wolf's interest was piqued.

Similarly, Zeke and the others pricked up their ears and listened carefully.

Although they were seated quite far from the counter and the owner was muttering, Zeke could still hear him clearly. The latter had broken through the limits of the human body. His sense of hearing was excellent, with a sensitivity to sound that was several thousand times better than a normal human being.

Sole Wolf prompted, "Please share with me all the details about this demon who feeds on human souls, Sir."

Petrified, the owner waved his hands and rejected, "No way, I can't speak a word about it. Once I do, I'll be the next target."

Sole Wolf assured him, "Don't worry, we'll ensure your safety."

He shook his head repeatedly. "No, no, no. I can't afford to risk the lives of my family. I have both the elderly and young children at home. I'd better carry on with my work. Once you're done eating, leave right away."

Then, the restaurant owner turned and left.

Seeing so, Sole Wolf hastily grabbed him by the arm and tossed a stack of money counter. It was exactly ten thousand! on the

A twinkle appeared in the owner's "You... This is..." eyes.

"Tell me the story. In return, the cash is yours to keep," Sole Wolf tried to convince him.

The owner's stance was shaken as he gulped nervously.

After mulling it over for a while, the owner

put the money into his pocket and agreed, "Fine, come with me."

Great!

Sole Wolf followed him into the kitchen.

Subsequently, the owner shut the door and windows. Upon checking that everything was in order, he said cautiously, "Dude, whether you believe what I'm going to tell you, I'll deny all of it once you leave this place."

Sole Wolf nodded in response.

The owner started sharing the horrific myth, "Right, I have to start from three years ago..." Back then, there was an old shepherd in this town.

At that time, Gold Mountain was still a lush green moor. It was full of healthy foliage and blooming flowers. Every day, the old shepherd would take his sheep to the pasture at Gold Mountain.

One day, when the old shepherd was tending his sheep, a severe sandstorm blew up and covered the entire mountain.

The village was totally wiped out by the phenomenon.

It was the very first time such a terrible natural disaster had ever occurred at Gold Mountain.

The sandstorm persisted for one whole night before it started to settle down.

The following morning, people realized that the old shepherd did not return. Hence, they assumed that he had encountered a mishap at Gold Mountain because it was quite impossible for anyone to survive the sandstorm. The mountain was covered by a thick layer of sand with at least three to four meters deep. The shallowest section was about a meter in depth too!

Since the old shepherd had no children, the villagers decided to put together some money and build him a cenotaph.

Chapter 2300

Unbeknownst to them, the old shepherd came back alive before the cenotaph was constructed.

His appearance sent everyone in the village into a frenzy.

They found it unbelievable that he could escape unscathed whereas all of his sheep died in the disaster. It was nothing short of a miracle!

However, everything about the old shepherd became weird ever since.

First, his mannerism was peculiar, and his movements were rather stiff. When he walked, he moved like a zombie.

Additionally, he did not utter a single word since his return.

Rumor had it that the old shepherd filled his mouth with sand. So, he refused to talk in order to keep the sand inside.

All in all, he looked and acted like a living dead.

Initially, the villagers had the impression that he was swamped by anguish and despair because he lost all his livestock.

Later on, the old shepherd started roaming around the village aimlessly like a haunting spirit. A few days later, he died.

When the villagers found him, his body was as hard as a rock. There was something very strange about the way he collapsed. He was kneeling down in the direction of Gold Mountain, facing south, seemingly worshipping the mountain.

Out of pity, the villagers buried him.

To their disbelief, the old shepherd's tomb was dug up three days later, and his body vanished mysteriously.

The villagers were petrified. They wondered who would have done such a bizarre thing when it was apparent that there was nothing valuable buried along his body. No one knew what the motive of the culprit was.

Upon investigating, the police discovered that the tomb was dug from the inside.

In other words, the old shepherd might have possibly risen from his grave!

Anyhow, not many people believed the myth.

When he was buried, it was evident that his corpse had turned cold and stiff with no signs of breathing or heartbeat. It was impossible that he was still alive then. How could he have escaped from his grave? Could it be that he was a zombie? The myth was utterly absurd.

Many strange things happened after the old shepherd was buried.

Later on, none of the villagers who went up to the mountain could avoid being engulfed by a harsh sandstorm.

The surprising thing was that they could all walk out alive after the disaster.

Similar to the experience of the old shepherd, the survivors would then act strangely and move stiffly. They always stared blankly into space and almost never opened their mouths to speak.

Some claimed to have seen their noses and mouths filled with sand.

After a few days, they suffered the same ending - death. A day after their bodies were buried, their graves would unequivocally be dug up.

Judging from the holes made, someone dug it from the inside.

It was only after the series of strange occurrences that the villagers started feeling dubious and having their guards up.

It would be considered as a coincidence if the same thing happened only once or twice. However, when it took place more than ten times, something dreadful must be going on.

Since then, Golden Sands Mountain became a restricted area. No one dared to step foot into the mountain.

A while later, people began to explore the mountain again.

There was a pair of twins who returned to the village after working elsewhere for several years.

They had no idea about the scary myth and wanted to climb the mountain one day.

As expected, they were met with a sandstorm.

However, their encounter was slightly different this time around. The older twin returned to the village the next day.

Unlike the other casualties, his movements remained agile, and he was not quiet albeit being a little out of his mind.

He wailed day and night, claiming that he saw a demon killed his brother and consumed his soul afterward.

Luckily, he was only crazy for a few days, and things went back to normal thereafter.

When he recovered from the episode, he was not aware of his peculiar actions. In fact, he could not even recall going to Golden Sands Mountain with his twin brother. It was as if he had lost his memory completely.