

# Mystical 181

## Chapter 181: Secret and Proposal 1

The blue eyed girl looked back at him calmly, and just smiled warmly.

"Sylphalan, are you going or not?! Give me a specific answer!" The black shadow again echoed.

Sylphalan frowned, his gaze was stuck on the blue eyed girl, her warm smile and expression made him feel warm too from the inside out.

"Big sister why aren't you saying anything? Is it because that old bastard behind me is too noisy?"

"Yes, it must be because that old bastard is too noisy. I have always hated him anyways, I didn't expect you to be uncomfortable around him too. Just give me a moment, I'll kill him now!"

His body suddenly floated like it had no form, and with a loud WHOOSH he flew towards the black shadow by the entrance of the hall.

In a split second his body suddenly dispersed into a shadow that covered the sky like an infinite blanket of mud covering all of the hall in an instance.

"Sylphalan you!!!" The black shadow was enraged as he yelled his disagreements under the shroud of the black mud.

"What mad episode are you having again?!!" The old man made a low hum and broke through the black mud, dashing towards the bottom to escape.

Sylphalan appeared out of the black mud.

"I'm still too weak... Big sister, do you think that if I were to become a little bit stronger, that I would be able to kill that cree old bastard?" He looked at the blue eyed girl again, who smiled back, filling his heart with warmth once more.

Suddenly his vision was blurred, and the girl disappeared, he was left with emptiness.

His face instantly turned into one of regret and sadness.

"Big sister are you unhappy again? I must have disappointed you." He touched the left side of his neck, and was suddenly happy again.

"My time scar has grown longer by a bit! Do you see it big sister? With this little bit, I can live another extra two days!" His face was suddenly filled with childlike happiness.

"1 month and 5 days long.... I have never had such a long time scar, big sister you would be happy too right?"

At the bottom of the mountain, a black shadow appeared, and stumbled onto a tree for stability.

A red shadow appeared beside him, it was Flamingo, he was plain faced, with his Sword of the Sprites sheathed on his waist, he looked up at the hall above.

"Sylphalan gone mad again?"

"Damn this, I don't want to be with that madman anymore! Whichever one of you want to you may go ahead!" The black shadow emitted the voice of the restless old man.

Flamingo squinted at the direction of the hall.

"Sylphalan has always been a madman. Sometimes good, sometimes bad. Just stay away from him, he is a pitiful one after all."

"Pitiful?! If he's pitiful, who will pity me?!" The black shadow was enraged, "His someone who should've disappeared a long time ago! The time scar determines how long more he has to live. He is only alive because he keeps extending his lifespan by absorbing the Blood of Eternal Life and the life force of other humans! What 'sometimes good, sometimes bad', he is just completely mad!"

"Consuming life force to maintain his life scar comes with a side effect. Between periods of time he will experience great pain. The more he absorbs, the more the life scar learns to fight the effects so each time the effects of the life force decreases. Sylphalan.....he won't be living for much longer." Flamingo stood silently for a moment, then continued upwards, "let him be."

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In the days after, Garen focused solely on recovering.

The medicine from Andreala was quite effective, it did away with the pus infection on his wounds very rapidly. These wounds inflicted by Palosa's Unrivaled Skyfall were a massive annoyance to fix, each wound was a pit, like the injuries from the Mitsubishi Army, they wouldn't close up.

This also deterred Garen's self recovery abilities from taking effect.

However once the pus infection was dealt with, the wounds started healing rapidly. Once they reached a stage where they resembled the behaviours of a normal human wound, Garen's recovery abilities were able to take over once more.

While this happened, Garen was hanging out in the manor every single day, playing Go with Andreala and occasionally having some causal spars, then he would try to gather some intelligence from Andreala about the world outside.

His wounds healed faster and faster each day.

The situation with the Confederation was also getting more complicated after each passing day. The third fleet positioned by the ports were finally exchanging fire with the Weisman's Imperial Greenbird Fleet.

The Confederation was loaded and powerful. With the Third Fleet directly fighting the Weisman's small fleet of ships, if all goes well, it should end in a total annihilation of the Weisman's fleet.

Everyone expected the Confederation to win this battle easily. All they had to worry about was the counter-attack from the Weisman's after.

However something shocking happened.

The Confederation's Third Fleet was annihilated instead. Ten of their destroyers were lost in a mere 20 minute span.

Even the Weisman Empire were shocked by the results. When the news came in, they thought that it was a ruse by the Confederation to lure them into a trap.

The Weisman's Greenbird Fleet was just one small fleet out of the Empire's 23 small ship fleets. All of the fleets were populated by small ships with weak firepower. While these fleets have served in the wild world of the oceanic borders, one wouldn't have expected them to win on a head-on fight with the Confederation's Third Fleet.

Suddenly, the true face of the Confederation was revealed in the eyes of all neighboring countries.

The truth was, that it's army was severely underfunded, its federal reserves were empty and its ships were long overdue for maintenance. Even the guns and cannons were loaded with inferior ammunition, while the ships' armors were all replaced with cheap metal.

Ever since the Border War, the Confederation has been slowly falling into corruption. During the Border War, all the countries looked up to the Confederation as the leader of the world. Nobody dared to challenge its might, anyone who tried were wiped out in easy fights by the Confederation's army. This led to those in charge of the military becoming comfortable and overly proud of themselves.

While sitting in the tea room of the Manor, Garen held his freshly poured tea in one hand, while he held the newspaper up to read with a serious face on his other hand.

The headlines spelled out: 'Who Will Pay For The Death of The Third Fleet?'

"Looks like things are bad," Andreala sat across Garen and was reading an exact copy of the Confederation Daily, the primary newspaper of the entire country.

"It's not just bad, it's really really bad," Garen added, putting down his tea, "This is because the Western Seas Company successfully opened a new shipping route but failed to draw up a mutually beneficial profit share plan with the Weismans. This led to the Weismans to declare war on the Western Seas Company, and subsequently leading to this. If the Confederation doesn't face this properly with proper countermeasures, they risk losing all of the respect they've gained over the years from the other countries, that would put us all at risk."

"A proper countermeasure would probably mean they will mobilize the Ninth Army. All eyes will be on that," Andreala frowned as well. The nation's security was in the interest of every citizen. Afterall, when they were outside of their own country, they would be identified by their nationality first, if the country they belonged to was weak, it would make doing business or anything at all tough.

The both of them had heavy hearts, but there was not much they could do as individuals. No matter how powerful they were, they were no match in a direct against something like a destroyer. Not to mention that each destroyer was staffed by at least a hundred seamen, some even up to the thousands. Even if they could make it onto a destroyer and kill every single one on the ship, by the time they're done, the enemy would have already won the battle.

As a martial artist in the face of real war, especially one that concerns the air, sea and even land, they could only sit and feel conflicted.

Dong, Dong, Dong.

Someone knocked softly on the door.

"Come in,"

Garen put down his papers, and put on a plain face again.

Jack walked in in a white army-like uniform.

"Gate Master, the ingredients you asked for are ready, the medicine has also been brewed according to your instructions by a master brewer. Should I go over now?"

"These small things let the small ones do it," Garen frowned at Jack, "you should be focused on enhancing your martial art abilities and improving yourself. Has that Eight Arm Dragon King bastard agreed on coming yet?"

"No, Mr. Yoda left Mr. Su Lin's manor half a month ago, we don't know where he was headed to. He was followed by the small bastard as well," Jack said briefly, "Also I would like to add that for someone like me whose age is nothing close to Cynthia, practicing martial arts won't affect my abilities much anymore. I am sure of the direction I am headed to and the choices I would make in life."

Garen did not say much anymore, and just looked at Andreala.

"Do you want to go?"

"No thanks, I am headed to the baths later. I do not have a naturally tough body like yours so I need to use different ways to train and manage my body's flexibility," Andreala wave his hand in denial.

"Your body's flexibility? What if your body was strong enough? Then you wouldn't need to fuss over this then?" Garen stood up and asked.

"Of course, but sadly for a martial artist to focus on one thing is already the limit. If I try any harder I will not reach a higher level anyways," Andreala shook his head.

"I have a secret technique, it can increase your body's strength in a short period of time. Would you be interested?" Garen suddenly said, "the side effects aren't too bad either, and the explosive strength is pretty terrifying."

"Oh? You actually have a secret technique like this?" Andreala's eyes lit up in excitement, "what do I have to give you for it?"

Garen shook his head and smiled.

"Just a simple exchange of knowledge."

Andreala was stunned, and just stared at Garen, unable to conjure a proper reaction.

"Do you know the true value of a secret technique that doesn't come with a horrifying side effect?"

"Of course," Garen knew the value of the technique best, since he had acquired it back then in a trade with the Tenth Hoop where he paid a great deal of benefits, money, real estate and rare materials in exchange for this secret technique. By his rough estimates, they were worth hundreds of million, a fifth of White Cloud Gate's total assets then.

Andreala lowered his head and said softly,

"Alright, I too have a secret technique, I suppose we could share and exchange."

Garen was slightly shocked.

The reason why he was so generous was because Andreala was technically on his side. This bastard valued martial arts as much as his own life, he even remembered the time he still owed Garen a favor, and was the first to automatically send free medication over after the fight with Palosa.

In this world, not many people stood alongside Garen on the peak of martial arts practice. The two of them were just die hard fans of martial arts, an exchange of knowledge felt like they had moved from acquaintances to close friends instantly, friends interested in each other's growth.

Garen did not spend much time practising, so he lacked experience, but he had a lot of combat experience from his life and death situations. Whereas for Andreala, who was experienced as he had spent many years practicing and perfecting his abilities, but lacked experience in fighting high level opponents, which made it hard for him to determine his own standing.

This exchange would be perfect for the both of them to help each other.

A few minutes later, the two of them stood on an empty space behind the manor.

The empty space's floor was made out of white rock tiles, it was specifically designed for the purpose of practising martial arts, and also for the occasional spar between high level fighters.

Around the arena was a circle of flowers, and further outwards was a perimeter of 5 meter tall black walls with electric barbed wire.

Chapter 182: Secret and Proposal 2

The whole of the field of white, complemented with a sea of blue flowers, and like the sweet fragrance of flowers, a sense of calm and joy filled the air.

The both of them faced each other, on their knees in the middle of the white stone yard.

Garen started to explain the theory behind the Explosion of Heavenly Spirit. This secret technique made use of the manipulation of finger methods to concentrate the qi onto a specific point. It would then excite a particular part of the body, which would instantly increase the strength and vitality of the user.

The explosive strength was 150% stronger than one would be able normally muster.

To Andrela, this enhanced explosive force was definitely a killer weapon. His speed would increase, along with his Vitality. It was perfect for him as it would make up for his weakness, which was being unable to increase his speed due to the load on his body.

To pay Garen back, Andrela decided to pass down one of his secret techniques; Three Star Convergence to him.

Other than sleeping and eating, both of them spent their remaining time teaching each other what they knew of their secret techniques.



The Three Star Convergence, a secret technique that had little side effect, was invented by Andrela from scratch. Similar to his Blink, it was the type of technique that he would usually not be passed down to others, but In this case, he considered it returning a favor with another.

This technique, which was of the instantaneous, explosive type, was something Garen had enquired of before.

It was a tri-simultaneous attack, which carried three times more destructive power than usual. Andrela had depended on this to injure him, past his Body Hardening Technique.

While they were trying to learn the secret techniques, Garen started preparing his medicine to learn the Golden Statue Technique as well.

He decided to invest points into secret techniques as he was not able to increase his attributes at the moment.

Both of them continuously learnt from each other for the next few months. Both the secret technique's training regimes were very complicated. On the one hand, the Three Star Convergence required an external force to progressively stimulate a hidden part of the arm, and on the other hand, the Explosion of Heavenly Spirit required one to constantly reduce the casting period of the explosion. Furthermore, he had to use the Finger Method with extreme precision to avoid any backfire that could cause him severe injury.

After they got a grasp of the the tricks of these secret techniques, they slowly broke out of the learning daze.

Garen finally got hold of the Three Star Convergence technique with the help of Andrela. Based on the requirement shown by the skill pane, this technique required both basic sword techniques and Celestial Circle Secret Technique to be at advanced level in order to achieve the prerequisite.

However, Garen successfully modified the Three Star Convergence to suit his uses, with the help of Andrela. Andrela was not called a genius for nothing, either, as he was already able to use the basics of Explosion of Heavenly Spirit for actual battles. When they both sparred, Garen estimated that the current Andrela was on par with the talented Clark of the Crimson Sand Sword.

A few days later.

Both of them started talking about Palosa's 179 secret techniques; the terrifying secret technique called the 99 Regressions. It made the White Bird Fist become the true White Bird Holy Fist. He was viewed as a Saint as his fist technique was beyond that of the normal realm.

"There should be something above the secret techniques." Andrela thought. "White Bird Holy Fist must have come in contact with this thing before being able to invent such advanced secret techniques like 99 Acute Airholes and 99 Regressions."

"You've said that you were pursuing something that was beyond the limit before. Don't tell me you've found something?" Garen repeatedly placed his hands in the stove to burn both of his palms to accumulate more power into his Fiery Claw.

"I do have some lead." Andrela nodded. "There are a few legendary ancient secret techniques which have the effects that I'm looking for. I've been looking for it high and low during the time I've closed myself away from the rest of the world, and I finally found some clues."

As their relations had become better than ever, they've stopped hiding secrets from one other.

"I found out from an ancient bible that an ancient Grandmaster of Combat called Torres knew a secret technique that allowed him to shrug off any fatigue. He once fought for three days and three nights without pause. After that, he travelled far away into the enemy's headquarters and started again. His endurance was definitely appalling."

Garen was alarmed. At his current strength, he was able to battle with all his might for a few hours at best before he started to feel tired. He couldn't even hold on for a day, much less three.

"What's the clue that you speak of?"

"I found a very well hidden connection." Andrela smiled. "You should have come across the Blood of Eternal Life, right?" He continued as Garen nodded.

"The Blood of Eternal Life is the blood essence of the Everlasting Beings. This is where we draw a connection to the blood of the non-human clans."

"Non-human clans?"

"That's right. At present, there are already a few non-human clans that we know of; namely the werewolf, catmen and mousemen. Any others have left no trace. I have understood their respective clan's histories through my friends from within them. I have discovered a new clue by comparing their histories." Andrela reached his hand out and started drawing on the white floor.

He finished drawing a simple relations chart very quickly.

"According to the records of the non-human clans, all their ancestors have their own genetic abilities. Some of their abilities are very similar to the secret techniques used by the Grandmasters of Combat in the ancient bible."

"What you're saying is that it is very likely that the secret techniques created by the Grandmasters of Combat mimic that of the non-human clan's genetic abilities?" Garen asked.

"No," Andrela shook his head with respect. "I'm not finished yet. My biggest discovery wasn't this, but another matter."

"Oh?" Garen was stunned that this was not the biggest discovery.

Andrela focused his aura and released in an instant, forming the gigantic black word 'ten' behind his back, which thoroughly covered the whole colosseum.

"Just to keep this between us." He softened his voice.

He spoke of his discovery softly after stabilizing his aura and confirming that no one was eavesdropping their conversation.

"I suspect that the secret techniques that we have been using are magic spells originating from the warlocks from the fairy tales! They were the ones who obtained their genetic abilities via a special stimulation method."

Although Garen's expression didn't change, excitement bubbled in his mind.

While Garen had witnessed the werewolves, demon hunters, telekinesis and secret techniques with ridiculous effects, he thought that he was currently in a world where the modern society was not as technologically advanced as earth. Now Andrela told him that warlocks once existed in this world and that the secret techniques were traces that they had left behind.

"Do you have proof!?" He directly asked.

"Of course I do." Andrela nodded. "Technically, my Blink is not a secret technique from the Celestial Circle Gate. It was obtained from an ancient sect. To learn this secret technique, one would require the blood of a prime male lion and draw 81 special characters onto the body."

"Isn't this superstition? Did you really do it?"

"Of course. I thought it was superstition as well, and I ignored this step to go directly for the steps to learn the secret technique. However, there was no effect." Andrela recalled and said. "I thought that the secret technique had complications, or that the physical body of the ancient people had some slight difference with that of ours. However, the effect showed itself within a short time after I'd decided to try it once!"

He continued as he saw Garen focusing all of his attention on him.

"After that, I saw the same characters in a fairy tale's history. The same characters I used to learn the technique."

"You could have tried to see if there are still any effects if you changed the character slightly."

"Of course I've tried it. There won't be any effect if I modify it." Andrela shook his head. "According to the fairy tale, the characters represented the lions in their time. I've been interested in the fairy tales related to the warlocks ever since, and I've started collecting information everywhere. I came to a shocking theory about when the first secret method came about."

"What theory?" Garen listened carefully.

"There is a high chance that warlocks once existed in this world. I have seen a record in an ancient book that does translations of ancient fairy tales." Andrela paused.

"It was written that: the warlock had enslaved species that were not their kind, and called them demons. They have ruled the world for a hundred million years."

Garen churned his brain as he tried to recall the legends of warlocks of this world.

"If they really did exist, how did they meet their demise, being such strong creatures?"

"I'm not so sure about that. However, I still suspect that our secret techniques originate from the warlock's magic spells."

"What's your plan?" Garen looked at Andrela, "If it's true, what do you plan to do?"

"I have marked down certain ruins that may be rewarding to us. I plan to invite some friends with certain capabilities and explore them together. Although these ancient ruins have been explored countless of times, we may find something new if we have a clear target in mind."

"Furthermore, The sea is vast, that there a lot of areas that humans have yet set foot on. There must be something for us to discover." Andrela spoke softly to Garen as he looked at him. "On another note, I suspect that the immortal palace and the Behemoth Gate are most likely searching for the truth of the history, and a solution to go beyond the limit in the dark, just like me. They are just using the Eternal Blood of Life in the ancient ruins as an excuse."

Garen pondered for a bit.

"How many people have you actually recruited?"

"If you agree, there will be 2 including me." Andrela answered in all seriousness.

"Stop the nonsense." Garen was speechless since Andrela rarely joke. "I have no problem with it as long as you show me you have something to go on. Who else are you exactly trying to recruit?"

"The proof is simple. I can show you the information that I've gathered. All of the information can be traced and validated from the Federation's library, and some private libraries as well. The information of the secret techniques and the history of the non-human species can also be validated. There are no falsification in the information but it would take a lot of time and energy to connect them together."

"As for who else to recruit, I have one in mind that is qualified to pursue what's beyond the limit. He has also attained the pinnacle of the human strength as well. The humans from the Stonecliff Continent have sworn loyalty to the Immortal Palace, and the Behemoth Gate has been recruiting people with potential so that they can attempt to train them themselves. There are still a few Grandmasters of Combat who were not on friendly terms with the Behemoth Gate and Immortal Palace." Andrela reached out his hand and carved a name onto the floor.

'Stephan Ralph'

Garen looked at a name that was unknown to him.

"Who is he?"

"He is mentally ill, and is not from the same district as us. However, he is the strongest and most horrifying hypnotist. Rumor says that you could be hypnotized just by hearing his voice and be caught in an illusion if you interact with him. He was the one who caused the appalling nine one four incident in Galantia, which resulted in a few thousand deaths. He had also once founded a terrorist organization in the Fivestar continent and has been listed as the fourth most dangerous individual by the three major countries.

He was able to hypnotize both others and himself. Nicknamed as the King of Nightmares, when his body was hypnotized his physical body would reach the utmost limit." When Andrela was describing this person, he had a faintly complicated and embarrassing look in his eyes.

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"How did you get to know him?" Garen was curious.

"You don't need to know about that." It was rare that Andrela's face was blushing red as he seemed reluctant to answer. "He will definitely come, because he was the one who made me realize this information."

"Alright. Would the three of us be enough?"

"It's enough" Andrela nodded. "The Immortal Palace has a small amount of people too right? We would be too weak if we want to snatch the item away from them and the Behemoth Gate. If not for the Explosion of Heavenly Spirit that I've picked up from you that was perfectly suited for me to increase my battle strength, I wouldn't even have had this idea in the first place."

"True that. I hope the person you mentioned is as strong as you describe to be."

"He will definitely not disappoint! Furthermore, the members of the Behemoth Gate had already entered the ancient ruins that I've marked. We will intercept them when they come out." Andrela said with confidence.

"We're still short handed. To go beyond the limit..." Garen furrowed his eyebrows and suddenly a name flashed across his mind. "Maybe... He will be interested."

"Who?"

"White Bird Holy Fist."

Andrela's eyes lightened up. "Didn't he seal his fist due to personality disorder? Are you sure he will leave the mountain?"

"Do you think it was just a simple spar when I visited him?" Garen pointed at his chest, indicating where he was previously injured. "What do you mean when you say he has a personality disorder?"

"Palosa has a total of three personalities, namely the good, evil and unconcerned. The situation determines the personality he's in. He's good when he's in a non-malicious negotiation, evil when facing his enemies or people who try to ambush or trick him, and finally indifferent is his actual personality, which is when his strength will be at its peak. He developed the good and evil personality when he was training his fists."

It was the first time Garen heard such a saying.

"Looks like he was not at his peak when he sparred with me." He frowned.

It was obvious that Palosa was in his good personality when they met.

After discussing about the procedures, both of them started consolidating Andrela's information. It was at this time that Garen started to come to the legitimacy of the truth. It was so unexpectedly obvious that there were traces of it, it was just that no one had noticed it until now.

After validating the proof, both of them brought the information and went to find the first person they thought of, White Bird Holy Fist Palosa.

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Skylark Mountain Range

Garen brought Andrela, which both of them were in white shirts, along to see Palosa, who was in the middle of barbecuing his fish.

The bonfire was easily noticeable, shining brightly in the middle of the forest during night time.



Palosa sat alone by the bonfire, his gray-white shirt was dyed red by the bonfire's illumination.

He raised his head and saw Garen and his men coming up to him torch in hand.

The group stopped just short of the bonfire, two of the men clothed in white turned around and started off from where they had come after giving Palosa a courteous, quiet bow..

Only Garen and Andrela were left standing, still in a white cloak.

"You've come once again." Palosa said coldly and lowered his head as he continued barbecuing his fish. The meat of the fish that was once white had morphed into a golden brown, and with it came the tempting aroma of cooked meat.

Garen walked and sat by the bonfire by himself and gestured Andrela to do the same.

"I'm not here to fight you today." He glanced at the fried fish that was piled onto the bonfire and calmly said, "I think you might be interested in what we are about to tell you."

Palosa glanced at him skeptically and then focused his attention onto Andrela. "Something that will interest me?" His tone was cold and emotionless and not as kind as Garen first met him.

"Let's hear about it."

With a smile on Andrela's face, he quickly took out a pile of papers that he had prepared from the cloak and strew it towards him.

Palosa caught it and read it at his leisure. He held a calm demeanor initially, but eventually his expression had started to change.

After some time, he put down the material that was on his hands and closed his eyes, deep in thought..

He soon opened his eyes and stared coldly at Andrela.

"I have seen Garen's strength, and I do admit that he's qualified to team up with me. How about you? You don't have the battle strength. How do you plan to be part of the team?"

Andrela smiled.

"It is true that my current strength is of no match to the both of you. However I have already considered this point since I am the one who suggested this." Again, he brought out something from his cloak. This time it was a small transparent cylindrical glass bottle filled with a viscous silver white liquid. "I have this. At the crucial moment, I can stall up some time even if it's from the professionals from the Immortal Palace, since my abilities lies in my speed. Furthermore, I have a friend, who is in the same level as you, needs me to be the middleman to communicate between us and him."

"The White Tree's Sap? I'm impressed that you can still get your hands on a nearly-extinct resource. Have you taken my problems into consideration?" Palosa replied emotionlessly as usual.

"Of course." Andrela nodded. "Where we are going is a deserted place. Even if there were demons, they're not something we can't deal with. You can kill anything that moves."

"I need time to validate the information presented. Give me at least a month." Palosa pondered for a while and continued. "What makes you think that I will join your party and not go searching for it on my own after knowing this?"

"Sylphalan of the Immortal Palace will definitely have company." Garen voiced out from the side.

The scene fell into a hush as the group stopped talking. What was left was the faint sizzle of the still burning bonfire.

"Alright. We will take our leave for now. You can send your answer to this address a month later." Garen threw a white name card to Palosa. They stood up, turned around and left where they came.

The duo's white cloaks slowly disappeared into the darkness of the forest.

Next up was the King of Nightmares. According to Andrela's intel, his friend had recently went on a vacation on a small private island near the Stonecliff Continent.

This issue was left for Andrela to settle on his own, as Garen had his own problems on his hands.

The connection between secret techniques and the legendary warlock's genetic ability might be the key to to go beyond the limits. Although Garen was very interested, his current main focus was to improve his own secret techniques.

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Splash...

A basket of cold water rained down onto Garen's head.

He stood in the middle of the Fenglin manor's colosseum clad in nothing but square white boxer and a faint, gold colored oil spread all over his fair skin.

What was already a strong and aggressive body was further defined under the reflection of the oil.

He looked at the skill pane. There was an addition of Three Star Convergence and the Golden Statue Techniques at the back.

Garen looked at the amount of potential points that he had been collecting having not been using them for a long time. The power of the Golden Sand Throne had been continuously transferred into his brain day and night.

His potential point had reached up to 25 points! However, it could be seen that the Golden Sand Throne had decayed for quite a bit as the rate of transfer had been decreasing.

Garen sorted his attribute and skill panes.

'Strength 2.66, Agility 2.72, Vitality 2.65, Intelligence 2.53, Potential 2596%.'

Secret Technique-----

Mammoth Variation : Explosive (Maximum Grade), Epidermal Hardening Level 1 (Iron Body), Blood Qi Stabilization Level 1 (Boulder Martial Art).

Fiery Claw: Grade 2 (Total of 4 Grades), Burning Strengthen Level 1 (Total of 3, from the Dark Crimson Technique and Red Jade Palm's training regime)

Golden Statue Technique: Rudimentary Level (Total of 5 Grades), Do you want to merge with the Mammoth Secret Technique.'

The three techniques, Bronze, Silver and Golden Statue, were to Garen excellent techniques. He obviously would not merge them.

As Garen stood in the middle of the colosseum, he ordered a servant to pour down a bucket of water, after which he subsequently left the premises.

He focused his vision back onto the skill pane after his surroundings had returned to calm.

"25 potential points are enough to push a secret technique to its strongest form. The Golden Statue Technique was much more stronger than the Mammoth Secret Technique since it was a third rated secret technique, albeit superimposed with a lot of enhancements. Furthermore, he still could not attain the best effect even though he had mastered it to the point that he was second to none. Although the key to attaining the level of a Grandmaster of Combat was due to the supporting battle skills, its level and power is still too low. To have it as the main skill is disadvantageous."

He looked at the Golden Statue Technique in the skill pane.

With all the time invested in soaking in potions and rubbing medicinal oil all over his body, he had finally entered the Golden Statue Technique's rudimentary level.

"The Golden Statue Technique's sect was once a rival of the Crimson Sand Sword. Although its technique was weaker than the Crimson Sand Sword, it shouldn't be that far apart." He recalled the explanation of this secret technique from memory.

Golden Statue Technique: Extremely effective in attacks and defense. Increase strength, vitality and recovery. Users who have mastered this technique are impervious to attacks that may injure the inner body, as the outer body was seamlessly merged with the inner organs, which result in enhanced regeneration. It was very effective in negating the effects of poisons.

Weakness: Heavy and dense body.

The benefits of the Golden Statue Technique was obvious compared to the Mammoth Secret Technique as it had an additional recovery skill. Even the modified Mammoth Secret Technique couldn't top this effect.

This made Garen determined to choose this secret technique as his main technique.

He took a deep breath and reorganized his thoughts, his body would definitely have drastic changes from this major shift. He had to be ready.

He focused his vision onto the recently learnt Golden Statue Technique.

One point of potential point disappeared.

The Golden Statue Technique had increased to grade 1.

Two points disappeared, Golden Statue Technique had increased to grade 2.

Another two points disappeared, Grade 3.

This time it was five points that disappeared, it had increased to Grade 4.

Finally another five point disappeared.

He ultimately spent 15 potential points and raised the Golden Statue Technique to grade 5, which was its peak.

Garen stood still in silence and prepared himself as he looked at the symbol slowly appearing at the end of the Golden Statue Technique.

The moment the symbol fully appeared, A loud sound came from within Garen's cranium and waves of cool air rushed into every part of his body.

It felt like his body was suddenly filled with torrents of cold water. However the strange thing was that thought to be a stream of hot blood kept flowing out of his heart and mixed with the cold water. It was similar to when he first learned the Explosive Fist Art, which produced a strong reaction towards the change of the body.

Again, something strange was happening to Garen's body. His left side of the body was a shade of red whereas the right side became white. The difference was obvious as two opposing fluids, which was hot and cold, reacted inside Garen's body.

A viscous liquid incessantly secreted out of Garen's body, covering the whole of its surface. It was as if he painted himself over with a layer of glue.

Fifteen points of potential points had raised the Golden Statue Technique to its peak, grade 5.

Chapter 184: The Legendary Power... 2

As the Golden Statue Technique had been successfully maximised, the modified Mammoth Secret Technique, together with the enhancement effects from multiple Body Hardening Techniques became one symbol and merged into the Golden Statue Technique, fusing into a new, mysterious symbol.

'Golden Statue Technique: Grade 5. The modified Mammoth Secret Technique has been partially covered and enhanced. A part of the conflicted effects have been erased.' The meaning of the symbol was sent directly into Garen's mind.

He panicked as he saw it. If he couldn't achieve what he wanted during this conversion, his strength would decrease. Whether the Golden Statue technique would disagree with the modified Mammoth Secret Technique had to be confirmed after some assessment.

Since the Golden Statue Technique had solidified in the skill pane, it meant that it would no longer be subject to change.

'Golden Statue Technique: Grade 5. (Known as strength, response and defense).

Defense Enhancement Level 1. (Conversion from the maximised Body Hardening Technique)

It was no issue that the powerful hardening might cause a counter effect, but he was concerned if the effect of the maximised Body Hardening Technique would be retained during attacking.

Garen tried to adjust his blood and qi. Fortunately, the effect retained but he couldn't raise it up to two dan, instead remaining fixed at one dan.

Slightly disappointed, he continued looking at the skill pane.

There were ten more potential points, and it seemed like the Golden Statue Technique could still be increased further as its name has yet to turn gray.

Without any hesitation, he added five potential points into it.

His internal organs started to feel like they didn't sit quite right with him.

Garen didn't turn a deaf ear to the discomfort and focused all of his attention onto the peaked Golden Statue Technique.

This technique was considered a second rate technique once it had reached its peak. However, a strange thing happened after he added five potential points into it.

A strange symbol appeared behind the Golden Statue Technique.

Garen immediately understood what it meant: Achieved the theoretical limits of the technique due to forced conclusion onto the Golden Statue Technique. Training method will be increased drastically. Name will be changed according to the information.

The golden Statue Technique slowly disappeared and a new name appeared.

Divine Statue Technique!

Garen gave a sigh of relief.

This was the pinnacle of the Golden Statue Technique that the inventor had envisioned. Nobody really knew what effects the Divine Statue Technique possessed. Only Garen knew, for he was the only one able to experience it. His body brimmed with an inexplicable energy from head to toe.

The Divine Statue Technique; its name was derived from a god, an ever constant being, standing above all, the overseer of all beings. A god was eternal, and would never change or be injured. This was the theoretical peak of the Golden Statue Technique. It required a ridiculously high spirit to be able to achieve it.

As soon as the Divine Statue Technique had been activated, countless battle skills passed through Garen's consciousness, and his body adapted to these battle skills swiftly as well. The Mammoth Secret Technique's battle skills that made him an upper class Grandmaster of Combat slowly faded and became normal, well practiced techniques. What replaced them were the battle skills from the Divine Statue Technique.

Haa!!



He raised his hands and a vortex rose up from around his surroundings, throwing leaves and flower petals in all directions from where he was standing.

A faint, white-gold glow radiated from the back of his hand. It was as if it were not human.

As his hand screeched a loud clang when he brought them together with speed .

"It's different from the Mammoth Secret Technique. The Divine Statue Technique is much harder and is less tough." Garen felt that his muscles and skin become as hard as bronze, yet he still had the flexibility to move freely.

He felt nothing when the cool air of the night breeze blew on his body. The lantern that hung at the corner of the manor's building quietly let a dim light similar to that of a sunset onto the ground as it swung about..

The light of the colosseum became unsteady.

Bam!!

An explosion rang from within the dark forest from afar. The explosion was like roaring thunder as it travelled through the whole manor, shaking the walls ever so slightly.

Garen looked at the direction and could faintly heard gunshots from the direction.

"Mark!"

Soon, a middle-aged man lead a few servants clad in white from the manor's main building.

"Gate Master, the military soldiers are having a battle against an unknown force. We have already sent our men to investigate."

Garen looked at him.

"Has Vanhatten returned?"

"He is still in Harmony City. The issue with the Felia Sisters has yet to reach a conclusion, owing to the fact that the matter has been exceedingly complicated. He has again requested to transfer people numbered 40 and above there." Mark replied with respect.

"He couldn't resolve such a small matter. Whatever. Send a few men and inquire of the situation. These mountains are our industry. Those who trespass and refuse to cooperate with the authorities shall be eliminated."

The creaking of metal on metal could be heard as Garen moved his fingers.

After Mark left the colosseum, two dark figures jumped over the enclosing wall and softly landed onto the white stone field in the colosseum.

As Garen was about to attack, one of the dark figures raised his hands up and spoke.

"Garen, it's me!"

The dark figure walked towards the lantern, and Andrela's familiar face was brought to light.

Another dark figure walked out of the darkness as well. He was a man in a classic black western suit. A small goatee hung from his chin, and his lips let out the gentle smile of an English Gentleman.

"It's a pleasure to meet you, Saint Mammoth Garen Sir."

Saint Mammoth's floor had a reputation in China...

The well known Saint Mammoth's floor...

Saint Mammoth's floor...

Floor...

Floor...

It was as if thousands of mud horses ran through his mind as the term echoed in his head.

Garen took a deep breath as he tried to suppress his urge to attack. With a stupefied look on his face, "I don't remember having such a nickname. Who thought of such a dumb name."

"Did you not know? This is a nickname bestowed to you by the International Martial Art Alliance. The nickname of the Grandmaster of Combat typically comes from his signature technique. Isn't it a good thing that people call you Saint Mammoth?" The gentleman asked curiously.

Garen's face twitched. He shrugged and changed the topic after calming himself down.

"It reminded me of a joke that I heard a long time ago. I still prefer people calling me the White Cloud Gate Master. Who are you?"

The man smiled and looked passionately at Andreia who was standing at the side. He looked at him coldly and introduced him as he forced a smile on his face.

"This is the King of Nightmares Stephen Ralph."

Garen had never seen Andreia showing such an expression before. He estimated a ridiculous guess based on the distance they stood between each other. Without waiting for his response, he caught Ralph looking at Andreia melancholily.

"Dreia, have you still not accepted my love towards you? We have already served each other without clothes."

"..."

"..."

A cold breeze blew across the colosseum as the three of them went quiet.

Garen felt goose bumps all over his body.

"Both.. Both of you should go rest for a bit." He mustered out a sentence as he invited them. "Mark!"

Immediately, Mark came out from the building and greeted them with a bow.

"Bring these two esteemed guests to the guest rooms."

"Yes, Gate Master."

Andrela reluctantly smiled and moved further away from Ralph on his own.

"Ralph. You... You should rest first as I need to talk to Garen for a bit."

Ralph looked at him with resentment and focused his gaze upon Garen as he admired and rated him. He left with Mark afterwards.

Only Garen and Andrela was left in the garden.

Both of them were still quiet even when the footsteps slowly faded to the distance.

"Beware of Ralph." Andrela helplessly put a complicated smile on his face.

"What happened between you two?" Garen sat on his knees as he could still feel the goose bumps he had earlier.

Andrela slowly sat down with an even bitter facial expression.

"This incident... I have to start from where I went outstation for my training."

As Andrela confessed, Garen started to understand the whole situation.

At the same time, he had a better understanding of the King of Nightmares Stephen Ralph.

The current Ralph was just one of his many pseudonyms. The King of Nightmares possessed many other aliases.

The King of Nightmares with a thousand faces, who had gone through hypnosis of himself and others, could reconstruct his body structure. With the addition of illusions in place, he was able to become an old man or a young girl with different faces and bodies.

He had a one night stand with Ralph in his womanly form. He turned into a man and became a gay friend of his after the incident. This story was filled with blood and tears and had exceeded the realm of genders.

Garen, who thought he was experienced and knowledgeable, had goose bumps again as he heard the story.

"Ralph will change his identity every once in awhile. He is able to adjust his own body, be it the hormonal secretions or his bones and muscle structure. This guy has mastered many types of ancient chinese martial arts, especially martial arts like Jujitsu. He is the ultimate grandmaster." Andrela helplessly said, "If we were to strictly measure his martial art capability, he is on the same level as I. Not to mention his skill in hypnosis."

He finally added on.

"What you need to be aware of is that his personality and temper will change every time the King of Nightmares changes his identity. Hence you should never put your guard down when he's around."

Speechless, Garen nodded.

"King of Nightmares.... Living up to his reputation..."

Andreia looked at Garen as he tried his best not to twitch his face.

"You have to be careful... I think he had laid his eyes on you. He will become the person that he likes in a few days time..."

Two Garens stood against each other on a starry night as the night breeze blew across the colosseum.

"Who are you!"

"I am Garen!"

"I am the real Garen!"

"You who are inferior in battle strength! Who allowed you to impersonate me!"

"Hmph! How dare you impersonate me! What you did is outrageous!"

"Mammoth Secret Technique!"

"Ten Thousand Mammoth Retrograde!"

This scenario flashed through Andrela's mind. Based on his understanding of Garen, it was very likely that this scene would happen.

Garen looked glazed as he obviously had a bad feeling about it.

"How did you solve it last time? This situation."

"He knocked me out and impersonate me for some time before. He will revert back to normal once he gets bored of it. He won't be bored of you so it depends on how you want to resolve it." Andrela helplessly replied. "However he still has a few identities that he tends to stick with. One of it is the current Steven Ralph, who is also the founder of the Siren Group. There is another identity he likes to use. You'll see it soon."

Chapter 185: Expo 1

"To be honest, you really did find a rare one."

"He does have the skill though." It was as if Andrela was trying to comfort himself. "I apologize for the explosion earlier. He is, after all, on the wanted list from the Federation."

"It's okay. So what's your plan now? We just have to wait for Palosa's response. If he were to accept our proposal, the four of us should be able to take on any situation." Garen said softly.

"We have to make our move regardless of his acceptance. The exchange with Duskdune Shura should be able to give us some reliable information. We will definitely have a lead if we follow the Immortal Palace." Andrela said with confidence.

After some thought, Garen softly clapped his hands.

A person soon came out of the small building with a black metal box. Two servants carefully placed the box onto the white ground, greeted Garen with a bow and left.

Garen walked towards it and opened it with a flick of the lock. What appeared in the box was, unexpectedly, another smaller box.

He opened it again and it was filled with small ice cubes, and among them in the centre was a test tube covered by a white silk. A dark red liquid filled the inside of the test tube.

Garen took out the test tube and shook it in front of Andrela.

"The Blood of Eternal Life that I have obtained from Behemoth Gate."

"You're really daring. Aren't you afraid that they will ambush you?" Andrela was speechless. "You even let your underling guard this."

"I couldn't find a good opponent that could fight me evenly." Garen grinned. "I took away their stuff as I defeated Clark. The whole Behemoth Gate's scheme in the southern region has been foiled by me. What's left is just trash and not worth mentioning."

"Just be careful."

"I understand."

Andrela felt emotional as he took the box of Blood of Eternal Life. "We'll just have to see what kind of information Duskdune Shura can give us."

\*\*\*\*\*

After a few days of resting in the manor.

Garen and his team finally received Palosa's response: '3 months later.'

It wasn't specified if he would be attending the operation three months later or he needed another 3 months to consider. Or maybe he meant he would give an answer in March?



The three of them couldn't wait any longer and brought the Blood of Eternal Life to meet up with Duskdune Shura. They had decided to exchange the Blood of Eternal Life with information regarding the Immortal Palace and a precious secret technique. At the same time, it was to clear off any resentment among them as well. This was the agreement between Duskdune Shura and Garen.

Within their own spaces, they communicated with each other with an encrypted tool without any face to face contact. Duskdune Shura had been extremely careful.

After some negotiation, the Garen trio obtained information of the Immortal Palace and Garen also obtained a special secret technique: White Peacock.

Under the suggestions from the King of Nightmares, they decided to name themselves the White Peacock as an alliance among the three men. This secret technique was able to make use of the user's qi to mark the enemy for a long period of time. The secret technique would secretly release a special smell that was very hard to suppress within a radius of two kilometers. Only users who knew this technique could notice the smell.

Those who were under the effect of the secret technique would be like a peacock, especially eye catching during day time.

This secret technique was purely used for tracking. It had no known side effects and was very effective.

Garen tried to invite Duskdune Shura to the White Peacock but was unfortunately rejected. The old man had been very careful after his battle strength waned due to his serious injury and had decided to stay hidden after obtaining the Blood of Eternal Life. Garen predicted that he had planned to pass down his skills to a disciple and heal himself afterwards.

Their purpose was barely met. However they planned to follow their plans anyway and went to Picardi as per Duskdune Shura's intel.

\*\*\*\*\*

Few months later...

An uncountable amount of flowers, pink and white, covered the mountains and plains, dying the hillside a pinkish red.

There was a gray-white car lane among the sea of flowers. The road had separated the sea of flowers like a thin, white ribbon.

Occasionally, there would be horse carriages or cars travelling down the road, and with them carried the sounds of bells and car engines.

The afternoon sky was showered in a pale golden color, with a dark blue on the edges in the horizon. There was a pale red within the gold sky which, when on the cloud, looked like the cloud was aflame with light.

The color of the clouds changed from gold-red to pale gold as the sunset light radiated through the sky like a slow crawling ladder.

There was a silver car en-route to the capital of Picardi through the white road. Its speed was so fast that it kept overtaking the rest of the carriages.

Behind the seat of the silver white car sat a tall man with short hair.

The man was in a suit. It looked like he was asleep with both of his arms on his knees. Although this guy was not particularly handsome except for his exceptionally smooth skin and golden white complexion, he had a presence that couldn't seem to be ignored.

There were a total of three people inside the car. The driver was a handsome man with an eye patch with long hairs. He looked sharp yet gentle.

There was another man with a sturdy body and a cool face sitting in the passenger seat. He looked exactly like the man who sat behind.

The driver looked at the scenery through the window.

"We have reached the Four Season Road. This road spans about ten kilometers, and we'll be reaching the capital of Picardi, Ansela soon." He looked sideways at asked. "What's the plan, Garen?"

The man who was sitting at the back slowly opened his eyes, revealing calm, dark red eyes. "I will find a place and stay first. You guys can decide where."

"According to our intel, The people from the Immortal Palace will be here during the full moon. Although we don't know how many people they will bring along, we are sure that they will definitely be here so we have no need to rush. We just need to wait patiently." The long haired man said as he nodded.

"You two shouldn't make any move yet. I need to go and scour for the strength of the Immortal Palace. Whoever had provoked me, the Saint Mammoth Garen shall die!"

Garen suppressed his urge to hit him as he stared and growled softly at the strong man in the co-pilot seat.

"King of Nightmares, you better revert back!"

Another 'Garen' hmph-ed. "Are you provoking me as well? You have to know that provoking me means provoking the whole White Cloud Gate!"

"Stop messing around King of Nightmares." Andrela who was driving the car said helplessly.

"Alright alright..." 'Garen' raised his hand and surrendered. "It's been so long I had so much fun. I don't know why but I admire Garen so much when I see his strong body and streamlined muscles."

Andrela shivered.

He even turned into a beautiful woman before she went to bed in the hotel last night. He became the strong Garen the next morning... and cuddled with him in 'Garen' form...

Truthfully he was very excited when the King of Nightmares turned into a woman and stayed with him. However, it could also be horrifying as what he had experienced yesterday.

He almost vomited out gastric when he saw 'Garen' leaning in for a kissed as they cuddled in the morning.

"If you pull a prank like yesterday night again, I will never touch you again." Andrela said with a serious face.

"Alright alright. I'll be careful." The King of Nightmares replied lazily as he smiled.

Garen, who was at the back of the seat, was completely speechless. The only way to differentiate them was their odour when the King of Nightmares transformed into him. Even Garen himself found it hard to differentiate them purely from look. He was slightly worried if the King of Nightmares decided to impersonate him and create trouble everywhere...

Suddenly, his eyes were brimming brightly.

"King of Nightmares, you can transform into anything right?"

"Of course." King of Nightmares nodded.

"Have you seen any members from the Immortal Palace?"

"Are you planning to..." The King of Nightmares furrowed his eyebrows in confusion.

Andrela smiled as he understood Garen's intention.

"A simple and effective idea. The strongest influencer in Picardi, the Argentism is lending us a hand in this operation. There are also other external forces from the locals as well. We will depend on you during that time."

The King of Nightmares nodded helplessly.

"Yes yes yes. In the end I will be doing the most work."

"An able man should do more work." Andrela said with a smile on his face. "It would be best if the members of the Immortal Palace were to not appear. If they did..."

"As long as it's not Sylphalan, don't butt in." King of Nightmares said calmly. "Especially Flamingo... That guy still owes me an arm..." His eyes were burning calmly in red as his tone was cold and calm. "What about you Drela? What do you plan to do?"

Andrela pondered for a moment: "I'll need to arrange to avoid any unexpected events. It all depends on you. It's my time to shine if all goes well."

"Let's hear about the overall situation this time." Garen asked softly from the back.

"According to Duskdune Shura's intel, there is a collector in Picardi's capital, Ansela. This collector showcased a strange looking ancient mirror during a public collection expo. The people from the Immortal Palace believed that it was the ancient Mirror of Secret Text, passed down from the previous generation. They then arranged for a few people to steal it. The Mirror of Secret Text contains knowledge of ancient secret techniques which the Immortal Palace have always laid their eyes on."

He continued after stopping for a while. "The identity of the collector is the high priest of Argentism. His strength is decent and his authority is even stronger. Those who are assigned to safeguard the collection are three of Picardi's most famous and strongest warriors from Argentism. I have never seen their skills but they should be at least the same level as the Grandmaster of Combat. Furthermore, they also have a group of military army guarding the surrounding with heavy weapons, which has its own threat."

"It's obvious that the Argentism are trying to show off their strength when they invited powerful individuals to attend the collection expo. I suspect that they have some hidden powers as well. We should take note of the Behemoth Gate too. However, their likelihood of attending should be low, since Garen you just severely injured them. At the moment, they should not be able to mobilize a large force."

Garen nodded: "That's true. So only the Argentism and Immortal Palace are worth taking note of?"

"That's not necessarily true. Perhaps there are some unexpected masters within the civilization?" Andrela laughed. "I have a list of the masters' names. Do you want me to read it out?"

"Don't waste your time naming the small fries." The King of Nightmares covered his face with his arm and his face started to slowly change. His body shrank and his body figure became more and more slender. It was like rubber moulding into another shape.

Chapter 186: Expo 2

Although this was not the first time for the two of them to see his transformation, they couldn't help but stare with a surprised look on their faces.

"Who are you trying to change into this time?" Andrela asked cautiously.

"You got thinner Drela..." The King of Nightmares became a middle aged woman with a well developed body and reached out his hand to touch Andrela's face.

Andrela was stunned. His face immediately turned red as his veins started becoming visible on his forehead.

"Don't expect me to give you any quarter if you become my mum again!!" Andrela was furious.

The King of Nightmare's laughter could be heard all the while inside the car.

It had been actively noisy inside the car during the journey as Andrela and the King of Nightmare would argue against each other over the smallest things.

The car finally arrived at a double story motel before the sky darkened.

There were a few sparse cars and carriages parked in front of the motel.

They disembarked and let the valet take care of the parking for them. The first floor of the motel seemed to have an air of liveliness as they entered.

The space of the first floor is similar to the typical bar. Although there were few patrons, the whole of the first floor was full as each of them took a spot.

Most of the customers were passers by on the first floor of the black ceilinged hall. Some of them were whispering to each other, while others were drinking alcoholic drinks in small amounts. There were even some that were looking at a map.

There was a saxophonist trying his best to play a not so melodious piece of music on the half oval stage on the first floor.

The trio looked all around them but still couldn't find any spot to seat down.

"Why don't we just chase one of them off and take that?" the King of Nightmares suggested.

"We are already in Ansela's territory. Ansela is famous for its strict law. If you do not want to be targeted by the sheriff, it's best to not make any rash moves." Andrela softly said. "It will expose our position if we make any big moves."

Garen, who had also knew about it, agreed as well.

"Let's get back onto the road after a quick bite then. There's no need to delay our journey to the city. If we really can't find a seat we will just have something in the car."

"Fine." King of Nightmare shrugged. He was now in the shape of Ralph.

"Ah!"

A girl suddenly screamed beside Ralph.

Garen and Andrela looked over.

What they saw was a beautiful woman in a full body white dress covering her mouth with her hand as she stared at Ralph. The tomato sauce that was on her hand splashed all over Ralph's shirt as they collided into each other.

"I'm sorry! I'm sorry!!" The girl kept bowing down as she apologized. Judging from the material of her dress, it was obviously a high quality product. With a silver white belt over her waist that was knotted in a flower from her left side, it enhanced her body figure even more.

"It's ok, forget about it." Ralph frowned as he clearly made way for her earlier. He didn't expect that the girl also tried to gave way as well, which resulted in both of them making the same gesture and collided into each other. "Be careful when you walk next time."

"Y...Yes." The girl blushed as she nodded.

Ralph's shirt was made out of a special material. The tomato sauce quickly came off from it with just a slight gesture. By using a piece of tissue and wipe off the leftover, his shirt looked good as new again.

Three of them looked at the girl as she walked back to her seat. Those three youngsters who looked somewhat cultured and polite looked at the girl immediately started a conversation the moment she sat down. Surprisingly, the heart of the topic was Stephen Ralph.

Those three thought that their voice would be overwhelmed in this noisy motel. What they didn't know was that Garen and his team had extreme senses and could hear everything clearly.

Among these three fellows who were not more than 15 or 16 years old, one girl and guy looked slightly frivolous and the white dressed girl was smiling happily on her seat.

"That man has class. He didn't say anything to me even when I poured tomato sauce onto his shirt. Judging from his attire, I suspect that he must be some young master from a big household. That gaze..." The girl's personality changed from innocent and elegant to lustful.



The guy from a side replied: "Stop dreaming. They're are about to leave. Only I would want such a pitiful animal like you. No one can sell you off no matter how they try."

"What do you mean by that!"

"Can you finish your food quickly and stop showing off your love in front of me?" Another girl in a green checkered shirt paired with white jeans said. With short and pale yellow hair and bangs, she gave off a clear and refreshing vibe.

The most eye catching thing about her was that she had a squirrel, smashing a big walnut onto the table beneath her elbow.

"We still have to get on the road after we're done eating. We need to reach Ansela tonight."

"Understood." Both the guy and girl responded in sync.

On Garen's side, Andrela had pulled the King of Nightmares away and he was the only one left behind. After glancing at the three youngsters, they walked out after buying their food and drinks.

The valet had already filled up the car with petrol. They got in the car after paying the bill and was immediately on route to Ansela.

The whole journey was filled with silence. Just as they almost arrived the outskirts of Ansela, their car broke down.

"What happened?" The King of Nightmares, who was half awak, asked as he felt the car slowing down.

"The car's not functioning and I have no idea what went wrong." It was the first time Andrela faced such a problem. He reluctantly stopped the car by the road side and got out of the car to inspect it.

Garen, who was sitting at the back of the car, could even see the white smoke coming out from the hood. The whole car was filled with the pungent smell of petrol.

He got down the car and stood at the slanted grass field which was just beside the road.

"What happened? Can it still move?" He looked at Andrela who had just popped open the hood to inspect the engine of the car.

"No idea. I don't know how to fix it either." Andrela shrugged after some inspection.

"I have a lot of clothes on the car; I don't want to carry all of it and walk into the city." The King of Nightmares complained. "This car is so useless! It can't even run for any long distance at all!"

Andrela could only pity him.

Garen started to miss Su Lin as he stood at the side of the car. If Su Lin and his limited edition car was here, this problem would have been unlikely. Even if there was, he was an expert in fixing cars.

"Although three of us are masters in martial arts, you can't just expect us to carry our luggages and walk to Ansel right?" The King of Nightmares leaned against the wall as he started to light up a cigarette. "Why not we hitch a ride?"

"That's all we can do." Andrela started to pack his own stuff.

Among the three of them, the King of Nightmares brought the most stuffs such as clothes, accessories, makeup, and a mysterious toy box. Andrela and Garen brought minimal items as they only brought washable clothes and boxes to store their money, which was in Picardi's currency.

Garen stood at the side of the road as he tried to wave down a car.

With his height of 1.8m and muscular body paired with a strict face. The cars did not stop at all. In fact they flew past even faster.

"You won't do. Let me have a go at it." Andrela pushed Garen aside and stood by the side with a smile on his face. However, it was the eye patch that made him even more domineering during night time. Even his smile started to look like an evil grin.

The driver immediately stepped on the pedal when he saw Andrela's face. The carriage sped off like a sharp arrow.

The next few cars which passed by was the same and Andrela's smile started to become stiff.

"Let me try." The King of Nightmares sighed as he walked to the front from behind.

He was dressed properly like a gentleman, which looked much more normal than Garen and Andrela.

After a few cars passed by, a big horse cart with four carriages finally slowed down.

The carriages were all in white and there was an initial 'KL' on the carriage.

"Can we hitch a ride?" The King of Nightmares asked the old man.

"Get on!" The old man pointed to the back with his whip.

The trio finally relaxed as they did not have to use their last resort, which was to snatch a car by force. Although the trio were good men who followed laws, they were not messing around during this trip. The Argentism had a lot of eyes in Picardi. They would be the first to know if anything happened.

All of the compartments were big and enclosed. As the trio pulled open the curtains, they saw the three youngsters sitting inside the adjacent carriage.

"Hi handsome uncle." The white dress girl greeted the King of Nightmares with a smile. "It's not a small problem to have your car break down in this area. It's fortunate that you met Sophie's driver."

"It's you." The King of Nightmares let out a seductive smile. "Thank you for your help. We might have to walk to the city if not for it."

"There's no need to thank us. Yali accidentally poured tomato sauce onto you earlier. We will repay you by bringing you along for the ride." The golden hair boy smiled as he said from one side. "Furthermore, you should thank the driver; the girl over here." He pointed at the girl with his mouth.

The girl in pale green checkered shirt laughed.

"We should help each other when we're all on a trip. You don't need to thank me." A small, well fed squirrel was climbing onto her shoulder. "My name is Katyusha. Where do you three want to go? I will send you guys there."

"Coconut Tree Hotel at the Northern region of the city. We have booked a room there." The King of Nightmares politely replied.

"Coconut Tree Hotel? I'm gonna ask just because I'm curious. Are you guys going to visit the ancient artifacts expo?" The girl asked.

Garen and his team sat down and the King of Nightmares nodded as he heard the question.

"Yes. We're here just to visit the ancient artifacts expo. I heard that they will showcase a lot of legendary treasures. We are also a hobbyist collector so we can't miss this opportunity."

Chapter 187: Expo 3

"I heard a lot of the participants this time brought their own collections, probably to exchange with other people as well. That's why the expo is made into an exchange instead." Speaking of antiques, the girl Katyusha suddenly became interested. "Speaking of which, the vehicles coming into Ansela today, at least half of them were heading toward the expo. Rumor has it that the largest natural emerald Heart of Yggdrasil will make an appearance, as well as the legendary Balbia's Box, it's one of the best known Millennium Antiques..."

"Balbia's Box? That's not a usual Millennium Antique, I heard its owners always end up in a failed marriage. Dunno if it's real. I've heard about the Heart of Yggdrasil, but isn't it in the hands of a Weisman Duke?" Garen's interest got piqued and joined the conversation.

"It was a long time ago, something happened a while ago..."

The conversation in the car split into two.

King of Nightmare, Andrela, the boy, and the girl in one, Garen and Katyusha in another.

After a while, Garen found out from the girl about a number of hidden Antiques of Tragedy and their owners.

"I have collector friends from all around the world." Katyusha said proudly, "A part of it are my dad's collector friends, but they know me. The others are my own friends I made. Mr. Garen is from Yalu Confederation but has knowledge far beyond a normal person. I don't suppose you know Green Pine Auction House?"

"Green Pine?" Garen thought it sounded familiar.

"Yeah, it's by a friend in the Confederation. You can find some decent stuff in there too, you should check it out. Just say you're a friend of Katyusha, their director would definitely give you a discount." Katyusha proclaimed. "The director, Fenistine, is a good friend I made when I was in the Confederation."

"Fenistine?" Garen finally recalled from his memory about Green Pine Auction House and its history. "Fenistine, isn't she the girl with the light blonde hair and blue eyes?"

"You know her?" Katyusha was slightly astounded.

"A little, but we've been out of contact for a long time." Garen shrugged.

"She's not doing very well now." Katyusha looked at Garen weirdly. "Her family is a huge family with very conservative attitudes. They don't like her having interest in antiques. Now she's even selling her prized collections because of some new problems. I wonder what it is, any idea what?"

"Not even a little. I haven't been talking to her." Garen's brows furrowed. They had a pretty good friendship, but she never talked about her family in front of him.

"Better take note then." Katyusha's gaze at Garen is a little loaded. She didn't believe in pure friendships between a man and a woman.

"I will." Garen nodded.

"What about your car?" Katyusha asked.

"We'll hire someone to pull it over. As long as we keep the important things with us." Garen shrugged.

"Any friend of Fenistine is a friend of mine, I'll ask someone to tow it over to Hotel Coconut Tree."

"Thanks."

Andrela, King of Nightmare, and the other two on the other side also went apart. The two sat together and spoke to each other in a voice so soft, it's like they're only lip reading each other.

Garen asked Katyusha about Picardi and the situation with the expo before quietened to rest.

He silently listened to the other people while putting his hand into his jacket pocket, feeling the Golden Sword Throne he brought around the whole time.

A cool Potential breeze still flowed out of it, but it's already running thin.

"I heard there'll be a Mirror of Secret Texts, do you think it's true?" King of Nightmare asked suddenly.

"It's true. I heard the owner lent it out for exhibition. It's definitely a rare treasure. I came here to admire and to appraise it actually. Mirrors of Secret Texts are not something you hear often these days."

She started talking nonstop about the history of the Mirrors of Secret Texts, obviously being excited having someone listening.

Garen just sat aside and listened.

Garen decided he doesn't need a breakthrough at this moment. He's still young, unlike Palosa, so he doesn't need to even worry.

Old Man Gregor's death has become more like an obsession at this point. He only wanted to locate Sylphalan and fight him. Mastering his Divine Statue Technique, he currently feels he's stronger than ever. He can clearly sense he's that much tougher than before.

His only motive of finding the Mirror of Secret Text was to fight the people from the Immortal Palace Alliance. Of course, finding Sylphalan would be the best case scenario.

As Garen was quietly combing through his thoughts.

Thud!

A dull sound came from in front of the carriage.

"What's up?"

"I felt the carriage shook for a little."

Katyusha stopped talking as well, her face was struck with a moment of panic, but she recovered her composure almost immediately after.

"Sciara, is everything okay out there?"

"It was nothing, just some animals running across us. Took me by surprise." The old coachman's voice drawled in from the front.

"Be careful."

"Yes miss."

Garen, Andrela and King of Nightmare exchanged a glance. They definitely heard the short but distinct exchange of blows. Obviously, the opponent was defeated in the blink of an eye.

But Garen had a hunch something was wrong.

His chest was radiating heat.

Confused, he pressed his hand on his chest. It was the pendant in the shape of a book Old Man Gregor gave him. It was burning slightly.

The pendant hadn't done anything since he'd gotten it. Sylphalan seemed to have come to recover the pendant that time. Garen had not been able to uncover its secrets no matter how long he analyzed it.

But now, the pendant is starting to heat up.

"Is there anything wrong?" Katyusha looked at Garen, confused.

"Oh, it's nothing, just spaced out a little." Garen smiled. He had a feeling something was wrong, but he didn't understand where.



Maybe I'm just paranoid, he said to himself.

This Katyusha may not be as simple as she seems. The strength of the battle outside does not sound weak, they're at least as strong as a member of special forces. If they had tried to rob...

The moment the sound came up, Katyusha's body tensed, as if she could burst out a fighting stance at any time despite her size.

"Excuse me." Katyusha stood and steadily made her way out of the carriage before closing the door.

She sat beside the coachman who was slowly driving the carriage to their destination. Katyusha frowned.

"Another batch?"

"Yeah, the Argentists. Don't think they want us to be there."

"Hmph. We have twelve squadrons and five main forces mixed in with the travelers, the Argentists could not possibly stop us. They are only filtering out possible opponents. They've got pretty good intel." Katyusha smirked. "Their going back on their words in the meeting last time has cost us much damage. I will definitely take my revenge."

"What's your plan?" Sciara inquired.

"The five main forces are already here, so let's see how they react. They didn't only offend us Black Snakes."

"As long as their bishop stayed put, the others are easy to deal with. It depends on who's got the Mirror of Secret Texts." Sciara nodded, breaking out of his coachman persona.

In the car, Andrela and King of Nightmare exchanged looks, while Garen closed his eyes again.

Looks like the capital city of Picardi had attracted lots of people with ulterior motives.

The carriage treaded the path for another half hour before stopping at Hotel Coconut Tree.

The Anselan streets at night were filled with crowds as busy as they were in the day. People swarmed the streets for entertainment and enjoyment.

Garen and the other two booked a room each in the hotel.

Katyusha had a villa near the hotel, so her group went there instead. Katyusha was obviously not her real name, but Garen didn't mind. This woman was here with the same intention as everyone else.

Similar to him, all these people would be coming in by the pack in the very near future.

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Ansela was an exotic city littered with buildings with white round top. Located in the city center, in a dark room of the highest tower-slash-hotel, two figures, one old and another young, sat.

The old one was a lady close to her centenary. She sat by her bed with a walking stick made of blackwood in her hand, staring closely at the girl in front of her.

The girl looked confused, but as the old woman kept her silence, so did she, just sitting at the wooden chair quietly.

None of them spoke to each other, the silence in the room amplified by ticking of the clock.

Soon, a set of faint steps shuffled up in front of the door before waiting outside the room.

Knock, knock.

The door opened by itself.

A young man with the blue and white uniform of the hotel room attendant walked in with a silver dining cart.

"Madam, your food is served."

The door shut itself with a click.

As soon as the door closed, the room felt as if it was detached from the rest of reality by an unknown force. The buzzing from the streets disappeared, leaving only the clock ticking in an otherwise pindrop-silent room.

The girl was visibly discomforted. She glanced left and right, hoping to find out what had happened.

"Don't worry." The attendant's voice switched to one of an old man's. He pulled at his face, unveiling his wrinkled face under a thin mask facade.

"I rushed here as soon as I got news of you coming here. I didn't expect you to be this early." The old man left the dining cart, pulled up a chair and sat down slowly.

Chapter 188: Expo 4

"Julie, this man is my old friend in Picardi, Tom King Cruise." Old woman introduced the old man to the girl. "He's also one of tens of millions of people in Picardi who's like us."

The girl was stunned for a little while. She turned to the old man, who flashed her a kind smile. "I've heard about you since a while ago, little Julie."

"Right, let's skip the formalities and go on with the topic," The old woman finished introducing. "The Argent Mirror is a treasure from eons ago, we cannot let the Immortal Palace Alliance have it. We need to come up with an strategy to deal with this."

Tom King frowned.

"The Argent Mirror is called the Mirror of Secret Texts amongst laypeople. It was said to have records of ancient Secret Techniques of the Mirror. Immortal Palace Alliance will definitely send their strongest members here. It'd still be fine if it's former Weisman Admiral Griffith, at least we've fought him a few times and are familiar with his modus operandi. If it were other people, then it'll be troublesome."

"What about you locals? I trust you have a plan ready even before we arrive?" The old woman asked with a frown.

"Of course. The Argent Mirror has a seal on it, therein lies the true Secret Text, alongside it was the terrifyingly strong, ancient Will of the Origin. Once it is released, the Will will be unleashed, toppling the whole world. This is also Immortal Palace Alliance's scheme. So we found the Time Pin. So long as we put it on the surface of Argent Mirror, we can stop the unsealing process when need be." The old man explained.

His eyes darted back onto Julie.

"But since you brought Julie, I reckon we'll not be using the Time Pin anytime soon."

"No, if they sent Flamingo this time, even Julie..." The old woman interrupted, "You don't understand the danger with the Will of the Origin. It's so incredibly unstable, the Immortal Palace Alliance is practically burning themselves with its flames. Which is why we need to have both plans prepared. Julie, I, and the others will stop Immortal Palace Alliance directly from the front, only with the nature of her telekinetic abilities that we can suppress those in Immortal Palace Alliance who had taken Blood of Eternal Life. We will also need to prepare the Time Pin, in case."

She added, "We must not let them succeed, once unsealed, nothing in the world can stop the Will of the Origin. I thought that thing had been long lost in history."

"How's Julie doing? Is her power gonna be enough?" The old man asked in a hushed tone.

Julie hesitated, looking a little guilty.

"I'm not that talented, I'm only at Third Level."

The old man's eyes twitched and his face flashed a slight shade of red. He inhaled deeply, and waited a while for his urge to yell at this unfairness to subside.

"Third Level, that's not bad, that's... not bad."

"Alright then, since it's all planned out, you will execute the your original plan, and we will wait for the Immortal Palace Alliance to show up." Old woman nodded. "Remember to keep casualty to a minimum."

Julie asked, unsure. "Teacher, why can't we ask the Argentists to help? A friend of mine told me, elites from all sort of places have shown up this time. If we can attack Immortal Palace Alliance together, wouldn't it help a lot?"

"You don't understand, normal people with no abilities to Immortal Palace Alliance is like lowly ants is to giant elephants. They won't even be able to expend their stamina." The old woman answered seriously.

Julie processed the information with a sense of doubt.

"All the telekinesis elites in Immortal Palace Alliance have a Secret Technique. They can flood the space around them with an aura of intimidation, anyone who saw them would be deeply affected physically and mentally, some may even collapse. With that ability to intimidate, swarms of enemies doesn't even worry them." The old woman sighed. "But at least we got that book. Through my transfusion of its telekinetic power to you, you have acquired great power, but you yet to learn to control it."

"I understand, Teacher. I will work harder." Julie nodded in commitment.

"Glad you understand," Old woman stroked Julie's face in endearment. "I know it's hard for you. You're only nineteen, but this responsibility was thrust upon you..."

"I'll be okay." Julie tried hard to look nonchalant. "Teacher and the others were the one who were stressed out. All these years you have been fighting Immortal Palace Alliance unbeknownst to normal

humans, no one have seen your sacrifices and hard work. In comparison with you, what's this little stress I'm taking?"

"You don't know... This was our fight, the clash of our ideology..." The old woman murmured. "It's late. Time to rest. Remember, when you intercept the Immortal Palace Alliance, you must lead them to somewhere remote, it is impossible to not hurt the normal people around accidentally with the power of your fight. Once a telekinesis elite uses his strongest form, even the elites of normal people will not be able to take it. That is why you have to remember, no matter how strong a normal human is, only talent can withstand talent. Looking for help from friends might just hurt them."

"But my friend said there are Grandmaster of Combat-level fighters amongst the Argentists, maybe..."

"There were already countless of Grandmasters of Combat who lost their lives to the Immortal Palace Alliance."

Julie finally shut up.

"Rest. You are our hope in this battle." The old woman softened her expression and caressed the girl's hair.

"Yes, Teacher."

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Top floor of Hotel Coconut Tree, Luxury Suite.

Garen stood in the center of the room, his arms raised to shoulder height, resembling a cross. Eyes shut, his breath was slow. Together with his whitish gold skin, he looked like a standard metal statue.

Knock knock.

"Come in." He muttered without even opening his eyes.

The door was slowly pushed open and King of Nightmares Stephen sashayed in.

"Practicing again?"

"What is it?"

Closing the door, Stephen sauntered past Garen to the full length windows, pulled the curtains apart and looked downward.

"Southern Sky Holy Fist Gate has news from Palosa, interested?"

"Spill." Garen's raised palms slowly moved toward each other in front of him, but wind started blowing in the room. The draft licked the thick black curtains, lifting them without stopping.

"Within the Immortal Palace Alliance, they've categorized their members to The Founders and The Comers." Stephen sat in a chair he set his eyes upon, "The Comers were members who joined after it's been founded, like Duskdune Shura and former Weisman Admiral Griffith. The Founders were actually only two people, Flamingo and Sylphalan."

"What's the difference?"

"A lot." Stephen grinned. "The Founders were said to be active internationally since decades ago. We weren't even born yet. On the other hand, The Comers members have been changing for years."

"I thought Palosa and Sylphalan were both heavily injured in their fight?" Garen opened his eyes, confused. "I've seen Palosa's power, even though that wasn't his strongest persona."

"You don't think his strongest state is his Indifference persona?" Stephen chuckled and shook his head, "His true strongest state has already been defeated in the battle with Sylphalan. The merging of the three personas, that's his perfect state. Having three personas essentially means having three Palosa sharing one memory, heading toward three different directions in Martial Arts. The Virtue persona fights head-on, Vice persona utilizes tricks and deception, and Indifference persona merges them both. Only

when the three meld together that Palosa will be at his strongest state. It was then that he was worthy of the title Holy Fist."

It was Garen's first time hearing this explanation.

"No wonder. When I fought him, I felt White Bird Holy Fist lacked a sense of majesty."

"Someone senior told me before. In the Azure Continent, there was a yoga master. He witnessed Palosa in his Holy Fist form. According to him, every movement seemed to be made from Secret Technique. His 178 Secret Techniques are actually the special effects of his 178 Fist Techniques in Holy Fist form. Under normal conditions, they could only be activated with Secret Techniques." Stephen told him another secret.

"Every movement seemed to be made of Secret Technique... If that's the case, what Palosa said..." Shocked, Garen thought about Palosa's reply before he left.

"Who knew?" Stephen shrugged. "But you're not bad too. Your title given by the entire Southern Martial Arts community, the next Holy Fist, Holy Mammoth Garen has already spread to the Northern Martial Arts Union."

"You're pretty in touch with the situation within the Confederation."

"Can't help it, the nation with the strongest, largest amount of Grandmasters of Combat, which fighter wouldn't take notice? But my news was from Andrela. Palosa's Holy Fist form got defeated, but Sylphalan is also in bad shape."

"This is an opportunity." Garen's brow furrowed.

"Let's see how this goes. Immortal Palace Alliance is made up of monsters, he might even have healed."

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Three days later, the expo started on schedule.

In a massive hall with golden ceiling and black floor tiles.

Black pillars erected on the floor, showcasing the treasures in a transparent glass cube in the center.

In the hall, hundred of black pillars like this held a single item each, with visitors fluttering about.

Garen is in his black suit. He was holding a glass of hot green tea and stood in front of a black pillar at the edge.

His gaze fell on a antique vase in the pillar.

The thin-necked vase was made of white porcelain and decorated with blue patterns. It looked like an enlarged medicine bottle with its ceramic blue willow pattern and pictures of human activities on its large body.

Several other antique lovers were admiring it in awe.

"This is a rare treasure from an ancient country from the East." An old man with a pair of golden glasses was staring at it in amazement. "This is a wine pot from that country. Why do they make a wine pot this pretty? It's such a waste. I like the tribal utensils from the Fivestar Continent. They are so wild, so mysterious, so much more attractive." A noblewoman sighed from the bottom of her heart.

"The Ancient East does not only have porcelain bottles! There are other antiques full of detailed delicacy, and at the same time survived history. Many pieces have mystery woven into them as well, like that silver plum blossom candle holder over there..." The old man wanted to have the last say.

With hushed voices, both of them started debating. Soon after, other people joined in the debate.

Garen set his ears on the debates quietly. He circled around the hall, noticing that debates were spurring at almost every black pillar.

Some were discussing the authenticity of an item, some were confused about the true worth of a piece, some of them even got ready to buy pieces off of their original owners.

The expo had just started, but it's already crowded with participation.

Garen didn't see King of Nightmares and Andrela, they each have their own plans and execution style. The three were together because of a common goal, but the means to their ends took a vastly different approach depending on their personalities.

Chapter 189: Argent Mirror 1

Garen strolled casually and occasionally looked at the antiques in the black pillars.

He left the one holding a hollowed out golden bow to walk to a row of railings at the edge of the hall.

Behind them were thicker black pillars with even more precious items.

Garen walked a few steps and stopped beside some college students.

These students wore blue and black uniforms, three guys and four girls. They seemed to be having an aggressive discussion about the treasures.

"Antas' Blue Wing, it symbolizes freedom, joy, happiness, and the yearning for the perfect paradise in the skies. It's a mythical item from Antas, only nobles are allowed to craft it," A girl with a blue ponytail claimed. "It's impossible to appear in a lowly merchant family."

"Normally that is true, but this is different. Look here, that's the famous Asha Mark from the famous Asha Business Alliance. You can also tell from the details here, here, and there." A white haired boy retorted gently but firmly.

"I think Karen is right, this item can not be simply crafted during that period."

"Maybe someone secretly constructed it for their own collection? Like how some rich dudes like to go to parties all night."

The students each took their sides, splitting into two.

Garen scrutinized the item they were debating about.

It's a sky blue statue of a single wing. It's about one meter tall, two meters wide, and looked as if it's soaring. The textures of the feathers were meticulously sculpted. It's like a real eagle's wing.

With a single glance, Garen could already tell it was made with an imitation style Old Man Gregor had talked about. He couldn't go close to it, but there was a tiny section of the base that made him suspect its authenticity.

Subconsciously, he frowned slightly, his gaze stopping at the crack-like fissure on the base. It didn't look like it cracked by itself, more like someone made it so and left an "S" shaped mark.

"You saw it?"

A white haired gentleman noticed where Garen fixed his eyes on. He was wearing a tuxedo and stood straight commandingly. He stopped by Garen and gave the Blue Wing and once-over.

"The mythical wing that symbolizes freedom and paradise, but it's only a fake." The gentleman sighed.

"I was not so sure myself, I didn't expect you to be so sharp, sir." Garen smiled humbly.

"No, you're already pretty good." The old man shook his head, "How much do you know about the Antasan Civilization?"

"Not a lot, I'm afraid. I've only read a little here and there in some books." Garen picked out some information he knew about the civilization and listed it to the old man.

The gentleman became more interested as he listed on.

"That's quite a bit that you knew. Tell me, from which class do you reckon this imitation was trying to imitate?"

"From the texture and the sculpting, I'd say it's by small time merchants who wanted to add to their collection." Garen didn't try to sugarcoat his thoughts.

"It can't be. If it were for the collection of small time merchant, how would they dare to include the royal coat of arms?" The old man shook his head again.

"The royal coat of arms does not mean anything."

"You don't understand how strict the law was then. Even using a noble's family symbol callously could get you onto the guillotine, let alone the royal coat of arms." The old man said seriously.

"Then you do not understand the uniqueness of the situation. If I'm correct, this imitation was made during a time of special circumstances when Antas was already near its end, the power structure is failing, and the royals no longer has any real power over the commoners." Garen disagreed.

"From where did you infer its specific creation year? After all, this is a fake. How would you know the imitators wouldn't just make it up as they go?"

"Obviously the wing looks like it's about to take flight, almost all of the Blue Wings you can find look like that, but did you notice? This has a little hesitation and weight to it, right here..." Garen pointed at the root of the feathers. "Do you see the shape? This is a red hawk's wing."

"Red hawk?" The old man had not noticed what the original models of Blue Wings are.

"Blue Wings, Royal Sculptors used to base it on the blue hawks that were bred in the palace. There are pretty much no blue hawks outside of the palace, so people can only base their imitation on the red hawk wings which are the most similar. Unfortunately they are still slightly different. Furthermore, only

during that period would Picardian sculptors use red hawks to imitate royal objects." Garen shook his head.

"Very detailed observation, you surprised me with your knowledge. But you also left out one spot. The inscriptions on this item." The gentleman was still not convinced.

"There are three symbols on the inscription, signifying the three sculptors. And it just so happens that I know this one. This one belongs to the most famous Blue Wings Royal Sculptor Robert Niggen."

"That doesn't mean anything, sir." Garen disagreed.

"What do you think?" The gentleman turned aside to a female student who listened to their conversation.

This was a girl wearing blue and black uniform with a white denim pants. She was so entranced by their conversation that she didn't realize the gentleman was talking to her.

"I... I think both points were valid."

"Don't be scared, child." The old man softened his voice, "I saw your gaze just now. Among all these people, only the three of us noticed the few weird points about this Blue Wing. Why don't you share your thoughts on it?"

Garen observed the girl from her side.

She looked about eighteen to nineteen, fair skin, silky shoulder-length dark hair. The way she stood highlighted her purity of heart. She had long lanky legs and rounded hips, as shown by the thinness of the material she was wearing.

"You're too anxious." The old man shook his head, "Take a breath. From I can see, you're a student from the Picardi Women's College, isn't it? You are already not bad if you can recognize that much, believe in yourself."

Garen and him were both staring at the girl, waiting for her to speak.

The girl shifted her weight in discomfort.

"Both of you have your points, but I think... this Blue Wing is by a Royal Sculptor during a peace period. If I remember correctly, the Royal family gifted slightly different Blue Wings to descendants who are going away to their territory..."

Before she could finish, she heard a soft clap from in front of her,

She looked up and saw the two agreed with her.

"You noticed something that we couldn't." The old man smiled. "I can't believe such knowledge came from a normal schoolgirl. Do tell me your name, child."

"My... my name is Ophany..." The girl hid her face with her hair in embarrassment, not knowing how to accept the praise.

"Ophany," The old man produced a black card from somewhere and gave it to her. "Take this, it's my name card."

Ophany took the name card thoughtlessly, but there was nothing on the card aside from a big symbol of an eye.

"Keep it safe, when you're in a pinch, this card will bring you luck." The old man told her mysteriously.

Garen looked at the old man for being cryptic.

Obviously he's some sort of important person, seeing how his bodyguards spreaded out to look after him.

"Congratulation, miss Ophany, looks like this old sir isn't just a normal expo-goer." He smiled at the girl.

Ophany blushed, not knowing what to say.

"What about you? Why do you act so mature? Teenagers should look like teenagers." The gentleman looked at Garen with admiration, "Your knowledge is on par with mine. I wouldn't expect the younger generation to produce someone like you." Another black card. "For you."

Garen smiled looking at the gentleman's card. He was about to say something.

"Who goes there!" Someone yelled outside the expo. "Alert!"

The voice was cut off.

The crowd in the expo started to make noise. People were worried, and those with bodyguards quickly surrounded themselves for maximum protection.

The gentleman was the same. Within seconds, seven bodyguards with different clothes surrounded him, and under his orders, kept Garen and the girl under their protection.

"Don't move." The gentleman told Garen and Ophany calmly. They both nodded, looking slightly worried.

"Micah, go check out the situation, be careful." The old man told one of his bodyguards.

"Yes sir." The man with a tall nose nodded and left the protection circle, and slowly make his way to the entrance from the wall, his gun drawn.

Several other people were doing the same thing.

Garen faked his serious and worried face.

Looks like it's going to start. He didn't want to stand out so early, or else he'd have wasted his advantage being hidden in the crowd.

He checked out the situation through the gaps between the bodyguards.

The other students were ushered into a corner by a middle-aged man, looking either curious, fearful, or excited.

Several other middle-aged men looked grumpy. They drew their guns and gave out orders to their subordinate to maintain order in the hall with the cooperation of the staff.

The security captain also stood forward. He led his teams to calm the emotions of their guests, while sending a team outside in full caution.

Chapter 190: Argent Mirror 2

Outside the expo, at the plaza between Hotel Coconut Tree and the convention center the expo was held in.

Yellow street lamps littered the circular gray plaza. Half of them has already died down, damaged.

Two white pillars were erected in the plaza, each measuring about fifteen meters tall.

There were two bronze statues on the top of the pillars, one of a girl of nobility with a horse whip, the other a knight on a majestic warhorse.

Below the pillar with the knight, some security guards with blue uniform gathered around two guards who fainted, examining them.

Some passersby rounded up to watch. It looked somewhat crowded.



Creak!

Two police cars with black and white stripes sped into the plaza and stopped. Two officers stepped out of their vehicles. The one in lead had a strict face and a fake eye emphasized by the unnaturally white eyeball.

He saw the few bystanders in a crowd. His real eye twitched when he saw a beautiful lady in white miniskirt in the lead, and marched toward the fainted.

"Move aside, give way!"

The other two policemen made way for him.

The man with a fake eye marched near the woman, and stopped for a split second.

"Well somebody's moving quick." He grunted.

"We aren't interested in your little tricks." The lady retorted, "Looks like somebody else is confident."

"Not as much as you are." Fake Eye smirked. Both of them moved away from each other, he approached the people who fainted and started examining them.

The woman with white miniskirt did not stay for long. She left the crowd with several other people.

One of them was an old man with walking stick. "Are they all here?" He eyed Fake Eye from afar.

"Almost. The five main forces are here. When should we start?" She nodded.

"Let's observe for a little," The old man's voice was soft, but it was clear as day to the woman. "The main problem here is not the random party starting a riot. Our main opponent is still the Argentists. Watch them with constant vigilance."

"I know, Katyusha and Wendy are waiting for them. Even though our main opponents are the Argentists, we can't let the small fries get the prize." She smiled.

On the other side, a group of expo-goers walked out. Among them, Katyusha stood behind two of her friends and watched.

"Let's go. It's boring stuff. Some people want to break in, but the guards chased them away, but they were also downed." The woman with brown hair in front of her said. "This place is messy."

"It is messy," The girl at the back echoed, she had a short and dulled red hair, her face wasn't memorable, and she looked like she hasn't been getting enough sleep with the dark circles on her eyes. She was dressed like a thug on the street.

"I've lived here for many years, there were stuff happening almost every week. I wonder if the two guards were okay, but let's get back in. Fake Eye is here, nothing bad will happen once he's here."

She was one of the collectors who sold the host of the expo one of her collections. However, different from the other collectors, she only qualified the entrance by selling her item. She only pretended to be interested to try and find a rich man for herself.

Katyusha looked at the red haired girl. If she wasn't the original owner of the Mirror of Secret Texts, she wouldn't have tried to get close to her.

The other girl is one of the other main force, Wendy.

The three were going to turn back into the expo.

A dull thud.

"Duck!" A man roared.

Boom!

A ball of golden flame burst out from the center of the plaza. White smoke accompanied by the shockwave flooded everywhere. Innocent people screamed and tried to escape, two cars nearby even got flipped over. Several horses got scared. Neighs and tyre screeches filled the air near the plaza.

Within a second, the peaceful plaza were disrupted with chaos.

Six or seven people laid strewn about, it was impossible to tell if they're dead or alive. As the white smoke dissipates, several figures in white dashed soundlessly toward the entrance of the expo.

"Now!" At the same time, three people by the woman in white miniskirt zoomed toward the back door of the expo.

Beep! Beep!

Alarms went off from inside the hall.

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Inside the hall.

Garen was standing in the middle of the bodyguards when the explosion happened followed by the alarm. He knew someone had made a move.

Chaos broke out in the hall. A few people by the entrance got knocked down first. White figures zipped in and toward the black pillar in the center.

"Die!"

A low growl. Three people rushed at one white figure each, and zoomed out of sight to fight them.

Bang! Bang bang!

Some people started shooting, sounds of guns firing started getting more intensive.

Yelps and screams filled the rampageous hall. Some visitors with their own bodyguards hid in corners followed by people who wished to get protection.

The hall quieted soon after. The hall packed with people suddenly became empty. On the ground, there were a dozen of bodies, everyone else had retreated to the corners to hide.

Garen noticed Ophany's paleness, her eyes were overflowing with fear and worry. Her gaze shot outside, worrying about her schoolmates.

The other university students crouched not far from there, hiding behind some of the pillars. It'll be safer. Two of the girls were sobbing quietly.

Everyone was on the floor, so no one were able to see outside. Only a few bodyguards kept watch around them.

Blows were exchanged and guns were fired from inside and outside of the expo. When some of the attacks hit the walls, they even shook violently.

Soon, a white figure escaped, leaving blood trails and roaring his opponent behind. One of the windows at the side of the hall was broken as he escaped, leaving broken glass on the ground.

"He took the thing! Stop him!" A huge black man punched a hole in the wall with his bare fist and chased after.

Tut tut tut tut tut...

Submachine guns were fired, sandwiching some shots from shotguns, it's like several parties were engaged in gunfights all at the same time.

Outside, two opposing forces were in trigger happy mode with their weapons, the box containing the Mirror of Secret Texts kept changing hands between the two parties.

The three Argentist elites were all Grandmasters of Combat, by their side, they have several Level three Sharpshooters. Katyusha and her team were fighting off the other party who wanted the Mirror of Secret Texts, all four of them were disciplined and speed-focused Sharpshooters acting harmoniously with each other. They don't have the auras of a Grandmaster of Combat, but with their own weapons, they were able to keep the Argentist elites at bay.

The main shooter was the woman in white miniskirt. She was holding two enlarged silver pistols and moved at high speed while she fired at the three Grandmasters of Combat. The power of the pistols were so strong, holes as large as fists appeared wherever the bullets landed.

On the side of the Argentists, the black man as imposing as a tower led the fight. He held a black shield, blocking every bullet coming his way, and pushing away any opponents who managed to get here.

"Give up, Chris!" The black man blocked a bullet from the woman with white miniskirt and took a few steps backward. His shield had a small dent in it where the bullet hit. "Even if you managed to secure the item, you will never be able to get it out of this city!"

"Unwavering Shield Marvin, you don't have a say in whether we are capable of bringing it out of the city." The woman sneered. She continued shooting with one hand and magically changed the magazine with the other. "With just three Argentists, you won't be able to stop us."

"Hmph, don't you understand? We could exhibit it, we already have necessary preparation for situations like this!" The black Grandmaster of Combat smirked.

"So you are prepared, but did you think we didn't?"

Boom!

Another grenade exploded.

The box with the Mirror of Secret Texts was blasted into the air.

None of the both parties glanced at the box, but instead started barraging the other side with attacks, obviously planning to do the other side in while they're distracted.

Clink! Clank!

Marvin's charging figure stopped, his shield had yet again stopped another bullet. Both of them were planning the same thing.

At this moment, the box in the air started its downward motion.

Fwoosh!

A barely audible draft of wind sounded. A black figure leaped from behind Chris toward the box like a swallow in flight.

On the other side, two white figures charged out from behind Marvin, arriving at the box at the same time.

Thump! Nobody managed to catch the box, leaving it to drop on the ground.

"The Argentist bishop?" One of the white figure yelled. All three of them fell backward, landing on the ground.

The two figures in white stepped on the stone tiles several times before they could neutralize the impact they received, leaving a few black marks on the tiles.

It was only until they regained their balance that other people could see their faces. They were two middle-aged man and woman. They had a winding black snake stitched on each of their right sleeves.

"Aren't you at the Fivestar Continent? How could this be?" The man in white growled unbelievably.

The black figure stood still, revealing a middle-aged man with black hair. He looked like an average person, but his skin glimmered silver, and his most prominent feature was a dark red mark on the left of his face, burning like a crimson fire.

The man stood with his hands at his back, and calmly stared at the two on the opposite.

"Trying to snatch my possession at my place? You were pretty daring."

He shuffled left, leaving the wall behind him with two deep bullet holes.