

Chapter 2601

"Are you speaking the truth?" Johan asked suspiciously.

Hawkeye nodded. "Of course. If you don't believe me, you can ask Mr. Williams when you see him later."

"Alright, you all can follow," Johan replied, nodding pensively.

Of course, Johan knew the others were Zeke's subordinates, but to prevent Hawkeye from getting suspicious, he had to deny the others' entry first.

Zeke, the Great Marshal, was the mastermind behind the conception of the acclaimed Cygnus Room. Being a member of Cygnus Room, Sole Wolf was naturally the former's subordinate.

On the way to find Zeke, Johan purposely slowed down a few times to speak to Sole Wolf, but Sole Wolf stopped Johan with his eyes.

After all, it was inappropriate to chat in such a place. They could speak about their circumstances once they met Zeke.

Not long after, Johan brought them to Zeke's territory.

Looking at the sea of people, Hawkeye was dumbstruck. The number of people present was almost twice as many as the people Zeke brought from Contubernium's district. Where did the extra numbers come from? Don't tell me Zeke defeated another Centuria and took over the troops. Is he really that powerful to defeat two Centurions?

Zeke had already been waiting outside the door for a long time. Upon seeing Sole Wolf and the others, he stood up.

Sole Wolf and the others immediately went over, and their first reaction was to kneel and bow.

However, Zeke stopped them in his mind: Don't kneel. It's not safe here, lest I reveal my identity.

Sole Wolf: Understood!

"Apollyon, take Hawkeye to eat something. Then show him around so that he can get used to the environment," Zeke said.

"Understood!"

With that, Apollyon left with Hawkeye.

Zeke's purpose was to let Apollyon keep an eye on Hawkeye, lest the latter escape.

Zeke had promised Yannick and Yoshua to hand Hawkeye over to be dealt with, so he couldn't break his promise.

Apollyon understood Zeke's intention and left with Hawkeye.

"Come with me," Zeke said to Sole Wolf and the rest.

Upon entering the room, Sole Wolf carefully closed the door before kneeling to Zeke without hesitation.

"Greetings to you, Great Marshal!"

"You may rise."

Sole Wolf and the others got up, but Johan remained on his knees.

This time, he was kneeling to Sole Wolf, not Zeke.

"Greetings to you, General North!"

Huh?

Killer Wolf, Ares, and the rest were all surprised and confused. They wondered why the Chieftain of Theos Island would kneel to Sole Wolf.

They had never heard of or seen Theos Island before, so when did Sole Wolf discover this island and even know someone on this island?

"Johan, you may rise," Sole Wolf said calmly.

"Thank you, General North!" Johan got up carefully.

The rest asked in bemusement, "Sole Wolf, you know him? You have long discovered Theos Island and even recognize someone on this island?"

Sole Wolf let out a sigh. "It's a long story."

He then told them how he had sent Johan to investigate a mysterious force but soon lost contact with Johan.

Everyone finally understood everything.

Looking at Johan, Sole Wolf said, "Johan, tell us, why did you not contact Cygnus Room for so many years?"

"General, I have always wanted to contact and return to Cygnus Room, but Theos Island is too mysterious. I've been searching for an exit but to no avail. Only recently did I find a way to leave the island, but I'm too old and weak to go through that taxing process. Thankfully, the Great Marshal came, and he summoned you all here. God must be taking pity on me and fulfilling my long-awaited dream before I die."

Sole Wolf nodded. "I see. Thank you for your hard work all these years, Johan. You will return with me to Cygnus Room. I will reveal the truth regarding your disappearance."

Chapter 2602

Johan asked tentatively, "General, may I know what the records in Cygnus Room said about me?"

"Don't worry. We just said that you went missing for no reason. We didn't determine the nature of your disappearance."

Johan heaved a sigh of relief as his biggest fear was being labeled as a traitor.

Sole Wolf continued, "Zeke, is the man who captured Lacey on Theos Island? Do you know where he is? We should take action as soon as possible and deal with that jerk."

"We can't be reckless now," Zeke replied, shaking his head.

Sole Wolf frowned. "Zeke, how is this being reckless?"

Ares chimed in, "Exactly. We're all here. Is our fighting prowess no match for Theos?"

"The issue is not with how powerful we are, but with Lacey. She's still in Theos' hands. If we alert him to our presence, he will threaten us with her life. I've been keeping a low profile during this period and didn't cause a big commotion lest I reveal my existence," Zeke said.

If Draco heard Zeke's words, he would be both amused and enraged.

Upon arriving at Centuria's district, Zeke had defeated four Centurions. How could this not count as a big commotion?

"So, your idea is to secretly rescue Lacey first, then kill Theos?" Sole Wolf asked.

Zeke nodded.

"Tell us Lacey's location, Zeke. We'll go save her now."

Zeke sighed. "This is the problem. Theos Island is huge. Even I don't know where Lacey is. But there's a high chance she's in the central district. Unfortunately, I'm too powerful as I have reached Celestial Class. Even if I suppressed my energy, Theos would probably still sense me if I sneaked into the central district. This is why I summoned you all."

Realization dawned on Sole Wolf. "Zeke, you want us to sneak into the central district and find Lacey?"

Zeke nodded. "That's right."

Patting his chest, Sole Wolf declared, "Leave it to me. Don't worry. We're all very weak. Theos probably won't sense us."

Of course, their weakness was relative to Zeke. In terms of their power, they were definitely in the top ten in the world.

Just then, they heard a panting voice outside the door. "Mr. Williams, save us... Please save our Centurion..."

Something's up!

Immediately, Zeke dashed out of the house.

Sole Wolf and the others went out as well.

The visitor was none other than Scar Face from Phoenixion.

Scar Face begged, "Mr. Williams, h-hurry up and save Ms. Phoenix... Ms. Phoenix... Ms. Phoenix is in danger!"

Furrowing his brows, Zeke replied, "Scar Face, calm down. Tell me slowly. What danger is Phoenix in?"

"The Dragon King... The Dragon King suspects that Phoenix is in cahoots with you, so he has captured her and is preparing to torture her. However, she's stubborn and refuses to speak. She's now severely injured from the beatings."

"Damn it!" Zeke muttered under his breath.

Although he did not care for Phoenix's life, he was the reason she was captured and in mortal danger.

If he ignored her, and she ended up dead, he would feel guilty for the rest of his life.

"Where's Phoenix? I'll go meet him."

"She's in the Dragon Palace."

Glancing at Sole Wolf and the others, Zeke announced, "Let's go. You all can come along. You should meet the natives here to get used to this place as quickly as possible."

"Understood!"

Just when Zeke was about to leave, Scar Face suddenly spoke up, "Wait... Mr. Williams, wait a moment."

Zeke stopped in his tracks. "What's wrong?"

Chapter 2603

Scar Face said, "I-I just wanted to tell you that Ms. Phoenix won't be in danger even if you don't go."

Zeke expressed his curiosity by saying, "Oh? Can you elaborate on that? How so?"

"This is actually the Dragon King's scheme to give you a taste of your own medicine. He purposely controlled Phoenix, using her to lure you there so that he could kill you. To be honest, the Dragon King isn't entirely certain about the relationship between Phoenix and you, and he isn't sure if you'll go to him. He won't do anything to Phoenix even if you don't go."

"I never owe others any favors. This is a splendid opportunity to settle things with Phoenix," Zeke responded coldly. "Also, the Dragon King is not a king in my eyes, and he doesn't deserve the title at all! Today, I will dethrone him and claim that title for myself."

With that, Zeke quickened his pace.

Scar Face was stunned. What is he talking about? Am I hearing it right? This man is trying to become the Dragon King? Does he really think he can be so arrogant after killing four Centurions? He doesn't even know the Dragon King can easily kill those four Centurions in a heartbeat! I can't tell who the stronger one is between these two people at all.

While they were on the way, Sole Wolf asked, "Zeke, who is this Dragon King anyway? Since he doesn't deserve his title as Dragon King, should we just kill him later?"

"Don't. Spare his life."

"Why?"

"He probably knows how to forge divine weapons, so he's still useful to me."

"Forging divine weapons?"

Sole Wolf, Ares, and the others exchanged looks of surprise.

"Divine weapons only appear in mythologies and legends. An ordinary man-made weapon is no match for a divine weapon."

"That's right. I heard that only Ancient Gods could forge divine weapons. Those weapons have long since disappeared."

"The Dragon King is merely a Centurion. How can he know how to forge divine weapons? Are you sure your information is correct, Great Marshal?"

Zeke explained, "Actually, the master of Theos Island, also known as Theos, is most likely an Ancient God. Perhaps he has passed down the skill of forging divine weapons to the people living on Theos Island, so it makes sense if the Dragon King has that knowledge too."

After confirming that Draco might know how to forge divine weapons, Sole Wolf and the others were overjoyed.

"If he can forge divine weapons and our army can be equipped with those weapons, our combat ability will improve drastically! Soon, we will become the strongest country in the world! We must obtain the skill of forging divine weapons!"

Too tempted by the possibility of obtaining the skill, they sped up.

Meanwhile, in the Dragon Palace, Draco was all prepared. He was only waiting for Zeke to take the bait.

The few Centurions who worked for him each led ten of their best men and were lying in wait.

Once Zeke entered, they would immediately trap him from all sides so that he wouldn't be able to escape.

Phoenix—the bait—was tied up in a chair and placed in the center of Dragon Palace, feeling extremely conflicted.

She was in a dilemma. On one hand, she hoped Zeke could come and rescue her. On the other hand, she didn't want him to come.

If he came to her rescue, it meant she still had a place in his heart, and he still cared about her.

However, it would also mean he would risk his life if he came.

Draco's trap could overpower even a Legatus, and Phoenix didn't believe Zeke was stronger than a Legatus.

After waiting for a long while, a Centurion got impatient.

"I don't think he's coming, Dragon King. He's a ruthless and heartless man. Why would he risk his life just to save a woman?"

The other Centurions chimed in, "I say we stop waiting for him to take the bait anymore and lead our army to attack him. I don't mean to brag. We can even defeat a Legatus with our power, let alone Zeke! Dragon King, hurry and decide to avoid unnecessary complications the longer we wait!"

Chapter 2604

[Draco began pondering and weighing the pros and cons.

While he was still hesitating, a guard barged in. "Master Draco, the messenger informed us that Zeke is on his way. He's only two miles away from Dragon Palace."

"That's great! I will definitely teach him a lesson for making me wait so long. By the way, how many people did he bring along?"

"He brought five to six subordinates."

"Oh? Do you know who they are?"

The guard shook his head. "No, I don't. They're all unknown faces to me."

Draco sneered. "I'm sure you recognize the well-known warriors on Theos Island. His subordinates should be someone random if you don't know them. It's fine. Hide now and pay attention to my command!"

"Understood!" Instantly, the Centurions led their army and hid again.

Phoenix, who was tied up, shed tears of relief. I didn't expect him to care about me so much! He's really risking his life to save me!

Yet, she felt gloomy shortly after. But I must rescue him because he's in grave danger.

Phoenix stared at the entrance.

Zeke had shown up.

She yelled frantically, "Zeke, hurry and leave now! This is a trap! Run! You can't escape once you step inside! Don't mind me and just leave!"

"Shut up!" Draco was furious. "How dare you betray me, Phoenix!"

Phoenix ignored Draco and continued shouting at Zeke, wishing he would flee.

Zeke didn't care about her warnings at all and kept walking into the area. "That's enough. Stop shouting. It's annoying."

What the heck... Phoenix was enraged by Zeke's reaction. I'm just helping you out of kindness. Yet, you're saying I'm annoying? What are you even thinking? You should be touched, all right? I-I dare you to come near me! I won't bite!

Zeke led Sole Wolf and the rest toward Phoenix.

Then he reached out and pulled the rope used to tie Phoenix up, causing the rope to break.

Phoenix gritted her teeth, fighting the urge to lash out her anger at him. However, she knew this wasn't the right time to do so.

She endured the rage and said, "There are many powerful soldiers waiting to ambush you, and not even a Legatus can escape. I will clear a path for you to escape. You don't have to worry about me. They won't dare to do anything to me."

"You can leave first. I must settle scores with the Dragon King."

Phoenix felt an increasing sense of unease. "Do you not hear what I just said? I just told you that not even a Legatus can escape this trap! Don't tell me you're stronger than a Legatus!"

Sole Wolf chuckled. "Whatever a Legatus is, they're no match for Zeke! I don't care who you are. If Zeke asks you to leave, you better do so immediately. Otherwise, I'll throw you out of here."

Phoenix was rendered speechless. As expected, birds of a feather flock together! Everyone around this blockhead is so dense!

Phoenix was no longer upset but angry. "Fine. Let's all die together, then, I'll die with you if you insist on staying."

"Die? Draco is the one who's going to die today!"

"How are you so confident? You don't know how powerful he is at all! Stop hiding and come out, all of you!"

Draco gritted his teeth and stared at Phoenix. "Fine! I underestimated you, Phoenix. I didn't expect you to have the audacity

to betray me so publicly! You're extraordinarily daring, aren't you? All right! Show yourself, everyone! We don't need to ambush them to win."

At once, groups of people leaped out from all around the area, surrounding Zeke and his team.

Draco's people had immense battle spirit and murderous intent. An ordinary person would definitely be intimidated by them and break down instantly.

Chapter 2605

Zeke scanned the surroundings and let out a derisive snort. "You're all a bunch of hooligans, and yet you dare speak of eradicating me? You must be dreaming!"

Damn it!

Zeke's words infuriated them.

How dare he call us a bunch of hooligans? He's hitting below the belt!

The Centurions fumed, "Master Draco, please hurry up and give us your order to wipe them out."

"Do you think you can do as you please just because you got rid of a few nobodies? We'll show you how powerful we are today!"

"Remember, no matter how strong you are, there's always someone out there who's stronger than you. Mind you, we are the ones who will teach you a lesson!"

Draco took in a deep breath and waved his hand. "All right, everyone. Calm down."

"Zeke Williams, you've killed four of the Southern Faction's Centurions, and today you've insulted us. I'm going to sentence you to death. I believe you should have no objection to the sentence."

"The four Centurions deserved it. I do not consider it an insult when all I did was state the truth," Zeke said matter-of-factly.

Such insolence!

Draco slammed the desk and sprang up from his seat. "You must be really accomplished yourself to belittle us so! All right, then. Show us what you've got!"

Zeke shook his head and said, "I'm afraid you guys may not have the chance to witness my prowess."

What does he mean by that?

"Are you conceding defeat right now?"

"It's going to be overkill for me to deal with the lot of you. Any of my subordinates can easily crush you."

What the f*ck?

Their blood boiled when they heard Zeke's impudent remarks.

"This is too much! We will not stand for this insult!"

"Master Draco, please give us your word! I can't wait for a second longer!"

"Did he say that any of his subordinates can take us down? I've never suffered such humiliation!"

"He will die today!"

"Kill them all!" Draco ordered.

The Centurions led their best men and circled Zeke.

Phoenix took a deep breath and got into a defensive stance. "Let's have our backs to each other and form a circle. We'll get out of this."

However, Zeke pulled Phoenix and said, "Follow me."

Phoenix panicked. "Zeke, what are you doing?"

"As I said, any of my subordinates can defeat them. There's no need for you to get involved. Let's just stand aside and watch the good show."

Even the least skilled members of the group and Sole Wolf were Half-King Class warriors. When even a hundred Archdukes were not a threat to Sole Wolf, the few Centurions were nothing.

Phoenix was rendered speechless for quite some time. "Hey, how are you so arrogant? Do you really think you're the single greatest person here? That others are nothing but useless trash? Mind you, the forces that Dragon King has gathered here today are his best elites. Even Legatuses will not be able to leave unscathed. Why do you think that any of your subordinates can easily defeat them? Do you not care about their lives?"

Zeke's patience was wearing thin. "Fine. Go on and do whatever you like. I'm not going to stop you!"

Then he took a seat aside and left Phoenix standing there all alone.

Meanwhile, Sole Wolf and the others had gathered to have a discussion.

"I think I should be the one to attack them. After all, I'm a Peak Class warrior. It's going to be a piece of cake for me to annihilate them," Sole Wolf said.

"No, no. You are a warrior of the highest caliber, belonging to the Peak Class. You can't stoop to fight those weak Archduke martial artists. This is so embarrassing for Peak Class warriors!" Nameless replied.

"Let me," Killer Wolf said. "I'm a member of the Alpha Suicide Squad. They've offended my brother. I should crush them all."

"Killer Wolf, you suffered serious injuries a while back. You should get a good rest instead. Let me fight. I'm already old, and I have only a few chances left to fight. Besides, I can feel that I'm close to leveling up any time now. Let this bunch of people be my training dummies," Alfred said.

Chapter 2606

The others agreed with Alfred's proposition. "Okay. Alfred, you should fight them."

Alfred took a few steps forward while the others found their seats and got ready for the good show.

He looked around and said impassively, "Are you guys going to volunteer for your demise, or do I have to make a move?"

Draco and the others nearly exploded in anger.

What the hell is Zeke playing at? Not only is he not fighting us personally, but he's sending a frail old man to fight us instead. He's going over the line to humiliate us!

They would be utterly vilified if they couldn't beat the old man.

"Kill him!" Draco yelled.

The Centurions encircled Alfred.

Phoenix stood still, unsure if she should help the old man.

It would be jarring for her to lend a helping hand to Alfred, especially since Zeke and the others were doing nothing.

Then again, she was worried that Alfred would get killed by the Centurions if she stood idly by.

In the end, Sole Wolf dragged Phoenix aside and said, "Get back, so you don't get hurt by the aftermath of Alfred's moves."

As Alfred brandished his sword, silver gleams and sputtering blood clouded everyone's visions, making it difficult for everyone to see what was going on.

After only two minutes, peace was restored.

Everyone tried to get a closer look and was dumbfounded.

Draco's subordinates were sprawled all over the scene as they lay in the puddle of blood splattered everywhere. Some of them had their limbs broken, while some heads had been severed from their bodies. The stifling metallic stench of blood hung in the air.

Meanwhile, Alfred had already dashed forward and pointed his long sword, still dripping with blood, right at Draco's neck.

Terrified, all colors drained from Draco's face as he trembled violently.

Everyone was horrified by the baffling sight. Their hearts pounded furiously as they couldn't fathom what had just happened.

The old man had eradicated all elites of the Southern Faction and taken Draco hostage in two minutes.

Poor Draco didn't even have the time to react.

What a joke!

Phoenix gulped in astonishment as her heart raced.

I've underestimated them. How foolish of me!

Alfred shook his head in disappointment. "I was going to use them as training dummies, but they were all too weak and useless. Even hunting a wild boar makes a better training than this."

How contemptuous of him to say so! How dare he say we're not qualified to train with him? This is so aggravating.

Draco breathed in deeply and tried to calm himself down. "W-Who are you guys? Why are you guys here on Theos Island?"

Draco reckoned that such a powerful group of people must have their own agenda to have come all the way to Theos Island.

Zeke took a deep breath and got up from his seat. "The lot of you are not qualified to stand while talking to me."

Alfred knew what Zeke was getting at. He immediately pressed the sword, pointing at Draco's neck. "Kneel!"

Draco shuddered at the feeling of the cold metal on his neck. He contemplated for a moment before kneeling in front of Zeke.

Such a strong warrior is worth my submission.

Draco's subordinates followed suit and got on their knees.

They were willing to submit to Zeke.

If even his subordinate was this powerful, they reckoned that Zeke must be really mighty.

They were willing to surrender to someone as powerful as Zeke.

"Well, at least you are sensible. Let me ask you this, then. Do you guys want to live or die?" Zeke asked.

They felt oddly bitter when they heard the question, as it was the very question that they used to pose to others when they had the power to dictate others' lives and deaths.

They didn't expect that one day someone would ask them the very same question, especially under such circumstances.

It was a bitter pill to swallow.

"Live. We want to live," they hurriedly replied.

Zeke nodded. "Surrender yourselves and serve me. I'll send those who are not willing to hell."

Chapter 2607

After a brief moment of hesitation, everyone eventually submitted to Zeke.

"We pledge our allegiance to you, Mr. Williams. We vow to protect and fight for you from here on out."

Needless to say, Draco was utterly miserable. He had been dethroned just like that, and his days of being high and mighty were over. However, he also knew that he had to yield to Zeke if he wanted to live.

"I, too, am happy to be in your service, Mr. Williams," Draco announced as he kneeled. before the man.

With that, it finally dawned on everyone that Draco's era was well and truly over; a new leader had risen.

Zeke glanced at Phoenix, only to realize the latter was still staring in wide-eyed disbelief.

"What's the matter, Phoenix?" he asked, patting her shoulder.

Having been jolted back to her senses, Phoenix quickly said, "No, no, it's nothing. Zeke, y-you're incredible..."

Oh, gosh. I don't know what else to say at this point.

"Well, can you do me a favor?"

"Go ahead," Phoenix replied firmly, "Just say the word, and I'll do it."

After all, I've already made up my mind to follow Zeke. I'll gladly serve him in any way I can!

Can you assist me in organizing the Southern Faction? I plan to put you in charge of it in the future."

Phoenix once again reeled in shock. "What? A-Am I hearing things? Do you really intend to let me lead the Southern Faction?"

"Why? Are you not interested? If so, you can forget I asked."

"Of course, I'm interested!" Phoenix exclaimed. "I promise you'll have nothing to worry about if you place the Southern Faction in my care. I'll manage it well and keep everything honest and above board."

Zeke nodded before turning to Draco. "You, come inside with me."

"Yes! Right away!"

Draco followed behind Zeke, Sole Wolf, and the others as they strode into the Dragon Palace.

"What's your name?" Zeke asked, his eyes fixed on Draco.

"I'm Draco Drogon. You can call me Drogon if you like."

There isn't any shame in letting a warrior call me by my family name, is there?

Sole Wolf, however, was less than amused. "Wait a minute... Are you asking to be addressed by your last name? Who do you think you are?"

How dare this shameless fool tell the Great

Marshal to call him that! By doing so, he's insinuating they're both equals. That's a blatant lie and an insult to the Great Marshal!

Draco flinched and quickly added, "No, no, I'm sorry. Please call me Draco."

What's wrong with being addressed as Drogon, though? It's still my name, and I'm proud to be a member of the Drogon family...

"Draco, do you know how to forge divine weapons?" Zeke queried.

Draco shook his head. "No, I don't, Mr. Williams."

Almost immediately, Zeke's face fell.

Argh! I've planned to observe Draco forging divine weapons and find out where I did wrong. Alas, he knows nothing about it!

"In that case, what's the use of keeping this guy around? Why don't we kill him?" Sole Wolf muttered.

"No! Please don't kill me!" Draco pleaded, raw panic in his voice. "I swear I can be of use! Oh, yes! I can extract spiritual iron from Spirit Stones in its highest purity. It doesn't have to be refined further and can be used directly to forge weapons."

Naturally, that piqued Zeke's curiosity. Refine? I don't think I've heard that term before.

All of a sudden, Ossa Dei had a lightbulb moment. "I got it! I got it! Haha! I finally know where our problem lies!"

"What is it, Ossa Dei?" Zeke asked. "Why haven't we been able to make any divine weapons? What's the problem?"

"The problem lies in the refinement step!"

"What on earth does that mean? Is that the same as us extracting spiritual iron from the stones?"

"No, of course not!" Ossa Dei snapped. "That was only extraction. The refinement step is essential because the spiritual iron we extracted had a very low purity and was unsuitable for forging divine weapons. That could be the reason your attempts failed."

The spiritual iron you used just had too many impurities in them. Not even master blacksmiths can forge divine weapons with unrefined spiritual iron, so don't beat yourself up over it. In short, only refined spiritual iron can be used to make divine weapons."

Chapter 2608

Zeke's eyes lit up. "So, if I had used refined spiritual iron, I'd have been able to make my divine weapon?"

"I guess so," Ossa Dei replied with a sigh.

'Argh, this is so frustrating.' It only took Zeke nine tries before acquiring the ability to forge divine weapons. Meanwhile, I had to train a hundred times before seeing some success and only managed to craft my first weapon on the three hundredth attempt. Then again, what's the use of comparing myself to him? All it does is hurt my ego and add to my stress.

"You piece of trash!" Zeke suddenly scolded. "You've let the entire Southern Faction down!"

Those words, unfortunately, left Ossa Dei befuddled. "What do you mean? What has this got to do with the Southern Faction?"

"If you had remembered to tell me about the refinement process, I would've succeeded in forging divine weapons. It's because I failed that I had to take over the Southern Faction and attempt to learn from Draco. In other words, the Southern Faction's downfall is entirely your fault!"

"What the f*ck..." Ossa Dei fumed. "You're just twisting facts and trying to shirk responsibility!"

Not wanting to waste any more time with Ossa Dei, Zeke turned his attention back to Draco. "Draco, how many Spirit Stones does the Southern Faction have in storage?"

"About a thousand pounds in total."

"Good. I want you to refine all of them."

"I'm afraid that won't work, Mr. Williams," Draco hastily replied.

"Why not?"

"We'll be gifting these Spirit Stones to the Legatuses in two days. Besides, refining them will take at least ten days to half a month. If we delay the shipment of the stones and incur the wrath of the Legatuses,

To Draco's surprise, Zeke didn't seem the slightest bit worried. "That's fine. Ignore the Legatuses. I never intended to gift these Spirit Stones to them, anyway. All need you to do is focus on refining the stones."

Draco couldn't help but frown as his heart hammered in his chest. "Mr. Williams, wwhat do you mean by that? Y-You're not going against the Legatuses, are you?"

"The less you know, the better it is for you. Just do as I say, and you'll be fine."

"Ah! Okay!" Draco replied.

Despite that, he still couldn't shake off the feeling of impending doom. How could he when he was sure Zeke would throw caution to the wind and oppose the Legatuses?

There's no doubt that Zeke Williams is a powerful man, and dealing with one Legatus would be child's play for him. However, there's a whole group of Legatuses, and they have a strong sense of unity. In other words, opposing one of them would be equivalent to aggravating the group. If they were to join forces, not even Zeke and his team would be their match! Gosh. Why must he invite trouble to himself? Isn't it good enough to stay here and enjoy his time as a king?

"Ossa Dei, will a thousand pounds of Spirit Stones be enough to forge a divine weapon?" Zeke asked.

"It's more than enough if you're forging an ordinary divine weapon. However, if you plan on making something more refined and powerful, you'll need at least a thousand pounds more," Ossa Dei answered. "My advice would be to make the best weapon you can. Using ordinary divine weapons is a burden for Celestial Class warriors, and only the best weapons can help increase your attack power."

Upon hearing Ossa Dei's advice and pondering for a while, Zeke finally decided. to put in more Spirit Stones and effort to forge a divine weapon of the highest quality.

That said, where would he find another thousand pounds of Spirit Stones?

4"Draco, how many Spirit Stones can the Southern Faction collect in a day?"

"On a good day, we can easily find fifty pounds. Otherwise, we might not even be able to gather a pound of it."

Needless to say, Zeke was exasperated.

Only fifty pounds of Spirit Stones a day? How long must I wait before I gather another thousand pounds, then? I don't have the time for that!

Chapter 2609

After some contemplation, Zeke turned to Draco. "Draco, the Legatuses would have the most Spirit Stones on Theos Island, wouldn't they?"

Draco nodded. "Theoretically speaking, yes."

"Excellent. Tell me which Legatus has the most Spirit Stones. I need to find another thousand pounds of stones, and I'll steal them if I have to."

Draco nearly burst a blood vessel when he heard that.

My goodness! We should be keeping our fingers crossed that the Legatuses don't realize what we're up to, yet Zeke is now saying he wants to rob them of their Spirit Stones... Is he that fearless, or is he just a reckless fool? In any case, there's no way in hell I'll let him rob the Legatuses. If they pinned the blame on me, I'd be dead meat!

"Mr. Williams, as much as you want the Spirit Stones, there's no need to rob the Legatuses. The risk is too high, and the reward may not be as great as expected. That said, I have another idea that will let you gather many stones in a short period."

"Okay. I'm listening," Zeke said.

"You can rob the Northern Faction's Spirit Stones instead," Draco suggested. "They're located on the northern side of Theos Island, where Spirit Stones are in great abundance. If even the

Southern Faction can gather a thousand pounds of Spirit Stones, I'm sure they'll have a lot more than us. Moreover, wouldn't it be easier to rob the Centurions than the Legatuses?"

Zeke once again gave Draco's words some thought and nodded. "Yes, that makes sense. Very well, then. Let's rob the Northern Faction. As for the rest of you, divide yourselves into two teams. I need one team to head into the heart of Theos Island to search for Lacey's whereabouts. The other team will follow me to the Northern Faction and transport their Spirit Stones back."

Without hesitation, Sole Wolf volunteered, "Zeke, let me head into Theos Island to search for Lacey! The central area is filled with countless dangers, and a Peak Class warrior like myself will undoubtedly fare better."

To his surprise, Zeke shook his head. "That's not necessarily true. The stronger you are, the riskier it is to venture deeper into the island. I think it'll be safer to send someone weaker. I reckon that on Theos Island, the only Peak Class warriors are the ders of Camp South and Camp North. If anyone else in the Peak Class enters the central district of Theos Island, there's a high chance Theos will sense it. Warriors below Peak Class, however, should be aplenty on this island. If a King Class warrior were to venture in, they'd be less likely to arouse Theos' suspicion."

Upon hearing Zeke's theory, everyone bobbed their heads in agreement. "Oh, yes, yes. That does make sense."

Of those present, Sole Wolf, Nameless, Ares, and Tiger Lord had all already attained Peak Class.

Thankfully, Killer Wolf, Alfred, and Tyler were still King Class warriors although they were only a step away from achieving Peak Class.

"Zeke, leave the job to us King Class warriors," Killer Wolf immediately said. "The three of us are still stuck in King Class, but we're very close to breaking into Peak Class. Who knows? This could be a good opportunity for us to achieve that breakthrough!"

Having been stuck in King Class for the longest time and always playing second fiddle to Sole Wolf and the others, Killer Wolf, Alfred, and Tyler were understandably frustrated. One thing was for sure they needed an opportunity to train and advance.

Zeke nodded. "Yes. It's better this way. Remember, your safety should always come first. If there's any danger, retreat immediately and contact me for reinforcement."

"Got it!"

"Go on, then." With that, Killer Wolf and the other two men set off on their mission.

"We should be on our way, too," Zeke added as he looked at Sole Wolf, Nameless, and Ares. "Let's head to the Northern Faction and ask to borrow their Spirit Stones."

"Let's go!"

Draco couldn't help but click his tongue. Borrow? Ha! What a way to put it!

After walking out of Dragon Palace, the group was surprised to see Yannick and Yoshua waiting outside.

Upon seeing Zeke, the twins quickly stood up and approached him. "Mr. Williams."

"Yes. I suppose you're here because of Hawkeye?"

Hawkeye is responsible for the brutal murder of Yannick and Yoshua's parents. Zeke made a promise to the brothers that he would hand Hawkeye over to them once they reach Theos Island.

Chapter 2610

Yannick and Yoshua nodded without hesitation.

"Mr. Williams, I know you've also promised Hawkeye before that if he did as you instructed, you'd spare his life," Yannick said gingerly. "We don't want to make things difficult for you, either. That's why all we're asking for is a chance to teach him a lesson. We have an axe to grind with him!"

"Let's go. I'll take you to Hawkeye," Zeke answered.

"Okay!"

Soon, Zeke found Hawkeye in the Spirit Stone storage area. He was busy tallying up the number of stones with Apollyon and Phoenix.

"Hawkeye, come over for a while."

Hawkeye glanced at Zeke before turning his attention to the Lewis brothers.

I don't have a good feeling about this. If I'm not wrong, Yannick and Yoshua are here to seek revenge. After all, how could they ever forget that their parents died at my hands?

After giving it some thought, Hawkeye finally got up and made his way to the trio.

On the one hand, he didn't dare to disobey Zeke's orders. On the other, Zeke had promised not to kill him before, and he believed the latter wouldn't go back on his word.

Worse come to worst, I'll let the Lewis brothers beat me up. I doubt it'd be anything more than that.

Zeke brought the men to a secluded corner.

"Mr. Williams, what can I do for you?" Hawkeye asked cautiously.

"Yannick, Yoshua, I leave Hawkeye in your hands."

Naturally, the Lewis brothers were overjoyed.

They had thought Zeke would only allow them to beat Hawkeye to a pulp, but his current tone seemed to suggest he was giving them the green light to get rid of Hawkeye altogether.

"Thank you for your help, Mr. Williams!"

Hawkeye, however, was frantic with fear. "M-Mr. Williams, how can a respected warrior like yourself go back on your word? You promised me before that you wouldn't. kill me."

"Yes. I did say I won't kill you, and I'm not one to break my promises."

"But aren't you killing me right now?"

"Idiot. I only promised not to kill you, but I never said I'd protect you," Zeke reasoned. "Honestly, I've been kind enough to keep you alive for so long. Now, it's Yannick and Yoshua who want your life, so why should I interfere? It's outrageous that you even expect me to protect you."

Hawkeye was at a loss for words as he felt his body go cold with dread.

Knowing full well that he had been fooled, he quickly turned around and tried to make a break for it.

"Stay right there, you b*stard!" Yannick and Yoshua yelled.

"Well, that's all I can do for you guys. Whether you can catch up to Hawkeye and avenge your parents' deaths is now completely up to you," Zeke said.

"Thank you, Mr. Williams," Yannick exclaimed. "We'll never forget your kindness."

With that, Zeke returned to the Spirit Stone storage area.

Even though Phoenix was still counting the stones, she couldn't help but throw him a curious glance. "Where's Hawkeye? Where did you take him to?"

"Let's not talk about him. Phoenix, do you know the Centurion of the Northern Faction?"

Phoenix nodded. "Of course! In fact, I know quite a few of them. They have tried roping me in to join their faction, but I turned them all down."

"Excellent. Take us to the Northern Faction now."

"Why? What business do you have there?"

"We'd like to borrow their Spirit Stones."

Phoenix didn't know whether to laugh or cry. "You guys are pulling my leg, aren't you? Don't we have plenty of Spirit Stones here in the Southern Faction? Besides, there's no way the Northern Faction would lend us theirs!"

"Oh, they will," Zeke said firmly.

Phoenix burst into laughter. "Oh, come on. You guys must be joking!"

"I don't have time to chit-chat," Zeke grumbled. "Just lead us to the Northern Faction."

Phoenix's expression turned grim. "Are you guys really going to rob the Northern Faction of their Spirit Stones?"

Oh, please, there's no way I'd believe they intend to borrow the stones. Anyone with common sense will know they're there to rob!

Chapter 2611

Zeke said to Phoenix, "I told you we're borrowing them. Let's go."

Fine.

She grumbled in exasperation, "I just don't get it. Why do you need so many Spirit Stones? The ones we have are more than enough for our troops. Tell me the truth. Are you thinking of conquering the Northern Faction? If so, I'd advise you to drop the idea. The Northern Faction Centuria is under the purview of the faction's Legatus. You'll be on his hit list if you take down his army. Plus, now that you've taken down the Southern Faction Centuria, its Legatus surely has his eyes on you. You're already in hot soup."

He replied, "Your imagination has run too wild. I'm not interested in the Northern Faction. I just want you to introduce me to the Northern Faction's Centurion. I want to convince him to allow us to join the Northern Faction."

Huh?

Flabbergasted, Phoenix sputtered, "You want to join the Northern Faction? Who the heck will believe that?"

"Just focus on introducing us to the Northern Faction Centuria and getting us into the Northern Faction. Don't worry about anything else," said Zeke.

"But-" Phoenix's curiosity would not be satiated.

Zeke cut her off and said, "Could you keep quiet for just two seconds? Can't you see you're being annoying?"

Phoenix was so angry that his words caught in his throat. Hmph! You'll only regret it later if you don't take my advice now. Mark my words! You'll eventually come begging for my help. You stupid blockhead. You won't get away with telling me off. Just wait and see!

The Southern and Northern Factions were separated by a buffer zone approximately ten meters wide.

The two factions usually left each other alone, unless one party entered the buffer zone or crossed its border, triggering a war.

With that in mind, Phoenix carefully led Zeke and the others across the buffer zone. Thankfully, they did not run into any obstructions during their journey.

Their joy was short-lived. Soon after traversing the buffer zone, a horde of people rushed out from all directions and surrounded them.

"Stay where you are! Don't move!" yelled an unkempt, bony man at the head of the group.

Phoenix glanced at him and drawled, "Ah, it's Monkey. Don't tell me you don't recognize me anymore."

Monkey looked her up and down and said, "Well, hello, Ms. Phoenix. Aren't you supposed to stay put in the Southern Faction? Why did you come to the North?"

"I'm here to meet your Centurion. I need to discuss something with him."

Monkey replied guardedly, "You may discuss any matters with me, Phoenix. I have full authority to represent our Centurion."

"I'm bringing some subordinates to defect to the Northern Faction. Are you sure you can represent your Centurion on that decision?" retorted Phoenix

What?

Monkey and his men were shocked and voiced their doubts over the sincerity of her request.

"You were doing just fine in the Southern Faction, Phoenix. Why do you suddenly think of joining the Northern Faction?"

"Is this a plot to infiltrate the Northern Faction?"

"Don't come looking for trouble, or you'll only suffer in the end. We in the Northern Faction never go easy on our enemies."

Phoenix shot back, "You're all a bunch of fools. If I were plotting against the Northern Faction, I wouldn't pick such an obvious method. I'd have done it ages ago in the dark."

She added, "Bring me to meet Centurion, Sebastian. He has tried many times to convince me to join his side to no avail. I've finally agreed to his request after thinking things through. If you somehow cause me to change my mind, you'll all be in trouble when Sebastian investigates the matter."

Unease flitted across Monkey and his men's expressions.

Phoenix decided to pull out her trump card. With a wave of her hand, she declared, "Forget it. The Northern Faction doesn't pounce boldly on new opportunities. We won't have a brighter future by joining them. Let's go back and twiddle our thumbs in the Southern Faction."

It did the trick. Monkey grew anxious.

He knew Sebastian had awaited Phoenix's defection for a long time. In fact, the latter had sent people to convince her at least ten times.

She had finally changed her mind, and if Monkey ruined Sebastian's longtime wish, the man would surely skin him alive.

Chapter 2612

Fearful of retribution from Sebastian, Monkey exclaimed, "Wait, Phoenix! Wait, I'll bring you to meet Sebastian. I was only joking earlier, please don't take it to heart."

"That's more like it," muttered Phoenix. "Come on then. Let's meet Sebastian."

Soon enough, they arrived at Sebastian's base.

The scale and luxury of the "base" spoke volumes about how wealthy the Northern Faction was compared to the Southern Faction.

Sebastian was one of the lowest-ranked Centurions in the Northern Faction, yet his base camp was as lavish as that of the Southern Faction's leader, Draco.

It was easy to deduce that the Northern Faction's leader would surely boast a more opulent base camp.

In other words, the Northern Faction possessed more Spirit Stones than their southern adversaries.

Monkey said to them, "Wait here, Phoenix. I'll inform Sebastian about your arrival."

"Sure," replied Phoenix simply.

She led Zeke and the others to some empty seats.

Shortly after Monkey's departure, boisterous laughter rang out from the most luxurious house on the base. A bearded man strolled out of the house and boomed, "Ah, my dear Phoenix. What a joy it is to see you again. You must be here because you miss me. I'm over the moon!"

Disgust swelled in Phoenix's chest at his cringy display.

Still, she mustered a smile and replied, "Yes, Sebastian. It has been a while."

Sebastian's smiley demeanor belied the displeasure brimming in his chest.

Why didn't she stand up to greet me? How disrespectful! Playing hard to get, is it? You have plenty of time to do that once I get you in bed. That's exactly my style.

He remained suspicious of Phoenix's motives. He did not believe she would willingly surrender out of the blue.

So what? Her motives aren't important to me. She's on my turf now, and I'm not letting her escape!

Sebastian's smile widened as he asked, "I'm happy that you're defecting to my side, Phoenix. But I have to ask; is someone picking on you in the Southern Faction? Is that why you're defecting?"

Phoenix sighed and said, "How could you not know, Sebastian? We have a new leader in the Southern Faction now. He has ill intentions toward me and harasses me all the time. Thus, I have no choice but to come to you for protection."

As she spoke, she glanced furtively at Zeke to gauge his reaction.

Alas, Zeke's non-reaction disappointed her.

Phoenix was floored. I can basically confirm that Zeke is a certified blockhead!

Meanwhile, everyone was stunned after hearing Phoenix's words.

"My goodness. Did I hear that right? The Southern Faction has a new leader now."

"Who usurped the Southern Faction's Dragon King? Or did the man himself step down?"

"Dragon King is too powerful. It's pretty impossible for someone to dethrone him. I guess he must've abdicated his position."

"I'd like to know about this new successor!"

Sebastian was equally intrigued and asked, "Tell me more about what happened in the Southern Faction, Phoenix."

She replied, "A strong newcomer fought his way right into the Centurion's district and defeated Dragon King." That's how he took control of the Southern Faction."

Everyone was shocked.

Sebastian declared, "Well, I don't care who he is. If he's harassing my dear Phoenix, he's as good as my enemy. Don't worry, I'll punish him for his misdeeds."

Before Phoenix could utter a word, a familiar voice sounded in her mind. "Enough with the small talk. I need you to distract Sebastian, so we can look for the vault holding the Spirit Stones."

What's that voice?

"It's me, Zeke. I'm communicating with you through your mind. You don't have to speak up to reply to me. Just think about your response will do."

Phoenix swallowed nervously and followed his instructions. "Tell me. What kind of warrior are you? How can you communicate with someone through their minds?"

Chapter 2613

Zeke replied, "We'll talk again once you have completed your mission."

"Okay." Phoenix regained her composure before turning to Sebastian, "Sebastian, I almost forgot to introduce them. These men came with me, hoping to join you. Given that they are exhausted from their long journey, I would appreciate it if you. could take them in and arrange accommodation for them."

Sebastian readily agreed.

Since he had plans to make advances on Phoenix, it would be troublesome if her subordinates were around.

Sebastian responded, "Any friend of Phoenix's is a friend of mine. Don't worry. I'll definitely treat all of you well now that you're going to join me. Monkey, get our friends here a place to settle in."

"Yes, sir." Monkey acknowledged Sebastian's order. "The few of you, please come with me."

Zeke, Sole Wolf, Nameless, and Ares got up and left with Monkey.

When they arrived in front of a straw hut, Monkey explained, "You'll be staying here going forward. In fact, you can count your blessings as this hut is among the better lodgings we have

here."

Zeke broke into a faint smile. "Monkey, why don't you come in? We have a gift for you."

"Oh?" A grin emerged on Monkey's emotionless face. "Haha, I shall graciously accept it. Come in."

Monkey was the first to enter the hut.

Thereafter, Zeke followed him in, while Sole Wolf closed the door behind them, causing the room to be shrouded in darkness.

Monkey inquired delightfully, "My friends, I wonder what sort of present is it given all this mystery."

Sole Wolf replied, "Monkey, tell us where your Spirit Stones are stored and the gift will be yours."

Monkey's brows furrowed. "Why do you want to know? This is a secret of ours that can never be revealed. Even those who have joined us for one or two years don't know where the location is, let alone someone new like you."

Zeke explained, "I'll be honest with you. Recently, we have discovered a Spirit Stone mine filled brimming with them. Therefore, I'm interested to see how big your storage is and if it's enough to store all Spirit Stones we have."

"Really?" Monkey was skeptical. "This is the first time I heard of a Spirit Stone mine. Are you taking me for a fool? If there really was such a thing on Theos Island, Theos would have found it before you did."

Sole Wolf began to grow impatient. "Stop wasting time. Tell us where Spirit Stones are stored or else... Hehe."

Sensing the ill intentions of the visitors, Monkey attempted to flee.

Unfortunately, Sole Wolf was already prepared.

He engulfed Monkey's body with an energy that brought the weight of mountains down on him. In the end, Monkey dropped to his knees with a thud, gasping desperately from suffocation.

"F*ck!" Monkey panted heavily as he yelled with all the strength he could muster, "What is this? What the hell is holding me down?"

When he painstakingly turned to look behind him, all he saw was thin air.

Nonetheless, the tremendous pressure weighing down on him was undeniable.

Is there a ghost?

Sole Wolf flashed a slight grin at him. "Monkey, stop dreaming about escaping from our clutches. It's impossible. You had better cooperate with us instead. Who knows, we might spare you if we're in a good mood."

At that moment, Monkey was filled with both awe and fear, "You... What is this technique you're using? H-How do you do this?"

Sole Wolf responded, "Actually, we, too, are Gods descended from the heavens and are members of Theos' family. We are here upon the Gods' orders to capture Theos for betraying the family. If you're willing to cooperate by leading us to where Spirit Stones are kept, I might consider bestowing upon you the Divine Ascendance Technique."

Monkey replied frantically, "All right, all right. I'll definitely work, with you. I'll bring you to the storage area right away as long as you promise to release me."

Chapter 2614

Obviously, Monkey didn't believe Sole Wolf.

Does he think he can fool me with such an outlandish story? Fucking Gods. What a load of bull.

The only reason he pretended to believe them was to buy time for his escape.

Out of nowhere, Sole Wolf unexpectedly slapped Monkey, leaving the latter in shock. "Damn it, I can't even fool you. Is my acting really that bad?"

Despite his outrage over being slapped, Monkey didn't dare show it. Instead, he remarked pitifully, "I already said that I believe you."

Sole Wolf snapped, "Believe my ass. The look on your face clearly says otherwise. Whatever it is, bring us to the location where the stones are kept. If you dare try anything funny, I'll squash you like a bug!"

Sole Wolf's words barely left his mouth when he unleashed a surge of energy that left Monkey gasping for air and on the brink of collapse. The pressure was so intense that Monkey felt every bone in his body was about to break into a million pieces.

It was a terrible sensation indeed.

Terrified, Monkey pleaded, "Mercy, I beg of you. I'll definitely obey whatever you tell me to do."

Although Monkey didn't believe that they were Gods, he still wasn't certain of their true identity.

A single move by them was enough for him to realize how powerful his foes were, leaving him no choice but to take them to Spirit Stones.

Weighing Spirit Stones - which belonged to Sebastian-against his own life, he had no doubt as to where the balance of scales was tipped.

Consequently, Monkey led Zeke and his companions to where the stones were kept. Throughout the journey, he didn't dare try anything funny, for fear of being crushed upon sparking their suspicions.

After leading the group through a bush, Monkey pointed to a cave in front. "The Spirit Stone is kept inside there. It's a restricted area that can only be accessed. with Sebastian's written instructions."

Zeke replied, "Go on ahead. We'll take care of everything."

"Okay," Monkey responded fearfully before steeling himself to proceed.

Guarding the cave entrance was a group of eight formidable fighters who noticed Zeke's group approaching when they were still thirty meters away.

Galvao of the guards bellowed, "Who goes there? Show yourself! This is a restricted area. We'll kill you if you take one more step forward."

Monkey yelled out at once. "Galvao, it's me, Monkey."

Even though Galvao's voice subsequently eased, he still maintained a sense of vigilance. "Oh, it's you, Monkey. What are you doing here?"

Monkey quickly explained, "Sebastian ordered us to take stock of Spirit Stones. He's worried that there might be issues, as he's going to offer them as a tribute to the Legatus."

Galvao replied, "But Sebastian just sent someone to do the same two days ago. Why would he

want to take stock again in such a short time?"

Monkey began to panic but maintained a calm facade. "One can never be too careful. I'm sure you know how meticulous Sebastian is."

After Galvao gave Monkey a look, skepticism began to fill his eyes. "In that case, where's Sebastian's written order? Given how important this is, he would definitely have given you one."

Galvao's words frustrated Monkey. Would I still be speaking so politely with you if I had one? I would have fucking barged my way in!

Just when Monkey had run out of ideas, Sole Wolf suddenly sighed. "Monkey, you're nothing but a fucking piece of trash. How can you fail to deal with a bunch of dumbasses like them?"

Thump!

Galvao instantly sensed something amiss from Sole Wolf's words.

Before he could warn everyone else, a powerful force pounded him down to his knees.

When he looked at his fellow guards, he realized that they, too, were kneeling on the ground.

"What's going on!" Galvao painstakingly eked out a few words. "W-What sort of power is this!"

Sole Wolf instructed Monkey, "Keep an eye on them while I take stock of Spirit Stones."

Chapter 2615

Monkey nodded in acknowledgment.

"Stop right there! Y-You're not... allowed to go..." Galvao glared at Zeke with bloodshot eyes as he attempted to stop them.

Nonetheless, the energy suppressing him was so overwhelming that he couldn't even move a muscle, let alone block Zeke's way.

All he could do was watch helplessly as Zeke and his men entered the cave.

Meanwhile, as the pressure weighed down on Monkey, he was hoping that it would ease once the group was inside the cave. By then, he would use the opportunity to escape.

Unfortunately, he was disappointed to learn. that the pressure didn't alleviate one bit, snuffing out what little hope he had left.

Galvao roared at Monkey, "Monkey, you... you betrayed Sebastian! You deserve to die for your treachery!"

Sighing, Monkey replied, "Galvao, if only you knew who they were. You might very well be saying something different."

Galvao gritted his teeth. "Who in the world are they? Why are they trying to rob us of our Spirit Stones?"

Monkey explained, "Actually, they are Gods, just like Theos. They are here to capture him for betraying his own kind. If I help them, they will teach me the Divine Ascendance Technique. Are you also aspiring to attain godlike prowess? Just cooperate with them, and I'm sure they will offer you the same opportunity."

Upon exchanging glances among themselves, the guards began to launch a tirade at him.

"Shut up. Do you take us for fools?"

"Hmph, only an idiot like you would believe something as ludicrous as that."

"If you still have a conscience, you can make up for your mistake by letting us go. I'm sure Sebastian will spare your life for it."

Monkey let out a wry laugh. "To be honest. with you, I'm powerless to release you, as even I am being pinned down by this powerful force. If I don't obey them, they will simply crush me alive. Therefore, I'm forced to do this for my own survival."

Meanwhile, Zeke and his companions proceeded deep into the cave.

It was huge and even larger than the storage facility of Southern Faction.

The realization stirred Zeke's excitement, as he felt that such a massive facility would have loads of Spirit Stones stored inside.

However, when they reached the end of the tunnel, they only found two hundred pounds of Spirit Stones.

The discovery enraged Zeke. "F*ck! How can there be so few Spirit Stones inside such a huge place?"

Sole Wolf added immediately, "Zeke, I'm sure there's more hidden inside. We just haven't found them yet."

Ares suggested, "Sole Wolf, bring the guards here, so we can question them."

"Right away!"

Thereafter, Sole Wolf brought Monkey and the guards inside with his energy.

Upon their arrival, the captain began swearing at them again.

In response, Sole Wolf intensified the energy he released to the extent of crushing the captain's chest. Finally, the captain begged, "I'm sorry. Please have mercy... I beg of you... I'm going to explode!"

Zeke threatened, "If you value your life, tell us where Spirit Stones are hidden."

Galvao gulped. "You already found all of them. There's nothing else left."

Sole Wolf sneered, "It seems that you're not keen on cooperating with us. Fine. Let's see how long you can withstand this!"

When Sole Wolf further amplified the energy he released, the captain's eyes almost popped out of their sockets, making for a terrifying sight.

Overwhelmed by the crushing pain, he continued to beg, "I... I'm telling you the truth. You do have them all. There are no more hidden Spirit Stones. Let me go, please... Let me go."

Sole Wolf thundered, "Bullsh*t! How can there only be two hundred pounds of Spirit Stones in such a huge place? Do you think we're idiots?"

Galvao frantically explained, "Two hundred pounds is a lot. In fact, it's our entire reserve for a single season. Also, a Centuria of the Southern Faction can only gather a hundred pounds of Spirit Stone in the best of seasons."

Chapter 2616

Sole Wolf refuted him, "Nonsense. The Southern Faction has a thousand pounds of Spirit Stones in storage."

"That's the cumulative total for the entire Southern Faction, which has more than ten Centurias added together. What you have here is the reserve for a single Centuria. Obviously, it isn't a fair comparison.

If you're really looking for more Spirit Stones, you can find them in the storage belonging to the Northern Faction's leader. He's the one who has the largest reserve among us all.

Sole Wolf replied thoughtfully, "Mmmhmm, that makes sense."

Subsequently, Zeke ordered Sole Wolf, "Take care of them. After that, we'll go borrow some Spirit Stones from the leader of the Northern Faction."

Monkey smiled wryly. How can you call this borrowing?

In response, Sole Wolf increased the intensity of his energy, knocking the guards out as a result.

Just as he proceeded to do the same to Monkey, the latter pleaded, "Guys, wait. Please let me join you, as I no longer have a future here. I promise I'll be a big help to you. Don't you want to find more Spirit Stones? I know which Centuria has the most and can lead you to them. In fact, I know the leader of the Northern Faction. I can help all of you sneak into the base and steal Spirit Stones from under their noses."

After giving the matter some thought, Zeke nodded in the end. "Fine. I'll give you a chance."

Who knows, he might be of good use after all.

Once they were done, Zeke updated Phoenix before leaving for his next destination.

Meanwhile, Phoenix was having a pleasant chat with Sebastian.

When he saw that the time was ripe, Sebastian remarked, "Phoenix, as you were formerly a Centurion within the Southern Faction, I will make sure that you are treated accordingly now that you're joining me. Why don't you come to my room where we can discuss your benefits."

His words caused her heart to sink, for Phoenix had no illusion about Sebastian's agenda.

It was now clear to her that she was running out of time.

While secretly praying that Levi would be done soon, she replied, "Sebastian, why don't we talk here instead? Given how hot the weather is, it's so much more comfortable to stay here."

Displeasure flashed across Sebastian's face. "That's not acceptable. As an honored guest of

ours, it would be rude for me to entertain you outside like this. If word gets out, my reputation would be ruined! Now, come with me."

Sebastian spoke with a hint of coercion before walking off to his room.

While Phoenix was still hesitating, Sebastian's subordinates came up to her on both sides. "Ms. Phoenix, this way, please. We shouldn't let Sebastian wait."

After weighing her options, Phoenix gritted her teeth as she gradually followed him into the room.

Zeke, oh Zeke, are you guys done yet? At this rate, I'll be in trouble soon.

The moment the anxious Phoenix entered the room, Sebastian locked the door behind her.

Phoenix asked, "Sebastian, why are you locking the door in broad daylight?"

Sebastian smirked in response. "Isn't it obvious?"

Despite her growing panic, Phoenix hid it well. "Sebastian, didn't you say that you want to talk to me about my benefits? Let's do so now."

Sebastian broke into a lecherous grin. "There's no hurry at all. We can discuss it after you pleasure me. As long as I'm satisfied, I'll give you whatever you desire."

No sooner had Sebastian spoken than he threw himself at Phoenix. Shocked by his actions, Phoenix dodged immediately. "Sebastian, I'm here to join you. For goodness' sake, how can you do this to me? Even if you want to have a relationship with me, you will have to take time to develop it. It's wrong for you to try and force yourself on me."

Sebastian snapped, "Quit wasting time, Phoenix. You're well aware of how long I have been salivating over you. After such a long wait, you've finally come. There's no way I can hold myself back for a second longer. Now, stop trying to flee!"

Sebastian lunged at her again.

When Phoenix desperately resisted, a fight broke out between the two.

Chapter 2617

Unfortunately, Phoenix was quickly put on the back foot due to her inherent physical disadvantage as a woman.

At the crucial moment, Zeke's voice rang out in Phoenix's head. The mission is over. Withdraw now!

Phoenix responded, "Help! Save me! I'm in danger! "

Hmm?

Zeke filled the room with his energy, getting a clearer view of the situation.

D*mn it!

He cursed under his breath before molding his energy into a hammer and smashing it down on Sebastian.

In the midst of a loud grunt, Sebastian was sent flying with blood spewing out of his mouth.

His chest collapsed onto itself, fracturing the majority of his ribs.

Upon crashing to the ground, Sebastian twitched slightly before finally losing consciousness.

"B*stard!" Unsatisfied, Phoenix vented her residual rage by stomping on his groin.

The vicious force she unleashed was enough to castrate him on the spot.

Thereafter, Zeke urged her, "Hurry up and meet us in the southeast direction."

Without a moment's delay, Phoenix ran back out.

The moment she emerged from the door, the two guards stationed outside stopped her. "Halt! Who let you out?"

Phoenix remarked calmly, "Take them out."

The guards were baffled as to who she was talking to, for there was no one else around but them.

However, Zeke knocked both of them out with his energy before they even realized what was going on.

Fortunately, not a soul was in sight to raise the alarm.

Soon, Phoenix escaped from Sebastian's territory and was reunited with Zeke and the others.

Staring at Zeke with a faint smile, Phoenix teased, "Zeke, be honest with me. Were you jealous just now? Otherwise, why did you strike Sebastian with such a heavy blow?"

Zeke gave her the side-eye. "Enough with your one-sided fantasies."

"What the-" Phoenix clenched both her fists. "Hmph, go on pretending then. Let's see how long you can keep that act up. Anyway, how's the haul? Did you manage to find any Spirit Stones?"

Sole Wolf and the others didn't know whether to laugh or to cry.

Acting? Zeke isn't interested in you at all! Lacey is the most beautiful girl in the world. Once you see her for yourself, you'll understand why Zeke will never fall for anyone else. Besides, even though you're a looker, we aren't even sure you're a woman with that macho swagger of yours.

Subsequently, Zeke proceeded to show her Spirit Stones they had gathered. "This consists of their entire reserve."

Phoenix was blown away by the sight. "Oh my god! That's a lot. My Centuria would need two seasons to gather that much. The Northern Faction is really rich! Now that we have secured a bountiful haul, it's time for us to go."

Zeke shook his head. "No, we still don't have enough Spirit Stones yet. We need to gather more."

Phoenix was puzzled. "Even this many isn't enough? How many do you really need?"

"At least a thousand of them."

"A thousand!" Phoenix gasped. "Why do you need so many?"

"To forge a divine weapon."

Zeke's answer shocked Phoenix further. "Forging a divine weapon? Do you even know the technique to do that?"

"Do you think I have the time to pull your leg? Enough idle chatter. Take us to gather more Spirit Stones."

After pondering a moment, Phoenix inquired, "Can you tell me where do you. come from? And what's your objective here on Theos Island?"

Zeke sidestepped the question as he replied, "We're heading to the commander of Northern Faction Centuria's base to gather more Spirit Stones. I learned that they have the most Spirit Stones out of everyone within the Northern Faction. Therefore, take us there right away."

"Fine."

Phoenix didn't probe further on Zeke's background.

She didn't mind who they were as long they posed no threat to her.

Along the way, she warned them, "The commander of Northern Faction Centurions is called Golden Cicada, and he's significantly more powerful than Draco. Rumor has it that Golden Cicada has achieved the power of a Legatus and is preparing to challenge one. Hence, are you guys confident about taking him on? If not, let's just forget it."

Chapter 2618

Sole Wolf responded with a faint smirk. "Legatus? Come on. I can handle him. Leave him to me."

Zeke replied, "Sure."

Phoenix responded with a wry smile. All right, we underestimated you.

Since his subordinates could take hundreds of Centurions down without difficulty, Zeke must be capable of defeating Legatus. Otherwise, he would not have commanded the respect of Sole Wolf and the others. Perhaps, I worried too much.

After a short walk, Zeke stopped in his tracks when he noticed something amiss. "Stop! Stop walking! Did you guys feel anything?"

Sole Wolf and the rest started putting their guard up and tried detecting the anomalies around the environment.

A few moments later, Sole Wolf exclaimed in shock, "I can sense a negative energy around me. It's so faint that I nearly missed it."

Zeke responded, "Be careful. There might be Netherworldians around this area."

"Even Netherworld has infiltrated Theos Island. This is unbelievable." Ares sighed.

Phoenix asked cautiously, "Netherworld? What's that? We're now in the territory of Golden Cicada's Northern Faction. Did they come to pledge their allegiance to Golden Cicada?"

Realization dawned on Zeke as his face turned grim. "This is not good. We got to hurry. Netherworld might be ahead of us."

If Zeke could track Theos down on Theos Island, so could Netherworld and Kush Clan.

Netherworld and Kush Clan had snatched Fortuna in a bid to meet Theos. They might even produce a divine weapon to seek an audience with him during Worship Ceremony.

Zeke and the others picked up their pace and entered Golden Cicada's territory in the blink of an eye.

They were stunned by what they saw.

Golden Cicada's territory was made up of vast lands, and the base looked luxurious.

Yet, not a single soul was spotted in the base. In fact, not a living creature could be found within the vicinity.

An air of gloom and misery shrouded the area.

Sole Wolf whispered carefully, "Zeke, the negative energy is much stronger here. I could tell the Netherworldians were here just now."

Zeke nodded in agreement. After closing his eyes, he released his energy to track down the source of the negative energy.

Soon, Zeke opened his eyes and said, "The negative energy is the most intense in the three o'clock direction, some eight hundred meters away. The Netherworldians must be hiding somewhere there. Let's go!"

They zapped past the base and arrived at a wooden house eight hundred meters away.

Since all the doors and windows were shut, they could not see the interior of the building.

Zeke gestured for Sole Wolf and the others to surround the wooden house.

Phoenix whispered, "This seems like the place where Golden Cicada carries out his training. He would only allow his confidants to enter the house."

Zeke inclined his head in agreement. He raised his voice and said, "Listen carefully, Netherworldians! We have surrounded the house. Show yourself right now!"

A dead silence ensued.

Zeke continued and burst into laughter. "So, the infamous Netherworld is made up of cowards, huh? Come out and fight us! Don't tell me you don't have the courage to take us on!"

He still did not get a response from anyone in the house.

Zeke released his energy in the form of a sword and knocked it against the wooden house.

All of a sudden, the wooden structure exploded and shattered into pieces.

A few black spherical objects rolled out of the remnants of the building.

After taking a closer look and realizing what those objects were, they started breathing heavily.

Those were human skulls - several hundreds of them.

They were all covered in blood.

These skulls must have fallen from the rack when the wooden house was blown into pieces.

Ugh!

Phoenix turned around and started throwing up.

After inspecting the skulls more closely, Sole Wolf said, "Zeke, these people have just died about half an hour ago."

Zeke clenched his fists. In a fit of anger, he released an energy wave to knock down a few trees around him. Those b*stards!

Chapter 2619

"We must destroy Netherworld for the sake of the people!"

"If only we had come early. They wouldn't have died had we arrived half an hour early."

Sole Wolf asked, "Zeke, what do you think the Netherworldians came to Theos Island for?"

Suddenly, Zeke remembered something that caused his expression to turn gloomy. "Oh, no. Spirit Stones! Netherworld might want to get their hands on Spirit Stones and use them to create a divine weapon! Come on, let's go! We must look for Golden Cicada's Spirit Stones as soon as possible!"

"All right, let's go!"

"Wait a minute!" Phoenix felt better after throwing out. "You guys will not find Golden Cicada's Spirit Stones as it's hidden in a secluded place. I'll help you find it."

"We have to hurry," Zeke continued, "we must not allow Netherworld to get their hands on Spirit Stones!"

Netherworld was already a force to be reckoned with. They would become a threat to Eurasia should they manage to produce the divine weapon.

Phoenix continued, "I need to hike up the peak of that mountain to study the area's topography and determine the location of Spirit Stones."

Before she could finish her sentence, an invisible force lifted her into the air.

Phoenix freaked out and struggled furiously. "F*ck. What's happening to me? Help me! Help!"

Zeke responded in a calm voice, "Stop moving. I did that. Just focus on analyzing the typography of the area."

Phoenix was even more stunned after hearing that. I bet only an immortal has the power to lift an adult into the air!

The more time Phoenix spent with them, the more she believed Zeke and his men were immortals.

In the blink of an eye, Phoenix had ascended about thirty meters above the ground.

She glanced around the area and said, "One particular place in the southwestern direction is shrouded in mist. Centurion had most probably hidden Spirit Stones in that location."

"Let's go!" Zeke, Sole Wolf, and the others started charging in the southwestern direction.

Phoenix, too, gradually descended and returned to the ground. "Oh, come on. I'm not done flying yet!"

However, no one paid attention to her.

Feeling annoyed, Phoenix could only sigh. These men don't even care about my feelings.

The land in the southwestern direction was a mountainous region.

Zeke ordered, "Let's split."

"Yes, sir!" They went separate ways and released energy to locate the whereabouts of Spirit Stones.

Soon, they heard Sole Wolf's voice from a distance. "Zeke, I found the stone. I can sense intense spiritual energy in this cave. Spirit Stones must be somewhere around here."

In a flash, Zeke and the others sprang forward, heading in Sole Wolf's direction.

Zeke looked around the cave that stretched deep into the mountains and realized the place was indeed saturated with spiritual energy.

Wasting no time, Zeke led the way.

The cave was deep and branched out to many other chambers, making it the perfect place for an ambush.

Zeke and his men kept their guard up as they entered the cave. Though they were not ambushed, they did not find Spirit Stones either.

Zeke's expression darkened. He said aloofly, "D*mn it! Netherworld must have taken all the stones."

Sole Wolf thought for a moment. "Zeke, Netherworld must have stolen Spirit Stones for..."

Zeke nodded in affirmation. "Yes. They most probably want to use it to create a divine weapon."

Nameless could not help but gasp. "It will be disastrous should Netherworld manage to produce the weapon. Let's not forget how powerful they already are."

"We must head back to Southern Faction. I'm afraid Netherworld might take this opportunity to strike the people there," Zeke responded.

With that, Zeke and the rest returned to the base in Southern Faction as fast as they could.

At that point, saving the people in Southern Faction was more important than hunting for Spirit Stones.

Meanwhile, the two guards at Sebastian's base gradually came to their senses.

Feeling dizzy, the two men, whose minds had gone blank, crawled up with difficulty and scanned their surroundings in a daze.

It took them about three seconds to snap out of a reverie. "F*ck. We've been ambushed."

"D*mn you, Phoenix!" the other guard echoed. "Sebastian might be in danger since Phoenix came out of his room."

Chapter 2620

The two guards instinctively tried to get up to check on Sebastian, but alas, even the slightest movement sent pain searing through them.

Realizing they had broken several ribs, they had no choice but to call out for help.

"Help! Somebody, please help us!"

"Something bad has happened! Help!"

Unfortunately, Sebastian's residence was quite a distance away from the base as he loved his peace and quiet, which meant the two guards had to shout for a long time before someone heard and responded to them.

"Quick! Save Sebastian! He could be in danger!" they exclaimed.

Needless to say, the group of men who had rushed over to the guards was stunned. What?

D*mn it!

Without further ado, they left the guards behind and dashed toward Sebastian's room.

"Open the door, Sebastian. It's us!"

When no one replied, the men kicked the door open and forced their way in, only to be greeted by the aftermath of Sebastian and Phoenix's battle.

The room was a complete mess, and Sebastian lay unconscious on the floor with blood at the corner of his mouth.

Terrified, everyone immediately swarmed around him and tried waking him up.

It took a long while, but thankfully, Sebastian finally regained consciousness.

Alas, as soon as he opened his eyes, he felt a sharp pain in his chest and groin.

"How dare Phoenix plot against me! That b*tch must be tired of living," Sebastian said through

gritted teeth. "I think my ribs are broken. Hurry, bring me the medical kit. My groin... Ah, f*ck. Wait a minute. Something doesn't feel right."

I remember passing out after being hit in the ribs by a mysterious, invisible force. Was my groin injured, though? Why is it hurting so much? Could Phoenix have done something while I was unconscious? D*mn it....

Sebastian hurriedly checked his genitals, and what he saw left him in utter despair, "M-my manhood is destroyed! From the looks of it, I might be impotent! Argh!"

"You're done Phoenix! Heed my orders! We'll move out and attack Phoenixion tonight!" he thundered. "I'll kill that b*tch for injuring me!"

"Sebastian, if we want to start a war against Southern Faction's Centuria, we must first seek permission from Northern Faction Centuria's commander, Golden Cicada," reminded one of the subordinates carefully. "If not, he'd never forgive us."

Upon hearing that, Sebastian clenched his teeth. "Take me to see him! Phoenix has gone too far this time. I want Commander Golden Cicada to give the orders to annihilate Southern Faction!"

With no time to waste, his subordinates instantly carried him and made their way toward Golden Cicada's base.

Since both bases weren't too far away, all it took was two hours before the team arrived at their destination.

The scene before their eyes, however, left them in stunned silence.

Golden Cicada's base, which was supposed to be bustling with activity, was now deserted and eerily quiet.

"D*mn it. This doesn't look right. When has Golden Cicada's base turned into a ghost town?" Sebastian muttered, his brow knitted into a frown.

Just then, one of his subordinates whispered, "Sebastian, could Commander Golden Cicada have secretly moved his base?"

"No. He'd have informed us if he were changing bases. Besides, their daily necessities are still here. All right, I want everyone to look around and see if you can find anyone."

"Got it!" the subordinates chimed in before entering the base to begin their search.

However, even after searching high and low for half an hour, Golden Cicada and his men were still nowhere to be found.

The more Sebastian realized that something untoward might have happened, the heavier his breathing became.

After a few moments of silent contemplation, he spoke up again. "Come on. Let's head to Commander Golden Cicada's training room. He might be close to leveling up, so everyone has left to guard him."

That being said, is it necessary to have everyone there? Shouldn't a few of them stay behind to protect the base? Argh. Sadly, that's the only explanation I can think of now...

What the team wasn't expecting, though, was the sight that greeted them when they arrived at the training room.

They were, without a doubt, overwhelmed with fear, shock, and utter confusion.

Then again, how could they not when they found out the training room had been destroyed?

Chapter 2621

Worst of all, heads belonging to Golden Cicada's subordinates were strewn all over the floor in the training room!

With the place drenched in blood, there was no doubt it was a hellish scene of death and destruction.

"What's going on here?" Sebastian muttered before a fresh swell of rage rose in him. "Who killed them? Who? I want you guys to look into this immediately! Get to the bottom of it!"

Alas, everyone was in such a state of shock that they remained speechless.

Of all the Centurias in Northern Faction, the one led by Golden Cicada was undeniably the strongest, yet they were still wiped out overnight.

One thing was for sure-the perpetrator must've been insanely powerful sneak attack on me earlier, I wouldn't be surprised if she also committed these murders!"

Sebastian's subordinates, however, had their doubts.

"From what I've heard, Phoenix isn't all that powerful. There's no way she could've beaten Commander Golden Cicada and his men."

"Are you dumb? Phoenix must've attacked with her troops!"

"Take a closer look at the scene, though. There aren't any traces of a large army trampling through... There aren't even signs. that a big fight had occurred!"

In any case, the crime scene created more questions than answers, but since they had no other

suspects, Sebastian remained insistent that Phoenix was the culprit.

To him, it no longer mattered who the murderer was. His priority now was to seek revenge and kill Phoenix once and for all!

With that, Sebastian turned to his fallen comrades and bowed deeply.

"Golden Cicada, you've treated everyone here like your brothers, and your death saddens us all. Don't worry, though. We'll avenge you guys! The murderer will be brought to justice!" he exclaimed. "Listen up, guys! Inform all the Centurias in Northern Faction to meet at our base. It's time to attack Phoenix!"

"Attack Phoenix!" everyone chimed in.

After offering a simple prayer for the dead, Sebastian hurriedly returned to his base.

However, as soon as they left, two figures strode out of the nearby forest.

One of them was a big, strapping man who strutted with confidence, while the other was a tall and lean man who looked meek and terrified.

His legs were trembling, and it soon became clear that the burly man was dragging him along.

As it turned out, the big man was none other than Zeke's nemesis, Erebus of the Netherworld.

The other one, unfortunately, was the commander of Northern Faction's Centuria, Golden Cicada.

Upon seeing the sea of severed heads and blood, he was hit by yet another wave of despair as he closed his eyes.

Alas, the terrifyingly brutal scenes from before immediately reappeared in Golden Cicada's mind.

Even though his subordinates had all been slain by Erebus, he didn't have the guts to exact revenge!

He had witnessed how Erebus unleashed several shadows to possess his subordinates, effectively turning them into puppets that the latter could control.

Erebus then sent the group into the training room before ordering them to cut their own heads off.

Scarily enough, the headless men could still move under the control of the shadows and proceeded to pile their severed heads. together in the training room.

Chapter 2622

Now, whenever Golden Cicada recalled that gruesome bloodbath, he'd undoubtedly feel chills running down his spine.

How can anyone be so vicious and cold-blooded? This man must be the devil!

Just then, Erebus' voice rang out. "Golden Cicada, do you think your subordinates died because of me?"

What bullsh*t is that? Of course, it is! I saw him killing them with my own eyes!

Despite his anger, Golden Cicada knew better than to provoke Erebus. "N-No... I-It's not you..."

"Tell me the truth!"

"Y-Yes..." Golden Cicada stuttered helplessly. "I-It's you..."

"Wrong!" Erebus retorted. "They might have died at my hands, but I'm not the real culprit! I killed them to complete my plan, and this plan is targeted at Zeke Williams!

Therefore, these people died because of him! Zeke Williams is the one responsible for this bloodshed!"

Although Golden Cicada was still quietly seething, he quickly nodded. "Yes, yes!"

Oh, come on. Is he f*cking kidding me? If Zeke Williams was his target all along, what was the point of killing my men? Is he out of his mind?

"Do you want to exact revenge?" Erebus added. "I can give you the opportunity if you like."

Not knowing what to say, Golden Cicada merely looked up at Erebus and trembled with fright.

Even though he was the commander of the Northern Faction's Centuria and was used to acting all high and mighty, he was powerless against a warrior like Erebus. Not only had he lost all bravado, but he was also scared out of his wits.

Argh! What else can I do but go along with him? Even if he wants me to die, I'll have to say yes.

"Answer me! Do you want to take revenge or not?" Erebus shouted.

"I-I'll do as you say, Elder Erebus... If you want me to take revenge, I'll gladly do so. Otherwise, I won't!"

Needless to say, Erebus was both amused and exasperated. "Are you a f*cking idiot? Your

friends and family have been killed. Shouldn't you be dying to seek revenge?"

"Yes! Of course, I do!"

"Good," Erebus replied with a nod. "In that case, I'll give you a chance to carry out your revenge. Gather all the forces in Northern Faction and attack Southern Faction. Wipe them all out if you can. Zeke Williams is too powerful for you to take on, but no matter. I'll help you deal with him."

Golden Cicada nodded fearfully. "Y-Yes. I'll follow your orders, Elder Erebus."

"Go on, then."

With that, Golden Cicada staggered off.

It was only when he had walked far enough and was certain Erebus had let him off the hook that he finally heaved a sigh of relief.

Oh, thank goodness I managed to stay alive... My team might have been wiped out, but I'm glad I'm still standing.

Meanwhile, Erebus pulled out a unique communication device and dialed a number.

The call got through in just a few rings, and soon, the voice of the Guardian of Mount Kush could be heard on the other end.

"Elder Erebus, what can I do for you?"

"Hello, Guardian of Mount Kush. How's your formation coming along?"

"Don't worry. The basic foundation's all set up. Just a few more tweaks here and there, and it'd be good to go," the Guardian replied. "Once my Mount Kush formation is completed, I'd have no problem trapping Theos inside. When that time comes, I'll hand him to you. I only want the Fortuna that he devoured."

"Okay. Be sure to complete it as soon as possible. We don't have much time left."

"How are things over at Zeke's now? No matter what, we can't let him forge any divine weapons. Otherwise, he might use them to kill Theos. Even if my Mount Kush formation is a success, it'd be useless if the plan falls apart."

"You can rest assured that he won't be able to forge any weapons," Erebus answered. "I've already gained control of all Spirit Stones in the Centuria's district of the Northern Faction. What Zeke currently had wasn't even enough to forge a top-quality divine weapon. Not only would a normal divine weapon not do him any good, but it might also end up being a burden. Either way, it wouldn't pose a threat to Theos."

Chapter 2623

"That's good to know," the Guardian of Mount Kush said. "By the way, I need a lot of Spirit Stones urgently. Send them to me as soon as you can."

"Understood! I'll make the arrangements immediately!" Erebus replied.

Meanwhile, Sebastian's base was bustling with so much activity that there was barely any space left to walk.

Apart from Golden Cicada, the other Centurias of the Northern Faction had all turned up, which meant there were more than nine hundred people.

Without further ado, the eight Centurions gathered in Sebastian's office for a muchneeded discussion.

"Sebastian, why have you suddenly summoned everyone here? What's the matter?"

"Where's Commander Golden Cicada? Why isn't he here? Sebastian, are you doing this behind the commander's back?"

"Come on. What are your intentions? Are you thinking of replacing Commander Golden Cicada? Is that it?"

Sebastian let out a deep sigh. "To tell you the truth, Commander Golden Cicada and his entire Centuria are dead!"

A stunned silence instantly filled the room as the Centurions stared at Sebastian in disbelief.

"Oh, you must be joking with us."

"Sebastian, that's not something to joke about! Commander Golden Cicada won't let you off lightly if he finds out what you've done."

"As far as I know, no one in Centuria's district is Commander Golden Cicada's match."

"Exactly. Not even Legatus can go up against Commander Golden Cicada and his Centuria! Besides, he's important to Legatus, so there's no way the latter would attack him."

"You'd better take your words back while you still can, Sebastian. You wouldn't want to incur his wrath, would you?"

Upon hearing the other Centurions, Sebastian sighed again. "I'm being serious. Why would I joke about this? I've been to Commander Golden Cicada's base and... Never mind. I can't bring myself to describe the horrific scene. You guys can take a look for yourselves."

The next second, Sebastian played a video that showed the hundreds of severed heads in Golden Cicada's training room.

After watching the video, the Centurions were stunned beyond words.

"Oh, my goodness! Those really are the heads of Commander Golden Cicada's Centuria!"

"Commander Golden Cicada's Centuria has been wiped out! F*ck! Who the hell did this?"

"I guess only Legatus is powerful enough to take down Commander Golden Cicada, isn't it?"

"But we all know how important Commander Golden Cicada is to Legatus. There's no reason for the latter to kill him."

"Based on our investigation, we have reason to believe that the prime suspect is Phoenix from the Southern Faction," Sebastian announced. "Furthermore, she launched a sneak attack on my base earlier in the day and severely injured me. I'm pretty sure that she's the murderer."

Phoenix?

The Centurions couldn't help but narrow their eyes in skepticism.

"From what I know, Phoenix's skills are nothing to write home about. She's definitely no match for Commander Golden Cicada."

"Moreover, this murderer has also slaughtered the entire Centuria. Since when is Phoenix that powerful?"

"That's right. The murderer has to be someone else. Let's think through this again."

Just as the Centurions continued to chatter among themselves, there was a sudden knock on the door.

Sebastian's gaze instantly darkened. "Who's that? Didn't I say not to disturb us unless there's something urgent?"

"I-It's very urgent, Sebastian..." the subordinate at the door stammered. "Commander Golden Cicada is here."

"Commander Golden Cicada?" Sebastian said with a shudder. "What? Isn't he dead?"

"Commander Golden Cicada is well and alive, and he has specifically asked to meet you."

"All right. I'll be right over."

Of course, that only left the other Centurions even more perplexed.

"You owe us an explanation, Sebastian.

What on earth is going on?"

"Why did you lie to us when Commander Golden Cicada isn't dead?"

"Since Commander Golden Cicada is still alive, that must mean his Centuria is safe, too."

"Come on. Let's report this to him! We'll let the commander decide what to do."

Upon hearing that, Sebastian hastily explained, "The video I showed you guys is real. Commander Golden Cicada's Centuria has been wiped out! I guess he must've survived the massacre... The thing is, I was in such a panic that I didn't have time to identify all the heads. That's why I misjudged! Come on. Let's speak with Commander Golden Cicada and find out what on earth happened."

Chapter 2624

Soon, the group of Centurions finally saw Golden Cicada.

What they couldn't believe, however, was how their commander had gone from being high and mighty to becoming all grubby and unkempt. They'd have thought he was a beggar if they didn't know any better, though, to be honest, even beggars looked cleaner than him!

Golden Cicada's eyes were dull as he stared blankly at the ground. He was, without a doubt, a far cry from the awe-inspiring leader he once was.

"Thank goodness you're still alive, Commander Golden Cicada!" Sebastian exclaimed while approaching the man.

Golden Cicada merely lifted his head and surveyed his surroundings, the fear in his eyes clear as day.

Fortunately, it didn't take long before he calmed himself down. "I'm glad that you guys are okay. I'm glad..."

"Commander Golden Cicada, I went to your base earlier and found it completely destroyed. Can you tell us what happened?"

"Southern Faction... It was the Southern Faction!" Golden Cicada mumbled, the mere thought of the horrific bloodbath still making him anxious and fidgety. "Southern Faction killed my Centuria. We have to wipe them out!"

The faces of the Centurions instantly clouded over.

Since Golden Cicada had confirmed his Centuria was annihilated and that even he had almost died, a battle with the Southern Faction was now inevitable.

That also meant the good, peaceful days would soon become a thing of the past.

"Hmph! Southern Faction has gone too far!" Sebastian said through gritted teeth. "We in Northern Faction don't like stirring up trouble, but we definitely won't stand by and do nothing, either! Down with Southern Faction!"

"Down with Southern Faction!" the Centurions chimed in.

Back in Southern Faction, Zeke, Sole Wolf, and the rest had been on around-the-clock alert, afraid that people from Netherworld might launch a sneak attack on them.

Fortunately, the Netherworld people might've also realized they couldn't avoid Zeke's watchful eye, so no one dared to show up.

On the second day of his guard duty, Zeke suddenly received a call from Killer Wolf.

Killer Wolf had headed into Theos Island to search for Lacey, so the fact that he was calling might very well mean that he had tracked her down.

Needless to say, Zeke was beyond excited.

"Killer Wolf, have you gotten any news about Lacey?"

"I'm sorry, Zeke. We haven't found any traces of her. That said, please don't worry. We'll do everything we can to track her down."

"All right. What's your reason for calling, then?"

"Oh, it's because we discovered people secretly transporting Spirit Stones to the outskirts of Theos Island," Killer Wolf replied. "It all seemed pretty iffy, so I wanted to let you know."

Zeke furrowed his brows. "Huh? Transporting Spirit Stones to the outer district? That's not right! The stones should all be sent to Legatus or Camps North and South, where they can be used to forge divine weapons. They shouldn't be leaked outside the island. In any case, I'm sure there's something fishy. Catch some of the people transporting the stones and interrogate them, Killer Wolf."

"I did, Zeke. But as soon as I caught them, they took their own lives. I couldn't stop them at all," Killer Wolf grumbled. "That being said, my endeavors weren't all in vain."

Those people reeked of negative energy and moved like stiff, mindless zombies. I strongly suspect they were under the control of those from the Netherworld."

Upon hearing that, Zeke clenched his jaw. Netherworld again? D*mn it!

"There must be a reason the Netherworld people are transporting Spirit Stones to the outskirts... Leave this matter to me, Killer Wolf. I want you to concentrate on tracking down Lacey."

"Got it!"

Having ended the call, Zeke pondered for a moment before dialing Zander's number.

Once a traitor of Eurasia, Zander Keach was now a ferryman for Theos Sect, whose job entailed picking up the new believers and transporting them to Theos Island.

After his last meeting with Zeke, the latter helped him, so Zander pledged his loyalty to Zeke ever since.

I always thought I'd only need Zander's help when leaving Theos Island. Who knew I'd require his assistance so soon?

Chapter 2625

Unsurprisingly, the call got through in just a few rings.

"What can I do for you, Mr. Williams?" Zander asked politely.

"Zander, have you noticed people transporting Spirit Stones to the outskirts of Theos Island recently?"

"Huh? Spirit Stones? What are those?"

Upon hearing the confusion in Zander's tone, Zeke burst into laughter. Oh, well... It looks like he doesn't know as much as I do...

"Since you don't know about that, you can forget I asked."

"Wait a minute, Mr. Williams," Zander suddenly piped up. "Even though I don't know what Spirit Stones are, I must admit I've noticed some strange happenings recently."

"Go on."

"I've seen several people secretly transporting some items toward the outer districts, though I have no idea if those were Spirit Stones you just mentioned. Anyway, the people would then hand the items to a mystery person. Well, who knows what they're up to?"

Naturally, that information piqued Zeke's curiosity. "Oh? What's the deal about this mystery

person?"

"He's a mystery person because he doesn't belong on Theos Island. I think he must've sneaked in."

Zeke immediately reeled in shock.

Huh? Theos Island is as mysterious as it can get, and not even I would've found it if it weren't for Hawkeye. I can't believe an outsider managed to find this place and even sneaked onto it. He's no ordinary person, that's for sure.

"I need details. Tell me everything you know about this mysterious person," Zeke urged.

"Okay, but it's a long story. Back in the day, I dug a secret tunnel in a remote corner of Theos Island, so I could come and go freely. Because of its location, there was no way anyone could stumble upon it. I was the only one who knew where it was. Besides, even if someone did find it, they wouldn't be able to survive the traps inside. However, I discovered recently that two strangers had found my secret passage and successfully made their way through. Unfortunately, they destroyed the tunnel, and it has become out of bounds even for me. That mysterious person, as it turns out, is one of the two strangers who used my secret passage."

"Describe their features to me," Zeke demanded.

With that, Zander began to tell Zeke the stature and clothes of the two strangers.

After listening to the descriptions, Zeke soon had a good idea of the strangers' identities.

From what Zander has described, those two men sound like the Guardian of Mount Kush and Erebus from Netherworld! Yes. I'm sure about it.

Since the day Theos kidnapped Lacey, those two men have been hot on his tail. They must've tracked Theos to the island! Argh, that reminds me... If it weren't for the Guardian and Erebus taking Lacey hostage, Theos wouldn't have had the chance to whisk her away. It's all their fault she's gone! I'll make them pay for this!

After ending the call on the communication device, Zeke once again sunk deep into his thoughts.

From the look of things, Erebus must've been responsible for wiping out Golden Cicada's Centuria. That means the person receiving Spirit Stones in the outer district is the Guardian of Mount Kush. Could these two be working together to set a trap? Well, all I know is that they're both massive threats to Eurasia, and their cooperation can't be good news. I must crush them before their plot succeeds.... Also, I don't think Erebus only annihilated Golden Cicada's

"Zander, I want you to keep an eye on them. They're likely my enemies... Inform me immediately if they do anything out of the ordinary."

"Understood!"

Centuria for Spirit Stones. I bet he wants to frame me as the murderer and send Northern Faction after me. If that's the case, I reckon they'd attack Southern Faction in the next few days.

With that thought in mind, Zeke quickly summoned Apollyon.

"Apollyon, Northern Faction might attack us in the next few days. I need you to be more careful when arranging guard duties."

Chapter 2626

Lucifer furrowed his brows. "The Southern Faction will launch a sneak attack against us? Why would they do that for no reason? Mr. Williams, do you have evidence to prove that?"

Zeke nodded. "Of course I do. Just do as I say."

Lucifer had complete faith in Zeke, so he instantly agreed. "I understand, Mr. Williams. I'll make sure to reinforce the perimeter of our base with more personnel."

Zeke reminded him, "Lucifer, remember to tell the guards at the perimeter to not stop the enemies from advancing. If they encounter the enemies attempting to breach the perimeter, they should immediately retreat and lure the enemies back to the base."

Huh?

Confused, Lucifer asked, "Mr. Williams, why do we want to lure our enemies to the base? I don't understand how this will be advantageous to us if we were to fight against them on our base. Even if we win, our base will be destroyed. The cost would be too high. I think we should go to battle with them away from our base."

Zeke responded, "Just do as I say. Don't ask questions."

Lucifer dared not defy Zeke's orders and nodded profusely. "Got it. I'll go make the arrangements now."

After he left, Zeke looked out of the window in Theos Island's direction.

The tranquil atmosphere of Theos Island was deceptive as a fierce tempest was gathering strength on the horizon. All signs pointed to an impending uproar that would soon rock the island to its very core.

At the border of the Southern Faction and Northern Faction, a bunch of people were glancing around, taking great care not to arouse any suspicion. They were being extremely cautious, making sure that they were not discovered.

After ascertaining that there was no one in sight at the buffer zone, they whistled out loud.

Before long, their shrill whistles caught the attention of many more people, and soon a crowd of nine hundred men assembled.

These were part of Northern Faction's Centuria.

Their leader was the ten Centurions, with the most senior of them, Golden Cicada, at the helm.

Sebastian spoke cautiously to emphasize the gravity of the situation. "Commander Golden Cicada, if you decide to proceed, it will be a point of no return. We will be crossing over into the turf of the Southern Faction, and once we do, confrontation is unavoidable. Are you certain that you are prepared to enter into battle with them?"

Golden Cicada nodded firmly. "The Southern Faction went overboard by killing so many of our comrades. We were lucky enough to survive, but we can't allow them to make a mockery of us. Not to mention, their plans for obliterating the Centuria make it clear that they are ready to go to war. If we simply sit back and take their aggression, they won't show us any mercy and will continue to attack us. It's better to take the initiative and launch a pre-emptive strike!"

Everyone nodded thoughtfully. "Yes, you're right!"

However, some people didn't share his sentiments. "Commander Golden Cicada, the Northern Faction used to be on par with the Southern Faction. As your Centuria had been wiped out, I'm afraid we're no longer as powerful as the Southern Faction. If a battle is to ensue, we'll be at a disadvantage."

Golden Cicada frowned unhappily. "Why? Are you too afraid to go to battle? Are you going to ignore our comrades who had sacrificed their lives?"

The person hastily explained, "Commander Golden Cicada, I apologize for my miscommunication. That is not what I intended to say. What I meant to express is that we should take caution before making any decisions. It is important to devise a plan before engaging in battle in order to maximize our prospects for success and minimize our losses."

Golden Cicada replied, "That was what I thought too, but we don't have a lot of time. Besides, we're not going to battle alone. There is also a strong force on our side."

Oh?

Everyone's curiosity was piqued. "Commander Golden Cicada, who could that be?"

Golden Cicada answered, "The person is extremely capable but mysterious. He refused to let me reveal his identity. Hmm, how should I describe his strength? Oh, I know. You know that the Southern Faction recently got a new commander, right?"

Everyone bobbed their heads. "Yes. We heard that the new commander's name is Zeke

Williams."

Chapter 2627

Golden Cicada nodded. "Yes. It was Zeke who partnered with Phoenix to slaughter my Centuria. He is undoubtedly our greatest foe, but he is nothing compared to this powerful and mysterious warrior who just so happens to be at odds with him. He had promised to help us get rid of Zeke. Without Zeke, the Southern Faction is a tiger without teeth. We don't have to be afraid of them!"

Hearing that, everyone relaxed. "It's good to know that we have a warrior on our side. Commander Golden Cicada, let's make haste and launch our attack. The moon is at its brightest so the condition is ideal for a successful attack. Let's act now!"

Golden Cicada gave a curt nod. "Let's set out!"

Back in the Southern Faction's base, Zeke was being taught how to refine spiritual iron by Draco in the comfort of his own room.

He was engrossed in learning when he sensed a faint, yet palpable, negative energy radiating in his direction, which he found to be strangely suspicious.

At once, Zeke's energy targeted the negative energy as he sneered, "Ha! Just look at that! I was just wondering how I was going to find you, and here you are. You've saved me a lot of trouble."

He "kept an eye" on the negative energy.

The negative energy crept slowly, as if it had a mind of its own, inching closer and closer to an unsuspecting guard, trying to make its way into his body.

Before it could do that, Zeke channeled his energy into an intangible, yet powerful hammer and struck at the negative energy with considerable force.

At once, the negative energy dissipated and nearly became transparent.

Shocked, it quickly made its retreat.

Zeke rushed out of his room to track it down. "B*stard! Stop right there! Don't you try to escape!"

The negative energy retreated with haste while Zeke went after it.

Half an hour later, the negative energy entered a dense forest and slowed down suddenly.

Without hesitation, Zeke shot out a burst of energy and destroyed the negative energy completely.

He then glanced around to locate the master of the negative energy.

Suddenly, an ethereal voice tinkled above him, laughing. "Zeke, it has been a while since we last met!"

Zeke didn't bother responding and glanced around warily.

"Zeke, it has been a long and arduous battle between us, so I think it is time to put an end to it. Take this!"

With that, a strong burst of negative energy surged in the air and suppressed Zeke.

Zeke immediately turned on his heels and fled the scene.

Erebus, who was hiding on a tree, couldn't help but gape in disbelief at the sight of Zeke running away.

Something doesn't seem right. I know Zeke well. Even if he knows he is no match for me, he wouldn't escape! Why did he just run away without hesitation? The negative energy I released wasn't strong enough to harm him.

Erebus' goal was to draw Zeke over and hold him there so the Northern Faction could kill those from the Southern Faction.

Since Zeke didn't fall for his trap and escaped instead of engaging in a battle with him, Erebus couldn't help but wonder if Zeke had learned about his plan to stall for time.

How did my plan get leaked? I must go after him!

However, Erebus hesitated before doing so.

Could it be part of Zeke's plan to pretend to escape? What if I fall for his trap if I were to go after him recklessly?

Erebus couldn't make up his mind.

After running away, Zeke realized Erebus didn't come after him and halted in his tracks to catch his breath.

He slowly took off his mask, and the face that was revealed was not Zeke's-it was Sole Wolf's.

In actuality, Sole Wolf was posing as Zeke. The real Zeke was still within the Southern Faction.

Sole Wolf turned over his shoulder to look at the tranquil expanse behind him, his voice a faint whisper as he prayed, "Elder Erebus, don't give up on me. I'm not that far ahead, and I'm sure you can catch up."

At long last, as "Zeke" had anticipated, a wave of negative energy quickly cascaded toward him.

Sole Wolf left a trace on the ground and sprinted away.

He did so because he was afraid the negative energy couldn't catch up to him.

At the border of the Southern Faction, guards were strategically stationed every fifty meters apart in order to ensure the safety and security of the area.

Chapter 2628

Lucifer warned the guards that the Northern Faction might attack them at any moment and reminded them to remain vigilant and alert.

The guards kept their eyes wide open. They were alert and vigilant, never once allowing themselves to slack off.

At the stroke of midnight, it was time to switch shifts. Gradually, other guards made their way to the station to take over the night shift.

A bearded man yawned incessantly as he made his way to a post within a pit.

The sentry who was originally stationed at the post was displeased. "Wake up, Watt! It is a serious offense to doze off while you're on duty. If you get caught, you will be punished most severely!"

"I know," Watt replied and waved his hands half-heartedly. "You should head back and get some rest. I promise no one, not even a fly, can get past me!"

The old sentry sighed helplessly.

He was frustrated with Watt but couldn't do anything.

Yesterday, Watt was transferred to this location in order to take up his new duties. However, he was always drowsy and found it difficult to stay awake. He often dozed off while he was supposed to be on duty.

The rest of the guards expressed their disapproval of the Decanus' decision to have Watt on sentry duty, citing his unsuitability for the role. However, the Decanus disregarded these objections and remained adamant that Watt be a sentry.

The guards belatedly realized that Watt might have important connections and stopped voicing their objections.

Before leaving, the old sentry turned over his shoulder again. As expected, Watt had dozed off.

He sighed, hoping that the enemies wouldn't launch an attack that night.

In a forest not far away from the guards lay a few hundred men that were from the Northern Faction.

Those from Northern Faction took the opportunity to conceal themselves in the forest when their enemy was changing shifts. Fortunately, their enemy didn't notice them.

Golden Cicada announced, "Our adversaries are heavily fortified and not easily penetrable. Does anyone here have the courage to scout out their grounds and uncover any potential weak points?"

Sebastian volunteered, "Commander Golden Cicada, I shall do that. I'm good at disguising myself."

"Okay." Golden Cicada nodded. "Be quick."

"Got it!" Sebastian responded.

He darted quickly into the dense thicket, vanishing from view in the blink of an eye.

The rest waited patiently for over ten minutes before Sebastian returned.

Golden Cicada queried hastily, "How did it go? Did you find any spots that we can penetrate easily?"

Sebastian nodded. "There is a pit just ahead of us with a single sentry stationed there. We should be able to eliminate him without making too much noise and then use the pit as a way to sneak into the enemy's territory without being discovered. It's our best bet."

"Okay!" Golden Cicada made up his mind instantly. "We shall sneak in through the pit. Sebastian, go get rid of the sentry inside the pit now. Your contribution is invaluable, so I shall make sure to reward you for your hard work."

"Thank you, Commander Golden Cicada!" Sebastian replied happily.

He slowly turned around, taking extra care to avoid making any sound, and gradually disappeared into the thick shrubbery.

Golden Cicada and the rest held their breaths and tensed up, afraid Sebastian would fail in his mission.

Fortunately, lady luck was on their side.

Sebastian proceeded cautiously and soon approached Watt's position in the pit.

Watt was snoring loudly, oblivious to Sebastian's arrival.

However, Sebastian didn't approach recklessly as he was afraid that it might be a trap.

Instead, he picked up a pebble and tossed it at Watt carefully.

The pebble hit Watt's foot, but he didn't stir at all.

It looks like he is most probably asleep.

With that thought in mind, Sebastian sprinted toward Watt and gripped his throat.

Crack!

Watt's neck was instantly snapped by Sebastian, and he collapsed to the ground.

Not a sound was made during the entire attack.

Sebastian flashed a menacing smile. "Ha! What a useless sentry."

He tossed Watt aside and darted back to his team.

After Sebastian left, Watt suddenly opened his eyes as a smirk flitted across his lips.

"B*stard. How dare you ambush me, huh? I, Nameless, shall take your life!"

Indeed, the sentry who others knew as Watt was actually Nameless in disguise.

Ten minutes later, Sebastian returned to his team.

Chapter 2629

Golden Cicada asked earnestly, "Sebastian, how did it go?"

Sebastian gave him the thumbs up. "It was a success. Now, all we have to do is to put our plan into motion."

"Excellent!" Golden Cicada exclaimed, clearly pleased. "You have done a splendid job, Sebastian. When we return, I shall make sure to reward you handsomely. Now, lead the way. The rest of us shall follow you and sneak into their base as quietly as possible."

"Got it!"

Sebastian was leading the way, and the rest of the Northern Faction followed closely behind.

They crept along on their stomachs, carefully navigating the terrain and keeping a watchful eye out for any potential threats.

The pit Nameless was stationed in was a naturally formed ditch.

It was dark at night, so the other sentries didn't notice those from the Northern Faction advancing into their base.

The Northern Faction had successfully sneaked into their enemy's base.

Golden Cicada gave a commanding wave. "Surround the base!"

His subordinates quickly got up and surrounded the base.

Golden Cicada gazed at the Southern Faction's base and chortled. "The Southern Faction will soon be erased from Theos Island's history and I, Golden Cicada, will be the sole ruler of Centuria."

At the same time, Erebus was chasing after "Zeke" relentlessly.

For some reason, "Zeke" wasn't as fast as usual.

Erebus nearly caught up to him a few times but gave up in the end.

He grew paranoid.

Why did Zeke run so slowly? Is he doing this on purpose? Is this a trap leading me somewhere? That sounds like a huge possibility.

In actual fact, Erebus was thinking too much.

"Zeke" was slower than usual because he wasn't Zeke at all. He was Sole Wolf in disguise.

Sole Wolf was an Ultimate Class warrior, so he was far slower than a Celestial Class warrior.

He was struggling to maintain this it was not his usual speed. pace, as

Sole Wolf's breath was coming in short, shallow gasps, and he was filled with a sense of growing panic.

Erebus was too quick and nearly caught up to him several times.

If Erebus caught up to me and discovered who I really am, he'll take my life for sure. I'm just an Ultimate Class warrior, and he's a Celestial Class warrior. No matter how strong I am, I won't be able to defeat him.

Erebus wasn't a fool and slowly realized something was off.

D*mn it. This person seems to be running at full speed. Don't tell me he isn't Zeke. Is someone else impersonating Zeke? F*ck, that might be possible!

He released a burst of negative energy and directed it at Sole Wolf.

At once, Sole Wolf retaliated.

The moment he released his energy to defend himself, his identity was exposed.

Erebus immediately discovered that the energy didn't belong to Zeke.

I was right. This isn't Zeke, for someone else is pretending to be him! I got tricked! Zeke is still in the Southern Faction's base. Those from the Northern Faction who had gone to attack the Southern Base are now in grave danger. D*mn it. How did our plan get leaked? How did they find out we were trying to distract them?

At the same time, back in the Southern Faction's base, Golden Cicada gave a commanding wave. "Attack!"

The members of the Northern Faction leaped into action with the ferocity of wild animals when they heard the order. They burst into different rooms in the base, brandishing their swords menacingly.

Golden Cicada rushed into one of the rooms too and swung his sword at the bed unceasingly.

However, weirdly enough, he didn't hear any screams or moans of anguish.

Something seems wrong.

He immediately yelled, "Switch on the lights! Hurry, switch on the lights!"

His subordinates turned on their torchlights instantly.

The moment light flooded the room.

Golden Cicada's heart sank to the bottom of his stomach. The bed was empty, and no one was around.

it. He had ruthlessly demolished the bed with his sword, leaving it in a state of utter destruction. Nobody was hiding underneath

The room was tiny, so its occupants could only be on the bed or underneath it. There was nowhere else to hide. He couldn't help but wonder where they went in the middle of the night.

Chapter 2630

An ominous feeling swamped him suddenly. He ran to the adjoining room and asked, "Did you find anything?"

His men responded, "Commander Golden Cicada, we have killed the occupants of this room."

"Oh, that's a relief." Golden Cicada heaved a sigh of relief.

Right then, his subordinate shone the torchlight into the room. The sight nearly caused Golden Cicada to faint in anger.

There was no one on the bed. His men had merely destroyed the bed by chopping into it repeatedly.

The soldier was shocked. "Eh? Where is the enemy? Did we kill them?"

"Idiots! Fools!" Golden Cicada roared.

He then scurried to the other rooms to check on them.

All rooms were empty.

He finally realized that they had fallen into a trap.

Golden Cicada hissed, "Run! Run now!"

The Northern Faction members got all flustered and fled the scene hastily.

Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh....

Countless blades soared through the night sky, swiftly piercing the flesh of the Northern Faction members One by one, they collapsed to the ground.

The entire Northern Faction was already overwhelmed by fear, so they became even more disoriented and hurriedly ran into the rooms to prevent themselves from getting impaled.

The sound of footsteps echoed through the air, causing the members of the Northern Faction to look out of the windows in alarm. Their despair grew as they realized the Southern Faction's members had surrounded them.

Furthermore, the core of the Southern Faction was comprised of archers with a plentiful supply of arrows. If any of the opposing armies attempted to flee, the archers would fire arrows to prevent their escape.

They were completely stuck and couldn't find any way out.

The previous commander of the Southern Faction, Draco, declared icily, "Golden Cicada, don't you think it's impolite of you to come here in the dead of night with your men all armed with weapons?"

Golden Cicada clenched his jaw. "Draco, just get straight to the point."

Draco snickered icily. "All right, then. Let's get straight to the point. Golden Cicada, you ambushed the Southern Faction late at night. This is a violation of our agreement. According to our agreement, you should be surrendering to us and bowing to our feet. Otherwise, the Chieftain would take action against you. I wouldn't even need to take action!"

Golden Cicada burst out in laughter. "We violated the agreement? You were the one who violated it first! You wiped out my Centuria, and I almost perished in the process. I had to lead my men here to get revenge for them! I had no other choice. How else could I respond after you slaughtered my Centuria? How can I face my dead comrades if I don't avenge them?"

Draco snapped, "Nonsense! We've never Do you. sent anyone to attack have you evidence to prove that the Southern Faction wiped out your Centuria?"

Golden Cicada indignantly exclaimed, "What more evidence do you need? I am living proof of what you have done! I saw you murdering my men with my own eyes. Isn't that sufficient evidence?"

Draco snorted. "Okay then. I have a question for you. How capable is your Centuria?"

Golden Cicada responded proudly, "I trained them all, so they are extremely capable!"

It was undeniably the truth, and even if he were to lie, no one would believe his words.

Draco continued, "Then may I know who from Southern Faction wiped out your Centuria?"

Golden Cicada pondered over it and told him, "It was Phoenix who led her men to wipe out my Centuria."

"From my understanding, Phoenix's Centuria is not as strong as yours," Draco remarked, raising his eyebrows. "Moreover, it appears that no one from Phoenix's Centuria has been killed or injured recently. It seems highly improbable that they could have managed to wipe out your Centuria without suffering any losses. That's simply unbelievable."

Hearing that, everyone turned to look at Golden Cicada in amazement.

Draco's words make sense. Is there something amiss about this?

Golden Cicada quickly corrected himself. "It wasn't just Phoenix, but the entire Southern Faction that came to destroy my Centuria. It happened so quickly that I couldn't make out the situation clearly. Amidst the chaos, I could only see Phoenix and mistakenly believed that she was the

one leading the attack against us. But now upon reflection, it was the Southern Faction as a whole that launched the assault."

Chapter 2631

Draco scoffed in disbelief. "Golden Cicada, that's utter nonsense. We have thousands of men in the Southern Faction. If our army were to attack you all at once, there's no way it could go unnoticed. Even if not all the Centurias from the Northern Faction were to notice us, surely some must have seen us marching into their territory. I'd like to ask the men from the Northern Faction, did anyone see us boldly charging into your lands?"

The members of the Northern Faction grew all the more confused.

They exchanged looks and started whispering among themselves.

"Draco's words make sense. Is there something fishy going on?"

"When the attack happened, we were operating at full capacity. Our soldiers were scattered throughout the region, all searching for the Spirit Stone. We were alert to any suspicious activity and would not have failed to notice the Southern Faction's Centuria if they had attempted to infiltrate our territory, much less if they had arrived with an entire regiment of men."

"Moreover, the Centuria under Commander Golden Cicada's lead was powerful. If the Southern Faction attempted to annihilate them, they'd surely pay the price. But the Southern Faction seems perfectly fine to me. They're completely unscathed and have even grown stronger than before."

"That's right. Did Commander Golden Cicada make a mistake?"

Everyone shifted their gazes onto Golden Cicada.

Golden Cicada panicked. "Are you all doubting me? Fine. Even if you don't believe me, you should trust Sebastian."

He turned to Sebastian. "Tell them, Sebastian. Before my Centuria was attacked, Phoenix picked on you, didn't she? She was the one who took your Spirit Stones and harmed you, right?"

Sebastian nodded. "Yes. My subordinates and I can prove that Phoenix ambushed us."

Phoenix sneered, "I can't believe you had the audacity to say that. Don't you know why I taught

you a lesson? I was kind enough to pledge alliance to you, but you had the cheek to want to have sex with me. Should I have just stood there and let you have your way with me?"

"I... I..." Sebastian's cheeks turned pink as he stammered, not knowing how to reply to her accusation.

Phoenix added, "You thought you could take advantage of me, so the Spirit Stones are the price you have to pay for that mistake."

As the number of people who began to voice their skepticism of Golden Cicada increased, a wave of discussion started to spread.

Golden Cicada's face was contorted in anger as he spat out his words. "Shut the f*ck up! You relied on me to survive, and I've done my absolute best to treat you well. After all, soldiers are trained for years in preparation for those crucial moments. I can't believe you're doubting me! I'm thoroughly disappointed in you! How could you turn against me after hearing lies from the enemy? I thought we were comrades, but if you are not willing to stand by me, then you have no right to be my comrades."

Sebastian chimed in, "Commander Golden Cicada, I believe in you. Even if the whole world were to doubt you, I will still stand by you. Everyone, please listen to me. Commander Golden Cicada has no motive to deceive us. Why would he even bother to lie when there's nothing in it for him?"

Everyone nodded thoughtfully, for he was right.

Initiating a conflict between the two factions would not be advantageous to either side.

If Golden Cicada really wanted to pick a fight, he could make up a random excuse instead of sacrificing his Centuria.

Those from the Northern Faction immediately hollered, "Commander Golden Cicada, we have unconditional trust in you!"

"Commander Golden Cicada, we fell for the enemies' lie. It was our fault, so please forgive us!"

"I am your faithful supporter, Commander Golden Cicada!"

Golden Cicada could finally relax. D*mn it. They nearly turned the tables earlier.

Draco suddenly smirked and announced, "Now, before you all come to a conclusion, I suggest you hear me out first. I am about to share something with you that you may not know. As it turns out, the Southern Faction has recently incurred the wrath of a formidable opponent. The opponent might be capable but didn't act recklessly, for he wasn't powerful enough to take action against us. Instead, he wiped out the Centuria of Golden Cicada and intimidated him into submission. Golden Cicada now answers to him."

Chapter 2632

"That opponent forced Golden Cicada to frame us for the death of his Centuria, then manipulated him to initiate a war between the Northern and Southern Faction. You all are just a pawn in their plan!"

Draco turned to Golden Cicada and continued, "Golden Cicada, your comrades trusted you and were willing to put their lives on the line for your sake, but you betrayed their loyalty for your own selfish ambition. You manipulated them so they would risk their very lives for you. I can't believe they could be so easily swayed by your lies and be prepared to sacrifice their lives for you."

What?

Everyone looked baffled after hearing his words.

Draco's words obviously made more sense while Golden Cicada's explanation made no sense. The latter's explanation was full of flaws, and he was just appealing to their emotions.

The crowd couldn't help but wonder who was telling the truth.

Golden Cicada leaped up angrily. "Nonsense! That is utter nonsense, Draco! You are trying to sow discord between us! Everyone, don't trust him!"

Draco let out an indignant snort. "Nonsense? Ha! Let's find out if I'm talking nonsense or if you're lying."

He raised his voice. "Bring him in!"

A man with his face concealed by a black cloth and bound with rope was brought before them.

Strangely, Golden Cicada found the figure familiar.

The man's face, however, was covered, so he couldn't figure out who it was.

Draco asked coldly, "Golden Cicada, you were wondering how we realized your ambush, right? We managed to capture one man who was involved in planning the ambush, that's why."

He faced the Northern Faction and declared, "Golden Cicada and a powerful enemy of us orchestrated this trap. Fortunately, we apprehended the enemy swiftly and devised a strategy to prevent getting killed. Golden Cicada, what else do you have to say?"

Golden Cicada shouted in anger, "Impossible! It can't be true! There's no way you've apprehended him! He's incredibly powerful."

The "formidable enemy" let out a sigh. "Golden Cicada, there's no point in denying it now. I've

already given away our plan to them. You should come clean to them, and they may spare your life. Otherwise, you will meet your demise today."

"B*llshit!" Golden Cicada snapped. "You are not my master. Your voice..."

He abruptly stopped speaking, realizing he had used the word "master" unintentionally when he lost composure.

That was enough to prove the existence of the "formidable opponent."

I've fallen for the Southern Faction's trap. Sh*t!

Golden Cicada's knuckles cracked menacingly upon that realization.

Right then, everyone from the Northern Faction cast furious or suspicious gazes at him. It was pretty obvious by now that Golden Cicada had turned against them.

Draco flashed a smile. "Golden Cicada, you've just admitted that our formidable enemy is your master. Anything else you'd like to say?"

Golden Cicada fumed, "F*ck you, Faction. You will die a horrible death, Draco!" Southern

With that, he leaped into the air and prepared to flee the scene.

Before the Southern Faction could take action, those from the Northern Faction descended into a state of chaos.

"How dare you escape after tricking us? Dream on! You must pay for your deeds. Everyone, stop him!"

"We were foolish to trust him. Please don't hold us accountable, Southern Faction. We were deceived by his lies!"

"Listen up!" Draco declared sternly. "You must capture Golden Cicada as he will be the one held accountable for this matter. If he escapes, all of you will be held accountable and punished."

Hearing that, those from the Northern Faction went all out to capture Golden Cicada.

They had no other choice. If Golden Cicada were to escape, they would be held responsible for the offense.

Their hatred for Golden Cicada had reached its peak.

Chapter 2633

He deserved to die as he was cruel enough to sacrifice his comrades' lives for his personal gain.

The members of the Northern Faction attacked him viciously.

Despite Golden Cicada's strength, he was outmatched in battle. Gradually, he became exhausted and was ultimately captured.

"I will not accept defeat!" he shouted defiantly to the sky.

Golden Cicada once held power over the Northern Faction and was highly respected by many. Unfortunately, he ended up defeated by his very own subordinates. It was a humiliating experience for him.

At the same time, Zeke brought Sole Wolf and Ares to the Northern Faction's base.

The entire Northern Faction had set out to attack the Southern Faction, leaving their base unguarded.

Zeke instructed Nameless and Ares, "The two of you, search for the Spirit Stones hidden by the Northern Faction's Centurias. Once you locate them, return as quickly as possible."

Aside from Sebastian's Spirit Stones which had been seized by Zeke, and Golden Cicada's Spirit Stones which had been taken by Erebus, the other Centurias' Spirit Stones should still be with them.

Zeke wanted these Spirit Stones for himself.

"Got it!"

Nameless and Ares immediately went to work.

Zeke stood still in his spot and waited patiently.

He and Sole Wolf had devised a plan. Sole Wolf would lure Erebus here, while Zeke would conceal himself and launch a surprise attack to kill Erebus in one swift move.

Erebus' existence was a huge threat to them, so he must be eliminated.

Half an hour later, Ares and Nameless came back. They each had two heavy sacks on their backs.

Zeke declared, "Report your findings."

Ares said, "I searched five camps. Two of them don't have any Spirit Stones, and the remaining three have a total of five hundred pounds of Spirit Stones."

Nameless replied, "I searched three camps. One was empty, and the other two have a total of three hundred pounds of Spirit Stones."

Zeke nodded. "Five hundred pounds and three hundred pounds. Including the over two hundred pounds of Spirit Stones that we got from Sebastian, we have enough to create a perfect divine weapon. I'm curious, though. Why were some camps devoid of Spirit Stones?"

Ares and Nameless exchanged a glance before shaking their heads to indicate that they had no idea about that.

Zeke remarked thoughtfully, "Perhaps they were sent to the outer areas and were given to the Guardian of Mount Kush."

What?

Ares and Nameless were taken aback. "What did you just say, Great Marshal? The Spirit Stones were dispatched to the outer regions to the Guardian of Mount Kush? Are you saying that the Guardian of Mount Kush is also here on Theos Island with Elder Erebus?"

Previously, Zeke told them about Erebus but kept them in the dark about the Guardian of Mount Kush.

Zeke nodded. "Yes. I am almost certain that the Guardian of Mount Kush is currently on Theos Island. He is working together with Elder Erebus. Erebus is responsible for collecting Spirit Stones and sending them to the Guardian of Mount Kush, who is in the outer regions of Theos Island. However, the reason they are sending the Spirit Stones to the outer regions of Theos Island remains a mystery to me."

Ares and Nameless both tensed up.

After all, Erebus and the Guardian of Mount Kush were supreme beings who were capable of killing them.

Now that both supreme beings had joined hands, they would have a hard time surviving on Theos Island.

Zeke instructed, "All right. Keep the Spirit Stones hidden. When Sole Wolf lures Elder Erebus here, we shall kill him swiftly in one move. Listen to my order!"

Nameless was concerned. "Great Marshal, Sole Wolf is in the Peak Class while Elder Erebus is in the Celestial Class. There is a significant difference in power between them. I'm afraid of Sole Wolf will be at risk before he successfully lures Elder Erebus here."

Zeke reassured him, "Don't worry. I provided Sole Wolf with a way of protecting himself. He will be fine."

"Oh, I'm glad to hear that."

Hearing that, Ares and Nameless were able to relax slightly.

Chapter 2634

While Zeke appeared calm, he was gripped with worry. Erebus is too powerful. While Sole Wolf has a protective measure I provided him, he's still in danger. I'm less worried about whether he can successfully lure Erebus here and more if he can defend himself against Erebus.

He turned his line of sight toward his nine o'clock as, according to their promise, Sole Wolf would be luring Erebus toward him from that direction.

Meanwhile, five kilometers away, Sole Wolf was sprinting in the direction they had agreed on. He was so tired that he felt as if he was going to throw up.

Despite his exhaustion, he didn't dare to slow down or relax because he still had five kilometers left to go. Erebus, who was hot on his tail, might catch up to him and take his life.

Erebus was furious. "You b*stard! I can't believe someone as weak as you have the guts to trick me! Don't you realize how meaningless your actions are? Surrender now, or I'll take your life!"

In response, Sole Wolf grinned evilly. "Scram! You have to worship me like a god first if you want me to surrender. I'll surrender if you're sincere enough. If not, I'll spank your butt!"

Insolent brat! As Erebus' patience ran out, he released a burst of negative energy toward Sole Wolf, aiming it straight at the latter's head.

Sole Wolf's expression changed drastically. What power! I don't think I stand a good chance of dodging it! What should I do? Do I use the ace up my sleeve? But I still have five kilometers left to go. If I use it now, I may not be able to reach my destination in time and end up getting captured by him. I don't think I have many options here. Guess I'll have to use my second trump card!

After ending his train of thought, he abruptly stopped, turned around to face Erebus, and laughed maniacally. "You fool! This idiot fell for my trick! Kill him quickly, Zeke!"

What? Erebus' face paled in shock as he swiftly changed the target of his negative energy attack from Sole Wolf to "Zeke," who was probably behind him.

He had long suspected Sole Wolf's actions were just a ruse, so he thought the latter's sudden statement confirmed his theory.

However, to his surprise, he saw absolutely no one when he wheeled around. I fell for his trick! He's lying to me!

When he turned back, he saw that Sole Wolf was already gone.

B*stard! Cursing Sole Wolf in his mind, Erebus sprinted forward at full speed. "How dare you trick me! I'm going to kill you!"

After being played for a fool by Sole Wolf, Erebus decided not to subdue the former. Instead, he was going to kill the former right then and there to prevent anyone from learning about that humiliating moment, it only took two or three minutes for him to catch up to Sole Wolf with supersonic speed, for he was, after all, a Celestial Class warrior.

Instead of wasting his time talking to his enemy, he directly launched a deadly assault in Sole Wolf's direction. "You will die today, Sole Wolf!"

Calmly, Sole Wolf stopped in his tracks. It's time for me to unleash the trump card Great Marshal bestowed upon me! This thing should be able to stall Erebus for at least a minute, which is the enough time for me to return to Great Marshal's side!

Moments later, Erebus' overwhelming negative energy pounced on him, suffocating him.

At that critical moment, he shook his arm forcefully, allowing a "long sword" to slip out of his sleeve. When it did, he held on to it tightly like his life depended on it.

That "long sword" was special. It was transparent, as though it was made of water. One could even vaguely make out the water ripples fluctuating on the object.

However, the aura that the water blade released was comparable to an ordinary divine weapon.

Even Erebus could sense the pressure emanating from the sword.

The water blade was the "Dragon King Sword" Zeke materialized with his energy and the trump card he provided Sole Wolf to save his life.

As Erebus' negative energy attack was about to reach Sole Wolf, he unleashed the Dragon King Sword in his hand.

Chapter 2635

In an instant, Dragon King Sword transformed into a "rocket," pierced through Erebus' negative energy attack, and flew straight toward his face, aiming for the spot between his eyebrows.

Erebus' negative energy was as soft as marshmallows compared to the Dragon King Sword which was materialized by Zeke's energy.

In a blink of an eye, the weapon arrived in front of Erebus' forehead. At that moment, he felt as

though he was facing the Grim Reaper himself as a sense of despair enclosed him.

What a powerful Dragon King Sword! He reflexively dodged the attack, and it went without saying that as he did so, he gave up on assaulting Sole Wolf, thus allowing his enemy to flee.

Erebus was about to chase after him when the Dragon King Sword exploded without warning.

The explosion was, of course, powerful enough to level a mountain.

As if that wasn't bad enough, Erebus was standing uncomfortably close to the sword when it detonated. In response, he released negative energy to shield himself from the blast. Even so, he was launched several hundred meters back. When he landed, he formed a massive crater on the ground and spat out blood.

That motherf*cking b*stard! Erebus was on the verge of losing his mind. I'm a Celestial Class warrior, and I'm as strong as Zeke! Yet, I was fooled by his subordinate three times! This is outrageous!

Livid, he slapped the ground and used the rebounding force to stand back up. Then he resumed his chase.

He was so angry that he even used some of his life force to catch up to Sole Wolf at maximum speed, taking only two minutes.

However, Sole Wolf wasn't as anxious as he was before anymore because he had arrived in the trap Zeke had laid.

Soon, he would become the hunter and Erebus the prey.

Erebus roared furiously, "Time to die, Sole Wolf!"

Sole Wolf shouted, "Save me, Zeke!"

"Hmph! Do you think I'm an idiot? You can fool me once with that petty trick of yours, but that's not going to work twice! I'm going to murder-" Before he could finish his sentence, he abruptly stopped talking because he suddenly felt impending danger approaching him.

When he scanned his environment, he saw nothing that was out of place. D*mn it! Why did I suddenly feel a sense of danger?

Meanwhile, Zeke messaged Ares, Nameless, and Sole Wolf through telepathy. "Kill!"

The moment they received that message, all four of them simultaneously unleashed.

Their energy toward Erebus, overpowering him.

Zeke's energy alone would be enough to subdue Erebus easily. Therefore, it took even less effort for him to accomplish that goal with the help of three other Ultimate Class warriors.

By the time Erebus sensed the incoming attack, it was already too late for him to escape or fight back with his negative energy.

As the energy pinned him down, a gigantic crater was formed in his location. A loud boom was heard while nearby rocks and plants were instantly decimated.

Erebus' blood vessels expanded under the pressure as though worms were pervading his entire body.

"Ah!" He cried out in agony. Where did this powerful energy come from? D*mn it! It seemed like Sole Wolf had already set up a trap here, waiting to ambush me! If he hadn't tricked me earlier, I definitely wouldn't have lowered my guard... Sh*t! That b*stard Sole Wolf is too cunning!

"Who... Who... Show yourself..." The energy attack rendered him completely immobile.

There was no escape for him. As he widened his eyes, he shifted his line of sight upward.

Zeke, Ares, Sole Wolf, and Nameless slowly appeared above him, standing by the edge of the crater.

Sole Wolf, still panting, spat, "It's your fault for not listening to me. I told you there's a trap here, but you refused to believe me. If you want to blame someone for getting trapped here, you can only blame yourself for being too stupid."

Chapter 2636

Gritting his teeth, Erebus cursed, "You have some guts to say that to my face, motherf*cker! I wouldn't have doubted you if you hadn't tricked me once before!"

Zeke smirked maliciously. "We meet again, Erebus."

"So, is this the Great Marshal's style? Ambushing someone instead of facing them head-on because you're afraid of losing? What a joke! If you still think you're the Great Marshal, the representation of Eurasia's reputation, you will release me and battle me head-on."

Shaking his head, Zeke responded, "Your provocation is useless against me. I don't need to care about principles or honorable battles when dealing with a heartless monster like you. I only need to capture you. Besides, didn't you scheme against me and sent Northern Faction to besiege me? You don't have the right to spout nonsense like that in front of me."

Erebus sneered, "Hmph! If you want to kill me, then do it! Stop wasting my time."

"I have a few questions I would like you to answer. If your answer is satisfactory, I'll grant you a

painless death. If not, a horrible end awaits you."

"Keep on dreaming! I won't tell you a thing!"

Despite Erebus' response, Zeke continued questioning, "Why did you and the Guardian of Mount Kush come to Theos Island? What are you trying to do by collecting Spirit Stones and sending them to the Guardian? Do you know where my wife Lacey is held?"

Stubbornly, Erebus remained tight-lipped.

Enraged, Zeke exclaimed, "Fine! Since you don't want to talk, we'll kill you now!"

Upon ending his sentence, Zeke and the other three increased the strength of their energy.

As a result, the crater was deepened by a whole meter. Erebus' bones started to crack loudly. Even his eyeballs were on the verge of popping out of his skull.

He couldn't help but shriek in agony.

Zeke sneered, "This isn't enough. Let's-"

"Wait!" Erebus suddenly waved his hand. "I'll have a condition, Zeke! F-Fulfill it, and I'll tell you!"

"Spit it out."

"L-Let me go. I-I have something to s-show you!"

"Are you playing me for a fool? What if you escape after I let you go?"

"I won't! If you don't release me, I-I can't show that thing to you!"

"Hah. Since you can't show it to me, I'll just have to kill you first and take it."

"N-No! You can't kill me! The thing I want to show you is related to your wife! Only I know where she is! Even if you obtain the item that I want to show you, you won't know where she is if you kill me!"

What? Zeke's expression shifted slightly. "You know where Lacey is? Tell me now!"

"You must allow me to display the item to you first."

Without delay, Zeke released another source of energy to examine Erebus' body.

When he did, he could tell there was a handkerchief with Lacey's aura hiding under his clothes.

There's a good chance he knows where Lacey is! As he thought, he reduced the amount of energy he was administering to Erebus, but only enough for the latter to produce and present the object to him.

There was still no way for Erebus to escape.

Tremblingly, Erebus unveiled the handkerchief to Zeke. "Look at this. Do you recognize this?"

Zeke was moved when he saw that. That handkerchief looks like the one Lacey always carried with her!

Chapter 2637

Zeke focused his attention on the handkerchief and could sense Lacey's familiar aura all over it.

Thus, he asked eagerly, "Where did you get this? This is Lacey's handkerchief. Does this mean you met her?"

Erebus replied, "It's a long story. Truthfully, not only have I met your wife, but I can also contact her right now."

Seriously? Zeke was getting very emotional. At last, I have a chance to find Lacey!

He missed her day and night. Hence, when he finally obtained a lead on her, he, naturally struggled to keep his cool. "Quick! Call Lacey now. I want to talk to her."

Erebus negotiated, "I can help you contact your wife, but you must let me go."

After only a moment of hesitation, Zeke nodded resolutely. "No problem."

As long as he could meet Lacey, he was willing to do anything.

Only then did Erebus pull out his communication device, which was a yellow talisman.

Eh? What's that? I thought he was going to grab his phone or something. Is that a yellow talisman?

Zeke asked doubtfully, "Can that thing really contact my wife, Erebus?"

In response, Erebus nodded. "Of course. When did I ever lie to you? I can prove it to you if you don't believe me."

A second later, he injected a large amount of negative energy into the talisman, causing it to glow a light-yellow hue.

In a blink of an eye, that glow grew so bright that it basically blinded Zeke and the rest.

Additionally, the light radiated immense mental energy that enveloped Zeke and the others, suppressing their consciousness.

As a result, their minds turned blank, and they entered a vegetative state.

Naturally, the energy attack they unleashed earlier disappeared.

Erebus' first instinct after regaining his freedom was to assault Zeke.

Without hesitation, he shot a ball of negative energy toward Zeke, who was currently vulnerable.

At that moment, Zeke was still unconscious, suppressed by the mental energy from the talisman. Hence, he could do nothing but wait for his death.

To Erebus' surprise, just as his negative energy was about to reach Zeke, the latter's right arm abruptly shot up before smashing the negative energy into smithereens.

The backlash from that attack rattled Erebus' internal organs, causing him to vomit out tainted blood.

"D*mn it! Why is he still conscious enough. to retaliate?" With no time to lose, he shot Zeke a resentful glare before vamoosing away.

Halfway through his escape, he recalled the reason Zeke was capable of attacking him, even in an unconscious state. It's because a piece of Ossa Dei is fused into his right arm! I can't believe how powerful it is. Even that old immortal's mental energy can't affect its consciousness. That's why it can still counterattack. It would be like gaining an additional life, maybe even multiple lives, if I could get my hands on that thing! Zeke is the best proof of Ossa Dei's power. If not for that thing, he would've been dead! I must get my hands on it no matter what!

Meanwhile, two minutes after Erebus unleashed his mental attack, Zeke returned to his senses.

When he swept his gaze across his surrounding, he realized Erebus had vanished. Lividly, he growled, "D*mn it! That jerk!"

Without hesitation, he tried to chase after his enemy.

Chapter 2637

However, it had been two minutes, which would be enough for a Celestial Class warrior to escape to any corner of Theos Island.

Chapter 2638

It was impossible for Zeke to track Erebus down.

Sighing, he felt immensely disappointed at losing a great opportunity to find Lacey.

Zeke's Ossa Dei communicated with him telepathically. "I saved your life earlier, Zeke. Don't forget you owe me a life debt now."

"Oh? You saved me? Your consciousness wasn't suppressed by that weird mental energy?"

"I am the bones of the Ancient Gods, after all. At the very least, my mental energy is more powerful than mortals. That's why the attack just now was ineffective against me."

Zeke excitedly asked, "What's the deal with that mental energy, Ossa Dei? Why is it so powerful?"

After thinking about it for a while, Ossa Dei informed, "If my guess is correct, that mental energy should belong to the Ancient Gods. They can remove parts of their mental energy and seal that energy inside special vessels, such as that yellow talisman. Then, when its power is needed, it can be released."

"Wow!" Zeke was shocked. "Does that mean Ancient Gods are still alive at present?"

"That is technically the case. Moreover, Ancient Gods are, well, Gods. They have much longer lifespans compared to mortals. At their shortest, their lifespans can last for around two to three hundred years. At their longest, they can exist for more than a millennium. They may very well still be alive."

"Where did Erebus obtain that power, then?"

"I don't know. You need to ask him yourself."

Tightening his fists, Zeke swore to himself, I will capture Erebus! He knows too much!

It wasn't until he returned to Ares, Sole Wolf, and Nameless that they returned to their senses.

Nameless promptly opened his mouth and vomited blood because he was severely injured by the mental energy attack.

Sole Wolf, Nameless, and Ares proceeded to stare at the scene in panic. "W-What happened earlier, Great Marshal?"

Upon taking a deep breath, Zeke told them about the Ancient Gods' mental energy sealed inside the yellow talisman.

The trio was shocked. "Oh my goodness. Erebus is actually capable of contacting the Ancient Gods! If they join forces, Eurasia is in grave danger!"

Zeke assured, "Relax. Eurasia is protected. by Fortuna. Even if the Ancient Gods still exist and bear ill-will toward Eurasia, Fortuna will undoubtedly punish them severely and protect Eurasia."

His words put the others at ease. Squatting down, he picked up Lacey's handkerchief.

He missed her even more after seeing her belongings.

Carefully, Sole Wolf consoled, "Don't worry, Zeke. This handkerchief does give us a piece of optimistic news. At least it proves that Lacey is on Theos Island. Also, we now know of another way to find her - through Erebus."

Holding the handkerchief tightly, Zeke muttered, "I will find you, Lacey, wherever you are. We must capture Erebus!"

Sole Wolf, Ares, and Nameless all kneeled before him. "Rest assured, Great Marshal. We swear that we will apprehend Erebus."

Nodding slightly, Zeke said, "Come, let's head back first."

Concurrently, the Northern Faction had captured Golden Cicada, tied him up, and handed him to the Southern Faction.

"We've captured the culprit, Dragon King, Feel free to deal with him as you wish. He's behind everything, so please don't blame us and let us go instead," the messenger pleaded.

Draco sneered at Golden Cicada, please with himself. I was always bullied by him. In the past, if one faction was doomed to be destroyed, it was definitely going to be the Southern Faction. But now, Golden Cicada is the one suffering as the Northern Faction finds itself in a precarious position, encircled by the Southern faction.

Chapter 2639

It was all thanks to Zeke.

Draco was very grateful that the Southern Faction was conquered by Zeke. Otherwise, he would've been trapped by Golden Cicada sooner or later.

Golden Cicada resentfully roared, "You can't touch me, Dragon King!"

"Hah. Even when you've lost, you still have the courage to say such a thing. Tell me why I can't touch you, then."

"Because I'm the leader of the Northern Faction! If you want to touch me, you must ask Legatus for permission first! Only when you obtain his permission can you touch me! Otherwise, he'll punish you with death!"

Draco couldn't help but chuckle. "Your own people captured you and delivered you to me. Right now, you're nothing, yet you still unashamedly call yourself the Northern Faction's leader. How shameless."

"Did you forget Legatus' words, Draco? He said before that he's the only one who can appoint and dismiss the leader of the Northern and Southern Faction. I will remain as the Northern Faction's leader as long as Legatus doesn't dismiss me from my position!"

Furrowing his eyebrows, Draco contemplated his words. Golden Cicada is right. Legatus did say something like that in the past. If I kill him now, I'll piss Legatus off.

Just as he was wondering what to do, a deep and authoritative voice exploded behind him. "Send him to my room."

When the crowd turned back, they saw Zeke and the others had returned.

Draco promptly agreed, "As you wish, Mr. Williams." He's back right on time. I'll just let him deal with this troublesome jerk.

When Golden Cicada noticed Zeke, he was so spooked that he stiffened and shivered. If Master views him as an enemy, this means he's as powerful as Master! I bet I'll suffer a fate worse than death if I fall into his hands! D*mn it! Now, I think I'd rather die painlessly in Draco's hands earlier!

He didn't dare to resist Zeke, so he obediently followed the latter into the latter's room.

The moment he stepped into the room, dropped to his knees in front of Zeke without hesitation. "Please, spare me, Mr. Williams!" he

Coldly, Zeke informed, "Relax. As long as you cooperate with me, I won't take your life."

A sigh of relief slipped out of Golden Cicada's mouth. He was glad enough to be given a chance to live. "Of course, Mr. Williams! I'll definitely cooperate!"

"Tell me everything you know about Erebus. How did you get to know him?"

Golden Cicada appeared confused. "Who's that? I don't know him."

Hence, he asked, "When you interacted with Erebus, did you notice a woman by his side? Or perhaps, have you heard him mention one?"

"He's your master."

"Oh, okay. Sure, I'll tell you everything. He suddenly appeared one day. When he showed up, he wanted me to submit to him. At first, I was against it. But then he released multiple shadows and inserted them into my subordinates' bodies, essentially controlling them. After that, he told my subordinates to chop their heads off. The scene frightened me so much. Besides, he wanted to chop off my head, so I had no choice but to submit to him. He was the one who told me to frame the deaths of my Centuria on you guys and borrow the Northern Faction's strength to oppress the Southern Faction."

Zeke didn't care about any of the stuff Golden Cicada said.

The only thing he wanted to know about was Lacey.

Shaking his head, Golden Cicada responded, "Woman? No. He's always alone. Besides, I didn't talk much with him, and he didn't mention any woman."

Chapter 2640

Zeke was greatly disappointed. "Do you have a way to find Erebus or contact him?"

Golden Cicada shook his head again. "I'm sorry, I don't."

D*mn it!

Infuriated, Sole Wolf grabbed Golden Cicada's collar and handily lifted him into the air. "Are you taking us for a fool? You can't answer any of our questions! Fine, let me show you the consequences of messing with us!"

Then he acted as though he was going to rip Golden Cicada to shreds.

Petrified, Golden Cicada hurriedly clarified, "Wait, wait, wait! I know a place where you may find Erebus. Please don't kill me! I beg you!"

Zeke glanced at Sole Wolf, to which the latter responded by throwing Golden Cicada to the ground.

Indifferently, Zeke urged, "Tell me."

Golden Cicada disclosed, "I suddenly remember a place Erebus mentioned in the past. He said I should seek him out in Tiger's Cave if there's an emergency. I think he probably resides there."

"And where is this Tiger's Cave?" asked Zeke right away.

"In the Northern Faction's territory. It's halfway up a very isolated mountain."

Zeke grabbed Golden Cicada and commanded, "Take me to it."

"Okay, okay, I'll take you all to Tiger's Cave. However, can you spare me in return?"

Zeke sneered, "You don't have the right to negotiate with me yet! If you take me there, I can't guarantee that you'll live. However, if you refuse, I'll grant you a fate worse than death!"

There were no other options for Golden Cicada to pick from except obeying Zeke.

Thus, he led the way and took Zeke to Tiger's Cave.

It was a naturally-formed cave with a narrow entrance. While it was very dark inside, the interior was pretty wide. Thus, Zeke had no issue ambling into the cave.

When he tried to sense what was in the cave, he picked up remnants of Erebus' negative energy. It seems like he has been residing here for a while. Then again, he should already know this cave is exposed, so it's unlikely he'll return here.

Upon releasing his energy. Zeke examined every corner of Tiger's Cave.

The cave was crude and simple, so it didn't take long for him to wrap up his investigation.

He was saddened when he didn't notice anything unusual.

Just as he was about to leave, Ossa Dei abruptly communicated with him through telepathy. "Wait. There's something in the southwest corner. Go and take a look at what's there."

Frowning, Zeke swept his gaze past the southwest corner and found nothing. "Perhaps you're mistaken, Ossa Dei. I'm not sensing anything special."

"Maybe... it's a relic of the Ancient Gods. If that's the case, it's only normal you can't sense it, for only those who are connected with the Ancient Gods can."

Therefore, Zeke followed Ossa Dei's instructions and stepped toward that corner.

After a detailed inspection, he found a strand of hair in the corner.

If he hadn't inspected closely, there was no way he could've found it.

Zeke studied the hair in surprise. Although, it didn't seem to be any different from an ordinary person's hair.

Hence, he inquired, "Don't tell me this is a strand of hair of the Ancient Gods."

"The aura I sensed came from this hair strand. It retains a considerable amount of vitality, which means it was shed from its owner's body not too long ago. So, the Ancient Gods still exist, and they could be living on Theos Island now. If I can find them, they may be able to restore my true form!" Despite Ossa Dei's hope, he was almost fully merged into Zeke's body.

Even if they were to encounter the Ancient Gods, it was unlikely they could help him.

Carefully, Zeke picked up the strand of hair, stunned.

Chapter 2641

While Zeke had a feeling the Ancient Gods still existed in the world, he was nonetheless bewildered when he found evidence of their existence.

After searching the cave for a long while, he had to give up because he couldn't find anything else.

Subsequently, he brought Golden Cicada back to base.

On the way back, Zeke coldly offered, "I'll give you a chance to live, Golden Cicada."

Joyously, Golden Cicada expressed his gratitude. "Thank you, Mr. Williams!"

"Of course, you need to help me do something in return. I want to annex the Northern Faction, so you'll need to talk to them about it and persuade them."

With a grimace, Golden Cicada explained, "But... I'm afraid I can't help you with that, Mr. Williams. I'm not the leader of the Northern Faction anymore, and they kicked me out. It's doubtful they'll even listen to what I have to say..."

"Come up with a plan yourself if you want to live."

Fine... Golden Cicada sighed and racked his brains for a plan to persuade the Northern Faction to submit to Zeke.

After running around for the whole day, Zeke felt slightly tired. Before falling asleep, he briefly studied the way of forging divine weapons with Ossa Dei.

Not long after he slumbered, he suddenly heard a familiar voice speaking to him. "Are you asleep, Zeke?"

What? This is Lacey's voice! When he recognized her voice, he jolted awake and sat up in bed. "Is that you, Lacey? Where are you?"

"I'm here." Lacey's voice seemed to be originating from the living room.

Zeke couldn't even bother to wear his shoes as he dashed toward her voice.

Inside the living room, Lacey, who was in a set of plain clothes, was washing his clothes. Despite the sweat on her tired, reddish face, she still looked as beautiful as ever.

It's Lacey! It really is her! The moment he saw Lacey, whom he had missed so dearly, he could no longer hold back his yearning and burst into tears. "You're back, Lacey! I'm so happy! Do you know how much I miss you, Lacey? I'm sorry that I came here so late and made you suffer for so long..."

Lacey gently wiped Zeke's tears away. "My goodness, Zeke. You're actually crying! This is the first time I've seen you cry."

With difficulty, Zeke squeezed out a smile. "It's because I'm ecstatic, Lacey. These are tears of joy."

"Let me go, Zeke. I can barely breathe. How long has it been since you last washed your clothes? Let me do it for you."

However, Zeke refused to loosen his hug. "No. I'm scared that you'll leave me again if I let you go. I feel worse than death without you..."

Out of nowhere, Lacey sighed heavily.

Zeke frowned. "Why are you sighing, Lacey?"

With a smile, she assured, "I-It's nothing... You should leave this place quickly, Zeke."

"Sure. I'll bring you with me."

"I'm sorry, Zeke, but I'm afraid I can't leave with you." Lacey heaved another sigh.

"Why not?" Zeke was surprised.

"Don't ask me why. Just leave here as soon as you can. This place is too dangerous for you. I'll feel guilty of the rest of my life if anything happens to you. Don't worry, Zeke. I'm very safe here. Nothing bad will happen to me. Perhaps... Perhaps one day... I may be... able to... leave this place... to find you... Remember... to take good care... of Nelly... Tell her that... I love her..."

Why is her voice breaking up and getting weaker? Lowering his head, Zeke stared at Lacey. "What's wrong, Lacey?"

Chapter 2642

To Zeke's surprise, Lacey's body became half transparent and grew smaller as seconds passed.

"What's going on with you, Lacey?" Panicking, he hugged her tighter.

However, her body had turned fully transparent by that point, and she was gone.

In the end, her body transformed into a handkerchief.

It happened so fast that it left Zeke completely dumbfounded.

He reached out to grab the handkerchief. Unexpectedly, the handkerchief was pulled away by a strand of hair into the distance.

That hair... It looks like the strand belonging to the Ancient Gods I found in Tiger's Cave earlier today!

Enraged, Levi roared, "Stop right there! I don't care who you are! If you touch my wife, you're dead!"

Instead of halting, the hair moved faster. In an instant, it carried the handkerchief and floated hundreds of meters into the air.

B*stard! Zeke jumped and flew toward the hair.

In response, the hair soared across the sky at an even greater speed.

It was moving so briskly that he almost couldn't catch up to it.

Zeke was flabbergasted because as a Celestial Class warrior, he was one of, if not the fastest person alive.

Yet, the hair was moving faster than him. He couldn't help but wonder how powerful the Ancient Gods were if only a strand of their hair could surpass him in terms of speed.

Still, Zeke refused to give up.

After pursuing the hair for five minutes, he saw a ball of light in the distance.

In response, he slowed down cautiously.

It was unusual for a fire to exist in the wild during the middle of the night, after all.

When he got nearer to the fire, he was astonished to discover someone sitting next to it.

Upon closer inspection, he recognized the figure as an old beggar.

The disheveled old beggar had tattered clothing on him. His countenance was filled with wrinkles, and his mouth only had a single tooth left.

He was holding a handkerchief in his right hand as he gazed at the chicken he was roasting, drooling.

That handkerchief is definitely Lacey's. However, who's this old man? The hair didn't transform into him, right? Or is this really the true form of an Ancient God? If it is, he looks way too shabby. As those thoughts swirled in his mind, Zeke approached the beggar.

A wretched smile formed on the old beggar's face when he saw Zeke.

Once Zeke was close enough, he asked, "Where did you get this handkerchief, sir?"

The old beggar glanced at him before continuing to roast his chicken. "This is mine. What do you mean where did I get it?"

"This is my wife's handkerchief, sir. Have you seen her?"

"Your wife? Is her name Lacey?"

That excited Zeke. "Yes! Her name's Lacey! Can you tell me where my wife is, sir?"

The beggar chuckled. "I don't know."

Helplessly, Zeke confronted, "You must know where she is, sir. How would you know her name otherwise? Also, this handkerchief really does belong to my wife. Where did you get it?"

After a brief moment of contemplation, the beggar tore a chicken leg off the roasted chicken and threw it to Zeke. "You can have that."

Staring at the old man's dirty hand and yellow, tartar-covered teeth, Zeke felt too disgusted to eat.

"If you want to know where your wife is, you will eat."

For Lacey's sake, Zeke stifled his disgust, took a big bite of the chicken leg, and chewed it forcefully. "Can you tell me where my wife is now, sir?"

"Sit."

In response, Zeke sat.

Then, the old beggar uttered seriously, "I truly have no idea where she is."

Chapter 2643

Exasperated, Zeke questioned, "Are you messing with me, sir?"

"No need to get so angry, young man. I don't know where she is, but I've seen her before. She gave me this handkerchief," said the old beggar.

Naturally, Zeke was overjoyed. "Then where did you meet my wife, sir?"

The old man sighed. "I don't know where it is. Even if I tell you, you can't find it."

Knitting his brows, Zeke started to feel like the old beggar was messing around.

How can he not know where he met Lacey? What does he mean I can't find it even if he tells me? Is it a mysterious place? He asked, "Please tell me what you mean by that, sir."

"Let me put it this way. A parallel universe exists on Theos Island. That is where I met your wife. You can't use our reality as a reference point to comprehend that parallel universe. That's why I said I don't know where it is and that you can't find it."

Taking in a deep breath, Zeke inquired, "A parallel universe? How did she end up there? Please, you have to take me there, sir. I need to rescue my wife. Don't worry, if I succeed, I'm willing to give you anything."

The beggar sighed. "I want to, but even I don't know where it is. So, I can't bring you there."

"You're contradicting yourself, sir. You just said you met my wife in the parallel universe, so you've been there. Considering you're back in this world, it means you can travel back and forth between the two universes."

Speedily, the beggar explained, "Ah, I forgot to explain something to you. What you're seeing right now isn't the real me. I'm just a manifestation of a wisp of consciousness that escaped my real body. My actual body is still back in that parallel universe."

Zeke found it hard to believe the old beggar's words. "Really?"

"I don't have a reason to lie. However, I can tell you that this handkerchief is real and does belong to your wife. It's difficult for living beings to transcend between this universe and the parallel universe, but not for inanimate objects. This handkerchief contains a sliver of your wife's consciousness. Therefore, one may say what you saw and heard earlier is an authentic reflection of your wife."

"Wait, I get it now. You're one of the Ancient Gods."

"The people of this world like to call my physical form by that name. In reality, my people only live longer and are a little stronger than those here, that's all."

"The yellow talisman Erebus used earlier was capable of releasing the powerful mental energy of the Ancient Gods. Was that mental energy taken from you?"

"Ah, yeah. That b*stard was lucky enough to get his hands on the mental talisman I left in this world back then. That's why he's capable of unleashing my powerful mental energy. However, you should thank him. If not for his theft, my physical form wouldn't have been able to sense this universe, and I wouldn't have been able to project my consciousness to talk to you right now! "

Zeke was still a little skeptical of his words.

Chewing on the chicken, the old beggar asked candidly, "Let's stop wasting time, young man. Let me ask you something. Do you want to save your wife?"

Zeke nodded. "Of course I do! However, didn't you say you don't know where she is?"

"I don't, but I do have a way to send you to where she is and reunite the two of you."

Chapter 2644

Really?

Zeke felt like he had found the light at the end of a dark tunnel. "Would you be so kind as to help

me out here? I would be really grateful!"

The old beggar eyed Zeke from head to toe as he asked, "Are you carrying refined spiritual iron on you?"

Zeke quickly retrieved the spiritual iron that Draco had refined. "Yes, I am. One of my subordinates refined this one."

The old beggar took a look at it and shook his head. "It's of very poor quality. If you craft divine weapons with this spiritual iron, it'll probably be the worst divine weapon ever made."

"Is it of very low purity? It has already been refined, though," Zeke asked.

"Heh... Refined? This right here is a piece of trash to me!" the old beggar replied.

Zeke frowned. "Wait, aren't we supposed to be discussing how I can find my wife? Why did you change the topic all of a sudden?"

"You'll need the help of divine weapons if you want to see your wife. To be honest, you can forget about finding her if you craft divine weapons out of such low-quality spiritual iron," the old beggar explained.

"Could you be a little clearer about what you're trying to say? I'm a little lost here," Zeke asked with a confused look on his face.

"Let me put it this way. In order to reach a parallel universe, you will first need to cut this one open, but you won't be able to do that with ordinary divine weapons, though. It needs to at least be a Dark Level divine weapon. On top of that, you'll also need the help of a thousand men to slash it eighty-one times. How will you be able to save your wife if you can't even craft a Dark Level divine weapon?" the old beggar said.

"Thank you very much for the advice. I will be sure to craft a Dark Level divine weapon!" Zeke replied after giving it some thought.

The old beggar nodded. "Good. Remember, the higher the purity level, the greater your chances are at crafting a Dark Level divine weapon. There, I've told you everything I know. The rest is up to you."

"Sorry, I have one more question. Who are you, sir? Why are you imprisoned in a parallel universe too?" Zeke asked.

To his surprise, the old beggar exploded with anger when he heard that. "Imprisoned? What are you talking about? I'm the owner of Theos Island! No one could possibly imprison me! I just got

sick and tired of all the trivial drama, so I decided to enter a parallel universe to stay away from it all!"

Zeke simply flashed him a smile without exposing his lies.

It's obvious that this old beggar is trapped inside the parallel universe. He managed to get a bit of his consciousness out and is guiding me to rescue him!

"Could you please help look after my wife in the meantime? I'll be sure to repay you when I rescue you both!" Zeke asked.

The old beggar nodded in satisfaction. "Good, good. Don't worry; I'll make sure to take good care of your wife in that parallel universe. To be honest, there are lots of powerful warriors in that parallel universe, but they're small fry to me. All I have to do is give the word, and no one will dare lay a finger on your wife."

"There are lots of powerful warriors there? Who are they? Why are they in that parallel universe?" Zeke asked worriedly.

"That's a secret. All right, enough chitchat. I need to get going now."

The old beggar then turned around and limped away, his body fading into a semi-transparent state as he got further.

Zeke knew that it was due to his consciousness growing weaker.

He got up and said, "Thank you for the help, sir. I'll go find you very soon -"

Chapter 2645

Zeke was halfway through his sentence when a voice called out to him, "Are you okay, Zeke? Wake up!"

Suddenly, his vision started to go black.

What the... What's going on?

Zeke began struggling in panic.

His eyes shot open moments later, and he saw that he was still inside his room.

Sole Wolf was standing next to him with a worried look on his face.

Huh? Was that all just a dream? Does this mean that Lacey, the old beggar, and the parallel universe don't exist?

At that very moment, Zeke felt his heart sink in disappointment.

"I'm so glad you're finally awake! I was worried sick!" Sole Wolf exclaimed.

"What happened to me, Sole Wolf?" Zeke asked with a frown.

"I was standing guard outside the door when I heard you screaming. I came rushing in and saw you waving a drumstick around. You looked like you were waving goodbye at someone," Sole Wolf replied.

"A drumstick? What drumstick?" Zeke was confused.

"The one you're holding in your hand, Zeke. I was wondering where you got it from!"

As Zeke glanced at his right hand, his eyes went wide with shock and excitement.

Sure enough, there was a burnt drumstick in his hand.

The old beggar gave me this drumstick earlier! So, that wasn't a dream, then? No, it was a dream that the old beggar created. The parallel universe does exist, and Lacey is trapped inside! I'll be able to see her again if I can craft a Dark Level divine weapon and cut my way through this dimension! I must craft a Dark Level divine weapon! Oh, and I'll also need the help of a thousand men to deliver eighty-one cuts! I need to assemble thousand-man team as soon as possible!

Having confirmed his objectives, Zeke got out of bed and asked, "Sole Wolf, what's our progress with the spiritual iron refinement?"

"We're working on it endlessly day and night. However, progress is rather slow as we only have a few people here who can refine spiritual iron," Sole Wolf replied.

Zeke nodded. "Come on, let's go have a look. We need to speed things up."

Sole Wolf was a little puzzled as to why Zeke was suddenly concerned about the progress of spiritual iron refinement.

After all, Zeke had never asked about it before, let alone tried to rush it.

As Ares and Nameless were in the room next to Zeke's, they came rushing over to have a look after hearing his screams.

The two of them breathed sighs of relief when they saw that he was fine.

"What happened, Great Marshal? Are you okay?"

Zeke nodded. "Yeah, I'm okay. Don't worry about it. Come on, we're heading over to the Spirit Stone storage. I have a new mission for you guys."

On the way there, Zeke asked Ossa Dei, "Hey, Ossa Dei! What's the deal with Dark Level divine weapons? How many levels are there? Tell me all about it."

"There are a total of four levels of divine weapons. Sky Level, Earth Level, Dark Level, and Yellow Level. As you probably have guessed, Yellow Level is the lowest one of the four. Sky Level divine weapons were commonplace during the era of Ancient Gods. You could also purchase Earth Level divine weapons easily. As for Dark Level divine weapons, you could find them pretty much everywhere. It wouldn't be an overstatement to say that everyone was walking around with Earth Level divine weapons. However, in this era, you can barely even find a Dark Level divine weapon, let alone a Sky Level divine weapon. It'll be hard to craft a Dark Level divine weapon!" Ossa Dei explained.

"I must craft a Dark Level divine weapon, no matter how hard or costly it will be," Zeke said.

"One would need to have at least two years of training in order to craft a Dark Level divine weapon, and that's during the Ancient Gods era. You, on the other hand, have only been exposed to divine weapons for a few days. It's impossible for someone like you to craft a Dark Level divine weapon," Ossa Dei replied.

"I'll just keep trying until I succeed, I'm sure I'll be able to pull it off someday!" Zeke said.

Chapter 2646

"Rest assured that I'll do my best to help you out. While it is true that ordinary armorers would need two to three years to craft Dark Level divine weapons, things might be different if I help you out!" Ossa Dei replied.

"Thanks." That was one of the rare moments Zeke thanked Ossa Dei.

He then turned toward Sole Wolf and said, "Sole Wolf, tell Killer Wolf and the others to stop searching for Lacey and return immediately."

"Why aren't you searching for Lacey anymore, Zeke? You're not giving up on her, are you?" Sole Wolf asked with a frown.

"Of course not! I would never give up on Lacey! I now know where she is, so Killer Wolf and the others are just wasting their time searching for her on Theos Island. Since they won't be able to find her, we might as well have them return and do something else instead," Zeke replied.

Sole Wolf was overjoyed. "You know where Lacey is? Tell me where she is, and I'll go find her right away!"

Zeke let out a sigh. "Unfortunately, Lacey is in a different dimension. I need to craft a Dark Level divine weapon in order to cut through this dimension and get to her. As such, our next objective is to craft that divine weapon as soon as possible."

Sole Wolf, Ares, and Nameless were confused when they heard that. Although they had no idea what Zeke was talking about, they knew they simply had to do as he said.

If crafting a divine weapon is what it takes, then we'll get it done!

Sole Wolf then contacted Killer Wolf and told them to return immediately.

Naturally, Killer Wolf and the others were hesitant to return at first.

"But we don't have a lead on Lacey's location yet! Why are you asking us to head back so soon?"

"Just do as you're told and get back here. I'll explain in detail when you arrive. It's a little hard to do so over the phone," Sole Wolf said.

He couldn't possibly explain it to Killer Wolf for he himself didn't understand Zeke's words either.

"Tell Zeke to let us continue searching for Lacey. This place is a paradise for our training. There are wild beasts everywhere, so we've been getting stronger with each passing day. I'm very close to reaching Peak Class. Alfred and Tyler will soon reach Peak Class too. We just need three more days," Killer Wolf said.

"Hold on. I'll go ask Zeke about this," Sole Wolf replied and relayed Killer Wolf's message to Zeke.

"All right. You have three days. After that, you must return regardless of whether you succeed in leveling up," Zeke said after giving it some thought.

"Don't worry, Zeke. If all goes well, I'll be able to level up by tonight!" Killer Wolf reassured him.

"Remember, safety comes first!" Zeke reminded him before hanging up the phone.

On the other end of the phone, Killer Wolf, Alfred, and Tyler were panting heavily as they lay in a den, all covered in blood.

There were lots of carcasses on the ground next to them, including wild tigers the size of calves, lions the size of camels, and pythons as long and thick as small trees.

As they were in the center of Theos Island, there were wild beasts everywhere. Killer Wolf and the others had spent the past few days killing those beasts, which served as an effective form of training.

In just a few days, Killer Wolf and the others had gotten so much stronger that they were close to reaching Peak Class.

Tyler ripped a bloody leg off a tiger and munched on it raw to replenish his strength.

"Haha! This feels great!"

Alfred, too, grabbed a tiger leg for himself. "You're making the most progress among us, Killer Wolf. How close are you to reaching Peak Class?"

"If all goes well, I should be able to reach it by tonight. I'll be needing you two to protect me," Killer Wolf replied.

Alfred let out a hearty chuckle. "Haha! No problem!"

"What did Great Marshal say on the phone earlier?" Tyler asked.

"Zeke is giving us three more days to train. We'll have to return after that, regardless of whether we reach Peak Class," Killer Wolf replied.

Chapter 2647

"I only need two days, so that won't be an issue!" Tyler declared confidently.

Alfred spat out a mouthful of blood. "F*ck! I'll only have a sixty-percent chance of advancing in three days. No, this won't do. I need to get out there and kill some more! Where are those animals?"

Zeke went all the way to the Spirit Stone's storage location in the Southern Faction.

Draco and his men were busy refining spiritual iron at the time.

As there were only dozens of people who were knowledgeable regarding spiritual iron, their progress was extremely slow.

Phoenix was among the people in charge of refining spiritual iron.

Her eyes lit up when she saw Zeke show up. She felt her heart thumping wildly in her chest as a warm sensation filled her body and removed whatever feelings of exhaustion she had.

Is this what it feels like to be in love? As much as I hate to admit it, I know I have fallen in love with Zeke. It's a shame he won't even notice me...

Feeling jealous, Phoenix cursed at Zeke inside her heart and tightened her grip on her tools.

The two guys working next to her didn't know how to react when they saw her response.

Judging by the way she looks at Zeke, it's obvious that she has fallen head over heels for him! She's our perfect goddess, and yet, she's obsessed with a man who won't even look at her... This is so painful to watch!

As Zeke made his way over to inspect the spiritual iron, Draco said with a smile, "Have a look at the spiritual iron. We've refined, Mr. Williams! What do you think?"

Zeke shook his head. "No, this won't do. The purity level is way too low. You need to refine it further."

What?

Draco was shocked by Zeke's response. "You're messing with me, right, Mr. Williams? I bet even Legatus wouldn't be able to refine it to this level of purity!"

"No, I'm serious. You need to increase the purity level even further. Draco, have the boys work a little harder to refine this spiritual iron again," Zeke said.

It was at that moment that Draco knew Zeke was not joking at all. He was dead serious.

"All right, then. We'll keep refining it until you are satisfied with the results, Mr. Williams."

Zeke then turned toward Sole Wolf and ordered, "Sole Wolf, Ares, Nameless, I'll need you three to stay and help refine the spiritual iron."

"No problem!" Sole Wolf and the other two replied in unison.

Zeke told the rest of them, "Please give it your best shot, boys. Rest assured that I will reward all of you well after this!"

Phoenix got even angrier when she heard that.

Aaargh! Zeke, you heartless b*stard! You only care about your boys! What about me, huh? I'm about to collapse from exhaustion here! Hmph... Just you wait, Zeke! One day, I'll get you back for this!

Phoenix was halfway through cursing at Zeke when she saw someone's face right next to hers.

"Eek! Who's there?" she screamed at the top of her voice and jumped three feet into the air.

Why is she freaking out like this?

"Goodness, you scared me!" Zeke exclaimed with a nonchalant look on his face.

That was when Phoenix realized it was Zeke standing next to her.

"What are you doing, Zeke? Why are you standing so close to me?" she asked.

"I heard someone cursing at me, so I was wondering if it was you," Zeke replied.

"N-No, it wasn't me!" Phoenix stammered nervously.

Apparently, she was muttering under her breath earlier, and Zeke's hearing was so sharp that he had heard it from all the way there.

"Are you sure it wasn't you?" Zeke asked.

"Of course it wasn't me! Why would I be cursing at you?" Phoenix replied.

Zeke nodded. "That's good to hear."

He then reached out and grabbed Phoenix by the hand.

Chapter 2648

Phoenix instinctively pulled her hand back and asked, "W-Wait a minute! What are you doing, Zeke?"

Zeke ignored her question and pulled her toward him. "Stop moving. I'm going to bandage your wound."

That was when Phoenix realized she had a blister on her hand, and Zeke was about to clean her wound.

Her heart was racing, and her face was burning bright red as she watched him hold her hand tightly.

This feels so good... It fills my heart with a sense of security that I've never felt before!

Zeke then pulled out Ammo Needle and carefully pricked the blister to release the blood inside. "You should just get some rest if you're injured. Why force yourself to keep working? You'll only lower your productivity even further. At this rate, even an ordinary member of Centuria could outperform you."

Phoenix let out a defiant snort. "Hmph! That's none of your business!"

"Gee, pardon me for trying to be nice. Your wound would've been infected if I didn't treat it in time. I just saved you from the possibility of having your arm amputated, and this is how you repay me? Instead of thanking me, you tell me it's none of my business?"

"I..."

Phoenix suddenly found herself at a loss for words.

After treating her wound, Zeke quickly packed his stuff and walked off without saying another word.

Phoenix had a dazed look in her eyes as she watched him go.

It sure feels good to be cared for and looked after... Sure, he might be a little rude, but I can't help it! I just love how manly he is! I knew I had good taste in men!

The two guys working next to her were completely speechless at that point.

Yup, Phoenix clearly only has eyes for Zeke. She has definitely fallen head over heels for that guy! He doesn't even deserve a beauty like her, and yet, she's super obsessed with him! What a shame...

Of course, Zeke was completely oblivious to Phoenix's dreamy gaze.

Cutting through this dimension to rescue Lacey was all he could think about at the time.

In order to enter that parallel universe, I'll need both a Dark Level divine weapon and the help of a thousand men to deliver eighty-one slashes. That means I'll need to have a thousand subordinates to help me out. The Southern Faction alone won't be enough. I'll need to get the Northern Faction involved as well.

With that in mind, he glanced in the direction of the Northern Faction and mumbled to himself, "I wonder if Golden Cicada can help convince them to lend me a hand..."

Meanwhile, Golden Cicada had just returned to his base at the Northern Faction.

Things were rather lively over there as a few Centurions and their subordinates were fighting over resources at the base.

Golden Cicada felt distressed upon seeing what a mess the place had become.

After glancing about, he saw Sebastian talking to another group of Centuria.

I'm not sure if the people of Northern Faction would listen to me and work for the Southern Faction, but Sebastian and I are pretty close, so I can start by asking him. Maybe he'll help me convince everyone else.

With that in mind, Golden Cicada cautiously made his way toward Sebastian. As he got closer, he overheard what the group of Centuria and Sebastian were talking about.

"Our faction is in deep trouble now!"

"I can't believe the Southern Faction would distract us, so they could steal all of our Spirit Stones!"

"Without the Spirit Stones, we won't be able to trade with the Legion for resources. At this rate, we're all going to either starve or freeze to death!"

"What do we do? I don't want to just sit by and watch my comrades die!"

"Do you think the Southern Faction will take us in if we side with them?"

"Don't be ridiculous! We just attacked them a while ago! It's a miracle that they were willing to let us come back alive! There's no way they'd take us in!"

"It looks like we're doomed this time. In the worst-case scenario, we'll have to go to Contubernium's district. We might just stand a chance at survival that way."

Golden Cicada's eyes lit up when he heard that.

Chapter 2649

Wow! I'm in luck! Just minutes ago, I was worried that they would refuse to submit to the Southern Faction, but they seem to be yearning for it! In that case, I might as well lend them a helping hand! Hahaha! This is great!

Having made up his mind, Golden Cicada came up with a plan and hit himself on the chest to cough up a mouthful of blood.

He then smeared it all over his body and acted as though he was severely injured as he limped into the base.

Sebastian was the first to notice him the moment he entered the base.

"Hold it right there, Golden Cicada! How dare you come back here? You'd better not try anything funny, or I'll kill you on the spot!" he shouted furiously.

Sebastian's loud yelling instantly drew the attention of everyone in the area.

Realizing that Golden Cicada had returned, everyone swarmed toward him and confronted him angrily.

"You've got some guts coming back here, you f*cking b*stard!"

"Hmph! What, have you not done enough damage? Are you here to finish us off or something?"

"We trusted you! I can't believe you'd betray us like that! Don't you feel any shame?"

"Why are we wasting our energy yelling at him? We should just kill him right away!"

Golden Cicada let out a huge sigh as he replied. "Please just hear me out here, you guys. I know you all hate me for what I did, but I didn't have a choice."

"Heh... Are you trying to justify your act of betrayal? You can save your breath, Golden Cicada! We're not going to believe you!" Sebastian exclaimed.

Golden Cicada then coughed up a huge mouthful of blood on the spot. He was struggling to breathe and looked like he could die at any second.

He then scanned the crowd with a look of melancholy in his eyes as he said, "Word of advice, don't bite the hand. that feeds you. Trust me, you'll regret it..."

What the f*ck?

The crowd exploded with anger when they heard that.

"How dare you lecture us when you should be apologizing to us? Do you have a death wish or something?"

"Just give the word and we'll kill him, Sebastian!"

"I can't relieve the anger and hatred in my heart unless he's dead!"

To their surprise, Sebastian motioned for them to quiet down.

"Quiet down, people! Let's hear Golden Cicada out. I want to know how we're biting the hand that feeds us here. Golden Cicada, you'd better give us a good reason, or we will kill you."

Golden Cicada coughed up yet another mouthful of blood to make himself look as pitiful as possible.

"You can drop the act, Golden Cicada. So what if you're severely wounded? Our comrades have lost their lives! You should consider yourself lucky that you're still alive!" Sebastian snapped at him.

Golden Cicada waved at him as he replied, "I'm not trying to put up an act. This is just my body responding normally to these injuries. I don't need your sympathy. Anyway, back to the matter at hand. Look, I'll be honest with you all here. A part of what Draco said is true. It wasn't the Southern Faction that wiped out Centuria. Instead, it was their enemy, Elder Erebus, who did it."

Elder Erebus?

Everyone exchanged confused glances as they had never heard of that name before.

"Don't bother asking around. None of you here know who Elder Erebus is because he's simply far too powerful. It's common to not know about Golden ... someone who is out of our league. Now, you guys might be wondering just how powerful Elder Erebus is. Well, let's put it this way. With the snap of a finger, he's able to summon hundreds of shadows and have them enter the bodies of my subordinates. The next thing I know, my subordinates have all become his puppets. After that, he gave an order that caused all of my subordinates to die on the spot. After killing my men, he wanted me to submit to him and have my men attack Southern Faction. He threatened to kill me if I refused to do as he said. Being a man of honor, I told him that I would rather die than sacrifice my subordinates. To my surprise, he then decided to threaten me with you guys instead. He said he'd kill all of you and feed your families to the fishes in the ocean if I didn't comply. Please do not doubt Elder Erebus' words because he most certainly has what it takes to keep them. So, after weighing the pros and cons of my options, I eventually decided to do as Elder Erebus said. At the very least, my men would have a chance at surviving the battle against the Southern Faction. It was either that or certain death at the hands of Elder Erebus," Golden Cicada continued.

Chapter 2650

Everyone fell silent and went into deep thought after hearing what he said.

They were still doubtful about Golden Cicada's words.

"Answer me this, Golden Cicada. If Elder Erebus really is as powerful as you claim, then why didn't he wipe out the Southern Faction on his own? There's no need for him to use our help, is there? It sounds completely unnecessary to me!" Sebastian asked.

"It's not as simple as you might think. I'm sure you guys know about Zeke taking Draco's place as the leader of the Southern Faction, right? Well, Zeke is really powerful and the arch-enemy of Elder Erebus. If Elder Erebus were to attack, Zeke would surely intervene. That could result in Elder Erebus being killed by the Southern Faction instead. Things would be different if Centuria attacked, though. Zeke won't hurt his own people, and even if he did, Elder Erebus would be able to stop him. You guys have to believe me. I only attacked the Southern Faction. because I had no other choice!"

Everyone began discussing among themselves again.

"Do you think Golden Cicada is telling the truth?"

"It makes sense from a logical standpoint, but... I don't know. I just have a hard time trusting Golden Cicada."

"To be honest, I don't really trust Golden Cicada either. I feel like he's just playing us like fools."

"Right now, I don't care if he's telling the truth. All I want to know is how we'll survive without food. It won't be long until we start dying of starvation!"

Golden Cicada motioned for them to quiet down as he continued, "Please, hear me out till the end. I know some of you still don't trust me. You guys still think I'm lying, and that's fine by me. Just keep in mind that we may end up starving to death now that our Spirit Stones have been taken. However, I have a solution that could save us all."

Everyone was staring at Golden Cicada like a pack of hungry wolves after hearing that.

"Well? Go ahead and tell us this plan of yours. We might just forgive you if you can help us all survive this."

"Okay, I'll be honest with you guys here. Even if you all have sufficient food and resources, you'd all still end up dead a few days later. Because we have failed to wipe out the Southern Faction as Elder Erebus wanted us to, he will surely kill us as punishment. Trust me, none of us are going to survive that. Right now, our best bet is to submit to the Southern Faction and ask Zeke to protect us," Golden Cicada explained.

"You think we don't know that? We thought about doing so, but we've always been fighting against the Southern Faction. Now that we've attacked them, there's no way they'd take us in! Unless, of course, you have a way of convincing them to take us in," Sebastian said.

"Why do you think I came back? I told the Southern Faction everything and said we'd be willing to join them in the fight against Elder Erebus, but they said they needed some time to consider it. After paying a huge price, I managed to get Zeke to agree to my request. I'll take care of our alliance with the Southern Faction, so all you guys have to do is submit to them," Golden Cicada replied.

Chapter 2651

Everyone was staring at Golden Cicada in disbelief.

"The Southern Faction is really willing to take us in? Are you sure you're not messing with us,

Golden Cicada? Why would they take us in after we attacked them? What price did you pay to change their minds about this?" Sebastian asked.

Golden Cicada let out a sigh as he replied, "You don't need to know that. This is between me and the Southern Faction, and they won't allow me to tell anyone about it. Come on, I'll take you guys over to the Southern Faction."

All eyes were on Sebastian as they waited for him to make the decision.

Golden Cicada used to be the most trusted person in the Northern Faction.

After his downfall, however, Sebastian took his place and became the heart of the Northern Faction.

"All right, we'll trust you this once. But if I find out that you're lying to us again, I will cut your head off on the spot!" Sebastian said with his teeth clenched after giving it some thought.

Golden Cicada nodded. "Don't worry! I'll chop my own head off if I'm lying to you guys."

Just like that, they all headed over to the Southern Faction with Golden Cicada and Sebastian leading the way.

The group had just arrived outside the base when the guard stopped them. "Stop right there, you Northern Faction b*stards! How dare you guys return after we decided to spare your lives? Take another step, and none of you will be leaving this place alive!"

Sebastian turned toward Golden Cicada and asked, "Hey, Golden Cicada! What's going on here?"

"Please calm down, sir. I've already made a deal with Mr. Williams. We have all agreed to submit to the Southern Faction and take Mr. Williams' side," Golden Cicada replied with a smile.

The guard was a little doubtful. "Is that so? How come I haven't heard about it?"

"You can go ask Mr. Williams if you don't believe me," Golden Cicada suggested.

"You guys wait here. I'll go ask Mr. Williams about this," the guard said after giving it some thought.

He then ran all the way to Zeke's residence and told him about Golden Cicada and the people from the Northern Faction.

Zeke was a little surprised when he heard that. Who would've thought Golden Cicada would be

able to convince that many people to join us so soon?

He then had the guard lead him toward Golden Cicada and the others.

The people of the Northern Faction calmed down when they saw Zeke show up.

Golden Cicada bowed respectfully at Zeke as he said, "I have brought everyone over, Mr. Williams. Please take us in."

Sebastian and the others, too, bowed and said, "Please take us in, Mr. Williams!"

Zeke nodded. "All right, then. You can all stay here."

The members of the Northern Faction cheered out loud in response.

"Since you're all going to stay here, I'll need you all to do some work for me. Tell me, do any of you know how to refine spiritual iron?" Zeke asked.

About twenty people in the crowd raised their hands, including Sebastian and Golden Cicada.

Zeke's lips curled into a satisfied smile when he saw that.

They have twice as many people compared to the Southern Faction who know how to refine spiritual iron. We'll finally be able to speed up the process.

With that in mind, he said, "Golden Cicada, lead them and assist with the refining of spiritual iron."

"Right!"

Golden Cicada waved at the others and had them follow him.

Zeke then turned toward the rest and continued, "The rest of you can help with collecting Spirit Stones."

"Understood!"

Fearing that they would get kicked out, they immediately began working diligently.

The next few days went by peacefully, but the peace did not last long. Three days after the Northern Faction submitted to Zeke, Phoenix went looking for Zeke urgently.

Since she and Zeke were close, she barged right into his room without even knocking.

"Bad news, Zeke!" she exclaimed anxiously, only to realize Zeke was still sleeping soundly in bed.

What the... Why is Zeke spending most of his time sleeping? He's such a lazy bum!

Unbeknownst to her, Zeke was sleeping in hopes of seeing Lacey and the old beggar in his dreams again.

Chapter 2652

Alas, it had been several days since Zeke had dreamed of the old beggar and Lacey, which frustrated him.

He opened his eyes and asked impatiently, "Why are you in such a panic?"

"Today's the day we're supposed to offer the Spirit Stones to the Legatus. If all goes as planned, the Legatus will send someone to come and collect them. However, our Spirit Stones have been refined into spiritual iron already. How will we explain to the Legatus?" Phoenix responded.

He replied, "If anyone comes asking for the Spirit Stones, just send them straight to me."

Hearing that, she asked cautiously, "Tell me the truth, Zeke. Do you want to meet the envoy sent by the Legatus. because you're planning to kill the person? You're not thinking of going up against the Legatus, are you?"

"Not at all," Zeke replied with a shake of his head.

Phoenix breathed a sigh of relief. "That's good to hear. I know you're very skilled. However, you're no match for the Legatuses. I heard they're all warriors of some class or other. In terms of the outside world, they could very well be kings. They have extraordinary power-"

"King Class," Zeke interrupted.

She nodded immediately. "Right, that's the one. King Class. That's why you shouldn't act rashly."

Nodding, he said, "My goal isn't King Class but Theos."

Phoenix could not help chuckling, then replied with a smile, "Isn't that just building castles in the

air? Forget it. I'm not going to stay here and talk nonsense with you. You should think about how you're going to deal with the Legatus."

Naturally, she did not believe Zeke was being serious. Theos? Do you honestly think you can afford to provoke Theos? You're not even qualified to be a servant of Theos.

With that, she turned to leave.

"Wait!" Zeke suddenly called out.

Phoenix halted in her tracks and turned around to look at him. "Anything else?"

He walked up to her, then stretched out an arm toward her forehead.

Instinctively, she stopped him. "Hey! What do you think you're doing?"

Ignoring her, he placed his hand on top of her head and commanded, "Don't move."

Intimidated by his masculine aura, she obediently stood still, allowing him to touch her head.

It's my first time having such close contact with a man. No, it's my second time. The first was when Zeke grabbed my hand forcefully and helped clean my wound. Is this what it feels like to be patted on the head tenderly? I feel... a little moved and somewhat nervous.

Her body stiffened. She was at a complete loss for what to do and didn't even know where to place her hands.

Why is he stroking my head? Is he finally going to confess his feelings to me? How should I respond? Should I accept his feelings? Will that make him think I'm too bold? Or do I reject him? What if that makes him frustrated and deters him from continuing to pursue me? Oh, what a dilemma this is!

Suddenly, she felt Zeke's palm emit a warm current that flowed into her through the top of her head and spread to every pore, blood vessel, and cell in her body.

The warmth made her feel thoroughly at ease. It swept away her fatigue. Her muscles subconsciously relaxed, and she felt much more energized.

It's as though I've just woken up from a good night's sleep. This is wonderful!

A hint of a smile appeared on Phoenix's lips.

Just as she was enjoying the moment, the warm current disappeared suddenly and

unexpectedly.

"Oh, do go on. Continue. Don't stop," she said without thinking.

In a frosty tone, Zeke said, "Continue? That's enough already. I noticed you were quite exhausted these past few days, and it caused some internal injuries. Hence, I used my energy to dispel the dark energy in your body. Make sure you get more rest in the future. You can go now."

She rose to her feet and stretched herself. My body does feel much more relaxed.

Then, she looked at Zeke and asked, "Are you going to ask me to leave just like that?"

"Oh, please help me take out the trash at the door," he added.

Chapter 2653

"I... Don't you have anything you want. to say to me?" Phoenix demanded angrily.

Zeke glanced at her curiously. "What should I say to you?"

"That sentence that men often say to women," she replied, her face reddening.

He was struck with sudden realization. "Men and women shouldn't get too close to each other. Please leave. I'm going to sleep now."

"Go to hell!" she yelled furiously before spinning on her heel and storming off.

As she walked out, she did not forget to kick the door hard to vent her anger.

Zeke smiled bitterly. How could I not understand what Phoenix meant? However, everyone else pales in comparison to Lacey. Having seen Lacey's beauty for myself, how could any other ordinary woman ever catch my eye?

A sad look crossed his face as he picked up Lacey's handkerchief and the strand of hair the beggar had left behind.

"Oh, Lacey. Why did you stop appearing in my dreams? Also, Mr. Old Beggar, would it kill you to release a glimmer of consciousness from the parallel universe again? Why hasn't anything happened for so long?"

The center of Theos Island was a remote, mountainous area blanketed with trees. No one ventured there. The forest was dense, and there were many wild animals.

Since the place was practically untouched by humans, the vegetation and beasts in the area were two to three times bigger than the average size of those of the same species. The animals were also much more ferocious.

At that moment, somewhere in the primeval forest, an elderly man and a fierce tiger were entangled in an intense fight.

The tiger was as large as an ox, covered in wiry fur that was as hard as steel nails. It knocked the trees down and trampled over the grass wherever it rampaged, and its tremendous roar shook the ground.

Its opponent was an elderly man in his fifties. He had grayish hair, and his clothes were in tatters. Bloody wounds covered his entire body, especially his back, which had a deep gash running down his entire spine. It was a terrifying sight to behold.

However, even though the elderly man was seriously injured, he seemed to have no fear and fought even more fiercely.

Meanwhile, in one corner of the battlefield sat two men-one older and one younger.

They watched the fight with great interest and showed no intention of interfering. Occasionally, they would cheer when impressed by a particular move.

A bonfire was burning in front of them, and they were roasting a chicken Killer Wolf had specially prepared over the fire. Although not fully cooked yet, its fragrance wafted in the air.

The younger man called out, "Hurry up and end the battle, Alfred! The chicken is almost done. If you take too long, there might not be any left for you."

The three men were none other than Killer Wolf, Tyler, and Alfred.

Killer Wolf and Tyler had attained Peak Class the previous day, so Alfred was the only one left.

Hence, he was using the tiger to train. His aim was to achieve Peak Class that day.

Zeke had only given the trio three days, and it was the last day already. Even if he failed, he would have to return, and it would be tough to find another golden opportunity for him to advance to the next rank.

Alfred retorted, "You jerk! How dare you touch my food? I'll make you pay for it. Give me five

more minutes. I guarantee I'll break through to Peak Class. Come on, little kitty. Let's make this quick. I've no time to play around with you."

The tiger seemed to understand what he said. Upon hearing Alfred call it "little kitty," it flew into a rage and let out a thunderous roar.

The roar shook the trees so hard that their leaves rustled. All the birds and beasts within a ten-mile radius fled in all directions, frightened by the tiger's fury.

Arching its body, the tiger gathered its strength and pounced. It swiped its front claws, aiming them directly at Alfred's head.

Killer Wolf and Tyler tensed up immediately.

It's such a vicious attack that even the two of us would have to go all out to block it!

They could not help wondering whether Alfred, who was one rank lower than them, could manage to withstand such a blow.

Both men stared intently at the battlefield without blinking, ready to step in and help Alfred at any time.

They had a vague sense that if he survived the tiger's attack, there was a possibility he might advance straight to the next warrior rank.

Chapter 2654

If he could not withstand it, however, he was probably going to die.

Alfred fumed. "Killer Wolf, Tyler, the two of you better stay out of my fight! Little kitty, the fight's over!"

With that, Alfred leaped toward the ferocious tiger.

"You lunatic!" Killer Wolf screamed as he paled.

He could not believe that Alfred was going to try to fend off the ferocious tiger's attack with his own body. He's crazy!

The tiger's physique was its strongest weapon, and the human body was weak.

He's insane to try to use his weakness to fight with the tiger's strength!

Alas, Killer Wolf could not stop him even if he wanted to.

Alfred and the tiger had already collided with each other with a loud thump. Then, a blinding crimson ray illuminated the area.

Both Killer Wolf and Tyler could not see what was happening while the crimson ray blinded them, and their hearts were in their mouths.

They had fought alongside Alfred for many years. Naturally, they would not want to see Alfred die.

A second went by. Then, two, three...

As time ticked by, the red light slowly dissipated.

Killer Wolf and Tyler widened their eyes to observe the scene within the crimson light.

It was then they vaguely saw the silhouette of the tiger.

Alfred's figure was nowhere to be found.

Their hearts lurched.

No way... Alfred couldn't have been devoured by the tiger, could he? How could he have disappeared into thin air?

Right as the two were confounded by the scene, the tiger that was in mid-air exploded all of a sudden. What came with the thunderous sound were pieces of bloody flesh being splattered everywhere.

After that, the figure of a human appeared at the spot where the tiger was hovering. It was none other than Alfred.

A bold thought popped into Killer Wolf and Tyler's minds. Did Alfred just get into the tiger's stomach and caused it to explode from the inside? He's exceptionally gutsy!

Alfred, who was still hovering motionlessly in the air, then began meditating.

Killer Wolf huffed. "That's enough, old man. Stop trying to play it cool. You've won."

At that, Tyler quietly asked, "Killer Wolf, do you sense that? The power he's emanating is getting stronger and stronger!"

Killer Wolf closed his eyes and focused on his senses. Then, he cried out, "Ha, you're right. This old man's about to rise to the next level!"

"Let's get away from him. Entering Peak Class will attract divine punishment. Let's not get caught up in that."

"Yes, let's retreat." Without hesitation, Killer Wolf quickly retreated and kept a distance from Alfred.

Alfred was like a jinx that everyone detested at that moment, for anyone close to him would be dragged into the mess.

Boom!

Dark clouds abruptly gathered in the previously clear sky as a bolt of lightning struck the ground.

Alfred slowly opened his eyes, revealing a cold glint within them.

He tilted his head back to look at the sky and shouted, "Come, divine punishment! We'll see who's the last one standing today!"

Boom!

Another earth-shaking sound came with a flash of lightning that was aiming right at Alfred.

"Bring it on!"

Alfred released a wave of energy that shot straight to the sky.

When Alfred's energy slammed into the flash of lightning, the energy dissipated immediately, but the lightning's power only decreased by a little.

Finally, the lightning bolt struck Alfred. The old man's hair and skin burned, and the smell of cooking flesh. wafted in the air.

With a cry of pain, Alfred struggled and nearly fell from the air.

Fortunately, he managed to regain his balance and began absorbing the bolt of lightning.

The lightning bolt was actually energy, and what Alfred was doing was absorbing the energy and

transforming it into his own.

Alfred's energy became even more condensed as he absorbed the bolt of lightning, and his power increased.

Perhaps a better way of describing the lightning bolt would be to say that it was a gift from God to warriors attaining Peak Class.

Only by taking in the divine punishments could a human achieve Peak Class, after all.

Crack!

Once again, another strike of lightning came toward Alfred.

The longer Alfred fought, the braver he became, and he welcomed the lightning wholeheartedly.

Chapter 2655

Both Killer Wolf and Tyler watched him in fear.

Although they had encountered the same thing a few days before, they were not as frightened when they themselves were experiencing it. Only when they were standing on the sidelines did they truly see the terror of the divine punishment.

They were worried that Alfred would not be able to take it.

In the meantime, ten kilometers away from them, a team was hunting in the woods.

The team was none other than the team Northern King led.

He was usually a busy man, and it was rare for him to have the time to head out for a hunting session like that day. Hence, he was in a particularly good mood.

However, the clear blue sky suddenly turned into a gloomy one as thunder echoed and lightning struck. Strong gusts of wind howled, and large droplets of rain pelted them mercilessly.

Northern King's subordinates hastily uttered, "Quick, set up a tent!"

The group immediately started pitching tents to shield Northern King from the rain.

However, Northern King was staring at the center of the storm in silent contemplation.

A moment later, his subordinate's voice pulled him away from his train of thought. "Northern Master, please move inside the tent to hide from the rain. It looks like it won't be stopping for a while."

Yet, Northern King shook his head and commented, "Something seems off about this rain."

"What?"

A few of the team members furrowed their brows in response.

What's off about it? Rain is a common occurrence in these woods. Still, I'm sure there's a reason behind Northern King's words.

Thus, one of his subordinates tentatively asked, "Northern Master, what's wrong with this rain?"

"I can sense the power from the thunder and the lightning. This is clearly divine punishment!"

Divine punishment? What's that?

A look of confusion crossed his subordinates' faces.

Northern King continued, "I've only seen divine punishment twice-when the Camp Masters of Camp South and Camp North advanced in their classes."

"Could it be that someone else's about to reach Camp Master class? Who could it be?"

The "Camp Master" they were talking about corresponded to "Peak Class" that Killer Wolf was talking about.

Upon hearing Northern King's words, his subordinates were all shocked to the core.

They could not believe that someone else was about to become a Camp Master. If that were the case, a third Camp might be established on Theos Island.

Right then, a thought popped into Northern King's mind.

First come, first served. If I'm not mistaken, I should be the first to find out that someone's about to advance into a Camp Master. I'll benefit from currying favor with the new Camp Master if I act fast. Yes, that's what I'll do.

After making up his mind, Northern King said to his subordinates, "I'm going to meet the new

Camp Master now. All of you stay here."

His subordinates quickly uttered, "Northern Master, up ahead is the primeval forest where the beasts rule. If you head there alone, you'll be in danger. Let us go with you. In that case, if anything happens, we'll be able to help you out."

Alas, Northern King rejected their offer. "It's fine. I'll go there myself."

Still, his subordinates insisted, "Northern Master, you're representing the entire Northern Faction now. If anything happens to you, the Northern Faction will face annihilation too. Please think this over and let us go with you."

At that, Northern King snapped, "What's the matter? Are you doubting my capabilities now?"

The wrath of Northern King frightened the living daylights out of his subordinates. They anxiously answered, "You're mistaken, Northern Master. We did not mean that!"

"In that case, stay here and don't follow me."

With that, Northern King leaped into the air and disappeared from their lines of sight.

There was a reason for Northern King to not let his subordinates follow him.

Up ahead was Theos Island's central district, which no one was allowed in not even Legatus.

Therefore, he was actually sneaking into the district. If he brought too many people with him, it would be too obvious, and they would soon be punished by Camp North's Camp Master.

Secondly, he would have to behave humbly upon meeting the new Camp Master, and he didn't want his subordinates to see that.

Allowing his subordinates to see his subservient manner would affect his prestige, which would in turn affect his ability to lead in the future.

Shortly after departing, Northern King reached the center of the storm by tracking the lightning,

Coincidentally, just as Northern King arrived, Alfred was done with his advancement.

Chapter 2656

As if he had been transformed into a new person, Alfred looked lively and powerful. Even when Northern King was hiding in a corner, he could sense the pressure of Alfred's overwhelming power.

As expected of a Camp Master!

Furthermore, even though the man before him had just become a Camp Master, he was exceptionally powerful to the point Northern King felt that he was comparable to the Camp Masters of Camp South and Camp North.

Once Alfred descended to the ground, he took in a deep breath and said, "Is this what Peak Class is? It's rather disappointing."

Killer Wolf and Tyler walked over to him and teased, "Save it, old man. We know you're delighted."

Alfred sighed. "Why should I be delighted? I reached Peak Class two days later than the two of you. It's humiliating. I'll have to be faster than both of you when we advance to Celestial Class."

Killer Wolf joked, "Haven't you heard of how a man will always be late after being late once? Since you're already slower than us to reach Peak Class, you're going to be even slower than us in the future."

Alfred huffed. "Fine. Let's make a bet. If I reach Celestial Class faster than you two, you'll have to prostrate before me and beg for mercy. How's that?"

"No problem. What if you're slower than us to attain Celestial Class?"

"Then I'll let my granddaughter marry you."

"D*mn you!" Killer Wolf cursed. "Stop trying to pull my leg. You're ugly, old man. I doubt your granddaughter's any better than you. There's no way I'll say yes to that."

Alfred chuckled. "I hope you won't regret your words. My granddaughter's a real beauty, and there are countless men courting her."

Killer Wolf laughed. "What is your granddaughter, ice cream in summer? Why are so many people interested in her?"

Livid, Alfred snapped, "Shut it! I'll kill you if you continue spouting nonsense."

Northern King, who was still in hiding, was dumbfounded by the exchange.

Oh my goodness, I didn't mishear that, did I? These three are all Peak Class warriors? The Peak Class they're talking about is our Camp Master's level. So, three Camp Masters just appeared on Theos Island? Things are getting interesting. If these three Camp Masters appear before the public, both Camp North and Camp South will surely take a hit, for these three Camp Masters will form the most powerful Camp on Theos Island. If I can work under them, I'll have a bright future ahead of me!

While he was mulling over those matters, Killer Wolf's angry voice suddenly traveled into his ears. "Stop hiding. Are you planning to hide until I drag you out here, chop you up, and feed you to the animals?"

As it turned out, Killer Wolf had already noticed Northern King. However, the latter was weak and posed no threat to them, so Killer Wolf ignored him until that moment.

Northern King's heart skipped a beat at his voice. Oh no, they've discovered me!

Promptly, he rose to his feet and said, "I'm coming out now! I'm coming out now! Please don't be angry, sirs. I'm not an enemy of yours."

Strength was of the utmost importance on Theos Island. The stronger one was, the higher one's status was on Theos Island. Therefore, everyone treated those who were stronger than them with respect.

Killer Wolf briefly studied Northern King. "Who are you? Why were you sneakily hiding in the shadows? What's your motive?"

Northern King hastily answered, "Sirs, I'm Northern King, the commander of the Northern Faction."

Tyler barked out a laugh. "Ha! How dare you call yourself a king in front of us?"

Northern King quickly corrected himself. "Sirs, please don't be mad. Northern King is just what my subordinates address me as. Please call me Nory instead."

With no hesitance, Alfred said, "Nory, why were you hiding in the shadows?"

"I sensed that you were advancing to Camp Master level, and I was worried. That beasts and other insignificant people would disrupt your advancement, so I came to protect you so you could progress in peace."

Alfred scoffed. "You're just a Legatus. How can you even offer me protection? Are you trying to humiliate me?"

Northern King shook his head fervently. "No, no. No way! Sir, this is a misunderstanding."

Alfred replied, "Since you have no business here, why are you even still here? Get lost!"

At that, Northern King suddenly said, "Sir, I... I just remembered that I have something to report to you about."

Chapter 2657

Killer Wolf growled, "Spit it out."

"You've all become Camp Masters, and according to Theos Island's rules, you're allowed to form a Camp. Furthermore, a Legion and a Centuria are necessary to form a Camp. If you need my help, please feel free to ask anything from me. I'll do my best to help you establish your Camps."

Killer Wolf curiously muttered, "So Camp Master is someone of Peak Class. Once I'm at Peak Class, I get to form my own Camp. So, if I become a Camp Master, am I allowed to meet Theos in person?"

Northern King replied, "Not necessarily. Only by offering the best divine weapon during the Worship Ceremony would one get the right to meet Theos."

Killer Wolf nodded as he ruminated about that. "Okay, I got it. You're dismissed. I'll contact you if I need anything. Also, you're not allowed to tell anyone about us. If someone else other than you learns about this, I'll kill you and your Legion."

"Of course, of course." Northern King retreated as he nodded vigorously. "Please don't worry, sirs. I'll bring this secret to my grave."

There's no way I'm going to tell anyone about this incident. What if the other Legatuses try to take my place in working with these three Camp Masters? That'll be bad for me!

Meanwhile, Killer Wolf and the other two were communicating with their energy,

"Killer Wolf, say, should we get rid of this guy?"

"Forget it. He's still a Legatus, and he's the commander of the Northern Faction; he has a certain social rank on Theos Island. His death will lead to a commotion. If Theos starts paying attention to this and tracks this down to Zeke, we'll be suffering instead."

"I agree. Since he swore he's not going to say a word about this and reveal our existence, we'll let him live for a while longer."

"By the way, do you think we should establish a Camp?"

"Let's go and ask the Great Marshal for his opinion on this."

In the meantime, Northern King returned to his subordinates.

He was in a good mood, for his meeting with the three Camp Masters was a beneficial one.

Nevertheless, he was greeted with the sight of his subordinates gathered together, causing a commotion.

"What's the matter?" Northern King loudly asked.

His subordinates quickly stood in neat lines before replying, "Northern Master, Third Guard was struck by lightning and passed out. We're currently giving him first aid treatment."

When Northern King let his eyes drift toward the unconscious Third Guard, he couldn't help heaving a sigh.

Camp Masters are truly powerful. The punishment he attracted burnt a normal warrior to a crisp.

Then, Northern King crouched down and took Third Guard's pulse before checking his injuries.

A beat later, he shook his head and sighed. "Forget it. We can't help him. Even if we have the resources to save his life, he'll be crippled forever. Johnny, make it quick for him."

"Sure!"

A guard named Johnny then stepped forward.

Sensing his impending death, a surge of strength manifested in Third Guard's body and gave him enough energy to squeeze out, "Save me... Save me... I... I can't die now..."

Unfortunately, the sword in Johnny's hands had already swung down, and it lopped off Third Guard's head.

Third Guard's eyes were as wide as saucers, staring at Johnny resentfully.

Johnny sighed. "Don't blame me for this. I'm only doing this for your own good. You can't be

cured, and you'll only suffer more if you were to stay alive. Rest now. You didn't get to enjoy life, so do be in peace in the afterlife."

Right then, Northern King said, "Right. I just remembered something. Third Guard was in charge of collecting Spirit Stones from the Centuria. Now that he's dead, this task will be assigned to you, Johnny. Don't let me down."

Johnny was thrilled to hear that.

Getting assigned the task of collecting Spirit Stones for Northern King was a symbol of his status-of how he was a trusted subordinate of Northern King.

In other words, Northern King had begun to value Johnny's worth.

Chapter 2658

Feeling grateful, Johnny said, "Don't worry, Northern Master. I won't let you down. I'll help you collect Spirit Stones on time and in full."

"Okay," Northern King answered. "You can start collecting today. Go on. You ought to get used to the process."

"Understood."

Johnny bade Northern King farewell and headed toward the base of Northern Faction Centuria. They better have enough Spirit Stones ready. Otherwise, I'm going to teach them a lesson. Since I'm new, I must show them what I'm made of.

Soon, Johnny arrived in Golden Cicada's territory.

To his surprise, Golden Cicada's territory looked deserted. In fact, there wasn't even a single soul present.

Johnny frowned and grumbled, "What the f*ck? Where's everybody? Could it be that they've changed the location of their base, or could it be that they've all gone out to collect Spirit Stones? It's impossible for them to change the location of their base. They would need to inform Legatus beforehand. However, I don't think Centuria had visited Legatus recently. It doesn't seem like they're out collecting Spirit Stones either. They can't possibly have all their members collecting Spirit Stones and left no one behind to guard their base."

Johnny could sense something was amiss, so he entered the base of Northern Faction Centuria warily.

The more he walked, the weirder things got. Not only does the base look deserted, but it also looks like it has been robbed! Sh*t! Did Southern Faction rob Northern Faction? However, I think Southern Faction Centuria is weaker than Northern Faction Centuria. Hence, that can't be it. What the hell is Golden Cicada doing? What on earth happened here?

Right then, Golden Cicada's training room came to Johnny's mind. Golden Cicada usually spends this time of the year in the training room. I wonder if he's there now.

At that moment, Johnny had no idea where anybody was, so he thought the training room was the only place he could go.

However, he had a mental breakdown when he arrived in the training room.

Golden Cicada's training room was no longer there, but at the spot where it used to be, Johnny found a whole pile of severed heads on the ground.

The sight of countless severed heads belonging to Northern Faction Centuria sent a chill down Johnny's spine, and he was having goosebumps all over his body.

"Who did this? Who the f*ck did this? S-Southern Faction... H-How dare you!" Johnny's voice trembled. "Do they want to go to war with Northern Faction? Fine! Southern Faction, since you want to die so badly, Northern Faction will grant your wishes!"

Unsurprisingly, Johnny blamed everything on Southern Faction.

He was having mixed feelings, and an indescribable sense of sorrow overwhelmed him. This is only my first time collecting for Northern King. Who would've thought that this would happen?

Meanwhile, Southern King, the commander of Southern Faction. Legion, had also sent an emissary to collect Spirit Stones from Southern Faction Centuria.

The emissary he sent was known as Speedy. He was good with his feet, and he was one of the fastest runners around.

In fact, he could run almost as fast as Southern King himself.

Southern King sent Speedy out to collect Spirit Stones because he could complete the task faster.

Speedy was in a good mood when he was on his journey. While walking gracefully, he was even

humming a tune to himself.

Speedy was very happy with his job because he only needed to work four days a year, and it was a job with freedom.

Besides, he could even keep some Spirit Stones for himself as he collected.

Essentially, nine out of ten people were envious of the job he had.

Before long, Speedy arrived at the base of Southern Faction Centuria.

When the guards saw Speedy, they quickly welcomed him and said, "Hi, Speedy! You must be exhausted. Here! Have a seat."

With that, the guards invited Speedy to rest in a gazebo nearby that was meant for themselves.

Although the guards and Speedy were only servers, Speedy was serving Legatus. Hence, the guards had to show Speedy respect.

Chapter 2659

As a matter of fact, even Draco, the O Centurion of Southern Faction, would have to show respect to Speedy.

"It's okay. I'm in a rush to look for Draco," Speedy answered.

Indeed, only Speedy was daring enough to address Draco by his name.

With a smile on his face, the guard said, "There's no hurry, Speedy. Have a cup of tea first, okay? Recently, Dragon King gave me some fruit tea, and I've been reluctant to drink it. I'll serve it to you."

Speedy sniggered and mocked, "Ha! Fruit tea? I'm sorry, but I'll pass. That's too cheap for me. That's enough nonsense. I'm heading in for work."

Speedy wanted to head inside.

The guard stopped him and said, "I'm sorry, Speedy. You can't go in yet."

What? Speedy gave the guard a dubious look and asked, "Is there a place in Centuria's district I

can't enter?"

The guard smiled awkwardly. "Well... Here's the deal, Speedy. There's a new rule in Southern Faction Centuria. No matter who wants to enter, he must greet the leader first and ask for the leader's permission to enter. Please wait for a moment. I'll inform my leader now."

That was a direct order from Draco to the guards.

Even if Speedy were to barge into Southern Faction and snatch Spirit Stones, Draco wouldn't dare and couldn't stop Speedy.

Therefore, it was a wiser choice to contact Zeke and let Zeke deal with Speedy.

Slap!

Suddenly, Speedy delivered a tight slap across the guard's face.

The slap was so hard that the guard's cheek was reddened, and his lips were bleeding.

"Can I go in now?" Speedy asked coldly.

The guard gritted his teeth and wiped the blood off of the corners of his mouth. "I'm sorry, but you can't."

Slap!F*ck! Speedy slapped the guard once more. "How about now?"

The guard wasn't backing down. "I'll still need to inform my leader first."

Slap! Slap! Slap!

Speedy slapped the guard three times in a row and asked, "Do you still need to inform him?"

Upon receiving those slaps, the guard could barely stand straight. "Yes!"

F*ck you! Infuriated, Speedy sent the guard flying away with a kick. "How dare you stop me in my tracks? You must be tired of living."

Speedy then dusted his hands and walked inside.

However, a few guards quickly stood in his way as soon as he had taken one step forward. The guards then formed a human shield and uttered, "Please stop there, Speedy."

F*ck off! Speedy flew into a rage at once. "Are you guys blocking my way as well? I'm going to

kill whoever stands in my way!"

The guards nodded earnestly and said, "Speedy, according to the rule set by our new leader, we have to inform him before letting anyone in. That includes Southern King himself."

What? Speedy frowned and asked, "Did you say a new leader? What new leader?"

"We have a new leader in Southern Faction, and that's a new rule we have," the guards answered.

Speedy finally had a grasp of the situation. "I see! I knew it. Draco wouldn't dare to stop me. It seems like your new leader is trying to exert dominance. Go on. Tell him I'm very displeased by his new rule. I want him to come here and apologize to me before abolishing the new rule. As for you guys, get out of my way!"

Seeing that Speedy was about to storm into the place, the guards immediately stopped him.

Without saying a single word, Speedy started beating them up and sent a few of them flying away.

"Ha! Who did they think they are? Were they trying to undermine me? Dream on!" Speedy entered the base of Southern Faction and walked toward the Spirit Stone storage area of Southern Faction Centurion.

When he was on his way there, Speedy noticed something weird. There are so many unfamiliar faces on the base, and it seems like the number of people has also increased by half. What's going on? Where did Southern Faction recruit these people from? Wait... Southern Faction now has a new leader. Could it be that these are all the people the new leader had brought in with him? Haha! I'm already impressed by this new leader. Fine. Since he wants to challenge me, I'm going to teach him a lesson.

Chapter 2660

Soon, he arrived at the Spirit Stone storage of Southern Faction, and he was flabbergasted by what he saw. Back then, there were only a few in Southern Faction who knew how to refine spiritual iron. Now, they have around thirty people refining spiritual iron! Furthermore, I don't even know who most of them are!

Speedy swept his gaze across the place and quickly found a familiar face. Isn't that Golden Cicada? Isn't he the leader of Northern Faction Centuria? Are my eyes playing tricks on me?

Have I gone mad? What is this? Everyone knows about the rift between Southern Faction and Northern Faction. Northern Faction was even planning on wiping Southern Faction out! Now, the leader of Northern Faction is helping Southern Faction refine spiritual iron! Did Southern Faction and Northern Faction join forces? That can't be, right?

Instead of racking his brain, Speedy went up to Golden Cicada and asked, "Golden Cicada, why are you not in Northern Faction? What are you doing in Southern Faction?"

Everyone immediately lifted their heads when they heard those words.

When they saw that it was Speedy, they all reacted differently.

While Golden Cicada was utterly embarrassed, Draco was sweating bullets.

Draco scolded the guards inwardly. Didn't I tell them to inform Mr. Williams the moment they see Speedy? They were supposed to let Mr. Williams deal with this bloke. What am I supposed to do now that he is here?

With that in mind, Draco instructed a subordinate nearby, "Let Mr. Williams know about this. Hurry!"

"Got it!" The subordinate sped away.

Speedy was getting annoyed when he said, "Golden Cicada, why are you in a daze? I asked you a question. Why did you suddenly come to the base of Southern Faction Centuria?"

Golden Cicada felt even more embarrassed, and he chuckled awkwardly. "Oh! It's nothing. I was free, so I came for a stroll."

Golden Cicada couldn't possibly tell Speedy that he had brought Northern Faction Centuria over to join Southern Faction. That would be shameful.

Obviously, Speedy wasn't convinced. "Why are you lying? Did you think I was going to believe you? Tell me the truth. What's going on?"

In the end, Golden Cicada had no choice but to tell the truth. "I... I brought Northern Faction Centuria here to join Southern Faction."

Huh? Speedy was stumped. "You're Golden Cicada, the leader of Northern Faction Centuria, no? You were so high and mighty. How did you end up submitting to Southern Faction? Haha! How funny is this?"

Golden Cicada's face flushed bright red when he heard those words. I want nothing more than

to skin Speedy alive!

Speedy laughed for a while more before adding, "Be honest with me, okay? Did the new leader of Southern Faction make you submit to him?"

Golden Cicada nodded in response.

"I see. It seems like the new leader is rather capable. He's so much stronger than Draco. Draco had been the leader for so many years, but Southern Faction was still so much weaker than Northern Faction. There was no way he could do this. By the way, Golden Cicada, since you've already submitted to Southern Faction, you must've brought along Spirit Stones from the storage in Northern Faction, right?" Speedy asked.

Golden Cicada nodded again.

It would be too embarrassing for him to tell Speedy that Zeke had taken all Spirit Stones from Northern Faction.

Speedy was filled with excitement when he said, "That's excellent! Coincidentally, Southern Faction Legion lacks Spirit Stones. Quick! I want to check out the Spirit Stone storage."

With that, Speedy wanted to enter the Spirit Stone storage in the cave.

Draco panicked and instinctively stood in front of Speedy to stop him in his tracks.

"Speedy, please hold on. You can't enter the cave," Draco said.

Annoyed, Speedy asked, "Why not?"

"Well... Uh... The cave is full of traps. If you go in now, you might get caught off guard. Let's wait for the new leader's arrival. I think it's safer to have him lead the way," Draco replied, "Mr. Williams isn't ready to give these Spirit Stones to Legion! If Mr. Williams finds out that Speedy has taken them, Mr. Williams is going to punish us!"

In a cold tone, Speedy said, "Traps? Do you think your traps are able to do any harm to me? They're merely cheap tricks! Step aside, will you? I'm going in."

Chapter 2661

With that, Speedy wanted to force his way in.

Draco stopped him once again and advised him not to do so.

That eventually pissed Speedy off, and he pushed Draco aside. "Buzz off! If you stand in my way again, I'm going to beat you up!"

After all, Draco was a leader of Southern Faction Centuria. Speedy had to show Draco some respect, so instead of beating Draco up, Speedy could only shove him aside.

Upon shoving Draco aside, Speedy walked forward.

Right then, another figure came up to Speedy and warned, "Stand right there. You're not allowed to enter."

The person blocking his way was Phoenix.

Speedy started grinning when he saw Phoenix.

In fact, he had been drooling over Phoenix for a while now, but he never had the chance to approach her.

Since this woman is daring enough to provoke me, isn't she presenting me with an opportunity? I can't do anything to Draco because he was a leader of Southern Faction. However, Phoenix is just a Centurion. I can have my way with her. While flashing a sinister smile, Speedy asked, "What are you doing, Phoenix?"

"I'm carrying out my duty. No one is allowed to enter the storage for Spirit Stones unless Mr. Williams has given his permission," Phoenix answered.

In response, Speedy smiled and replied, "Is that so? Fine. I won't go in, but I have a condition."

"What is it?" Phoenix asked subconsciously.

Speedy then brazenly tried to grab Phoenix's breasts and said, "You'll have to sleep with me!"

"Ah!" Phoenix immediately backed away to avoid Speedy's hands. "Get away from me! If you dare to touch me again, I'm going to kill you!"

"Haha! Let's see if you're capable of that," Speedy replied.

Lust was taking over Speedy's mind, and all he could think about was having sex with Phoenix. Hence, he lunged at her.

At that critical moment, Phoenix subconsciously picked up a piece of refined spiritual iron and threw it at Speedy.

Speedy caught the spiritual iron casually. Right when he was about to toss it aside, he noticed something and stared at that piece of spiritual iron.

Upon scrutinizing it, Speedy fumed, "Sh*t! B*stards! Did you guys actually refine the spiritual iron to the Grade Two purity? Who gave you permission. to do that?"

Southern King and Northern King only allowed the Centurias to achieve Grade Three because they were worried that the Centurias would forge divine weapons.

Although one could forge divine weapons with Grade Three spiritual iron, those divine weapons would be harmless. Hence, Legions didn't need to feel threatened.

However, Draco and the rest had already achieved Grade Two spiritual iron.

What are they up to? Are they going to rebel? It was a serious matter, so Speedy immediately calmed himself down.

"This is our new leader, Mr. Williams' idea. If you have any questions, please wait for Mr. Williams to answer them," Draco uttered.

All of a sudden, Speedy felt threatened. I think the people of Northern Faction and Southern Faction are really going to revolt. If they join forces and attack me, I don't think I can get out of here alive. I should cut the crap and get out of here as soon as possible.

Speedy instantly composed himself and changed his tone. "Yes. To be frank, it's very impressive to see you guys refine Grade Two spiritual iron successfully. I'll tell Southern King about this and ask him to reward you guys. Wait for my good news, okay?"

A vicious smile then appeared on Draco's face when he said, "What's the hurry, Speedy? Before this, you would always stay for a nice meal, no? Let's not break the tradition and let us serve you. I've already prepared food and drinks for you! Let's go, Speedy!"

Draco wouldn't let Speedy leave because he knew that he was already suspecting them of rebelling after they refused to hand over Spirit Stones belonging to Southern Faction. We're going to be in trouble if Speedy tells Southern King about this. I must keep him here and let Mr. Williams deal with him.

In response, Speedy waved dismissively and said, "That's not necessary. Let's do that next time because I still have matters to attend to. However, I appreciate your kind gesture."

Chapter 2662

With that, Speedy intended to turn around and leave but did not expect to see Phoenix and the others line up to block his way.

Even though his heart was racing, he pretended to be calm. "Hey, hey, hey! What are you guys doing? Get out of my way now!"

In response, Phoenix inquired wittily, "You don't have a problem with us, Southern Faction, inviting you over for dinner, do you?"

"As I said, I don't have the time because I have some business to attend to. We can do this another time," replied Speedy.

"Are you really going to turn us down like this, Speedy? How disappointing. I didn't think we'd be so unimportant to you."

At that point, Speedy knew he would not be able to leave. It's impossible to force my way out with this many people in front of me. For now, my best play is to stall for time. As soon as they let their guard down, I'll make a break for it. "Since everyone is insisting that I stay for dinner, that's what I'll do then."

"Draco, could you get everything ready?"

After nodding, Draco turned to Speedy. "Please wait a moment, Speedy. I already have my people prepare dinner for us."

As if! They're probably on their way to get Mr. Williams, and I'm about to turn into his punching bag. Speedy then started looking for an opportunity to escape as soon as he found a cool spot to sit down.

Meanwhile, the guards beaten up by Speedy hurried to Zeke's room and knelt outside. "We have a situation that requires your attention, Mr. Williams."

Zeke, who was in his room discussing the divine weapon forging technique with Ossa Dei, walked out and frowned when he noticed the guards' bruised and swollen faces. "What happened?"

"Southern King sent Speedy to retrieve spiritual iron. We tried to stop him according to the rules, but he forced his way in. Since we couldn't stop him, he should be heading to the Spirit Stone

reserve for spiritual iron now," replied one of the guards.

"Speedy? That's an interesting name," commented Zeke. "Was he responsible for your injuries?"

The guards responded by nodding.

"List down your injuries. I'll avenge you by giving him five times the beating," promised Zeke.

"You don't have to do that, Mr. Williams. Our injuries are nothing," voiced the guards quickly, for they did not think it was worth it for Zeke to make an enemy of Speedy for their sake. We have thick skins, so the beating is nothing worth mentioning. Besides, it's not as if we've never gotten beaten up by Speedy before. We are displeased about what happened, but there's really nothing that should be done since we're just lowly subordinates.

However, Zeke was determined to keep his word. "That won't do. You serve me because you trust me, so how will I be able to continue to lead you if I let others step all over you?"

The guards were deeply moved after listening to Zeke's words. This is just... Mr. Williams is really a righteous man! Draco used to be known for his loyalty to his people, and now, it seems Mr. Williams is even more so. After all, Draco would never stand up to Speedy for a couple of nobodies. Even if Speedy had murdered us, Draco probably wouldn't dare say a word about it.

Having found a sense of recognition, belonging, and security in Zeke, the guards wasted no time listing down all the injuries Speedy was responsible for.

Meanwhile, at Spirit Stone reserve, Speedy's eyes darted around as he tried to figure out the best escape route, and after careful consideration, he finally found the perfect way to flee. The cave where Spirit Stones are stored is a few hundred meters high. With no guards on the mountain, I'll be able to reach Southern Faction base after climbing over it. I have ninety-percent confidence that I can lose the faction's pursuit by then. After all, mountain climbing is what I'm best at.

Speedy decided to make a move once he thought he had perfected his plan.

Chapter 2663

After rising to his feet to stretch, Speedy turned to Draco. "How's the preparation coming along? I'm hungry."

"Be patient, Speedy. It's almost ready. I just need you to wait a little while longer," answered Draco, who was wondering anxiously why Zeke had not shown up yet because he did not think he could keep Speedy under control much longer.

Just when Draco was still thinking, Speedy suddenly looked behind the man and uttered, "What are you doing here, Your Majesty?"

What? Why is Southern King here? Turning around instinctively, Draco and the others of Southern Faction were dumbfounded when they realized who had appeared.

Southern King was Legatus of Southern Faction. Not only was he powerful, but he was also like a deity to the faction members. On Theos Island, he was second only to Legatus of Northern Faction.

Everyone could not help but wonder why Southern King was with them since he rarely left the Legion district.

When Speedy saw how the others got distracted, he almost jumped for joy. This is my chance!

Then, he leaped into the air without a second thought and got tens of meters high.

Speedy was about to reach the mountain when somebody suddenly threw a rope and caught him by the leg.

As soon as the rope was pulled back, the man was dragged down and fell heavily to the ground.

Speedy only regained his senses after slamming into the floor because of how fast he got pulled down.

The fall was violent enough that he vomited blood and lost a few teeth. With the severe pain in his jaw, Speedy suspected that he had sustained a fracture.

However, his physical pain was nothing compared to the fear in his heart.

"D*mn it! Who the heck has such speed and strength? Even Golden Cicada and Draco are incapable of such a feat. It's hard to believe there's someone this powerful in Centuria." Speedy tried to get up but to no avail since he could not rid himself of the rope.

At that point, he could not help but wonder how someone could wrap the rope so tightly around his leg without much effort.

Speedy almost lost his mind when he witnessed what happened next-the rope around his leg began dissipating at a reasonable speed, but after three seconds, it disappeared without a

trace. What the heck happened? How does a rope vanish into thin air? This isn't just a trick but magic!

The truth was that Zeke materialized his energy into a ball of rope, which disappeared after he withdrew his energy.

Draco and the others only realized they had been tricked when they saw no one behind them.

Then, they turned back around to find Speedy lying and bleeding on the ground. It's obvious that Speedy fooled us in an attempt to get away, but for some reason, he fell flat on the floor instead of escaping.

Angered, Draco scolded Speedy, "What's the meaning of this? Don't you think it's rude to leave without saying goodbye?"

However, Speedy did not respond to Draco because he had been focused on finding the master of the rope. I'm probably doomed if I'm being targeted by such a powerful person.

Before long, an intimidating figure with a dominant aura appeared, and it was none other than Zeke.

All it took was one look, and Speedy was convinced that Zeke was a big shot and that he was probably the new leader of Southern Faction.

In fact, he was not wrong at all.

"Greetings, Mr. Williams," voiced Draco and the others as they knelt respectfully before Zeke.

After nodding in response, Zeke scrutinized Speedy. "So, you're Spitty?"

Everybody chuckled when they heard that since they did not expect Zeke to have such a good sense of humor.

"I'm Speedy, not Spitty," Speedy corrected Zeke angrily..

"I don't care. From now on, you'll be known as Spitty."

"How dare you..." Speedy could not believe that the leader of Southern Faction Centuria just gave him a nickname on their first meeting.

Chapter 2664

Preferring not to waste time on nonsense, Speedy questioned directly, "You're Zeke Williams, the new leader of Southern Faction Centuria?"

"That's right. What can I help you with?" Zeke nodded in response.

"I only have one question for you. What's the meaning of this?"

"What do you mean by that?"

"Why are you refining the spiritual iron to Grade Two? Don't you know that it's against the rules of Centuria? Also, are you trying to stop me from taking these Spirit Stones?"

"We worked hard for them, so why should we let you have them? Since they belong to us, we can refine them to whichever grade we please. An outsider like you has no say in this matter!"

"I see that I was right after all. This is a mutiny!" stated Speedy coldly. "Don't you know what happens to those who start a rebellion on Theos Island? You'll regret the day you were born when Southern King makes you pay!"

"That reminds me of the reason I'm here to make you pay. You beat my people up for no reason, so how do you intend to make it up to them?"

After taking a deep breath, Speedy replied, "They should've known better than to offend me. I simply taught them a lesson for you."

"So you're saying that I should thank you?"

"You don't have to-"

Slap!

Before Speedy could finish his sentence, Zeke slapped him so hard that he was sent flying away.

"You must be an idiot if you couldn't tell that I was being sarcastic," remarked Zeke.

Everyone dropped their jaws when they witnessed what Zeke did. He just slapped Speedy as if it was nothing. No wonder he was able to unify Northern Faction and Southern Faction. He is incredible!

Speedy was stunned after getting hit, for he did not expect Zeke to get physical.

"Just you wait, Zeke! You won't get away with this," threatened Speedy through gritted teeth while holding his cheek. "I'm leaving. You win this time."

With that, Speedy was ready to make a break for it, but Zeke refused to let him.

"Don't go just yet. We still have unfinished business. You can leave as soon as we have everything hashed out," uttered Zeke before snapping his fingers. "Get me the list."

The guards who got beaten up then quickly handed Zeke the list showing how Speedy treated them.

After glancing at the paper, Zeke voiced, "Speedy slapped you twice, huh? Then do the same to him ten times."

"Yes, sir!" responded one of the guards before cautiously approaching Speedy, who was furious by then.

Speedy could tolerate getting hit by Zeke since the man was the leader of Northern Faction and Southern Faction, but there was no way he would let a guard lay a finger on him. Why would anyone in Legion respect me if I get humiliated like this? I'll become a laughingstock!

"You and your entire family are dead if you touch me!" threatened Speedy, causing the guard to halt in fear.

"Just go ahead. He wouldn't do anything to you with me around," encouraged Zeke. "If he does, I'll cripple him."

After hearing that, the guard continued to walk toward Speedy, who looked daggers at him.

Even though he was afraid, he managed to muster up enough courage to slap Speedy's face.

"You're dead!" roared Speedy as he attempted to retaliate.

However, Zeke only had to wave his hand casually to cut off Speedy's hand with an energy blade.

As blood sprayed out of his injured wrist, Speedy let out a wail so agonizing that those who heard it immediately shivered.

Because of how effortlessly Zeke managed to cut off Speedy's hand, everyone was convinced

that he was a supernatural being.

Slap! Slap! Slap! Slap!

After slapping Speedy ten times, the guard backed away in satisfaction.

Chapter 2665

Zeke was not done with Speedy yet, so he glanced at the list again. "He slapped you thrice, right? Give him fifteen slaps."

Then, he turned to Speedy. "You'd better not try anything silly again because I'll cut off the limbs you move. If you move your head, I'll behead you."

Speedy was dumbfounded when he heard that.

When the next guard hit him in the face, he dared not defend himself but simply cried in pain. I'll lose another part of my body if I retaliate. This is outrageous and sickening!

At that point, Speedy could not find the right word to describe Zeke.

Zeke then swept his gaze across the guards and inquired, "Did Speedy also bully you? If so, now is the time to get even."

"That b*stard tore my shirt," uttered Phoenix.

"Okay. After we're done beating him, we'll strip him naked and throw him out," promised Zeke.

"Understood!"

"Those who have no score to settle with Speedy, you may return to your work. Don't let him affect our order here."

After the crowd dispersed to return to work, Phoenix approached Zeke and inquired concernedly, "Zeke, aren't you afraid that Legion would want payback for the cruelty you're showing Speedy?"

"You know that my goal is to become Theos, which makes Legion and the Camp Masters my prey. They'll save me the trip by coming to me," answered Zeke with a smile.

Phoenix shook her head while chuckling bitterly. Zeke is truly hopeless. What makes him think a mere mortal like him can be Theos? He'd have to be a deity to achieve such a feat. Wait a second! He did show that he was supernatural on more than one occasion. Could he really be... a deity? If that's the case, he probably can replace Theos.

Phoenix was taken aback by the thought but quickly shook her head to return to her senses. "What am I thinking? Zeke is just an ordinary man who eats and sleeps just like the rest of us. How could he be a deity?"

The truth was that Phoenix refused to believe Zeke was a deity mainly because she knew she could not be with him if that were true.

When the guards were finally done slapping Speedy, his face became as swollen as a frog in the autumn.

With saliva hanging from the corner of Speedy's mouth, Zeke was right to call the man Spitty.

After the smacking, the guards personally stripped Speedy of his clothes and threw him out of Southern Faction base.

Speedy was utterly humiliated and hopeless then, but whatever was left of his sanity urged him to leave the place as quickly as possible, lest he would lose his life too.

Staggering away, Speedy would have blacked out and died if it were not for his will to survive.

Meanwhile, Johnny of Northern Faction was heading in Southern Faction's direction. I have to find out if Southern Faction has really seized Northern Faction. If so, they're provoking Legatus of Northern Faction to an all-out war!

Johnny was nothing if not anxious on his journey. Those from Southern Faction wouldn't dare kill me, right? After all, I'm representing Legion of Northern Faction! Centuria would never in a million years dare to go against Legion. However, nobody can really say for sure. Southern Faction had no problem wiping out Golden Cicada's Centuria, so they might just try anything. I have no choice but to find out the truth myself. Northern King has assigned me such an important task, and I'll lose his trust if I don't get to the bottom of it. In fact, he might even kill me!

Refusing to waste the opportunity to prove himself, the man hesitantly entered the buffer zone between Southern Faction and Northern Faction, which had already become useless since Northern Faction was wiped out.

Chapter 2666

He would arrive at Southern Faction's territory if he continued to move forward.

However, he wasn't familiar with the layout there, so he didn't know how to locate Southern Faction's base.

While at a loss, he heard footsteps coming from ahead of him.

Johnny hurriedly gazed in that direction and saw someone walking toward him.

This person must be from Southern Faction since he shows up here. I can ask him to bring me to Southern Faction's base.

Johnny shouted, "Hey, come over here. I want to ask you something."

That person was none other than Speedy, who had just escaped Southern Faction in a pathetic state.

After running far away from Southern Faction's base, Speedy let out a sigh of relief. Just then, he heard someone yelling at him.

Speedy's blood pressure skyrocketed at that instant, and he almost passed out in fear.

He assumed that the person screaming at him was someone from Southern Faction who was sent to eliminate and silence him.

Amidst his desperation, his legs turned to jelly, and he couldn't help but grovel on the floor to beg for mercy.

"I'm sorry. It's my fault. Please spare me. I'm begging you."

Johnny froze in his spot.

What the hell? What's going on? Am I this intimidating here in Southern Faction? Their people are getting on their knees, begging for mercy upon laying their eyes on me. Am I that scary? Also, why does this person's pleading voice sound so familiar? It seems like I'm acquainted with him.

After contemplating for a few seconds, Johnny approached Speedy and looked carefully at the latter's face.

Upon recognizing Speedy's facial features, Johnny exclaimed in surprise, "It's you! Speedy!"

Isn't this one of the guards in Southern Faction's Legion? Why is he here, and why did he kneel after noticing me? We are considered equals, so he didn't need to get on his knees.

Not to mention, Speedy's face was severely beaten into a mush, and one of his arms was broken. Evidently, he had been tormented by someone.

Hearing Johnny's astonished voice, Speedy hastily looked up as well.

. When he realized it was Johnny standing before him, excitement washed over him instantly. He grasped Johnny's arm like a drowning person. clutching a straw.

"Johnny, take me away. Let's hurry up and leave this awful place. H-Help me. I-I'll give you all my riches."

Johnny quickly asked, "Speedy, tell me what happened. Who hurt you so badly?"

Speedy answered, "T-Those people from Southern Faction did this to me."

The people from Southern Faction!

Johnny was taken aback. "Are they out of their minds? How dare they harm a Legion member, not to mention a rent collector like you. Who are they to lay a finger on you?"

Speedy sighed. "Johnny, no. Mr. Johnny, now is not the time to talk about this. Take me away from here, and I'll describe the incident to you in detail later."

"Speedy, tell me. Did Southern Faction's people kill the men from Northern Faction?"

"No, that's not the case. The people from Northern Faction had joined Southern Faction."

Johnny clenched his fists. "D*mn it! How dare that b*stard Golden Cicada betrays Northern Faction. We'll never let him off easy."

Speedy pleaded again, "Mr. Johnny, I beg you. Let's quit talking about these irrelevant things and leave in a hurry. The people from Southern Faction. have gone crazy. If they catch up with us, we'll definitely die."

Sensing the severity of the circumstances, Johnny carried Speedy on his back. "Hmph. Speedy, if it weren't for your grave injuries and the fact that you may die at any time, I would crusade against Centuria. Since I need to prioritize saving you now, I'll let them off for now. Let's go."

The two swiftly left.

Johnny felt relief that he ran into Speedy before arriving at Southern Faction.

Otherwise, he would be sharing the same fate as Speedy.

Johnny brought Speedy back to the Legion's camp and immediately attracted everyone's attention.

"Johnny, why did you come back so quickly?"

"Didn't I instruct you to collect Spirit Stones from Centuria? Why are you carrying a person on your back instead?"

"Who is this? He looks a little familiar."

"Oh, I recognize him. He's Southern Faction's rent collector. Johnny, why did you bring him here?"

"Did you inflict those injuries on him? If you really did this, you may provoke a war between both Southern and Northern Factions, you know?"

Chapter 2667

Panting heavily, Johnny said, "H-Hurry up and bring the first-aid kit here. Tend to his wounds. He mustn't die."

Johnny couldn't allow Speedy to die because they had to obtain more information from him regarding the situation at Southern Faction.

Everyone immediately got to work and began treating Speedy's injuries.

After some time, they were done bandaging his wounds and managed to preserve his life temporarily.

Johnny sighed. "Where's Northern King? Swiftly relay to him that I have something important to report."

"That's not needed." Northern King's booming voice suddenly rang out.

He heard the commotion earlier and decided to come out to take a look.

Upon noticing something was wrong, he quickly rushed over.

Everyone hurriedly knelt when they saw Northern King. "Greetings, Northern King."

Not having the attention to spare to deal with the others, Northern King immediately directed his question at Johnny. "Johnny, what's the matter? I sent you to Northern Faction's Centuria to collect rent, but why did you bring Southern Faction's rent collector back here with you?"

Johnny replied while breathing heavily, "Northern King, b-bad news. When I arrived at Northern Faction's Centuria, I discovered that Golden Cicada's base was vacated and desolate. There were even traces suggesting a violent battle had taken place there. So, I went to Golden Cicada's training room to look for him. In the end, I saw all members of his Centuria had been beheaded, and they seemed to have died for quite some time already. At that instant, the first thought that entered my mind was that Southern Faction's Centuria did that. Hence, I wanted to go and confront them."

Johnny paused briefly before continuing, "Unexpectedly, I stumbled upon Speedy at Northern Faction's buffer zone. Speedy suffered grave injuries, and his life was hanging by a thread. Due to the urgent circumstances, I had to prioritize bringing Speedy back, as he would've died if I had first gone to interrogate Southern Faction. After all, I can deal with Southern Faction at any time. On our way back, I got a brief understanding of the situation from Speedy and f-found out..."

Northern King hastily asked, "Tell me what you found out quickly!"

Johnny took a deep breath. "I discovered Southern and Northern Faction's Centurias might've betrayed us."

What?

Northern King slammed the tabletop and got to his feet furiously.

"How dare these insignificant Centurias turn against us. They deserve to die! Johnny, explain everything to me in detail. Are you sure they've truly betrayed us?"

Johnny quickly responded, "Northern King, I didn't have the time to visit Southern Faction to investigate further, so I'm not sure about the details. Why don't I let Speedy answer your questions? He's the most qualified to give an account of what had happened."

Everyone shifted their gazes onto Speedy.

Speedy had just barely escaped death after receiving emergency treatment and was extremely

weak at that moment..

Still, the mention of Southern and Northern Faction's Centurias immediately invigorated him.

"Both Centurias have committed heinous crimes for daring to betray us. Northern King, please deliver justice on behalf of heaven by eliminating them."

Northern King said, "Speedy, elaborate the whole story to me. Don't worry. I will avenge you!"

Speedy swiftly began to recount the incident.

"I went to Southern Faction Centuria to collect Spirit Stone earlier today. To my surprise, they'd changed their leader without informing Legatus. This newly-appointed leader was extremely arrogant and full of himself. After I asked him a few questions, he beat me up and even tried to kill me. Fortunately, I was strong enough, so I managed to escape with much difficulty even though the people at Southern Faction ganged up on me. Southern and Northern Factions' Centurions also mentioned they wouldn't be offering Legion their Spirit Stones as tribute in the future. Naturally, that wasn't the most significant issue. Most importantly..."

At that point, Speedy's face became contorted with rage as he balled his fists in a fury.

Northern King probed impatiently, "Speedy, keep talking. What's the main concern?"

"They're refining Grade Two spiritual iron and are forging Dark Level divine weapon. They plan to rebel and even declared their intention to wipe out our Legion!"

Chapter 2668

Northern King exploded in rage. What? Do Centurias want to create a divine weapon to free themselves of Legatus' control? And they even want to kill Legatus?

Northern King could no longer stand such humiliation. I'll tolerate them no more! Centuria has just dug its own grave!

He slammed his palm on the table and exclaimed, "Where's Northern Faction's Suicide Squad?"

"We're here, Northern Master!" A group of men beside him bowed before him. "We're here awaiting your orders!"

Northern King gritted his teeth and said, "Centuria is plotting a rebellion, and I'll never forgive

them for committing such an outrageous act! I want you to destroy Dragon King from Southern Faction and Golden Cicada from Northern Faction!"

"Understood!" the men roared in response.

When Suicide Squad was about to begin the mission, Johnny stopped them from leaving. "Hold on! Calm down!"

He turned to Northern King and said, "Northern Master, we mustn't be reckless."

Northern King knitted his brows and looked at Johnny. "Do you have other ideas in mind?"

Johnny replied, "Can we talk in private, Northern Master?"

After a moment of contemplation, Northern King nodded. "All right. I'll give you two minutes."

Northern King brought Johnny to his bedroom. "Spit it out. Don't waste my time."

Johnny said, "Northern Master, how much do you know about the new leader of Centuria?"

Northern King shook his head. "Nothing. I just learned that they had appointed a new leader."

Johnny bobbed his head in response. "I suppose you have no idea how powerful that person is?"

"Of course not. But he's just a Centurion. Do you think he can be more powerful than a Legatus?" Northern King replied.

Johnny said, "We shouldn't underestimate the new leader, Northern Master."

Northern King frowned. "You mean he might be more powerful than a Legatus? What makes you think so since you haven't gone to Southern Faction to meet the new leader?"

"It's based on my analysis," Johnny answered, "When I was at Centuria's base in Northern Faction, I noticed not many people were killed. And it didn't seem they had had an intense fight before that. I suspect Golden Cicada was so impressed with Zeke's power that he submitted himself to Zeke. That might be why he led Northern Faction's Centuria to pledge their allegiance to him. Perhaps, Golden Cicada was willing to surrender to Zeke because he believed Zeke was more powerful than you. Aligning himself with Zeke would benefit him long run."

Upon hearing his analysis, Northern King gasped. If what he said is true, Legion's base would be in grave danger!

Who on earth is that new leader? Does that mean he's more powerful than a Legatus? Could he be a Camp Master? D*mn it! He better not be one of the Camp Masters I bumped into at the primeval forest.

Northern King was worried that Legion would have no choice but to submit to Zeke. I must check with Speedy to find out what the new leader looks like and if he's one of the three Camp Masters.

Johnny continued, "Even if my analysis is wrong, and the new leader is not as powerful as you are, he's still not someone we should take lightly. If we insist on killing him, I foresee dire consequences coming along. Legion from Southern Faction had be watching us for some time but couldn't find a chance to take us down. If our men suffer a heavy blow during this critical period, they might come at us!"

Northern King nodded in agreement. "That made sense. But does that mean we should sit here and do nothing? What if they come after us after forging the divine weapon?"

Johnny shook his head. "Of course not. We must do something. All we need to do is play both ends against the middle."

Northern King processed his words for a moment before giving him a surprised look. "You mean we instruct Legion from Southern Faction to launch an attack on Southern Faction's Centuria?"

Johnny nodded. "That's right."

Chapter 2669

Northern King said, "If we could think of the consequences, I'm sure Legion from Southern Faction would have. thought of them too. They might not be willing to initiate an attack if they haven't figured out how powerful the new leader is."

Johnny said, "Well, all we need to do is add fuel to the fire!"

His suggestion instantly caught Northern King's attention. "Oh? What plan do you have in mind, Johnny? How do we do that?"

Johnny explained, "Rumor has it that Southern Faction's rent collector might be the illegitimate son of the faction's Legatus. Are you aware of this?"

Northern King inclined his head. "It's not just a rumor. It's the truth. During one of the drinking

sessions, Southern King got drunk and spilled the beans."

Johnny continued, "What do you think Southern King would do if he finds out Southern Faction's Centuria had killed the rent collector? I'm sure he'll go all out to avenge his son."

Northern King was bereft of words. upon hearing that.

He looked at Johnny in disbelief. "Johnny, you want us to kill the Southern Faction's rent collector and pin the blame on the faction's. Centuria?"

Johnny immediately cut in, "What are you talking about, Northern Master? The culprit who will be responsible for killing the rent collector is the new leader of Centuria, and I'll be the one who will go against all odds to rescue the body. I'm aware of the consequences of my action, but the world needs to know that the murderer is Centuria's new leader. Most importantly, he will pay the price with his life!"

With a serious look on his face, Northern King nodded steadily.

Johnny's storytelling skills were so impressive that he nearly bought that story.

After patting Johnny on his shoulder, Northern King said, "Johnny, I'm surprised you have a knack for coming up with such brilliant strategies. I can't believe I've overlooked this talent of yours. From now on, I'll make you my confidant. Stay by my side and help me come up with plots and schemes. Instead of making you a rent collector, I must put your talent to good use."

Northern Master expressed his gratitude. "Thank you, Northern Master! Thank you!"

"Come. Let's go and meet Speedy." Northern King continued with a smirk. "Or should I say Speedy's corpse?"

After returning to the main hall, Northern King looked at Speedy and asked, "Speedy, how much do you know about Centuria's new leader?"

"I only know his name is Zeke Williams. Other than that, I know nothing about him," Speedy replied.

Northern King said, "Oh? Does that mean you have no idea how powerful he is either?"

Speedy shook his head. "I'm not sure, but there's something unusual about that man. We might have exchanged a few blows, but I still couldn't figure out what he had in mind."

His remark confused Northern King and others even more. Instead of identifying the new leader

as an invincible or incapable warrior, Speedy described him as unusual. What does "unusual" even mean? Why would someone describe another person as unusual? It might not be wise to offend the new leader as he seems to be a force to be reckoned with.

Northern King then said to Speedy, "Is there anything else you want to add on, Speedy?"

In other words, he was giving Speedy a chance to utter his last words.

Failing to read between the lines, Speedy said, "Thank you for saving my life, Northern Master. I'll forever be grateful to you. I shall not disturb you any further. Please get your men to take me home. I'll tell Southern King about what you've done for me, so don't worry. He will definitely repay your kindness."

Northern King nodded. "He doesn't need to thank me. I'll get Johnny to send you home."

He turned to Johnny and said, "Johnny, I want you to send Speedy home since you're the one who brought him here. Is that okay?"

"Of course. It's my honor to serve you, Northern Master." Johnny bobbed his head in response.

Johnny walked up to Speedy and helped him up. "Come on, Speedy. I'll take you home."

"Thank you!" Speedy said repeatedly.

While Speedy was turning around, Northern King waved his hand and slit his throat with his invisible energy, severing his head.

Chapter 2670

Speedy's head rolled on the ground. He glared at Northern King fixedly with his bloodshot eyes.

Speedy did not expect Northern King, whom he had exchanged pleasantries with just a while ago, would kill him. How dare he do this to me? He knew I was Southern King's son...

A few seconds later, Speedy lost consciousness and breathed his last.

Everyone in the hall was stunned by the sudden turn of events. While some began chattering among themselves, some got panicked and started running.

Northern King roared, "Quiet! Keep quiet!"

The crowd instantly zipped their mouth and calmed down.

A man asked carefully, "Northern Master, w-why did you kill Speedy?"

"Shut up!" Northern King raised his voice. "Did you see me do that? Watch your mouth, or I'll cut your tongue!"

The man freaked out and immediately prostrated before Northern King. "Please forgive me for uttering nonsense, Northern Master!"

Northern King looked at Johnny and said, "Johnny, tell everyone what happened just now. I don't want them to spread false information."

Johnny cleared his throat and said, "Sure."

"Today, Northern Master sent me to collect Spirit Stone from Northern Faction's Centuria, but there was no one at their base when I arrived. I had a feeling that Southern Faction's Centuria had exterminated them. That was why I decided to look for Dragon King and see what he had to say about it. But I was surprised to learn that Centuria had a new leader. That man was not only cruel but also arrogant. More importantly, he betrayed Legion. When I reached Southern Faction, the new leader had already tortured Speedy to death. Since Speedy and I were acquaintances, I decided to bring his body back. After this, I'll take his body to Southern King."

Everyone in the hall immediately understood that Johnny had come up with the story to sow discord between Southern Faction's Centuria and Legion.

Thus, they all started dancing to his tune.

One of them snorted and said, "Centuria has gone overboard. How dare they torture Speedy to death? Did they not know that he was Southern King's illegitimate son?"

Northern King let out a sigh. "I bet Southern King will avenge his son. I will be disappointed if he doesn't do so. Johnny, send his body home. Remember to tell Southern King the truth."

Johnny smirked and responded, "I will, don't worry."

He picked up Speedy's head, stuffed it into a bag, and headed to Southern King's base.

Southern King's base was much more luxurious and spacious than Northern King's.

About fifty guards were stationed around the high walls of the base. It was so heavily guarded that no one could enter the premises without permission.

One of the guards noticed Johnny when he was still about a thousand meters away.

He shouted at Johnny from a distance. "Who are you? What's your name? Stop walking, and stop moving, or we'll shoot!"

Johnny immediately raised his hands and replied, "Johnny Rowaz, a rent collector from Northern Faction. I'm here to see Southern Master!"

The guards were surprised to see him there. Johnny Rowaz?

Out of curiosity, the leader of the guards asked, "What are you doing here, Johnny? Aren't you supposed to be feeding Northern King's horses?"

Before this, Johnny worked as an ostler in Northern Faction.

Johnny immediately explained, - "Northern Master sent me. He wanted me to hand over something to Southern Master, so please allow me to enter the base."

"Hold on!" The leader led a few guards and ran toward Johnny.

They surrounded Johnny as they did not dare to lower their guard. The leader then ordered his subordinates to inspect him thoroughly to make sure he was not a threat.

Chapter 2671

The commander asked, "Johnny, what did you bring for Southern Master? Give it to me; I need to check it."

He was afraid the man would try to sneak some weapons into the city.

Hearing that, Johnny subconsciously hid the bag on his back and replied, "I think... it's best that you don't check this."

Naturally, the commander only got more suspicious of Johnny the more he tried to stop him from checking.

Tightening his hold on his weapon, the commander asked in a serious tone, "Why can't we check it? Please cooperate with us and open up the bag yourself."

Johnny sighed and muttered, "All right. I hope you won't regret this, commander."

With that, he slung the bag off his shoulder and placed it on the ground before opening it carefully.

When the head inside was revealed, everyone present felt their hearts lurch, and they clenched their weapons before aiming them at Johnny.

Before they could do anything, however, they got the shock of their lives when they realized the head belonged to their rent collector.

Our rent collector is dead!

It was well known in the Southern Faction that the rent collector, Speedy, was Southern King's illegitimate son. Although Southern King never admitted to this, his love for Speedy was obvious to all.

I can't believe someone actually beheaded Southern Master's precious son. This is bad... Southern Master will definitely raze the Northern Faction to the ground once he finds out about this.

Forcing a calm front, the commander exclaimed in a trembling voice, "How dare you kill our rent collector! And you even have the audacity to send his remains back to us? This is a blatant act of provocation! The Southern Faction will never let you off!"

Turning to look at the guards, he ordered, "Men, arrest Johnny Rowaz this instant! He shall wait for his punishment by Southern Master's hands.

"Yes, sir!"

The guards went ahead and pinned Johnny down with ease.

Johnny hastily explained, "I didn't kill him, commander! I'm innocent! Speedy's death was caused by the Centurias and has nothing to do with me, nor does it have anything to do with the Northern Faction!"

He added, "Besides, I risked my life to bring Speedy's head back here. If it weren't for me, the Centurias would have fed him to the dogs already."

Huh?

The commander grabbed Johnny's collar. "What did you say? The Centurias killed Speedy?"

Johnny nodded fervently. "Yes."

Hah! That's bullsh*t!

Upon that thought, the commander punched Johnny so hard that the latter felt his head spinning.

He then growled, "The Centurias are nothing compared to us, yet they dare kill one of our members, a Legion? Not to mention the person they killed was the rent collector? There's no way I'd believe that! You must be lying!"

Johnny emphasized, "I swear on my life that the Centurias are responsible for Speedy's death! You might not know about this, but they have a new leader. This new leader has already united them all to lead a mutiny against the rest of the Northern Faction."

He continued, "Forget it. Just let me meet with Southern Master. Things are a bit complicated, and I can't explain them to you clearly."

The commander, too, was of the opinion that this matter was way out of his league and that he would have no way of handling it.

As such, he immediately ordered his subordinates to notify Southern King of this before escorting Johnny to the Southern Faction camp.

Meanwhile, in one of the most luxurious houses in the Southern Faction base, Southern King was in the midst of flirting with his young lover.

Although he had countless lovers, the children that he fathered were few and far between. Of course, the reason for that wasn't because he didn't want any more children. Instead, he was involved in an accident that made him infertile soon after Speedy was born.

After his eldest son was killed by the enemy in a battle, Speedy became the only son he had left.

As such, Southern King hid Speedy's identity so that the latter would not be targeted for being his son.

Unfortunately, nothing stays hidden forever, and news of Speedy being Southern King's illegitimate son soon spread like wildfire.

Left without a choice, Southern King could only assign Speedy to be the rent collector. This way, his son would only need to deal with the Centurias and not participate in the war between Legions.

Chapter 2672

Southern King reckoned Speedy would be much safer with this kind of arrangement.

No matter how capable the Centurias were, he thought that they would not dare harm the rent collector.

Southern King was just done with the foreplay and was prepared to bed his lover when a knock sounded on the door.

Furious that he was interrupted, he barked, "Who is it? You should know not to bother me if it's nothing important!"

There's nothing I hate more than to be disturbed at such a time. Besides, didn't I instruct my subordinates to not bother me unless it was something very important?

The person on the other side of the door replied. "Southern Master. I do have something very urgent to report to you!"

Southern King glanced at the woman in his arms before saying, "Go look for my deputy if there's anything, and he will report back to me."

To that, the person said. "I've already met with the deputy, Southern Master. He's the one who asked me to come and inform you of this as soon as possible.

Oh?

Finally realizing the gravity of the matter, Southern King inquired. "So. what is it that you want to report to me about?"

"It... it has something to do with Speedy," came the reply.

Huh? Could it be that Speedy's in trouble? He's the only son I have left. What am I going to do with my life if something happened to him?

Ignoring the woman in his arms, Southern King got dressed and said, "Okay. I'll deal with it right away."

Reluctant to part with him, the woman whined, "What about me, Southern Master? I'm... I'm so

hot for you right now. So please, just f*ck me. F*ck me hard..."

Southern King gave her tight rump a slap and said, "You saucy little minx! Wait here for me. I'll give it to you all you want when I get back."

After straightening his clothes, he headed out of the room.

The guard who came to give his report hurried over. "Southern Master, he's already waiting for you at the palace, so please make haste there at once."

While walking in the direction of the palace, Southern King asked, "Tell me what happened to Speedy. What is it that made you all so anxious like this?"

Naturally, the guard dared not mention Speedy's death, for he knew there was a high chance that Southern King might slap him to death in a fit of rage.

He mumbled, "I'm not too sure about the details, so let's just head over to the palace to learn more about the situation."

An ominous feeling surged within Southern King at that. He scrutinized the guard's expression and realized that the situation might be worse than he thought.

He quickened his pace and soon arrived at the palace.

The place was jam-packed with people. Apart from the guards lining up at the side, the elders were also present.

Normally, such a scene would only happen whenever there was a meeting of utmost importance being held.

Southern King looked toward the group of elders, asking, "What the hell is going on?"

The elders trained their gazes on the commander. "I think it's best to let the commander tell you about it."

The commander fell to his knees and said cautiously, "Southern Master, earlier... the rent collector of the Northern Faction, Johnny Rowaz, requested to see you."

Oh?

Surprised, Southern King asked, "What is their rent collector doing here in the Southern Faction?"

Even if the Northern Faction wanted to initiate contact with the Southern Faction, they should have sent envoys instead of the rent collector. After all, the rent collector always deals with the Centurias. In theory, it is disrespectful to send a rent collector to deliver a piece of news.

The commander elucidated, "He even brought something for you..."

He brought me something? What is it?

Having his curiosity piqued, Southern King quizzed, "Why are you all being so mysterious? Just get the rent collector from the Northern Faction here to see me."

"Of course."

The commander then turned toward the entrance and called out, "Come on in!"

Upon that command, in walked Johnny in a gingerly fashion. He got to his knees in front of Southern King and greeted, "I, Johnny Rowaz, the rent collector of the Northern Faction, offer my sincerest greeting to you, Southern Master."

In response, Southern King asked, "I heard you brought me something?"

Johnny nodded. "I did, Southern Master."

After saying that, he placed the bag he had brought on the ground.

Chapter 2673

As soon as Johnny brought out a bundle, an overwhelming stench of blood permeated the air.

Southern King's brows drew together sharply. "What's inside it? Open it!"

Johnny slowly untied the bundle, revealing Speedy's severed head.

The gruesome sight hit Southern King like a ton of bricks, and everything around him went black as he reeled from a complete emotional breakdown, nearly fainting right there and then. My son. My only son, Speedy! All that's left of him is his head! He's dead, and my line has ended with him!

The elders turned pale with shock and hurried forward. "Southern Master, you need to take care of your health."

"We're so sorry for your loss, Southern Master, but you must stay safe and healthy."

"Hurry up and wake up, Southern Master. Please wake up!"

Southern King abruptly slammed his palms on the table and stood, the motion causing powerful shockwaves in the air that threw the elders backward. The veins on his forehead bulged, and he looked absolutely terrifying. He pointed at Johnny and growled, "Guards, chop him to pieces and feed him to the dogs! No, wait. Don't kill him just yet. I want to torture him slowly and make him suffer so much that he'll wish he were dead!"

Horried, Johnny felt his entire body instantly turn to jelly. He quickly fell to his knees and pleaded, "I'm innocent, Southern Master! I've done nothing wrong! I didn't kill Speedy, and his death has nothing to do with me! If you kill me, the real culprit will get away. And if Speedy knew that, he wouldn't be able to rest in peace!"

The elders also attempted to placate Southern King.

"Please calm down, Southern Master. You must keep a cool head!"

"In my opinion, it doesn't seem possible that Johnny is the one who did it."

"That's what I think, too. Firstly, Johnny is nowhere near as skilled as Speedy and is incapable of killing the latter. Secondly, would he bring Speedy's head here if he was the culprit? Wouldn't that be seeking death?"

"Southern Master, let's hear what Johnny has to say first."

Under the elders' persuasion, Southern King regained a shred of rationality. He breathed in deeply. Widening his eyes, he glared at Johnny, wishing he could swallow the latter whole. Although it was possible that Johnny was not the person who killed Speedy, that did nothing to lessen Southern King's anger toward him. "Very well, then. Go ahead. Tell me what happened without sparing any details. Should you dare to lie, I'll turn your life into a living hell!"

Johnny nodded vehemently, agreeing to do as he said. At that moment, his heart was flooded with fear and regret. Had I known how cruel Southern King could be, I would've never agreed to accept this mission. Just moments earlier, he was about to have me chopped to pieces and fed to the dogs without even bothering to get to the bottom of what happened! Sure enough, being around people in high positions is risky business.

Despite taking a deep breath to calm his nerves, Johnny's voice still shook as he explained, "Today's the day I collect rent, so I went to the Northern Faction's Centurias bright and early in the morning to do so. When I arrived, however, I found their base deserted. There were even

signs that someone had robbed the place. I took it for granted that Southern Faction had sent people to take over and wipe out Northern Faction and loot it. Hence, I went to your Centuria base to investigate. Alas, I never thought I'd be too late. They had already tortured Speedy to death, and I had to risk my life before barely succeeding in retrieving his head. I still have the injuries. Look..."

He lifted the hem of his shirt to reveal three or four bloody wounds on his abdomen. In truth, they were from him stabbing himself as a ploy to make his story more believable.

Southern King could not control his energy any longer. It raged about him and ripped apart everything breakable close by, such as the wooden tables, chairs, and porcelain pieces. In fact, even the stone table in front of him that weighed several tons was overturned. "Kill them! Kill them all! I want the Centurias dead! Elders, send word to our eight Legatuses. Tell them to gather their elites and bring them here. Today, the Centurias' blood will spill!"

Chapter 2674

Once again, the group of elders attempted to persuade him in earnest. "Southern Master, please reconsider your decision."

"We haven't investigated what's going on, so we shouldn't act impulsively," one of them cautioned.

"It'd be rather naïve of us to go into battle solely based on what Johnny said."

Another said, "Southern Master, don't you think some parts of Johnny's story don't quite make sense?"

Annoyed, Southern King snapped, "Fine. What are the things that don't make sense? Tell me one by one. Let's start with you, Great Elder. Why don't you think I should deploy our troops?"

The Great Elder looked at Johnny as he said, "Everyone knows the Centurias hold a deep respect for Legions and automatically defer to the latter. They're usually eager to flatter and curry favor with the rent collector, so why would they try to kill him for no reason?"

"Oh, I'm so sorry! There's something I forgot to tell you. Actually, the Centurias have a new commander. Not only does he command the Southern Faction's Centurias, but he has also taken over the Northern Faction's. He went as far as to behead hundreds of innocent people to prevent the Centurias from opposing his leadership. Those heads are still in a pile in Golden Cicada's training room. That shows just how vicious and brutal he is. I suspect he killed Speedy

because he couldn't stand his attitude," Johnny responded hastily.

A new commander? Southern King turned to the elders and asked, "Why wasn't I informed that the Centurias have a new commander?"

"We didn't know about it either, Southern Master," they replied, looking confused.

"Didn't they inform you in advance?" Southern King asked.

They shook their heads. "No."

Sighing, Johnny said, "It'd be odd if they did. I've to be honest with you. Can you guess what I discovered at their base? They were extracting Grade Two spiritual iron and using it to forge divine weapons! Clearly, they are planning a rebellion. The new commander even declared that he wanted to kill all the Legatuses!"

D*mn it! Southern King's knuckles cracked as he clenched his fists tightly. "Look into this new commander of theirs immediately and give me all the information on him as soon as possible. Ah, forget it. I'll go and meet him personally, I want to see what he's made of to dare behave so insolently!"

To his surprise, the Great Elder stopped him again. "Please be patient, Southern Master. I still think something is off about this whole matter."

"If you have something to say, just spit it out," Southern King said, growing somewhat impatient.

The Great Elder answered helplessly, "A delicate balance hangs between Southern Faction's and Northern Faction's Legions. If any one side becomes just a little bit weaker, there's a possibility of getting defeated by the other. Sending our Legions to fight the Centurias will surely weaken us, regardless of whether we win or lose the battle. And if the other faction seizes this opportunity to attack us, we'll be doomed. I'm worried this is all an act orchestrated by Northern Faction's Legions. As the proverb goes, 'while two dogs are fighting for a bone, a third runs away with it.'"

Johnny's heart started pounding when he heard that. This Great Elder is getting on in years, yet he still hit the nail right on the head.

Suddenly, he felt a little guilty.

Southern King also fell silent. Nonetheless, it was only for a brief moment as he soon said, "That's all right. I'll lead a team to investigate the matter. If it turns out that Northern Faction's Legions orchestrated the whole thing, we'll obliterate them. Of course, if it's really the Centurias' doing, we'll surely teach them a lesson."

Johnny hurriedly piped up, "Southern Master, rest assured that you don't have to worry about Northern Faction's Legions. Although we want to expand our power, we wouldn't resort to such underhanded methods."

Chapter 2675

Southern King replied, "Hmph, you had better be telling the truth. Come with me to the Southern Faction Centurias' base. If what you say is true, you'll be handsomely rewarded. Otherwise, I'll definitely have your life!"

Johnny nodded vigorously. "Understood!"

With his plan all laid out, he wasn't worried about Southern King not believing him.

He would first take Southern King to see the pile of human corpses in Golden Cicada's training room.

Southern King would then assume that the Southern Faction Centurias were responsible for beheading all those men. If they were capable of annihilating a hundred Centuria members, severing Speedy's head wouldn't be so far-fetched after all.

Southern King demanded, "Where are the Ten Ruthless Warriors of Southern Faction?"

"Here, Southern Master!"

From an obscure corner of the grand hall, ten burly men suddenly appeared and dropped to their knees in front of Southern King.

"Ten Ruthless Warriors of Southern Faction at your service, Southern Master!"

Southern King instructed, "Follow me to find out the truth. We will set off right away."

"Understood, Southern Master!"

Together with Johnny, Southern King headed to the Southern Faction Centurias' base under the Ten Ruthless Warriors' escort.

Meanwhile, inside Zeke's room at the Southern Faction Centurias' base, Zeke was discussing with Ossa Dei about forging techniques for divine weapons and was at the beginning stage of

forging one.

Given that it was troublesome for Zeke to do it alone, he requested Sole Wolf for his assistance.

Both of them were busy at work when a sudden knock was heard at the door, causing Zeke and Sole Wolf to furrow their brows in unison.

I have instructed the members not to interrupt me unless it's important, so why is someone knocking on the door?

Sole Wolf demanded in annoyance, "Who is it?"

Silence was all he heard in reply.

As Sole Wolf and Zeke exchanged glances, they came to a quick understanding that something was amiss.

Once Zeke nodded at Sole Wolf, the latter shouted again, "Who's outside?"

Nevertheless, no response was forthcoming.

After putting down the divine weapon Zeke was forging, Sole Wolf gradually moved to the door.

When he took a careful peek outside and saw no one, Sole Wolf immediately knew that trouble had come knocking.

A smirk gradually emerged on his face. To dare challenge the Great Marshal is the equivalent of seeking death itself.

When he opened the door abruptly, he was greeted by a massive hurricane of energy spinning toward him. With dust and dirt swirling in the air, Sole Wolf couldn't clearly see who the intruder was.

Having prepared himself, Sole Wolf unleashed his energy to block the attack, but he could only hold it off temporarily.

He was subsequently surprised when the intruder intensified the energy unleashed, pushing him back by a few meters.

With a drastic change in expression, Sole Wolf cursed, "F*ck! Look at this energy. Seems like you aren't a pushover! Show yourself, you b*stard!"

While speaking, Sole Wolf increased the energy he used to block.

Finally, he managed to achieve parity with whoever his attacker was, but he was already at his limit.

Just like me, the enemy must be unleashing all of his energy too.

Given that he was the strongest warrior within Ultimate Class, anyone who was more powerful had to be of Celestial Class.

Unless he has achieved Celestial Class, there's no way the attacker can further reinforce his energy. Besides, the only person on Theos Island who is of Celestial Class is Theos himself, but I don't think he would have discovered us so quickly.

However, Sole Wolf's hopes were dashed the very next second.

The attacker further intensified the energy unleashed, throwing Sole Wolf back a few more steps. It wasn't until his back hit a stone pillar that he managed to come to a stop.

What frightened him even more was that the intruder's energy continued to increase.

Unable to hold up any longer, Sole Wolf was on the brink of puking blood from the pressure.

Finally, he had no choice but to beg Zeke for help, "Zeke, help... We're under attack!"

Unfortunately, Zeke was still engrossed in forging the divine weapon and was, naturally, clueless about Sole Wolf's situation.

Chapter 2676

It wasn't until Sole Wolf shouted for help that Zeke finally threw him a glance. "Stop fooling around."

In that instant, Sole Wolf didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

Zeke, are you kidding me? We're under attack by a powerful enemy. How is this considered fooling around?

Just as Sole Wolf was feeling exasperated, the wave of energy that had attacked him suddenly vanished.

The next second, two men walked into the room.

Nonetheless, the dirt and dust they brought with them prevented Sole Wolf from seeing who they were.

"D*mn it, how dare you attack us? Do you have a death wish? Now, die!"

Right as Sole Wolf was about to attack, a voice suddenly rang out. "Stop, Sole Wolf! It's us!"

Sole Wolf stopped his attack immediately before rubbing his eyes to take a closer look.

The voice sounds familiar. Are they back?

Sole Wolf squinted his eyes again. Isn't that Tyler and Alfred?

His expression changed immediately. "D*mn it, you idiots! Why did you attack me? Do you have a death wish?"

Tyler and Alfred laughed awkwardly. "Hehe, we just leveled up to Ultimate Class and wanted to test out our strength."

Sole Wolf responded with his evaluation, "Hmm, to be honest, both of you have made rapid progress. Even I could barely hold back your combined energy."

However, both of them hung their heads and sighed in dejection. "Our combined strength can only pressure you slightly? That's too weak. It looks like we have to double our efforts in training."

Sole Wolf replied, "Sheesh, of all the people to compare, why did you choose me? I'm the most powerful fighter below Celestial Class, while both of you have just achieved Ultimate Class. This just isn't meaningful. That aside, if the three of you combined can beat me, that itself is a respectable result. Oh, now that I think of it, where's Killer Wolf? Why isn't he with you?"

Tyler remarked, "That's enough, Sole Wolf. Stop blowing your own trumpet."

To be honest, you would have been killed by the three of us if this was a real battle. Also... Hehe, even the Great Marshal might feel a little pressured."

"What do you mean? Where in the world is Killer Wolf?"

"I'm right here." A lackadaisical voice rang out from above their heads.

When they looked up, they were shocked to see Killer Wolf affixed to the ceiling.

He was being held up by a cloud of energy, and the source of that energy was, naturally, Zeke.

Tyler queried anxiously, "Killer Wolf, when did the Great Marshal notice your presence?"

Killer Wolf sighed, "The very moment I stepped in. I was restrained up here right after that."

Tyler continued, "Why didn't you say a thing?"

"Isn't it obvious? Zeke sealed my mouth. I couldn't even make a sound."

Thereafter, the three of them bowed toward Zeke. "Great Marshal, please forgive us for the offense we have caused."

After sweeping his gaze across the three of them, Zeke nodded slightly. "Hmm, to exhibit such power right after achieving Ultimate Class is an admirable result indeed. Keep up the good work."

The three of them nodded. "Definitely."

With that, Zeke ignored them and continued forging his divine weapon.

Meanwhile, the three asked Sole Wolf curiously, "Sole Wolf, what is Zeke upto? He looks really engrossed in it."

Upon regaining his senses, Sole Wolf explained, "Zeke is forging a divine weapon. It's a process that cannot be disrupted. Now, get out of here quickly."

The few of them hurried out at once.

The disturbance they caused earlier almost resulted in Zeke making a mistake.

Nonetheless, Zeke instructed, "Sole Wolf, get them to refine spiritual iron. We don't have much time left."

"Understood!"

Sole Wolf was reluctant to help Zeke with forging the divine weapon, given how boring it was. He wasn't allowed to move or make a sound for fear of disrupting Zeke's concentration.

Hence, he preferred to refine spiritual iron.

Chapter 2677

Along the way, Killer Wolf was filled with a sense of dejection. "And here I was, thinking that I could stand toe to toe with you after achieving Ultimate Class. I didn't expect the combined strength of the three of us to be only enough to attain a draw with you. This is humiliating."

"Sole Wolf, train with us when you're free. You can help provide us with some real-life battle experience. Judging from our fight with you just now, that was the only thing we lacked."

"Forget it. Are you trying to tire me out? Now that I'm second-in command in the base, I have to refine spiritual iron during the day and train soldiers at night. I barely have enough time, and yet, you want me to train with you? Can you bear to let me suffer that way?"

Killer Wolf said, "All right, why don't you find us an elite fighter to train with?"

After pondering briefly, Sole Wolf readily agreed. "No problem. Leave it to me."

Coincidentally, igniting some conflicts might liven up the otherwise boring life here.

Soon, Sole Wolf brought Killer Wolf and the others to the place where spiritual iron was refined.

Draco and Phoenix were so busy that all they did was throw the newcomers a glance before going back to work.

Sole Wolf arranged for them to work in a corner. "The three of you, just follow what the others are doing."

Killer Wolf was puzzled. "Weren't you going to arrange for someone to train with us?"

Sole Wolf explained, "Have some patience. There are plenty of powerful fighters here. Let me think about who the best candidate is to train with you."

"All right. Thank you."

After dwelling on the matter for a moment, Sole Wolf's gaze finally fell upon Draco and Golden Cicada.

Both of them used to be the commanders of the Northern and Southern Factions' Centurias respectively. Proud of their skills, they were previously the strongest warriors within all the Centurias.

Also, the only person they obeyed was Zeke. Even Sole Wolf didn't manage to gain their respect.

All this while, he felt the urge to eradicate the duo but refrained from doing so for fear of holding back the progress of refining spiritual iron.

Now that he found an opportunity for someone else to do his dirty work, Sole Wolf wasn't going to waste it.

Upon approaching Draco and Golden Cicada, he flashed a slight smile. "Guys, you've done good work today. I'll definitely report this to Zeke so that he rewards both of you accordingly."

Both of them replied flatly, "Thank you."

Even though their response intensified the resentment Sole Wolf felt, he suppressed the anger within him and let out a sigh instead.

His reaction managed to spark Draco and Golden Cicada's curiosity.

From their perspective, the brute in front of them behaved in a ruthless and occasionally stupid manner most of the time. However, he never seemed to have any problems before.

So why is he sighing today? Is something finally bothering him?

Draco inquired, "Sole Wolf, what are you sighing for?"

Taking a deep breath, Sole Wolf heaved another sigh. "I'm worried that our positions are no longer secure."

Hmm?

The curious Draco asked, "What do you mean by that, Sole Wolf?"

Sole Wolf jerked his chin in Killer Wolf's direction. "Do you see the three newcomers? They're really powerful and extremely arrogant. Despite having just arrived, they declared that they'll defeat oldies like us and force us into submission. In fact, they labeled us as unworthy of becoming their subordinates and think they are doing us a favor by allowing us to be in their service."

This is outrageous!

Golden Cicada clenched his fists and gritted his teeth. "That's too much. They have gone too far! It seems that they won't know who's boss until we put them in their place."

Draco added, "Hmph! Those clueless idiots must be taught a lesson! Other than Mr. Williams, we bow to no one here!"

Draco and Golden Cicada exchanged glances and gave each other a nod.

They had come to a decision to teach the three newcomers a lesson.

Chapter 2678

Nevertheless, Sole Wolf stopped them. "Guys, don't act hastily. The newcomers are really something. Moreover... moreover..."

Draco and Golden Cicada asked, "Moreover what?"

After stuttering for a while, Sole Wolf ended up swallowing his words.

Instead, he waved his hand and remarked, "I just can't bear to say it as it would outrage you

two. Whatever the case, my advice to you is to endure it and let it go."

Sole Wolf's refusal to speak only served to increase Draco and Golden Cicada's curiosity, causing them to question him repeatedly.

Left without a choice, Sole Wolf told them candidly. "They said that they're looking to defeat both of you in particular since you were the commanders of the Southern and Northern Faction Centurias previously. Only by getting you two to grovel for mercy can they elevate their own prestige."

B*stards! Such insolence!

Draco and Golden Cicada sprang to their feet, unable to tolerate it anymore.

Upon hearing Sole Wolf's words, both of them were going to teach the newcomers a lesson, regardless of what anyone else had to say about it.

How dare they want us to beg for mercy? It might not physically hurt, but the humiliation is unacceptable!

With that, Golden Cicada and Draco approached Killer Wolf.

Breaking out into a devious smile, Sole Wolf watched Killer Wolf and the rest. Now that I have made the arrangements, let's see if you can make the best out of it.

Upon approaching the newcomers, Golden Cicada and Draco barked, "Hey, you three, come over here to work."

Killer Wolf raised his gaze to look at Golden Cicada. "Why?"

Golden Cicada snapped, "Shut up and do as I say. This is my territory."

"Is that so? What proof do you have?"

"Hmph! I used to be the commander here, so what do you think?"

"That only makes you the former commander, not the current one. You're not qualified to order us around."

Draco added, "Are you refusing to do as we say?"

"You got that right."

Golden Cicada took a deep breath. "Fine. Since you're disobeying our orders, we'll just have to beat them into you."

In an instant, Killer Wolf, Tyler, and Alfred sprang to their feet, brimming with excitement. Is it finally time to train?

Polishing his knuckles, Killer Wolf was ready to rumble. "Fine. Show me what a former commander is made of!"

However, Tyler protested, "Wait, Killer Wolf, you're a young man with plenty of opportunities ahead of you. Why don't you let an old man like me take this since it's so difficult to come by?"

Killer Wolf fell into a dilemma, reluctant to give this chance up.

Subsequently, Alfred threw his hat into the ring too. "Killer Wolf, Tyler, why don't you let me take them on? I just leveled up and haven't gotten the chance to fight a real battle, while both of you have fought waves of fearsome beasts already."

The three of them began arguing over the opportunity, with no one willing to give in.

When they finally came to an impasse, Killer Wolf suggested, "Why don't we decide this over rock paper scissors? The winner will get to fight."

"No problem!"

As the three of them began playing the game, Draco and Golden Cicada were utterly flabbergasted.

This is too much! They have gone too far! How can they treat this as a training opportunity and fight for it? To make it worse, they're deciding on it with rock paper scissors! F*ck you guys, I've never seen anyone disparage others this way in my entire life!

At that moment, Golden Cicada and Draco were filled with the urge to kill.

As for the three, Alfred beat Killer Wolf and Tyler in the end.

Consequently, he looked more ecstatic than if he had won the lottery. "Haha, guys, step aside!"

Turning to Draco and Golden Cicada, he jeered, "You two, attack me now. I'll give you a handicap by only fighting you with one arm."

Draco roared, "F*ck you! I don't need your handicap! Golden Cicada, I'll take on this old man and leave the other two to you."

Alfred quickly waved his hands and explained, "Guys, you've misunderstood."

Scoffing, Golden Cicada retorted, "Are you backing out now?"

Alfred clarified, "I'm actually challenging both of you, not just one."

Chapter 2679

"Besides the two of you, who else has a problem with me? Feel free to join these two in fighting me. Truthfully, these two insignificant men are not even enough to get me warmed up."

At that point, the crowd was infuriated.

This old man has crossed the line!

Alfred was not merely fighting against one person from the whole crowd. Rather, he had challenged the entire crowd!

There were more than thirty people on the scene refining spiritual iron, and all of them were strong warriors.

With their combined power, wiping Alfred out would be child's play.

Has this coffin-dodger gotten tired of living? How dare he provoke so many people?

Draco spat, "You better keep your tongue in check before you say something you'll regret!"

He then turned to Golden Cicada. "Golden Cicada, leave this old codger to me. I'll teach him a lesson on your behalf."

To his surprise, Golden Cicada scoffed. "Not a chance. This old man has too smart of a mouth. I want to teach him a lesson myself."

Alfred rolled his eyes. "How indecisive! You're no different than women choosing outfits! I've told you: both of you can fight me together!"

Draco and Golden Cicada exchanged glances before nodding. "Deal. We'll do as you say and fight you together. But before that, what's going to happen if we kill you in the process? What would be the price to pay?"

"If you manage to beat me to death, it's entirely on me. You don't have to worry about that," Alfred stated calmly.

Golden Cicada shook his head. "Verbal consent is not enough. Let's sign a liability waiver form instead!"

Alfred guffawed. "No need for that. Relax. You guys still have to refine spiritual iron, so I won't take your lives."

By then, Draco and Golden Cicada were so furious that smoke was coming out of their ears.

This old man is infuriating! That's it!

Feeling the last bit of patience draining out of them, Draco and Golden Cicada gritted their teeth and charged at Alfred. "Die!"

Upon seeing that, Alfred merely stood his ground and smiled. "Come!"

With that, the battle began!

Everyone on the scene put aside whatever they were doing to watch the fight.

Meanwhile, Johnny had brought Southern King and the Ruthless Warriors to the Centuria's district.

Johnny had not brought Southern King straight to the Southern Faction Centurias' base. Instead, he first made a detour to the Northern Faction Centurias' base.

As they walked, Johnny began narrating his story, "The other day, when I came to the Northern Faction Centurias' base, it was completely deserted. Everything-people, resources, and even the Spirit Stone Was gone! All that remained were traces left by the Southern Faction Centurias, suggesting that a violent battle had taken place here. To uncover the truth, I decided to go to the Southern Faction Centurias. In the end, when I passed by Golden Cicada's training room, I saw..."

Here, his voice trailed off.

"What did you see?" The Southern King inquired out of curiosity.

Instead of answering, Johnny sighed softly. "There are no words for me to describe what I witnessed. I'll bring you there instead."

Soon, Johnny and the crowd arrived at Golden Cicada's training room.

When he saw all the rotting heads being piled up into a small mountain, Southern King felt a chill go down his spine. Despite all that he had gone through, the gruesome sight was enough to make him shudder.

How cruel! The Southern Faction Centurias really are ruthless!

Even Southern King himself could not do something so inhumane.

Killing people is one thing. Why would they pile all of their victims' heads together? This is inhumane!

Johnny continued to explain, "These are all the courageous spirits of the Northern Faction Centurias. All these brave souls refused to submit to the new commander, so he beheaded all of them. I suspect that the new commander had originally planned to recruit Speedy. However, Speedy was stubborn and refused to submit to the commander, so Speedy was..."

Southern King clenched his fists tightly. "The new commander, Zeke Williams. Hah! I'll kill him! I want him dead! Bring me to see this new commander this instant!"

"As you wish!"

Johnny immediately led the crowd to the Southern Faction Centurias' base. All of them sprinted the entire journey.

A worthwhile note to take was that all of them were powerful warriors. In other words, they had impeccable speed.

Within half an hour, they arrived at the Southern Faction Centurias' base.

The guards at the city entrance immediately recognized Johnny as the rent collector of the Northern Faction Legion.

Chapter 2680

However, the guards did not recognize the Southern King and the Ten Ruthless Warriors. After all, lowly commoners like them did not have the chance to get close to the Southern King, which was why they had never seen him before.

Nevertheless, since Johnny was among the crowd, the guards naturally assumed that all of their incoming guests were from the Northern Faction.

One of the guards called out to Johnny from afar. "Halt! This is the base of the Southern Faction. We do not welcome visitors from the Northern Faction. Please leave."

Alas, Johnny's footsteps did not falter in the slightest, and neither did the rest.

Instead, Johnny asked mischievously, "Visitors from the Northern Faction are unwelcome, you say? What about visitors from the Southern Faction? For example, the rent collector of the Southern Faction-Speedy?"

At the mention of Speedy's name, the guard's expression shifted slightly. Johnny can't be here to avenge Speedy, can he? He's from the Northern Faction. Why would he stand up for someone from the Southern Faction?

The guard replied icily, "That is a private matter of the Southern Faction and none of your business. Please turn around immediately. If you insist on advancing, don't blame us for being rough."

Nonetheless, not only did Johnny and the rest not stop, but they did not even slow down.

Just then, the Southern King spoke up. "A private matter of the Southern Faction? Hah! How come I, Southern King, have not even heard of such matters? What a joke!"

Southern King?

The guards at the entrance widened their eyes as they gaped at Southern King with terror.

Is he really the Southern King? Is he here because of Speedy?

Everyone had long heard of the rumor that Speedy was the illegitimate son of Southern King. From the current events, they realized that the rumor might be true.

Otherwise, Southern King would not show up personally on behalf of a rent collector.

The Southern King thundered, "Speedy was killed by you a lot, wasn't he?"

The guard quickly shook his head. "No, we didn't kill Speedy. He left here alive."

Johnny interrupted. "Hah! More like 'he left as a corpse', I suppose?"

Enraged, the guard shot Johnny a sharp glare. "Shut up! You're trying to sow discord between us! Speedy attacked us, so our new commander merely gave him a round of beating! An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth! Once we had taught him a lesson, Speedy left!"

Upon hearing that, the Southern King tossed a skeptical look at Johnny.

The guard did not look like he was lying.

If the guard was telling the truth, it could only mean that Johnny had lied.

Southern King was aware that the whole ordeal could be a scheme planned by the Northern Faction. Speedy could very well have been killed by them instead.

Noticing Southern King's gaze on him, Johnny tried to appear calm even though his heart was racing. "Southern Master, do not listen to his blatant lies. He's the one that's trying to sow discord."

Just then, another guard with a tall stature called out from the city wall, "We killed Speedy by cutting off his head! He deserved to die!"

The first guard began to panic. "Leigh! What nonsense are you spouting? Since when have we killed Speedy?"

The tall guard-Leigh-spoke again. "Enough, Watt. Man up and tell it like it is. Only weak people would shy away from the truth. There's no need to be afraid of him. Our new commander is powerful. The commander had given word that anyone who dared to offend him shall perish, be it Northern King or Southern King. Even if they don't show up, our commander will seek them

out to settle the score with them himself!"

What?

The Southern King shot the tall guard with a deadly glare.

Upon hearing that, any hint of skepticism left in Southern King's heart completely vanished into thin air.

At that moment, Southern King was purple with anger as he clenched his teeth so tightly that his jaw began to hurt. His hatred and wrath skyrocketed.

Speedy was, in fact, killed by these people! Yet not only do they show no sign of remorse, but they are smug about it! If one insignificant guard is so proud, one can only imagine how much worse their new commander is!

The Southern King realized that his position was under threat if he did not get rid of the new commander.

What Southern King had not realized was that Johnny had sneaked the tall guard a meaningful look.

The tall guard was actually a spy that Johnny had placed within the Southern Faction Centurias. His main task was to collect intel from them.

Who would have thought that he would one day serve a bigger purpose?

Chapter 2681

The Southern King took a deep breath to try and calm himself, but he could not hide his rising anger.

"Open the gate at this moment! I want to see your new commander," he demanded, giving the guard a cold, stern stare.

"We'll head in to seek permission from our commander now," the guard replied.

Without any warning, Southern King reached out and shot a lash of energy at the guard, roping it around his neck.

With a powerful flip of his hand, he sent the guard hurtling down from the tall wall. Pinning the guard under his feet, he growled, "Permission? Did say you want to seek permission for you my entry? I, Southern King, have never been treated in such a humiliating manner! You're going to pay dearly for this mistake and die a horrible death!"

The guard threw up a mouthful of blood and painfully sputtered in a weak voice, "Y-You'd better let me go. O-Our new commander is a great leader, and he'll never forgive you for doing this to his men."

The Southern King arrogantly laughed out loud and said, "Haha! Well said! Then I shall wait for your great commander to come out, and I'll kill you right before his eyes!"

After that, he furiously shouted in the direction of the camp and demanded, "Get your ass out here, Zeke! If you don't, I'll raze this place to the ground!"

Having infused his voice with his powerful energy, Southern King's thunderous howl instantly traveled to all corners of the camp.

Accompanying that howl was a mighty outburst of energy that stirred up the air, and everyone on-site could feel the enormous wave of energy storming across the camp.

After all, being a high-level King Class warrior, Southern King had the power to bulldoze through a hill if he wished to.

In the meantime, at the Spirit Stone reserve, Draco, Golden Cicada, and Alfred had just started their battle.

Draco and Golden Cicada were charging toward Alfred, but before they could get near him, a gust of powerful energy wave swooped in from afar,

When it reached Golden Cicada and Draco, the two were instantly swept away.

Many other men were also being blown off.

Draco and Golden Cicada were only of Archduke rank. As such, they were not able to withstand the mighty energy storm stirred up by a high-level King Class warrior.

On the other hand, Sole Wolf, Killer Wolf, and the others were unaffected by Southern King's energy wave as they were already Ultimate Class warriors.

However, the insults hurled by Southern King reached their ears and infuriated them.

"Darn it! How dare he insult the Great Marshal? He's courting death!"

"Let's go! Let's meet that arrogant rascal!"

In a flash, they dashed toward the entrance of the city.

After being flung across the air for tens of meters, Draco and Golden Cicada landed hard, multiple injuries littering their bodies.

Alas, they were not the worst hit. Many others were thrown hundreds of meters away and were bleeding profusely from severe internal injuries.

The energy wave had hit them hard and caused grievous damage to their organs.

What's happening? What was that strange wave of energy? How could something be so powerful?

The men were terrified, and Draco and Golden Cicada were no exception.

Even an idiot would have realized that sudden storm was unusual.

"It could be an attack by our enemy! Let's go! We've got to defend the city!" Draco shouted.

"Let's go!"

Without any delay, all the men started to rush toward the city gate.

Sole Wolf and Killer Wolf were among the first to reach the city gate, and they were already facing off with the Southern King when Draco and the rest arrived.

Sole Wolf's face fell when he saw the guard pinned under Southern King's foot, and he demanded, "Who are you? Why are you kicking up such a big fuss here? Don't you think you've gone too far?"

Everyone at The North Regiment kept a lookout for one another, to the extent of being a little over-protective.

Although Sole Wolf had not spent much time in this Centuria, he already considered the Centurions as family since they had placed their trust in him and pledged loyalty to Zeke.

"Gone too far? Haha! I'm Southern King. Anyone from the Southern Faction, be they Centurions or Legatuses, are all my slaves!" The Southern King gave Sole Wolf a cold stare and declared.

"I can do whatever I want to them! Even if I decide to take their lives, no one has the right to intervene! I merely pinned my slave under my foot, so how is that considered gone too far?" he continued.

"From this moment on, you have no right over the people here at this Centuria, and they will no longer be your slaves. Lay a finger on them, and you'll find yourself an enemy in me!" Sole Wolf uttered coldly. "Release him this instant and get down on your knees to apologize!"

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Chapter 2682

The Southern King let out a hearty laugh and said, "Well done! I like that arrogance! Other than Camp South's Master, you're the only one who dares to demand that I get down on my knees! I'll grant you your wish! Here you go!"

With that, the Southern King kicked the guard in the stomach and sent him flying toward Sole Wolf.

Sole Wolf immediately reached out and effortlessly caught the guard.

However, that kick gravely injured the guard and caused him to throw up blood again.

Sole Wolf turned to his men and ordered, "Call for help immediately and get him treated."

"Okay!" Right away, Draco sent out instructions for the medical team to attend to the guard.

At the same time, he whispered into Sole Wolf's ear and said, "This guy is the commander of the Southern Faction's Legions. He is very powerful and definitely not a pushover."

"Even ten of me may not be his match. Maybe we should get Mr. Williams to deal with him," Draco added.

Sole Wolf snorted in disbelief and dissed, "Southern King, my foot! To me, he's but an overrated guy. You stay out of this! I can crush him with a finger."

Draco made a face, as he doubted Sole Wolf and thought he was being overconfident.

Unconvinced by Sole Wolf's assurance, he looked toward Phoenix for help.

Phoenix understood his silent plea and quietly left the scene to look for Zeke.

After all, Phoenix was the only one in the entire city who would dare to bother Zeke.

Next, Sole Wolf could be heard sighing regretfully and saying, "Gosh! I said release him, not send him flying back! Also, what about getting on your knees to apologize? People who don't pay attention need to be taught a lesson."

"From your attitude, it looks like you're Zeke, the new commander of the Centuria's," Southern King concluded.

"Of course not! We don't need to trouble Zeke. You should be honored that I bothered to lift my finger to deal with you." Sole Wolf's retort came fast and sharp.

Annoyed, Southern King yelled, "You arrogant punk! Tell Zeke to get his ass out here right now! I have a score to settle with him!"

"I'll remember you for those insults you hurled against Zeke. But before we go into that, maybe you can tell us what grudges you have against Zeke?" Sole Wolf asked.

The Southern King snorted and said, "You guys killed Speedy. How are you going to make up for that?"

"Speedy bullied our guards, so I paid him back with interest. An eye for an eye, so no one can fault us for that. But we did not kill him. Well, at least he was alive when he left from here," Sole Wolf replied.

The Southern King did not buy that. "Earlier, your men confirmed that you killed Speedy, and now you deny it. How do you expect me to believe you?"

"Who admitted to killing Speedy?" Sole Wolf frowned and asked, puzzled.

Draco quickly stepped in and said, "I can vouch that Speedy wasn't killed by us, Southern Master! We punished him and then let him go."

"I also witnessed Speedy leaving this place without any fatal injuries," Golden Cicada added.

The fury in the Southern King's eyes intensified when he saw Draco and Golden Cicada.

The two of them used to follow him around and fawn over him endlessly. His wish was their command, and they behaved in a servile manner toward him.

He was infuriated that even such bootlickers betrayed him.

However, as the two spoke with much sincerity, he wavered and began to think that the Centurias might really have nothing to do with Speedy's death.

Could it be the Northern Faction is trying to frame them to cause conflict between me and the Centurias?

Southern King began to suspect Johnny and threw a doubtful glance in his direction.

Johnny was prepared for that scenario.

He lifted his head slightly and glanced at the spy he had planted among the Centuria guards.

That spy caught Johnny's eye and got the signal. He began to slowly turn his fist toward the direction of the Southern King.

He had a stealth weapon in his hand. Once Johnny gave him the signal, he aimed it at Southern King immediately and launched it.

Instantly, a poisonous silver needle shot at high speed toward Southern King.

Being a high-level King Class warrior, Southern King had a lightning-fast reaction, and he managed to intercept the silver needle just before it pierced into his temple.

It was a close shave, and even the mighty Southern King could feel his heart involuntarily racing.

Chapter 2683

Earlier, his attention had all been focused on Johnny as he debated whether he should continue trusting the latter. While the Southern King was deeply absorbed in his thoughts, a whistling sound rang out.

He almost failed to seize that silver needle. If this silver needle had penetrated my temple, I would have been gravely injured, if not dead.

Then, a searing sensation spread on his palm. He hastily spread his hand and glanced at it. Southern King noticed the part of his skin in contact with the silver needle had turned black as if he had been burned by acid. This silver needle is poisonous! If it had pierced my temple, I wouldn't have merely suffered a critical injury. I would've lost my life immediately!

He quickly tossed the silver needle away and gazed at Golden Cicada and Draco with bloodshot eyes. These despicable, shameless, and arrogant b*stards! They were clearly trying to distract me with their explanation so that the guards upstairs could assassinate me with concealed weapons. What a brilliant scheme. I was almost tricked.

At that instant, the Southern King no longer doubted the reason behind Speedy's death. I'm sure The Southern Faction Centurias murdered Speedy. They would even kill me, Southern King, without hesitation just because our discussion wasn't going well, let alone a mere rent collector like Speedy. Ha!

He sneered while staring at Golden Cicada and Draco. "Aren't you planning to explain to me about this silver needle? I suppose nothing else scares you since you even dared to kill me, the Southern King."

Golden Cicada and Draco were also surprised by the unexpected turn of events. "Who shot the silver needle? Show yourself!"

No one admitted to the crime.

Golden Cicada and Draco instantly realized there was a spy among their guards. Someone is trying to sow discord. Who planted the spy? D*mn it!

Still, that was obviously not the time to dwell on that issue.

Draco hastily explained to the Southern King, "Southern Master, this is a misunderstanding. We did not give this instruction. Someone must've arranged a spy among the guards. The spy is deliberately creating a conflict between us-"

Before he could finish his sentence, Johnny suddenly let out an agonized scream. He clutched his chest and collapsed to the floor, spewing white foam from his mouth. "Poisoned needle... D*mn it! It's a concealed weapon. Help me..."

Draco and Golden Cicada bellowed at the city wall again, "Stop that! Anyone who dares to attack without our order again will be executed by dismemberment!"

Turning to his trusted followers, Draco ordered, "There's a spy among the guards. Hurry up and seize them. We'll interrogate them one by one!"

Draco's trusted followers rushed to the top of the city wall and apprehended all the guards there.

Naturally, the spy among the guards. was also arrested.

He didn't plan to escape because he had destroyed all evidence, Hence, he was confident Draco couldn't identify him as the spy.

At that moment, the spy stared at Johnny, who was lying on the floor, in slight astonishment. I didn't shoot the needle and certainly wouldn't harm Johnny. How was he wounded?

However, it didn't take him long to figure out what had happened. Johnny wasn't hit by any needle; he's just putting on an act.

Southern King was further infuriated when he saw Johnny was hurt. "D*mn it! This is outrageous! Summon Zeke here at once. I want to fight him in a death match."

Sole Wolf said, "A deathmatch? Ha! Do you believe Zeke can end your life with a fart? There's no need for him to face you personally, I'll entertain you instead."

"Hold on!" Killer Wolf hurriedly stepped forward. "Sole Wolf, that's very inconsiderate of you. This is such a great training opportunity. Why don't you let us handle him? We are in dire need of battle experience."

Alfred and Tyler chimed in as well, "That's right. He's our prey. Quit competing with us."

Sole Wolf replied, "Fine. I'll let you all handle him then. I was just thinking how it would dirty my hands if I needed to get away from him."

Alfred flashed a menacing smile. "This guy can indeed be considered formidable on Theos Island, but he's, at best, as strong as an infant before me. I can eliminate all of them with just a casual punch."

Tyler laughed mockingly. "One punch? Stop embarrassing us. I can crush them with one finger."

Chapter 2684

Killer Wolf said, "You two still need to use your hands to defeat them? Believe it or not, I can wipe them out with a sneeze."

Alfred uttered, "Killer Wolf, we admit you are undoubtedly the strongest among the three of us. Still, regardless of how capable you are, there's no way you can kill them with a sneeze. And Tyler, did you say you can crush them with a finger? I think you're boasting a little too much."

Tyler replied, "You don't believe me? Fine. Let me prove it to you."

Killer Wolf said, "Let's go. Coincidentally, I've been feeling the urge to sneeze. I can't stand it if I don't let it out."

Alfred guffawed. "Let's do it together, then?"

"All right!"

Soon, the trio finalized their strategy.

Killer Wolf and Tyler leaped in opposite directions, surrounding Southern King and the Ten Ruthless Warriors in a triangle formation.

At that moment, the Southern King was beside himself with rage.

"You insolent b*stards! Did you say you'll kill us with one punch, crush us with a finger, and wipe us out with a sneeze? Very well. In that case, I shall assess your combat abilities! Men, attack! Slaughter all of them!"

"Die!"

The Ten Ruthless Warriors brought by Southern King had been enraged for some time.

After the Southern King gave the command, they dashed toward Alfred like wild, violent horses.

Alfred sneered. Then, he casually swung a punch at them.

Despite how harmless that punch seemed, it was actually packed with an enormous amount of energy.

The energy of an Ultimate Class warrior, even one who had just attained that level, was not something a King Class warrior like Southern King could handle.

Alfred's energy swept toward Southern King, and upon impact, Southern King instantly lost control of his body and flew backward.

Meanwhile, the Ten Ruthless Warriors had already been sucked into mid-air by the vortex.

The Southern King attempted to resist, but his energy was too weak. It was as if a tornado was engulfing a breeze.

At that moment, the Southern King's mind was blown away as utter despair washed over him. They're too strong. My enemies are too powerful. D*mn it! D*mn it all! Why did I stumble into

such formidable opponents when I finally about to become a Camp Master?

Before he could contemplate further, his body crashed heavily onto the floor, causing a crater to form.

Unfortunately, that wasn't the end. His body continued flying backward, causing the earth to furrow, trees to fall, and weeds to disintegrate everywhere he passed.

What the f*ck?

Everyone was so shocked that their eyes almost bulged from their sockets.

He's so strong! This ordinary-looking old man is so powerful!

Initially, the crowd assumed any member of the Centuria could effortlessly beat Alfred, who was already an old man. Little did they imagine the latter was so frighteningly brutal that even Southern King and the Ten Ruthless Warriors failed to endure an attack from him.

This is unbelievable. If even someone as capable as he willingly serves Zeke, how extraordinarily competent is Zeke?

They couldn't imagine.

Draco and Golden Cicada flushed in embarrassment and guilt. They felt so ashamed that they wished the ground could open up and swallow them whole.

They couldn't believe they had thought of challenging Alfred and the others. Now that the two recalled their behavior, they realized how foolish and childish they had been. What we did was no different from courting death.

Draco and Golden Cicada glared at Sole Wolf in unison. This is all Sole Wolf's fault. We wouldn't have offended an elite warrior like Killer Wolf if Sole Wolf hadn't sown discord between us. He must've done this on purpose. That's right. We should find a chance to teach him a lesson.

Unbeknownst to them, Sole Wolf was actually stronger than the trio because his combat prowess was equivalent to the combined strength of Alfred and Tyler.

The Southern King was a warrior who had experienced countless battles, after all. He swiftly regained his senses from the shock and pulled himself together. We are obviously no match for our enemy. The only thing I can do now is to escape!

At that point, he couldn't care about the Ten Ruthless Warriors and Johnny anymore. As his rolling body gradually came to a halt, he sprawled on the floor and tried to crawl away from the scene.

However, Tyler wasn't going to let Southern King off the hook.

Chapter 2685

Alfred already took action, but I haven't made my move! How dare you try to leave? This is unfair!

Tyler flicked his finger at Southern King gently.

Boom!

Tyler's energy, which was far more potent than Alfred's, crested into a wave as it hurtled toward Southern King

The amount of energy in that wave was twice the strength of an energy storm.

Caught in the energy wave, Southern King was like a plastic bag. Completely out of control of his body, he alternated between floating and sinking.

Shouts of surprise could be heard from the crowd.

A single finger. Tyler had only used a single finger to best Southern King.

Why are the old men so d*mn strong these days? The older, the wiser indeed.

The energy wave roiled for a good ten minutes before gradually abating.

His clothing torn to shreds, Southern King did not appear to be in a good shape in the aftermath.

His face was bruised all over, and he wavered in and out of consciousness. Subconsciously, he knelt on the ground, begging for mercy.

"I was wrong... I'm sorry... Please forgive me...."

Killer Wolf sighed. "Oh, forget it. Since you look so pitiful, I won't make my move."

Overcome with gratefulness, Southern King hurriedly bowed in supplication. There was no way he could have continued to withstand their attacks.

The attack did not even have to come from someone of Alfred's or Tyler's caliber. In his current state, an ordinary warrior would be able to down him with a single kick.

Southern King's eyes were so swollen that he could no longer see clearly. He blearily bowed in front of a vague form, which was actually a large tree instead.

Killer Wolf's mouth dropped open as he inhaled. "Ah... Ahh..."

Upon hearing this, the Southern King spat out a mouthful of blood.

Killer Wolf was going to sneeze!

Would Killer Wolf's sneeze be as powerful as he claimed? So powerful that he'll snuff me right out?

The answer was almost certain, for it was highly possible.

Alfred had said that he would take them out with one punch, and he had done so.

Tyler said that he would finish them with only a single finger and that, too, had come to pass.

After all that, there was no reason to be skeptical of Killer Wolf, who claimed that he could kill them with a sneeze.

Achoo!

Before Southern King could ruminate further, Killer Wolf sneezed as promised.

Out of the three of them, Killer Wolf's abilities were the strongest, and he also had the densest energy.

The amount of energy discharged from his sneeze was far stronger than Tyler's and Alfred's energies.

Instantly, the scene turned into a hub of energy. The energy there was rampant and intense, shredding and crushing everything in its wake.

Fortunately, Golden Cicada and his cohorts were standing in the outermost layer. Thus, they managed to retreat quickly.

Southern King, on the other hand, was not as fortunate. Caught in the epicenter of the energy, his flesh was continuously shredded by the energy that was sharp as knives.

If he had only been badly wrecked previously, he was now completely ravaged. His entire body turned red, almost as though he had shed a layer of skin.

If he had been an ordinary warrior or even someone of Archduke rank, he would have been obliterated or even lost his life.

However, the Southern King was a King Class warrior. His endurance was far beyond a normal person's limit. The extent of this injury was not enough to kill him.

Regardless, he could only hang on by the barest thread as his body convulsed uncontrollably.

Killer Wolf sneered, "I thought you were much more powerful since you acted so arrogantly. I guess I overestimated you."

Mustering one last bit of strength, Southern King clung to a large tree and somehow managed to half prop himself up.

He stared at Killer Wolf and the others with a complicated expression. "T-The three of you are strong... Surely you must have achieved Camp Master rank. Y-Your boss, Zeke Williams. What exactly is he? Could it be... his abilities are comparable to Theos'?"

If Zeke's subordinates were already Camp Master rank, the former had to be as powerful as Theos to be able to intimidate Killer Wolf and the other two.

Just then, a loud bellow rang out from the base. "Scram! I'll kill you if you interrupt me forging the divine weapon again!"

It was unmistakably Zeke's voice!

Chapter 2686

Zeke's voice was also infused with a dense energy fluctuation that was directed at Southern King. Before the latter could comprehend what was happening, he was swept away by the energy and sent flying, disappearing from the crowd's sight in the blink of an eye.

The crowd was astonished by the turn of events.

With just a sentence, Zeke had sent the Southern King hurtling away. It would not be an overstatement to say that his word was law.

Zeke and the others' reputations only grew to be more mysterious in the eyes of the people from Theos Island.

Sole Wolf waved his hand. "All right, playtime's over. Return to your tasks. External labor team, please clean up the battlefield."

"Wait a minute!" Killer Wolf yelled all of a sudden. "Draco and Golden Cicada, please wait."

Their hearts lurched. Has the time finally come? We're done for!

Many of the others who were previously leaving also slowed down. They, too, wanted to witness what was about to happen.

Killer Wolf had called out to Draco and Golden Cicada with the intention of continuing their sparring match.

The onlookers stared at Draco and Golden Cicada gleefully. Hehe, it's your fault for being so arrogant. Are you two regretting it now?

Golden Cicada's and Draco's voices trembled as they asked, "Mister... Killer Wolf... D-Did you need something from us?"

Killer Wolf replied, "We were interrupted by the Southern King earlier. Let us continue!"

Golden Cicada and Draco immediately fell to their knees before Killer Wolf.

"Master Killer Wolf, Master Graham, and Master Collins, we failed to recognize your true power and offended the three of you. Won't you please forgive us?"

"We know our powers cannot possibly compare to the three of you and readily admit defeat. Please spare us!"

"Don't be like that," Killer Wolf grumbled. "It's unsightly to surrender without a fight. What if I give myself a handicap and only permit myself to sneeze? The two of you are allowed to use your hands and feet, of course."

Golden Cicada and Draco were at a loss for words.

Is your sneeze merely a sneeze? It's practically an energy bomb! One sneeze from you was enough to take out Southern King!

Even if ten Golden Cicada and Draco joined hands, they were still not Southern King's opponents.

The difference in their strengths was not something that could be merely described as disparity.

Pleading pitifully, Golden Cicada and Draco kept begging and apologizing until Killer Wolf had no choice but to give up the notion.

After scraping by with their lives, Golden Cicada and Draco finally felt relieved.

It wasn't until everyone had dispersed did Golden Cicada and Draco huddle together as they whispered to each other.

"Draco, what do you think our new commander is like? Initially, I assumed he would be around Legatus rank, but I think we've been severely underestimating his abilities."

"Surely his subordinates, who managed to defeat the Southern King easily, must be at the rank of Camp Master. Therefore, Zeke's abilities must be above that. Could it be..."

"It's highly possible that Zeke's abilities are as strong as Theos'. Perhaps he came to Theos Island not out of adoration of Theos..."

"Could he be plotting against Theos..."

Upon saying that, Golden Cicada made a head-chopping motion.

Draco instantly turned pale. "Shut up! Golden Cicada, some things should never be uttered! Drop it! Let's go and finish our tasks. It's better to mind our own business."

Hmph!

Golden Cicada sighed. Draco was clearly deceiving himself.

Truth be told, Draco was aware that Zeke's motive for coming to Theos Island was probably for Theos.

However, he dared not believe it. It was utterly unthinkable, and he wouldn't dare dream of such a thing.

Meanwhile, the Northern Faction Legions were standing by. Everyone in the faction was assembled and battle ready.

Northern King stood in front of the troops, his eyes staring ahead as if waiting for something.

Finally, under the anxious gazes of the crowd, a figure approached them rapidly.

It was the messenger the Northern King had sent out!

Chapter 2687

"How did it go? What did you find out?" The Northern King asked impatiently without waiting for the messenger to approach.

Though out of breath, the messenger did not dare delay reporting, "Credible news. The Southern King dispatched his Ten Ruthless Warriors to question Centuria."

The Northern King slapped his thigh in delight. "Excellent! Without the Southern King and the Ten Ruthless Warriors, his Legions will not pose a threat to us! This is a rare opportunity, and we cannot let it pass! Mobilize the men!"

The Northern King led the Northern Faction Legions out toward the Southern Faction.

Over the years, the Southern Faction had never dared attack the Northern Faction because Southern King had always been wary of Northern King and his Suicide Squad.

Similarly, the Northern Faction had never dared attack the Southern Faction because Northern King had always feared Southern King and the Ten Ruthless Warriors under his command.

With Southern King and the Ten Ruthless Warriors away, the Southern Faction had been left defenseless like a porcupine without quills.

Thus, the Southern Faction was putty in the Northern Faction's hands.

Northern King had planned everything. Upon arriving there, he would kill the warriors of the Southern Faction before disposing of the Elders to weaken the enemy's forces.

That way, it would be too late for Southern King and the Ten Ruthless. Warriors upon their return.

Not long after, the party arrived at the camp of the Southern Faction.

Idle and unguarded, the Southern Faction Legions still had not the faintest whiff of danger. Even the sentries were asleep on duty.

They did not notice the battalion that was the Northern Faction Legions, even when they arrived within a kilometer of the Southern Faction's base.

Northern King's plan was going much smoother than he expected.

The army edged closer to the Southern Faction's base. Nine hundred meters. Seven hundred. Five hundred...

Only when they were less than three hundred meters away did the people of the Southern Faction realize their presence.

Until that moment, the sentry of the Southern Faction had not noticed any danger.

"Halt! Who goes there?" he shouted at Northern King, not recognizing him.

"We are the Northern Faction Legions," Northern King hurriedly answered. "here to see the Southern King."

"I see," the guard said coldly. "Have you made an appointment with him?"

"No," Northern King said simply.

"Nobody is allowed to see the Southern Master without an appointment," the guard declared. "Kindly depart at once."

"My trip here is to make an appointment," Northern King explained.

"Then I'm afraid you're here at a bad time," the guard said. "Southern Master is away today. Please come back another day."

"No problem. We can wait."

"You may," the guard assented, "but please do so a kilometer away. As our turf extends to one kilometer, you are currently trespassing."

The Northern King gave a sinister smile. "There are many wild beasts out there, and I'm worried for the safety of my men. Let us take shelter within your walls."

The guard chuckled. "Preposterous! What gave you the impression that we would do such a thing? How naïve. You would do better to leave, or we would be forced to expel you."

With a sudden leap, the Northern King landed on the city wall in the blink of an eye, and before the guard could react, the Northern King sent him flying with a vicious slap across the face.

"You are courting death for calling me naïve."

The guards of the city wall only regained their composure when the Northern King leaped onto the city wall.

"F*ck me. The Northern Faction is launching an assault on us! The Southern Faction is in danger!"

All hell broke loose amongst the guards as the reality sunk in. They dashed madly at Northern King while shouting, "We need reinforcements! Our walls are being breached! Alert the city to prepare for battle! Notify the Legatuses to come and fight. Quickly!"

The battle began at once.

Northern King shouted at his men, "What are you standing there for? Kill them all!"

Chapter 2688

Upon receiving Northern King's order, the long-suffering Northern Faction Legions began their ferocious assault on the city.

The Northern Faction was divided into two garrisons: one for attacking the city gates and another for hoisting the ladders to breach the city walls.

Soldiers scaling the ladders were supposed to be the most vulnerable, but due to Northern King's immediate elimination of most of the guards, they managed a swift capture of the city walls.

The guards of the Southern Faction did not stand a chance against Northern King.

Upon occupying the city walls, the Northern Faction soldiers immediately drew their bows and shot at the city below.

The arrows were fiery arrows specially prepared for this purpose. Within seconds, the Southern Faction was set ablaze amidst yells of pain filling the air.

The commotion alerted the Legatuses of the Southern Faction.

The ten Legatuses were King Class warriors. With a leap, they arrived atop the city walls and began shedding the blood of the Northern Faction soldiers.

"Legatuses of the Northern Faction, hear me!" Northern King cried.

"Yes, sir!"

Thirteen men leaped out of formation in the Northern Faction camp and fell to a knee before the Northern King.

"Kill all the Legatuses of the Southern Faction!" he bellowed.

With a bloodcurdling battle cry, the thirteen Legatuses of the Northern Faction dashed toward the ten Legatuses of the Southern Faction, who were rooted to the spot with shock.

What's going on? As far as we know, the Northern Faction also had only ten Legatuses. Since when did thirteen warriors join the ranks to become Legatuses? Godd*mn it, the Northern Faction must have cultivated three additional Legatuses in secret. Those devious f*ckers!

Far from being idle, Northern King dashed toward the ten Legatuses of the Southern Faction alongside his men, subduing four Legatuses on his own.

"Hear me, Legatuses of the Northern Faction. Eliminate the other six Southern Faction Legatuses with haste. I'll hold these four for you."

At his command, the thirteen Legatuses of the Northern Faction pressed their advantage against the six remaining Southern Faction Legatuses.

Outnumbered two to one, the Southern Faction Legatuses were suppressed every way they turned, helpless against the merciless onslaught.

They were about to crumble from hopelessness. It's all over. We will only end up dead if we resist any further.

Following the fall of two of their number, the remaining Legatuses had enough.

"We surrender!"

"Have mercy, Northern King! We will serve you!"

The Northern King sneered. "Those who surrender, kneel and place both hands on your heads. Those who resist, prepare for your demise!"

As soon as he spoke, the remaining eight Southern Faction Legatuses placed their hands on their heads and fell to their knees in surrender.

They watched the battle of the common soldiers and saw that the Northern Faction had occupied the city walls, seemingly with an absolute advantage.

The soldiers of the Southern Faction were overwhelmed to such a degree that they could not put up even an ounce of resistance. With their morale being chipped away, the defiance of the Southern Faction members became increasingly weak.

At the sight of their Legatuses' surrender, the fighting spirit of these soldiers crumbled.

Even the Legatuses have surrendered. Why should we continue holding on? We will only die if we keep resisting.

"I surrender. Please have mercy, Northern Master."

"We will serve you with undying loyalty."

"Have mercy, please. I have surrendered. Don't kill me!"

"Those who surrender, kneel and place both hands on your heads. Those who resist, prepare for your demise!" The Northern King roared once more.

At that, almost everybody in the Southern Faction fell to their knees.

The remaining handful were Southern King loyalists, and they were still putting up the fight of their lives.

With a strike at each, the Northern King casually disposed of the renegades.

The Southern Faction base gradually fell into silence. The Northern King leered.

His plan to attack the city had been much easier than he anticipated. The whole process took less than half an hour, with almost no casualties on their side.

"I have finally united all the Legions together under my rule. Even if the Southern King returns, he will not pose a threat to me. I wonder how he's doing now? I'm sure a conflict has broken out between him and the Centurias.

"Speaking of which, I must thank the new leader of the Centurias for my smooth conquest of the Southern Faction camp. Of course, Johnny also deserves credit for the part he played. If not for him bringing Speedy back, the conflict between the Southern King and the Centurias would not have been invoked, and the Southern King would not have left the Southern Faction to give me this opportunity."

Chapter 2689

With the Northern King's plan a success, he would not bother himself with Johnny's survival as Johnny was no longer of any use to him.

His next goal would be to occupy every corner of the city to consolidate his authority.

After ordering his men to swiftly take over everything in the city and occupy every corner, he left to ascertain the situation in the forges for divine weapons.

The most valuable commodities among the Legions were the Spirit Stones, spiritual iron, and divine weapons.

In the meantime, Southern King was slowly regaining consciousness from his stupor in the forests deep in the mountains.

After being knocked out cold by Zeke's energy, he regained consciousness. only after night had descended.

His mind was in a daze, and his body was throbbing. It took him a long while to regain his senses.

Suddenly, his ordeal at the Centurias' base came back to him in vivid detail, and his heartbeat quickened in horror.

The new commander frighteningly powerful. If I had known, I wouldn't have picked a fight with him.

Southern King was so weak that he felt like he might drop dead at any moment.

Quickly, he sat cross-legged to compose himself and channeled his energy to repair the damage to his body.

Thus, he meditated the entire night until his vital signs stabilized.

As soon as he was able, he started back with his mind in a whirl.

Zeke is too powerful. The Southern Faction Legions would be at a loss to make an enemy of him. Why not swear fealty to him? That way, our might would be bolstered, and we may even take over the Northern Faction with the new leader's strength. Mmm, that's what we'll do.

He picked up his pace, intent on bringing the Southern Faction Legions to join Zeke's cause.

However, he was unaware that the Northern King had conquered the Southern Faction Legions.

The guards discovered Southern King when he approached the Southern Faction camp and

immediately reported the incident to the Northern King, imploring him to take a look.

At that moment, the Northern King was at the Spirit Stone reserve, taking stock of the spiritual iron and divine weapons.

A jeering smile appeared on his lips at the sound of his men's report. "Hah! Southern King has had his fun boasting about taking over the Northern Faction on more than one account. Now that I have acquired the Southern Faction first, I can't wait to see the look on his face when he finds out. Show him in and bring him to the palace. I want to see his expression. Hah!"

"At once, sir."

A disheveled Southern King scrambled to the city entrance. "Open the gates!" he roared.

The sentries quickly opened the gates for Southern King, who had not yet noticed that the sentries were different.

The truth was that he did not have a clue as to which of his men guarded the city gates. As the high and mighty Southern King, the matter of personnel was not something he concerned himself with.

He walked through the city gates and hurried to the palace without noticing the guards on either side were no longer his men.

Half an hour later, the Southern King arrived at the palace.

Only then did he finally realize something was amiss-the guards at the palace gates seemed unfamiliar.

"Are you two new?" Southern King asked at once.

The palace guards exchanged a glance before nodding. "Yes, we're new."

We are new. In fact, it's our first time in the Southern Faction base.

The Southern King was irritated. "Hmph, the Elders are going from bad to worse. How dare they change the palace guards without first running it by me? It's high time they are taught a lesson."

The palace guards were of vital importance as they pertained directly to his personal safety.

Thus, their appointment and dismissal were personally overseen by the Southern King. With the Elders' meddlesome ways, in addition to his utter defeat at Zeke's hands, Southern King's mood was predictably foul.

"Tell all of the Legatuses to gather here," Southern King ordered with a scowl. "We have matters to discuss."

The guards smiled knowingly. "The Legatuses are already awaiting your presence in the

palace."

Chapter 2690

Though the Southern King was surprised, he did not ask further but hurried into the palace instead.

The scene that greeted him in the palace, however, shocked him even further.

Less than half of the Legatuses filing on both sides of the palace were familiar faces, while the rest were new.

The thing is, they are not exactly new. They are somewhat familiar as well.

The Southern King glanced up at the throne where his seat was, and a dull ringing filled his ears.

'Northern King! Goddamn it! How did he appear in the heart of the Southern Faction, and seated atop my throne, at that? No wonder the new faces seemed familiar. They are the Northern Faction Legatuses!'

With a sudden rustle, the Legatuses moved to block the exit.

A sense of despair overcame the Southern King. The possibility of the Southern Faction being occupied by the Northern King finally sunk in.

The Southern King glared at the Northern King through bloodshot eyes. "What is the meaning of this, Northern King?"

"It's like this. After you left today, I noticed signs of a revolt emerging from the Southern Faction and decided that it could not be left without a leader, so I occupied the Southern Faction and became its new master to prevent a mutiny. There's no need to thank me as it's within my duty."

Thank him? He can go to hell! How is he so shameless to occupy my territory behind my back and justify it so pompously?

The Southern King gritted his teeth and glared at the Southern Faction Legatuses who had betrayed him. "And you all! I have never treated you poorly and always saw you as my brothers. I can't believe you would treat me this way. Consider my faith misplaced!"

The Southern Faction Legatuses hastened to explain, "We did not want to do this, Southern Master, but Northern Master's forces were too overwhelming, against which we did not stand a chance."

"We would have been killed if we resisted. We don't mind dying, but our families..."

"We hope you'll understand, Southern Master."

"Hah! There's barely a scratch on any of you. It must have been an easy decision," Southern King retorted.

The Southern Faction Legatuses were so ashamed that they bowed their heads, as it was true that they had surrendered without much of a fight.

"Would you be willing to fight by my side once more?" The Southern King asked. "We are not much weaker than they if we join forces. Even if we can't beat them, there's a good chance we'll be able to escape. Given our abilities, making a comeback is not impossible."

The Legatuses bowed their heads in shame, indicating they did not wish to fight alongside Southern King.

We can't! Our families have been taken control of by the Northern King, and their lives would be lost if we defied him. Also, the Northern King promised to treat us even better than we were used to if we swore loyalty to him. Even a fool would know what to do.

The Southern King gave a bitter laugh. So be it. I have lost, and poorly, it seems. I did not only lose to Zeke but also to the Northern King. Worst of all, I have lost to cruel reality.

"You now have two choices, Southern King," Northern King proclaimed. "The choice is yours."

"Choice number one: you submit to me, and we'll let bygones be bygones. I will also value and make full use of your abilities."

"Choice number two: resist, and I will kill you. That offer naturally extends to your family."

The Southern King heaved a deep sigh.

I have no other choice, it seems.

He dropped to a knee before the Northern King. "My sword is yours, Northern Master."

The humiliation he felt almost consumed him, but he managed to suppress it.

The Northern King chuckled. "Very good. You may rise. Let me ask you this, Southern King. Did you launch a crusade against the Centurias?"

The Southern King nodded. "That's right."

"Did the Ten Ruthless Warriors go with you?" Northern King pressed on. "Where are they? Have them come here."

Chapter 2691

The Northern King thought the Southern King had ordered the Ten Ruthless Warriors to sneak in and ambush him.

To everyone's surprise, the Southern King sighed instead. "I'm afraid they're not coming back."

The crowd shot him curious looks. "What do you mean?"

"They're dead."

That caused an uproar in the crowd.

"The Ten Ruthless Warriors were felled in Centuria's district? Unbelievable!"

"Yeah! As everyone knows, the Ten Ruthless Warriors are more powerful than the Legatuses, despite not holding the title. Yet, they were defeated in Centuria's district... How powerful is the new commander in that area?"

"It seems unlikely the Northern King can defeat him."

"Maybe... the new commander there is a Camp Master-level warrior."

"Crap! If that's true, then it's pointless for us to fight them at all. We're basically just waiting for our defeat."

Northern King's heart lurched. "Did the Ten Ruthless Warriors truly die in the hands of that new commander, Southern King?"

Nodding, Southern King replied, "Yes."

"Then do you know how powerful he is? If he's capable of vanquishing the Ten Ruthless Warriors, he must be as powerful as a Camp Master."

Southern King was going to tell him he suspected the new commander's strength could rival Theos.

However, after a brief moment of contemplation, he decided to withhold the answer. Since the Centurias have betrayed us, Northern King will probably pick a fight with them. However, if I let him know the new commander is as powerful as Theos, he probably won't do it. In that case, I may as well tell him the new commander is very weak, so he'll provoke the guy and dig his own grave! Hmph! If I'm going down, I'm taking you down with me!

Swiftly, he refuted, "You're mistaken, Northern Master. Actually, that new commander isn't as powerful as we thought. In fact, I think I'm about as strong as him. If I do my best, I believe I can slay him."

Confounded, Northern King questioned, "In that case, why are you severely injured and the Ten Ruthless Warriors dead?"

A sigh escaped Southern King's lips. "It's because he has a Dark Level divine weapon. You know just how powerful a weapon of that caliber is. Even after I joined forces with the Ten Ruthless Warriors, we were still no match for him."

"Oh my god. A Dark Level divine weapon? How is it possible that he possesses one? As you know, we can only craft a crude Dark Level divine weapon. It's only after we hand it to the Camp Master for him to perfect it that it can truly be called a divine weapon. Tell me, Southern King. Did he make the weapon himself, or did he bring it here from the outside world?"

"The weapon seemed relatively pristine, so I assume he crafted it himself. Besides, hasn't he been collecting many Spirit Stones and refining them into Grade Two spiritual iron with the purpose of forging divine weapons?"

The crowd's expression darkened. Southern King may be speaking the truth. If that new commander does possess a Dark Level divine weapon, there will be trouble. However, this challenge may be an opportunity too. If we can capture the new commander, we can ask him to forge more Dark Level divine weapons or learn how to do it ourselves from him! If that happens, our might will no doubt skyrocket!

Northern King turned to the Legatuses. "What do you all think? What should we do with that Centuria?"

The crowd promptly responded, "What else? Since that Centuria has betrayed us, we'll have to kill them!"

"Ha. Is this Centuria really going to be taken out that easily? Don't forget, they still have a Dark Level divine weapon."

"Godd*mn it, this new commander is one son of a b*tch! How dare he use weapons to bully others? He's a disgrace to us men!"

"Things will be so much easier if we can steal the weapon."

"Obviously, but considering it's the most powerful asset in the new commander's arsenal, there's no doubt he'll guard it as though it's his own life. It'll be very difficult to snatch it from him."

Chapter 2692

Suddenly, the Southern King spoke. "Everyone, please quiet down. I forgot to mention something."

The crowd promptly turned to him. "What is it? Tell us!"

"While he had severely injured me, I managed to destroy his divine weapon. Without that weapon, he's about as harmful as a clawless, toothless tiger. There's no need for you all to fear him."

That news delighted the crowd and inspired courage in them. Now that his mightiest asset has been destroyed, he's no different from an ordinary Centurion! Any one of us can take him out easily!

"There's no reason to be afraid of him if he doesn't have a divine weapon!"

"Let's kill him!"

"I can kill a Centurion without a divine weapon with one finger!"

"Why don't you send me to kill him, Northern King? I'll definitely bring the head of that new commander back!"

"Why didn't you say that earlier, Southern King? You made us worry there for a moment!"

An embarrassed smile formed on Southern King's countenance. "I didn't have the time to."

Meanwhile, Northern King remained silent and carefully observed Southern King. Frankly, I suspect Southern King's lying. If he is, and the new commander is actually extremely powerful, we'll meet the same fate as him. I know what kind of person he is, and he's definitely capable of doing something as heartless as that.

Upon detecting the Northern King's skepticism, the Southern King clarified, "I'm telling the truth, Northern Master. Think about it. If he took out eleven Legatuses, including a commander of the Southern Faction, by himself without using a Dark Level divine weapon, it means he's as powerful as a Camp Master. Do you truly believe he's that strong?"

The Legatuses nodded in agreement.

"Southern King's right. I don't believe that guy is as powerful as a Camp Master."

"If he is, why is he still only Centurion? He could've gone straight to one of the Camp Masters or even Theos and challenged them! He could have started his own camp!"

While the Northern King was still suspicious of the Southern King, the latter's words reminded him of the three warriors he had met in the forest within the central district of Theos Island. They recently reached Camp Master level, 'so if I can ask them for help, I'll be able to take out that new commander rather effortlessly, even if he's as powerful as a Camp Master. This complication with the new commander may be a massive problem for me to deal with, but it'll be a piece of cake for the three of them to handle. Of course, I'm not expecting them to do this for free. I'll offer them a bunch of resources, exchanging their services for my goods. With this, I believe my relationship with them will improve. Yeah, I'll do just that.'

Thus, he said, "This is a pretty serious matter. Since our survival is at stake, I must act cautiously. Please allow me to think about this issue thoroughly before I inform everyone of my decision. In any case, all of you can stand down now. As for you, Southern King, please report to the resource department and help them take inventory of Southern Faction's resources."

Before the crowd could convince Northern King to strike immediately, he hurriedly left.

A scowl was set on Southern King's countenance. That b*stard's going way over the line! He actually wants me to take inventory of my camp's resources and hand them to Northern Faction! This is agonizing! Unfortunately, given the current circumstances, I have no choice but to endure this humiliation and do his bidding.

Chapter 2693

Northern King went all the way to his training room.

Many valuable techniques and highly refined spiritual iron were kept inside that room, which was why it was declared a forbidden ground in the Northern Faction.

At least ten warriors would protect the place day and night on his orders. Not even a fly could enter the building.

When Northern King arrived, he spoke to the guards. "Listen up, you lot. I'll be cultivating in seclusion for a while. It may last a couple of days or even longer than that. If anyone wishes to speak with me about something important, direct them to the Elders. Unless we're at risk of total annihilation, do not disturb me during this period. Understand?"

The guards nodded. "Understood!"

They were quite curious about what he was up to.

While he often went into seclusion to cultivate, he had never imposed rules as strict as that before.

Hence, they wondered what secret technique he was cultivating this time.

Upon entering the training room, Northern King locked the door and window tight.

Once he ensured no one would notice what he was about to do, he carefully approached a cabinet sitting in a corner and pushed it away, revealing an underground tunnel.

Then, he dove into the tunnel and slipped away.

The other end of the tunnel was connected to the primeval forest located in the central district of

Theos Island.

As that area was a forbidden zone, no one was allowed to step foot inside, not even a Camp Master.

However, the forest was rich in resources. In order to steal those resources, he had dug a tunnel. That way, he could go there whenever he wanted.

Northern King didn't expect it to come in handy for other, greater purposes.

Upon reaching the woods, he began searching for the three Camp Masterlevel warriors.

To his disappointment, he still couldn't find even a trace of their presence after wandering around their previous spot for three hours.

While Northern King was fairly certain, they had moved and were staying elsewhere, he had no idea where to find them in the vast forest.

Thus, he opted to wait for them in their previous spot for three full days. Obviously, he wished they would show up because there wasn't anything he could do if they didn't.

Bang, bang, bang!

Phoenix knocked on Zeke's door loudly.

At the moment, Zeke was focusing on learning how to forge divine weapons.

He frowned and thought, Godd*mmit. Who's here to bother me again? I told them not to disturb me unless it's important!

Annoyed, he opened the door.

Just as he was about to reprimand the visitor, he swallowed his words when he realized it was Phoenix. This woman again. Ugh, I'm too lazy to scold her. She'll just try to reason with me aggrieved if I do. Reasoning with a woman is always a very unpleasant affair.

He asked, "Why are you here, Phoenix?"

In response, Phoenix grumbled, "Look at you! You didn't shower for days again! Right now, you look as disheveled as a beggar. Wait, no. I think even a beggar will distance themselves from you. Anyway, I'll boil some hot water for you. You need to clean yourself."

"No need. I'm busy forging divine weapons."

"Do you think forging those weapons is more important than your life? Aren't you afraid you'll stink yourself to death? Just take a break. I'll boil you some hot water, wash your head, and tell you something important."

Without giving him a chance to reject her, she strode right into his room and boiled water for him.

A sigh of resignation slipped out of his mouth. I'll just let her do what she wants since I just so happen to be stuck researching the art of forging divine weapons. Maybe washing my head will bring me some inspiration.

"What's the important matter you want to tell me, Phoenix?" Zeke inquired.

Phoenix answered, "Our food supply is running out. It'll only hold for at most three or four more days. We'll starve to death if we can't find more food in that period."

"Running out? Where did your food come from in the past?",

Chapter 2694

Phoenix said, "In the past, we exchanged Spirit Stones for resources with the Legions. Under current circumstances, I doubt they'll be willing to conduct trade with us anymore. So, please come up with a solution quickly."

Frowning, Zeke asked, "Is that the only way?"

"Of course. If I knew of another way, would I have approached you?"

A brief silence ensued before he requested, "Summon Sole Wolf and Killer Wolf for me." I'm at a critical moment right now in terms of divine weapon forging., so I can't go and look for food myself. I think Sole Wolf and Killer Wolf can handle it.

"Okay."

Not long after, Phoenix summoned Sole Wolf, Killer Wolf, and a few others.

Their hygiene situation wasn't any better than Zeke's as their clothes were ragged and they stank.

Refining spiritual iron was a lot more exhausting than collecting Spirit Stones.

Before the group arrived, they had a discussion amongst themselves and decided to complain about their work conditions to Zeke. However, when they saw he was having a worse time than them, they kept their mouths shut.

After all, if their boss was suffering too, they surely had no right to complain about their woes.

"What's the matter, Zeke?" Sole Wolf asked. As long as it doesn't involve refining more spiritual iron, I'm willing to do anything.

...

"We're running out of food. Can you lot search for more?" Zeke answered.

Out of food? Upon hearing that, they experienced a mild headache.

After all, the only thing that was difficult to locate on Theos Island was food.

Just as the group was wondering how to achieve that goal, Killer Wolf abruptly proposed, "I think I have a way to do it, Zeke."

They promptly shifted their sights toward him. "Where are you going to find food, Killer Wolf?"

"At the primeval forest located in Theos Island's central district. Plenty of beasts roam those woods, so we can just hunt them and turn them into food."

Alfred nodded in agreement. "That's right. Some time ago, when training in that forest, we had feasts so often that we were sick of it."

Tyler added, "There are many edible plants in the forest, too. It's not an exaggeration to call it a natural granary."

Upon hearing that, Sole Wolf, Ares, and Nameless started salivating.

"Meat! D*mn, it's been a very long time since I had meat."

"That's right! I've lost a few kilograms due to a lack of meat!"

"Come, let's go hunting. Even if we can find food elsewhere, we still need to enter the forest and hunt ourselves some meat."

"Give us the orders, Zeke. I can't wait to hunt in the primeval forest!"

Thus, Zeke nodded. "Very well. Go and kill a few beasts for us in the woods. Remember, safety first."

Sole Wolf laughed. "Don't worry, we'll tell that to the beasts living in the woods."

Phoenix wasn't sure if she should laugh or cry. This group of people is insane! Even though Zeke told them they should take care of their safety, Sole Wolf just said he'll relay that reminder to the beasts. Then again, they are very powerful, so maybe Sole Wolf is right.

Upon receiving their order from Zeke, the group left for the primeval forest without delay.

It was then Phoenix's water reached boiling point.

Moments later, she mixed the hot and cold water together. "Come over here, Zeke. I'll help you wash your head."

"No need!" Zeke rejected.

He wasn't used to having someone other than Lacey wash his head.

His rejection put a damper on her mood.

Pouting, she explained, "Do you think I like washing your head, Zeke? If you do, you're overthinking it. I'm simply worried about you because your wounds will become inflamed if they come in contact with water, affecting your forging of the divine weapons. If you aren't concerned about slowing down your progress, feel free to wash your head yourself."

Furrowing his eyebrows, Zeke thought she made a good point..

Chapter 2695

However, after mulling over his options, Zeke still chose to wash his head by himself.

He still wasn't used to physical interaction with women other than Lacey.

Hence, he bent down and prepared to wash his head.

Just as his hand was about to touch the water, Phoenix darted toward him. grabbed his hand, and stopped him. "I'm impressed by how utterly stubborn you are, so much so that you would rather hurt yourself than let me wash your head. I don't know why you're acting so modest when I'm totally fine with this. Can you man up a little?"

After she ended her sentence, she forcefully washed Zeke's head for him.

A sigh of resignation left his lips. Fine, whatever. I'll just treat her as a barber. After she's done, I'll pay her for her service.

It didn't take long for Sole Wolf and the others to reach the primeval forest sitting in the center of Theos Island.

It took less than half an hour for them to cross the entire island since they were Ultimate Class warriors.

Just as they arrived in the forest, Sole Wolf spotted a black boar.

Cheerfully, he muttered the names of various pork dishes under his breath before exclaiming, "Looks like we're eating good tonight, boys!"

Just as he was about to chase after the boar, Killer Wolf stopped him. "Don't kill it, Sole Wolf."

Dissatisfied, Sole Wolf questioned, "Why? Don't tell me he's your relative. Or are you suddenly feeling compassionate?"

"F*ck you, man." Killer Wolf barked, "You're his relative! Your whole family is his relative!"

"That's right, he's my relative, and I'm still going to kill him. What are you going to do about it?"

That rendered Killer Wolf speechless. So Wolf's willing to call a boar his relative just to get a bite of its meat. Unbelievable.

Then, he uttered, "Just listen to me, all right? You mustn't hunt the young in this place. If you do, there will be consequences."

Sole Wolf, Nameless, and Ares were slightly stunned. "Wait, what did you say? What do you mean by 'don't hunt the young'? Are you telling us that one meter-tall boar is a boarlet?"

Shrugging, Killer Wolf answered, "Yes, that thing is just a boarlet."

The group was bewildered.

If that boarlet is larger than an adult pig in the outside world, how humongous is the adult boar here? Sole Wolf wondered.

"The adult boars here are about the size of an ordinary camel," Killer Wolf replied.

Clicking his tongue, Sole Wolf uttered with anticipation, "A boar as big as a camel... Haha! It seems like there'll be a feast today!"

"Every plant and animal in this place is several times larger than their normal counterparts we're familiar with, so please pay close attention when discerning if an animal is an adult or not. If you accidentally attack a young, we'll suffer major repercussions."

"What kind of repercussions?"

The group members exchanged a glance with each other. "An invisible force? What kind? Is it related to Theos?"

Ares was more knowledgeable, so he speculated, "I think the invisible force may be rules!"

The group became even more confused. "What rules?"

""We're not too sure about the details, but we do know that if you attack a young, the same amount of force will be reflected on you. Just be mindful of your actions. I suspect there's an invisible power protecting the young in this forest from harm."

"Everything in existence has its own rules, like plants, animal reproduction, and the inevitable

death of all life. For example, without water, any living creatures will die. That's one of the basic rules in our world. The world here has one more rule compared to ours, which is that those who attack the young of animals and plants will be punished. Everything here must obey that rule, regardless of where they come from."

Chapter 2696

"I don't understand what you're saying. However, if we don't chase after that boar soon, it's going to disappear from our sight, and we'll go hungry tonight." Sole Wolf knitted his eyebrows before leaping away and chasing after the boarlet.

Killer Wolf hurriedly warned, "I just told you there'll be repercussions if you hurt the young here, Sole Wolf. Are you trying to kill yourself?"

"Tsk, ts, ts. You have no hunting experience at all. Right now, the boarlet is frightened, which means it's running toward its home. I'm going to follow it back to its den and kill its parents! It'll be my treat tonight!"

Upon ending his sentence, he vanished from everyone's sight.

The group continued forward.

Whoosh!

After a while, they suddenly heard a gust of wind and experienced an intense sense of danger.

In an instant, they tensed up and reflexively stepped back.

A spotted tiger the size of a small house almost pounced on them as it arrived in front of them in a flash.

They had to tilt their heads back if they wanted to look at its face.

The murderous intent in its eyes sent a shiver down their spines.

"Holy sh*t," Nameless gasped. "It's so big! Is it the king of tigers?"

"This is just a regular-sized adult tiger here, Nameless," Killer Wolf clarified.

"I see. Well, it's been a while since I had tiger I bone liquor and tiger meat. Tonight, I'll treat everyone to a glorious feast. This tiger is mine, so don't interfere."

It was as though the tiger could understand human speech because right after Nameless mentioned turning its body into food and liquor, it roared with fury and pounced on him.

Nameless leaped into the air, dodged the attack, and speedily lured the creature away.

He was worried the others would steal his prey from him.

Suppressing his thirst for blood, Ares urged, "I like beef, Killer Wolf. Is there a bison habitat nearby? If there is, take me there as fast as you can!"

Killer Wolf replied, "Everything you can think of is here. I believe there's a group of bison nearby. Follow me!"

Meanwhile, Sole Wolf patiently followed the boarlet.

After circling around in the forest, it eventually approached a hill.

Upon approaching the slope, the boarlet abruptly increased the volume of its squeals to a thunderous degree.

Sole Wolf was overjoyed to hear that because it meant the boarlet was getting very close to its home and was essentially calling for help. Finally, I found the den!

However, at that critical moment, someone showed up in front of the boarlet.

That person's presence scared the boarlet and caused it to run away from its home.

No! Sole Wolf was furious. It was just about to lead me to its home! I can't believe someone ruined my plan at the last second! I'm going to kill that f*cker!

To his surprise, the person humbly prostrated themselves before him. "Please spare me, good sir. Please, spare me. I know what I did wrong. I'm sorry. Please show me mercy, good sir."

Sole Wolf's rage was greatly quelled when he heard the person call him "good sir."

In response, he sneered, "Hmph, at least you're sensible enough to apologize. However, I doubt you're a good person if you're showing up in this place."

He proceeded to release a ball of energy to trap the person. Then he communicated telepathically with Killer Wolf. "Come here, Killer Wolf. I got a present for you."

After that, he resumed his chase of the boarlet.

The person who suddenly showed up was none other than Northern King.

He still couldn't find the three Camp Master-level warriors after roaming around the forest for three days.

By the time he was about to give up, he was tired and thirsty, which was when he suddenly detected a powerful aura.

He was excited because he thought the aura belonged to his targets, as only Camp

Master-level warriors could possess such a powerful aura.

Chapter 2697

When the Northern King arrived at the spot where he detected the powerful aura, instead of the three Camp Master-level warriors he was seeking, he encountered an unfamiliar warrior chasing after a boarlet.

At that moment, he was shocked. This guy... He's definitely another Camp Masterlevel warrior! Why are there so many of them here? Are warriors of that caliber as common as the beasts here? Unbelievable!

Despite his struggles, Sole Wolf's energy was far too powerful for him to break. He felt as though he was being crushed by a mountain, unable to move even a single part of his body.

In the end, he gave up.

Not long after, three figures arrived.

When Northern King saw them, he greeted gleefully, "I've finally found you, Masters! P-Please allow me to prostrate myself before you!"

He wasn't sure how to express his over excitement, so he wanted to do that instead.

However, he was still trapped by Sole Wolf's energy, so he was immobilized.

Awkwardly, he apologized, "Forgive me for not being able to prostrate myself before you, Masters. I've been ensnared here and cannot move."

Meanwhile, Killer Wolf and the other two could not be bothered to pay attention to him. From their perspective, Northern King was no different from a plant.

The trio stared at each other. "Sole Wolf used energy here to communicate telepathically with us earlier, right?"

"Yep, this is the place. I can sense traces of his energy here."

"He said he has a present for us, so where is it?"

"There's no way that guy's nice enough to leave us a gift. I'm starting to wonder if he's lying or not."

"Godd*mmmit. Is this annoying guy the present Sole Wolf mentioned?"

It was then the trio turned to Northern King.

A wave of misery washed over Northern King.

He thought he had left a good impression on them when he licked their boots last time.

To his utter disappointment, he was so insignificant to them that they initially just ignored him.

Killer Wolf asked, "Hey, are you the present Sole Wolf said he left for us?"

Hastily, Northern King answered, "Sole Wolf? Do you mean the Camp Masterlevel warrior earlier? I think he did say something like that."

In response, Killer Wolf cursed, "That b*stard's getting more and more ridiculous! I can't believe he gifted us this little sh*thead!"

Despite being called a "sh*thead," Northern King didn't have the nerve to defend himself. Instead, he acted like an aggrieved princess.

"I don't know how you pissed Sole Wolf off, but if you were imprisoned here by him, he's probably aiming to take your life."

Terrified, Northern King pleaded, "Please save me, Masters! I'm willing to do anything you want!"

"Do you truly want to live, Northern King?"

Northern King nodded vigorously. "Of course! As long as you're willing to save me, I'm prepared to fulfill any request you three have!"

In response, Tyler spoke. "We can save you, although we haven't eaten anything for a while now, so we're feeling rather hungry."

Hearing that delighted Northern King. I thought he was going to demand something unreasonable. It turns out he just wants a meal! Only an idiot would refuse this trade!

Speedily, he agreed, "Sure, sure. I'll treat you all to a fancy meal. Whatever you want, I can get them for you."

Alfred grinned. "I'm glad to hear that. However, we don't want a fancy meal or anything like that. We just want thirty thousand kilograms of rations."

Northern King's eyes almost popped out of his skull when he heard that. What? Did I hear that wrong?

Chapter 2698

Thirty thousand kilograms of rations is enough to feed more than a thousand people for nearly three months! Why do they need that much food? Even if they spend the rest of their lives just eating, I doubt they can finish all those rations themselves! Upon taking in a deep breath, Northern King asked in a trembling voice, "D-Did I hear that right, Masters? Y-You want thirty thousand kilograms of rations?"

Killer Wolf nodded. "What's the matter? Do you think it's too hard? If you do, then forget about it. I don't think your life's worth thirty thousand kilograms of rations either."

Just as he completed his sentence, he turned around with the other two, preparing to leave.

Alarmed, Northern King begged, "Please don't leave me here, Masters! I'll give you thirty thousand kilograms of rations! Save me, please!"

The trio frowned.

When they voiced their demand earlier, they were expecting Northern King to negotiate.

To their surprise, he agreed to their demand without hesitation, which made them regret not asking for more.

Thus, they decided to go against their word.

Sighing, Killer Wolf remarked, "It's such a pain to rescue you. I alone can't do it. How about we work together, Tyler?"

As he spoke, he glanced at Tyler.

Tyler understood his intentions and played along. "Fine, let's work together. However, I'll be taking twenty thousand kilograms of rations out of the thirty thousand."

With a dissatisfied tone, Killer Wolf retorted, "Why do you get twenty thousand?"

"I deserve to get more because I'm putting in more work."

"Now you're bemusing me. We're supposed to save this little sh*thead together, so why are you saying you're putting in more work?" 2 *

"I'm taking the twenty thousand kilograms, whether you like it or not. It's up to you if you want to save him."

"I'm not an idiot, you know. You're not going to play me like that. I'd rather leave him here than let you get more than me."

"Then let's just forget about this. It's a pain in the butt to save him, anyway."

Northern King was on the verge of a mental collapse listening to their act. Are you three really taking me for a fool? Even an idiot can see you two are attempting to raise the price for my rescue! This isn't even good acting! Still, what choice do I have but to submit to their demand?

Hence, he bitterly offered, "Please stop arguing with each other. I'm willing to provide forty thousand kilograms of rations. This way, both of you can get twenty thousand each. Is that all right?"

Tyler and Killer Wolf agreed without hesitation, "Deal."

"Then please save me-" Before Northern King could finish his sentence, the duo waved their hands at him in unison. The energy that was trapping him instantly dissipated.

While he had regained his freedom, he felt extremely awful. And you two said it's a pain to remove the energy binding me! You two literally only waved your hands! It's even easier than taking a piss because you'd have to pull down the zipper first! Now I'm wondering if they're working with that Sole Wolf to scam me!

Killer Wolf threatened, "Now, deliver the forty thousand kilograms of rations to us. If I find out we received even a gram less than what you promised, you'll pay with your life."

"Of course, of course." Northern King nodded. "There's just one more thing I would like to mention. A small favor, if you will."

Swiftly, Alfred inquired, "What is it that you need?"

He felt a little bummed out as Killer Wolf and Tyler had each-earned twenty thousand kilograms of rations, but he hadn't gotten any.

Therefore, he was excited when Northern King mentioned a favor because that meant an additional opportunity for him to obtain some rations.

Hurriedly, Northern King explained, "You see, a mighty enemy has recently threatened Northern Faction's existence. I'm too powerless to stop him alone, so I'm hoping the three of you can help me out."

Killer Wolf grinned wickedly. "So you want us to be your hitman? Is that it?"

Chapter 2699

Northern King was frightened by Killer Wolf's grin and shook his head immediately. "You're mistaken, Master Killer Wolf. That's not what I meant. The three of you don't even need to do anything. I believe the three of you only need to stand still to intimidate the enemy with your

powerful aura. Of course, if the enemy insists on attacking, I'll need you all to defend me. Don't worry; he's as weak as an ant in the face of your might. I bet you only need to wave your arm casually to eliminate the enemy."

In response, Alfred spoke. "We can intimidate and even attack your enemy. It's not a problem."

Northern King sighed in relief.

"However, our time is precious and very valuable. If you waste our time, it means you're wasting our money."

Even a fool could tell Alfred was soliciting benefits.

The three of them are basically ruthless bandits! Northern King remained quiet for a moment before uttering, "Name your price."

Alfred demanded, "Twenty thousand kilograms of rations for each of us."

The edge of Northern King's lips twitched. What a heartless b*stard! Twenty thousand kilograms of rations for each of them means I need to hand over sixty thousand kilograms in total. In addition to the forty thousand I promised earlier, I'll need to deliver one hundred thousand kilograms of rations to them! I don't think I have that many rations stored in my entire base!

Alfred was displeased to witness the grimace on Northern King's countenance. "What's the matter? Are you going to tell me you can't afford the price? In that case, we're leaving. Don't waste our time."

"Wait, wait! Please don't leave!" Northern King exclaimed. The three of them are my only hope. If they refuse to help me, that traitorous Centuria will annex my territory! When that happens, there's no point in having that many rations! "Masters, I really don't have that many rations. How about this? I'll only invite one of you to help me in exchange for twenty thousand kilograms of rations."

After a brief moment of contemplation, Alfred retorted, "No, that's not enough. If you're only asking me for help, it means I have to do the work of three people by myself. You need to give me more."

Gritting his teeth, Northern King negotiated, "Thirty thousand kilograms of rations. That's my limit. I hope you're willing to accept this offer."

Alfred intentionally put on a troubled look before nodding in agreement. "Fine, I'll accept it."

Without delay, Northern King removed a Spirit Stone from his pocket and handed it to Alfred.

Ordinary Spirit Stones were gray, but that one was white and half transparent.

Northern King explained, "This is a telepathic Spirit Stone specially made by my Legion. When I need you, I'll break my telepathic Spirit Stone, which will cause yours to vibrate. When you

sense the vibration, it means I'm asking you for assistance. You can use the stone to locate my position."

"No problem," said Alfred.

With the trade completed, Northern King left with satisfaction.

The moment he left, Alfred hastily turned to Killer Wolf and inquired, "Say, who do you think is this little sh*thead's enemy? Why does he need the help of an Ultimate Class warrior?"

Killer Wolf retorted, "Do you really not know, or are you playing dumb? Think about it carefully. Who's most likely to be his enemy when he has so many Legions?"

"Wait, is he talking about the Centuria led by the Great Marshal?"

Tyler commented, "Who else on Theos Island is powerful enough to threaten them aside from us?"

Alfred wasn't sure if he should laugh or cry. "What do I do? I'm not the type of person to go against my word. Now that I've accepted the Northern King's rations, I must help him. Otherwise, I'll tarnish my reputation!"

Chapter 2700

Tyler said, "Of course we have to fight. Not only will you make your move, but I will also do the same. The only difference is that I'm representing the Great Marshal."

Alfred slapped himself on the head and replied, "I understand now, Tyler. Are you planning to spar with me?"

"That has been my wish for a long time. And now, a wonderful opportunity has presented itself."

"Haha, it's a deal! When the time comes, we'll go all out in a decisive battle."

"My sentiments exactly."

It had never crossed Northern King's mind that a sparring match between two old friends was all he had gotten in exchange for thirty thousand kilograms of rations.

Three days later, Sole Wolf and the others reaped a bountiful harvest.

Sole Wolf alone had slaughtered thirteen wild boars along the way, while Nameless had killed three fearsome tigers in his hunt.

As for Ares, he reaped the greatest prize of all in the form of twenty bison.

As bisons were herd animals, it did not take Ares much effort to rack up the count.

Although Alfred, Tyler, and Killer Wolf didn't go hunting, they managed to trick Northern King into giving them seventy thousand kilograms of rations, which was enough to sustain Zeke's Centuria for two whole years.

In the beginning, Sole Wolf and the others had no idea what had happened. Instead, they were upset over Killer Wolf and his companions' decision not to go hunting.

"Killer Wolf, you lot are becoming increasingly cunning. By not going out to hunt, are you planning to freeload on us? You had better forget it. I'm not going to share my spoils with you."

Ares, too, reprimanded Tyler and Alfred, "It's understandable if the young Killer Wolf lacks sense, but how can I say the same of both of you? If you don't put in any effort, who's going to feed you? You had better be ready to go hungry. Even our current haul is too meager to meet the Great Marshal's expectations."

Despite the accusations, the three simply responded with a slight smile.

When the others had finished lecturing them, Killer Wolf broke his silence. "Are you done already?"

Sole Wolf replied snarkily, "Why? Do you have a problem, Killer Wolf?"

"Yes. A big one, in fact. Let me ask you, who told you that we didn't work and have nothing to show?"

"Are you joking? If I recall correctly, you guys remained here the entire time. How could you have secured anything if you never left? Moreover, we were the ones who hunted the prey, which has nothing to do with you. So what haul are you talking about?"

Killer Wolf let out a sigh. "Your stupidity has limited your imagination. To be honest, the prey you have hunted is worthless compared to the spoils we're about to receive."

Tyler added, "Killer Wolf, you're being too polite. In reality, their haul can't even be compared to ours."

Alfred joined in the fray. "Their haul can sustain the troops for a month or two at most, but ours can do so for two whole years."

Killer Wolf remarked, "It should be arriving anytime now."

Shhh!

All of a sudden, Alfred shushed the crowd. "Quiet, everyone, and listen carefully."

They gave Alfred a curious look before pricking their ears to listen.

Soon, the sound of chaotic footsteps and creaking carts approaching could be heard.

Sole Wolf, Ares, and Nameless tensed up immediately. "There's a big group of people approaching. This shouldn't happen in a place like this. Everyone, be on your toes!"

No sooner had they spoken than the three prepared for battle.

However, Killer Wolf remarked haughtily, "Look at how nervous you have become. Those are our guys and pose no threat at all. They're just here to deliver rations."

What the hell is going on?

A baffled look descended upon Sole Wolf's face. "Killer Wolf, what nonsense are you spewing? What do you mean by 'our guys?' Since when you have so many men under your command?"

"You'll see."

A short while later, the flurry of footsteps heralded the arrival of more than a hundred men. They were all enthusiastically pulling a hundred carts behind them.