

Chapter 23

"If you even had the slightest ability to sense such matters, you would know there isn't any malevolent force in this room. Ms. Shaw isn't unconscious because of some ghost. Someone used a dark arts technique to try and steal her lifespan from her," Shannon declared.

Upon hearing that, both Donald and Helen reacted in horror. They hurried forward and asked, "Ms. Jensen, what dark arts technique are you talking about? Is someone trying to take Emmie's life?"

Turning toward them, Shannon continued, "They're not trying to kill her. Those involved in the mystic arts call this a lifespan transfer. I once said that Ms. Shaw has a blessed fate. She is supposed to have a blissful, carefree life. Due to that, someone seems to have set sights on her fate. They want to use her lifespan to extend their own."

Shannon took Emily's hand again and pointed at the little red mark on the tip of her thumb.

"This cinnabar mark on her thumb indicates that someone tricked her into stamping her thumbprint on an agreement that allows someone else to take her lifespan."

Helen had reported to Shannon that Emily had gone missing for ten or so minutes, and Shannon deduced that was when this happened.

Donald and Helen studied the tip of Emily's thumb. True enough, they spotted a faint red mark on it. Someone had clearly tried to wipe everything off. They wouldn't have noticed it if they hadn't looked closely.

Plus, after Emily fell unconscious, the couple had been so caught up in the search for someone to help her that they wouldn't have noticed such a minor detail.

Tilly was doubtful, so she tried to take a look for herself too.

Meanwhile, Donald couldn't be bothered to pay any attention to Tilly or Desmond. With a grim expression, he looked at Shannon and asked, "Ms. Jensen, does this mean someone has taken my daughter's lifespan? Can we get it back?" 1

Meeting his gaze, Shannon nodded. "That can be done."

Desmond was disgruntled to see that Shannon had gotten the Shaws' trust with just a few sentences. He was just about to speak up in contempt when someone drew nearer to him—it was the handsome young man who came in with the Shaws just now.

At some point, Hector had made his way over to Desmond. Standing beside Desmond, Hector said curtly, "Quiet. If you say anything to my sister, I'll make sure you leave the Shaw residence on a stretcher."

His voice was mellow and soothing to the ears, but his words sent chills down Desmond's spine. Desmond

shuddered and even forgot to respond.

By now, Shannon had taken out a small brush from her bag and dipped it in cinnabar ink. She also took out an emerald pendant.

After making a mark on the emerald pendant with the cinnabar ink, she placed the pendant on Emily's forehead.

Donald and Helen had been standing beside the bed all along. They weren't sure if they had been mistaken, but they thought they saw a dark wisp flashing past the emerald pendant when it was placed on Emily's forehead. It was only visible for a brief second before vanishing.

Shannon took out several talismans from her bag. Seemingly catching what Hector did, she glanced at Desmond and noticed his look of indignation as well as resentment.

She recalled the sword dance he had performed earlier. Although she didn't think it looked good by any means, everyone seemed more trusting if such a ritual were to be performed.

Tilly also demanded that she prove herself just now.

Shannon gave it some thought. While she didn't know how to do a sword dance, she knew how to scare people. She took a step back and steeled her expression. She started giving off a focused, imposing air.

She raised her hand and clapped them together. Then, when

she separated her palms, the five talismans she had been holding between them hovered in the air as if controlled by some invisible power.

With just that alone, everyone's eyes widened in shock, including Desmond's.

She called out in a clear yet commanding tone, "Clear the paths, earthly and celestial. Merge the worlds. All will prevail. By this decree, cease to be!"

Once she finished casting the spell, she pushed her palms forward, and the talisman shot straight toward Emily.