

Mystical Journey

#Chapter 31 - Read Mystical Journey Chapter 31 Chapter 31: The Spiral (1)

Garen sat on the chair without moving as hot and cold Qi continuously circulated through his body.

It was not because he did not want to move, but actually that he could not move at all. As the hot and cold Qi continuously circulated, it would increase with every revolution. Within more than ten minutes, the growth of the hot and cold Qi had actually reached a level where it had spread to his entire body; he could not even distinguish the feeling between circulation and flow.

As Garen sat on his chair, the muscles in his body alternated between red and white. When they were red, he felt they burned like a cooked shrimp whose shell was peeled. When they were white, he was like a patient that had just recovered from a serious illness.

After an uncertain amount of time, a crashing noise sounded out.

Garen suddenly opened his eyes; they were extremely clear, as if a black pearl was embedded within a top-grade red jade.

Ssss...

When he breathed in deeply, there seemed to be a faint wind in the room, even his clothes hanging nearby on the hanger were fluttering. The clothes were four meters away and not directly in front of Garen; it was bizarre that they would be affected by his breathing.

As Garen opened his eyes, he slowly raised up his right arm—it was stiff like a robot's—he arduously and slowly lifted it up from the armrest of the chair.

Kaka... A series of bone cracking noises came from his arm.

It was followed by the rest of his body: left arm, both legs, chest, and neck. As Garen slowly stood up, his entire body made a series of creaking noises at once.

“This happened because the sudden increase forced by my special ability was excessive, which caused my physique to improve by too much. If it were those experts that had been training for a long time, the result wouldn't be this exaggerated.”

He didn't know how strong he currently was. Even his master and senior sister had only reached the third level of the White Cloud Secret Arts. He was only able to reach the fourth level by forcefully increasing it with his attribute points.

It was a state that no one had reached before.

“Even though I'm so strong right now, my body is still not used to it. The increase in strength this time is too large, so it will take me a long amount of time to acclimate. Otherwise, I might accidentally kill someone again.” After some thinking, Garen immediately understood his current situation.

“And I am only physically strong right now, my combat skills are still too weak. If only I could greatly increase the amount of attribute points I have, then I would be able to save the time I need to increase my proficiency and just improve my combat ability.”

Shaking his head, Garen pulled on the clothes on the hanger. However, he forgot to adjust his strength.

The sound of cloth tearing echoed out.

His clothes were immediately torn into two.

He looked at his clothes in surprise: a corner of them was caught on a nail on the hanger. If it was another person, they would've stopped when they felt the resistance.

However, he could not. He was too strong, and thus the little resistance was completely negligible for him.

“I knew it.”

Shaking his head, he walked out of the room, still shirtless.

As he walked out of the room, he immediately noticed a group of youths wearing yellow gi in the hall. They were chattering among themselves while a young female instructor was leading them.

Two of the headquarter staff were standing by the side, greeting them.

A beautiful woman with a cold aura stood up from a chair nearby. She wore a white top with a matching tight black skirt. She had dark red pupils with dark brown hair combed to the side and glowing, fair skin. Her eyes were slightly squinting as she walked next to Garen, and automatically received the clothes in his hands.

“They're the second batch of new students visiting the headquarters this month. What's wrong with your clothes?”

This woman of course was Grace. After accompanying Garen in his Critical Fist Technique practice for a month, her internal organs received extremely serious damage and it took a while before she fully recovered. However, her dispute with the White Cloud Dojo was found out by her company. Perhaps it was the company's arrangement or maybe her own volition, but either way, she became Garen's personal assistant.

"I accidentally tore them just now. How is your body?" Garen casually asked. "Even though I intentionally held back during the practice, your internal organs were still injured. Even if you rested for a month, you couldn't have recovered so quickly."

"After taking the secret medicine provided by the dojo, I feel much better now. This result is already better than expected, so there's no need for you to worry."

The both of them chatted as they walked. They passed by the new students in the hall and headed toward the practice hall on the second floor.

"You're more or less a part of our dojo now, so are you still participating in your company's activities?"

"Not anymore, my current mission is to take care of your daily life. In fact, I've basically been abandoned by the company as a compensation for the previous incident." Grace bitterly smiled, "Master Fei is currently away. The person currently in charge is your senior sister, Rosetta. She's currently training in the private room, and I am not sure when she will leave."

Garen nodded and said, "As long as there is no major incident, the external instructors and the management staff can handle it. There's no need for us to worry about it. Your connections are better than mine, so do you know whether there's any progress with the case on Dale Quicksilver's side?"

"I am not sure, but I heard that detective Quicksilver returned to the Dolphin Antiques that you mentioned previously, these past few days. I don't know what happened, and the men that I sent didn't receive any information either. My previous connections were actually the company's, and since now I don't have any funds on hand, I can't make use of the other connections," Grace said with a frown.

"If you're looking for detailed information, you could try asking your seniors. They have their own connections and would know more than we do."

"We'll see." Garen accepted a white towel that a girl handed to him and wiped the sweat on his body.

He rested at the practice hall and ate lunch. As it was a weekend, Garen let Grace drive him to Pennington Road and stopped at Dolphin Antiques.

The furniture within the store had already been changed to black from the original red.

The old man was still sitting in front of a bookshelf, wearing reading glasses as he carefully adjusted the brass pocket watch in his hands. When Garen entered, he only glanced at his direction without even lifting his head.

“There’s new stock that just came in, do you want to take a look?”

Garen looked around the store and saw that there was actually a customer: an elegantly dressed old lady with white hair. From her clothing he could tell that she was not from an ordinary family.

The old lady was carefully looking at a black necklace in her hands, and she seemed to be slightly preoccupied.

“Old man, where did you get that pocket watch? It looks like an authentic Buvich, doesn’t it?” He walked toward the old man and sat down on a chair in front of him.

“What do you mean by it looks authentic? It is authentic!” The old man glared at him. “That old lady is trying to pawn this. I am checking whether the internal structure is original.”

“You’re a pawnbroker as well?” Garen was speechless. “By the way, Dale Quicksilver came back, right? Did he find out anything?”

He had already obtained the emblem, but did not dare tell the old man. He had come to inquire about Dale Quicksilver’s situation.

After all, getting the emblem back had something to do with the company behind Grace. Dale Quicksilver might one day trace it back to him.

Also, during the exchange of information with the old man, he felt that Dale Quicksilver’s recent actions were strange.

“He’s still chasing after the Golden Hoop. Anyway, I’ve already given up. I didn’t lose much anyway. The Golden Hoop isn’t just an ordinary thief, but a powerful killer as well!” Old Man Gregor put down the pocket watch and wiped its surface with a microfiber cloth.

Garen’s eyes slightly flashed. “You mentioned the other time that the detective is also interested in troublesome antiques, just like me. What did you mean?”

“I am not sure. Anyway, he chose a few pieces of those kind of antiques from the ones I had just gotten. I made twice the profit from just reselling it, so that transaction was definitely worth it!” The old man had a triumphant look on his face.

“He preselected from this batch again?” Garen knitted his eyebrows. It was not the first time that it happened.

“What? You want it as well?” The old man glanced at him. “I’ll sell it to you as long as you can pay for it. Let me tell you this, it’s not only happening here. Dale Quicksilver has bought all the antiques of this kind that are being sold in the entirety of Huaishan City.”

“So he has collected a lot of them?” Garen’s eyes lit up. “Honestly, I am very interested in these kind of strange and dangerous antiques. They excite me.”

With a loud thump, the old man’s hand viciously landed on Garen’s head.

“Exciting, your head! You don’t even have an income and you want to collect antiques like him, you wastrel!”

Garen did not get angry and only laughed. “Oh and where’s that book? You already got it back from your friend, right? Can you let me see it again?”

“I already said, there’s no point if you have no talent. Nothing will change no matter how many times you look at it.” The old man impatiently waved him off. “Alright, hurry and do whatever you need to do.”

“It’s not like it would disappear if you just let me see it once more. Stupid old man, you’re still so stingy.” Garen shook his head.

The both of them happily chatted for a while, before Garen got up and left.

After a while, Old Man Gregor stood up and closed the entrance of the shop.

The old lady put down the necklace in her hand and looked at Old Man Gregor with a complicated look.

“It’s been a while, and you’ve completely turned into an ordinary person.”

The old man smiled, but strangely did not refute.

“This is fate. This was the choice that I made. I am merely reaping what I sowed.”

“How long do you plan to stay here?”

“How long? Until they find me, I guess.” The old man sighed and sullenly replied, “I’ve been avoiding and escaping from them for so many years...”

“Are you really fine with spending your days like this?” The old lady calmly said. “We’ve already entered this circle, it’s not possible for us to leave anymore. They’ve already come looking for you.”

“Are you threatening me?” The old man’s expression darkened.

“I am only here to give you a reminder. They won’t let go of anyone who has come in contact with you, including that boy. ”

“He’s only an ordinary person, don’t get him involved with this!” The old man’s expression became solemn. There was no longer the usual joviality in his eyes, only a slight gloomy sharpness remained.

“You’re saying that to the wrong person.” The old lady walked toward him and sat on the chair that Garen sat on. “He saw that book as well, right? There’s no need to deny it, I heard your conversation. That boy really resembles you when you were younger. He really does...”

She silently looked at the old man, eyes glimmering like the sea.

Chapter 32: The Spiral 2

“Perhaps, but he’s still different from me in the end. He can’t do anything without talent...” the old man said sullenly as he lowered his head.

“Stop being foolish, Gregor. Give the book to me, only I can keep it safe now.” The old lady slowly reached out her hand toward the old man.

Old Man Gregor held his head down and did not say anything for a while.

“Influence, wealth, reputation. In the end there’s nothing more dependable than your own ability. Gregor, you’ve fallen.” There was a trace of pity in the old lady’s eyes. “Time flies; in the blink of an eye, we’re already at this age. And you, who had made the wrong choice, no longer have the right to safeguard it.”

Garen was ambling down Pennington Street — while looking back in the direction of the antique store from time to time — when he saw the old man covertly closing the store’s entrance.

“Good lord! That old woman still hasn’t come out, right?” He was stunned. “They’re still so bold at their age? They couldn’t even wait until nightfall... As expected of the vulgar old man...”

Shaking his head, his mind suddenly conjured a juicy story between the old couple, and goosebumps immediately appeared all over his body.

“They were making eyes at each other back at the store too, but I didn’t think that they were so impatient that they would immediately start after I left. It seems that the elderly have such needs as well...”

He ambled along the street with his hands in his pockets. As he watched the ongoing stream of carriages and automobiles, he continued along a small distance until he reached a black sedan and entered the vehicle.

Grace was sitting in the driver’s seat with one hand on the steering wheel and the other holding a paper-wrapped sandwich. She was eating voraciously; there was no sign of the “cold lady” image she should have.

While eating, she asked, “Where are we going?”

“Home. We need to find a way to earn money as well. Grace, do you have any connections?”

Grace thought for a while and then replied, “I have some, but it would depend on whether you’re willing.”

“Tell me. I haven’t used that check you gave me yet. I can invest using that.”

“The money isn’t mine: I took it out of the company’s accounts. It’s rather appropriate to use as your capital.” Grace nodded. “What’s your motive? Are you aiming to start a career or just to earn money?”

“It’s best to just earn money. Of course, the source should be clean.”

“That’s simple then. The most suitable method would be tutoring using the dojo’s name. Of course, it depends on your master’s reputation. You could ask your seniors to introduce tutoring work to you as well. With your identity, you should be able to easily earn a large sum of money,” Grace explained.

“Oh, that might work. However, I haven’t even mastered it myself, let alone being able to teach others. Are there any other methods?”

“There’s also Miss Felicity; she started her own auction company. Aren’t you trying to earn money to collect antiques? You can just cooperate with her. Lastly, you could work with my company. My company can pay you a considerable sum every month. It’s just that you might be called up to solve any... problem.. that arises.”

“There’s no need to hurry, let me think about it.” Garen knitted his eyebrows. The three methods did not meet his requirements, especially when he found out that Dale Quicksilver was actually collecting similar antiques. He was slightly tempted.

“It would be great if I could make contact with Dale Quicksilver and look at his collection. The problem is, what kind of excuse could I use to contact him?”

He looked toward Grace.

“Do you have a method to contact Dale Quicksilver? I want to take a look at his collection of antiques, but I need a reason to do so.”

“That’s simple. If you tell him that you have some antiques and would like to show and exchange some of your collections with him, he probably wouldn’t refuse if you use our company’s name. Do you need me to make preparations immediately? It’s just that you will need to put on makeup first. You’re still too young, after all,” Grace swiftly replied. “As for the antique needed for the exchange, my company will arrange it.”

“Arrange it, see if he agrees.”

In the next few days, Garen traveled back and forth between the school and the antique shop, behaving completely like an ordinary student.

However, as the effect of the emblem had become almost negligible, he could only obediently learn martial arts every day from his seniors. White Cloud Combat Arts were moves developed from the Mammoth Secret Technique; its four forms were interchangeable and abnormally powerful. Garen spent every day practicing the moves with his seniors while suppressing his own strength.

For the past few days, he did not attend classes even when he was at school. He was only waiting for the end of term results to be announced.

“How did you fare?” Fayne and Kalidor gathered together to check each other’s result.

“Alright, I’m twentieth in the class, it’s not that bad.” Kalidor grinned.

“How can you even be happy with twentieth place, there are barely even twenty people in our class...” Garen jokingly scolded as he walked over with papers in his hand. “I messed up my foreign language paper. There’s no hope for me: I just answered randomly.”

Kalidor looked at Garen’s foreign language paper: 20 marks were clearly drawn on it.

“Impressive!” Kalidor gave Garen a thumbs up. “Oh and let’s go to the White Eagle Saloon later. They just imported a batch of purple grape wine! I made the owner keep a bottle for me.”

“I am not going, you guys can go. I have something else i need to do,” Garen declined.

“Again? You’ve been refusing to hang out with us for quite a while now. Just what exactly are you so busy with all day?” Kalidor was slightly unhappy.

“I really have something to do.” Garen helplessly shrugged his shoulders.

Ever since Kalidor and Ai Fei got together, the gap between Kalidor and Garen grew larger and the group was not as harmonious as before. Even though the two of them intended to mend the gap, the incident with Ai Fei was like a thorn between them that could not be removed.

Both Fayne and Jake noticed it and tried persuading Kalidor to forget about it. Little did they expect that after Kalidor became enamored by Ai Fei, even the two of them were both left by the wayside.

“Alright, if you really have something going on, then forget it. It’s just as well, now I can go out with my girlfriend: I only have the first few days of this vacation to play around. My father will probably force me to help him out the rest of the time,” Fayne continued.

Kalidor’s expression only slightly improved after his two friends’ persuasion, but he still angrily left.

Garen could not do anything about it as well.

“Garen, are you going to the dojo?”

“No, I’ve stopped going to the dojo for now. I’ll be staying at home this vacation. It’s another matter.” Garen no longer needed to go to the dojo on a daily basis. He had learned everything he could; he only needed to practice on his own.

After the matter with Grace was settled, his life seemed to have completely returned to normal.

After chatting with his friends for a while, Garen checked the time. When he realized that it was almost time to leave, he slowly walked out of the school.

There was a line of carriages and automobiles queueing outside the school to pick up students. From time to time, a vehicle would hurriedly arrive and leave shortly after. Garen slowly walked toward a black sedan and entered it.

“The arrangements are ready,” Grace softly said from the driver’s seat. “Dale Quicksilver has agreed to our request. The meeting will occur at his temporary residence in the suburbs.”

“Where is it?”

“Canoe Town.”

“Canoe Town? Is there a place nearby called Silversilk Castle?” Garen was slightly surprised.

“Silversilk Castle?” Grace slightly hesitated. “It seems like it... I’ve never been there before, but Dale Quicksilver seems to be quite interested in that place. He’s currently resting over there.”

“Is his case solved?”

“It’s not completely resolved. He only found half of the antiques that the Golden Hoop stole. The rest were sold through various channels. Our company was only one of the channels used. I am sure you know about that.”

“That’s true.” Garen knew the company behind Grace, the Manuyllton Corporation, was the biggest antique reseller in Huaishan. “How far is the place from here? How long would it take?”

“We’ll first go to another place to pick up somebody to help you put on your makeup. Then we’ll go to Canoe Town to meet Dale Quicksilver. The meeting time is around 3 p.m.”

“It’s only 11 a.m. right now, there’s still time.” Garen nodded.

He had always wanted to go to Silversilk Castle to check out the source of the Bronze Cross Emblem and see what was special about it. As the strangest and longest-lasting Potential Antique, Garen had wanted to find out the secret behind it. He did not think that Dale Quicksilver would actually be investigating the matter as well.

“From the looks of it, it’s not a coincidence. He’s collecting Potential Antiques and is even deliberately staying around Silversilk Castle. It would be strange if it’s only a coincidence.”

Garen turned his head to the window and looked outside. With a roar of the engine, the vehicle started to gradually move forward. He could see groups of students on both sides of the road entering and leaving stores. The girls were dressed in short skirts and black stockings; most of them were youthful and charming. The boys were dressed in shirts with long pants and leather shoes; they were lively and slightly charismatic even if their looks were ordinary.

This was a special aura that only Shengying Academy had; it was not possible for ordinary schools to possess it. Even the clothes that they wore were not affordable for ordinary students.

There was more than one academy within Huaishan City. There were a few high schools and Shengying was the best among them. It was not just due to having a

spectacular score while enrolling annually I — the environment, the quality of the students, and other various aspects all mattered as well.

As Garen watched the students from the window, he suddenly remembered his young sister, Ying Er, who had been obediently staying at home for the past few days,

In regard to the matter of acknowledging his master — after he told his parents about it — they personally visited his master's residence to make up for their previous absence.

Garen's parents were simple people. They did not understand the actual status and power of Fei Baiyun. They were only surprised by the seriousness of the whole situation. Fei Baiyun's residence was not extravagant either. Instead, the furnishing was quite simple.

His sister, Ying Er, also knew that he acknowledged Fei Baiyun as his master but she did not know about the details. After she found out about the entire process, she understood that it was a formal ceremony and it changed her opinion about him. However, for some reason, her recent relationship with Garen became even colder.

Clearing his mind, Garen laid back on his seat and glanced downward toward his Skills in the attribute pane.

“Right now, I am only lacking in actual combat skills. It would be great if I still have any Attribute points. At least then I could just rapidly raise my White Cloud Combat Arts, which would help save a lot of time and energy. I only wish that meeting Dale Quicksilver this time would give me some sort of reward...”

Chapter 33: Silversilk Castle (1)

Huaishan City, southern suburbs

Green mountains and rugged rolling hills were reminiscent of a thick green carpet covering the land.

On one of the hills scattered several yellow and white dots. Upon a closer look, these were actually small residential houses. These houses were in the shape of cubes, built with cream-colored marble stone.

The building walls and door frames were covered in green ivy, of which some of had blossomed small flowers.

Below one of the houses stood two arched gates, inside was a semi-outdoor resting area.

There were two tables inside, and sitting by the left table were four people, resting and drinking tea.

Two middle-aged men and two young women sat across from each other.

The older man had a well-trimmed beard, he was wearing a nice and delicate black suit. He looked around 40 years of age and had a wooden cane in one hand. He lifted the teacup from the table and took a sip.

“Mr. Kelly has come all the way here to discuss the collection of antiques of misfortune, this kind of enthusiasm is rare nowadays.”

His eyes landed on the middle-aged man sitting across from him.

The man’s skin was a bit pale. He had blond, curly hair, and a blond goatee, wearing a tidy white suit. He seemed relaxed and elegant. He was much younger, about thirty instead.

His eyes were the most dazzling, they were like the finest rubies, transparent and crystal clear.

“I am also amazed by Mr. Quicksilver’s enthusiasm, to not only collecting these antiques and jewelry by yourself, but also looking for their places of origin and background stories.

The man sighed.

“Collectors like us, aren’t we all intrigued by these things? The dream life of coming home to a house full of antiques with mysterious backgrounds. It’s like... like...”

“Like our own house and lives had become mysterious, filled with powers unknown to men,” Dale Quicksilver added with a smile.

“Exactly! That’s the feeling!” The blond man nodded. “Life is always so boring, that’s why we long for us, for our lives to be filled with puzzles and mysteries. That is the most interesting part of finding these antiques of tragedy.”

“Indeed.” Dale Quicksilver approvingly nodded, his eyes glanced over the man’s wrist, “I unexpectedly came across an antique of tragedy while investigating a case, and I got hooked on collecting them ever since. Time flies by like an arrow, over the past decade, I’ve collected hundreds of them in my house.”

“Hundreds!?” The blond man’s eyes gleamed with light, “That’s incredible! Only a man such as Detective Quicksilver is worthy of these treasures, I’m sure they are completely different from the stuff you had earlier. Anyway, the reason you have come here, is it related to antiques?”

“Not exactly.” Dale Quicksilver shook his head, he took over the pipe from Ms. Si Lan and smoked from it, he slowly blew a smoke ring. “We are here for a well-known criminal in detective business, it’s a serial killer case. The case was settled, that’s why we have time to come and investigate.”

“Is that so? The well-known criminal, would that be the Golden Hoop?” The blond man mused as he pinched his beard. After receiving a positive answer, he continued, “Golden Hoop had committed dozens of crimes all over the federation. I heard that other than you, only one famous detective had met him face to face before. Would you be kind enough to inform me of this Golden Hoop’s story?”

“I do apologize, it’s not that I don’t want to tell you, I have a non-disclosure agreement with the police department,” Dale Quicksilver shrugged, “Well, we might get going soon, I have to go to the Silversilk Castle this afternoon, would Mr. Kelly be interested in joining us?”

“The Silversilk Castle? I’ve heard of that shabby place over the years of living in Huaishan City, it’s the inheritance of a military officer, he didn’t have enough money to maintain the castle, and he had sold most of the stuff in there,” Kelly replied. “I’ve heard that the castle was for sale, but it was too worn out and desolated, visitors had left as soon as they saw it. Are you planning on buying this castle?”

“Just visiting the place, I don’t plan on buying it.” Dale Quicksilver laughed. He turned around and said a few words to Si Lan, who nodded in reply and walked out towards a two-floored house nearby, disappearing behind the green and thick bushes.

“The vegetation here is rich, and there are no signs of withering this late in the fall, if it wasn’t too far from my home, I’d love to move here,” Dale Quicksilver blew another smoke ring and lamented.

“I agree, that’s why I’ve moved here and never wanted to leave,” Kelly replied. He spoke a few words with the blond girl with ponytail next to him, the girl stood up and walked towards the black car parked outside.

“From here to Silversilk castle is a two-hour drive, it’s almost 5:00 pm now. If we go at this time, we would have to come back during the late night. Or perhaps Mr. Dale was prepared to stay there for the night?” Kelly stood up and questioned.

“I’ve spent a few nights there the past few days, no big deal. I talked with the castle’s owner Mr. Nusves and paid him some money, I have rented the castle for two months. Since everything in there was already sold or moved out, he didn’t worry about it too much.” Dale Quicksilver also stood up, “On another note, you don’t have to bring your car, there’s nowhere to fill gas, we’d be better off riding in a carriage.”

“That’s true, I guess I have to bother you for a few days.”

“No problem, we are all fellow collectors, and it’s hard to find a friend with the same interest. I won’t lie to you, my other friends are not too fond about this hobby of mine. Okay, enough talking, I’ll get the carriage so we can get going soon, I’ll see you in a bit.”

“All right, I’ll be right out.”

Kelly stood next to the table, he took a cup of tea and drank it bottom up. He watched as Dale Quicksilver walked over the grass towards a black carriage coming from afar. Ms. Si Lan was wearing a white trench coat, she jumped off the carriage to wait for him.

The winding road stretched on, like a gray snake coiling towards the horizon. Far away on the road, two bullock carts filled with golden wheat moved slowly.

A warm wind breezed over, sending the hems of Kelly’s white suit flying, a relaxed and leisured atmosphere permeated the air.

Kelly touched his chin.

“This beard feels so real.”

“Of course it does.” The blond girl who left earlier had come back to him. “The road to Silversilk Castle is going to take at least two hours in the carriage, we’ll have to walk quite a distance in the mountain as well. I’m afraid we’ll have to stay there for the night.”

“Mr. Dale said we could stay at the castle for the night,” Kelly smiled and said. “Let’s go, don’t let our detective wait too long.”

The girl watched Kelly’s back as he left, her eyes glimmered with suspicion. Even though she knew he was undercover, it was still strange that from all aspects, Kelly was too mature and too real compared to Garen. He didn’t seem like a teenage boy. As if Garen was Kelly’s disguise, and the Garen-turned-Kelly was his true self.

She shook her head and stopped the thought, quickly followed up. The two walked towards the waiting carriage on the road.

Before getting into the carriage, Garen snapped a violet flower from the side of the road, he smelled it, and upon closer look, he discovered there were many tiny black bugs near the center of the flower bud. They looked like ants, and the flower was odorless.

The group of four boarded the carriage, Dale and Si Lan sat in the front row, Garen and Grace sat in the back.

The riding whip made a crisp snap sound, as two tall and strong horses pulled the carriage forward, the bells on their necks started ringing.

Noticing the flower on Garen’s hands, Dale Quicksilver commented.

“The flowers here are all odorless, but they seem to attract a lot of bugs, I wonder how that happens.”

Garen stretched out his index finger and let a bug climb onto it from the flower petal, it tickled his finger. The bug looked like a miniature ladybug, its semicircle-shaped wings flapped occasionally to maintain balance.

“The origins of antiques of tragedy tend to involve different kinds of unusual phenomenon, this is quite common, isn’t it?” Garen smiled, “If it were the same as any other place, I wouldn’t have bothered to come here. It is a pity that you didn’t bring any of your collections with you, I could have had the luck to take a look at them.”

Dale Quicksilver started laughing.

“I initially thought you were just a boasting fraud, I never thought you could tell apart the knockoff replicas of antiques of tragedy from the real ones so easily. I didn’t expect to find such a bosom friend at a place like this. I thought I was the only one interested in these things.”

“Same as I.” Garen laughed along as he stripped a flower pedal and flicked it out of the carriage. “What is it about the Silversilk Castle that drew your interest? I’ve lived here for so long without knowing anything remarkable about it.”

Dale Quicksilver handed the horsewhip to Si Lan. He took out a stack of papers from his leather bag and handed them over. “These are some documents I’ve collected, take a look.”

Garen took them over, he saw the title of the first page: Castle Owner Found Dead. Underneath the title was a large paragraph of writing, describing how the body was found.

He flipped to the next page, it was a similar title.

The third page was the same, except this one had a picture, it was a picture of the Silversilk Castle.

Three owners of the castle died for no reason, killer unknown. They all died peacefully in their sleep without any trace of a struggle, like old-aged seniors who had lost their last breath. Strangely enough, these three owners were all strong, middle-aged military officers.

Chapter 34: Silversilk Castle (2)

“The most recent death was the owner of the Silversilk Castle from about 30 years ago. I am not sure which Antique of Tragedy it is, but I am trying to see just what’s going on there, and I might even find it if I’m lucky,” Dale Quicksilver added, while Garen nodded his head.

Garen knew what an Antique of Tragedy was, and he thought his Bronze Cross was one of them. Although it could barely provide him with any potential, only about 1 point per week, it was better than nothing.

Garen had no idea why an Antique of Tragedy could provide him with potential, and he wanted to know where the name came from. Those were the main reasons why he decided to travel to the Silversilk Castle with Dale Quicksilver.

The carriage left the city before noon and arrived at a green and yellow slope in the afternoon. There was a small forest in front of them and the sun was beginning to set. The four got off the carriage and surveyed the forest.

By the end of the forest, they could see an old-looking graycastle built upon a hill. The surface of the castle had burn marks all over it, and it was completely devoid of plant life.

Outside the castle, the lawn was surrounded by fences and several trees, but they all looked gray and burned. The castle had three bartizans, and Garen could see many windows around it. However, everything looked black from a distance.

“This is Silversilk Castle. I heard it caught fire 30 years ago and the next owner had no money to fix it, so now it looks like this. It was pretty sad, since the castle was famous for its garden. The word silversilk came from its beautiful exterior. Before the accident, the facade looked like it was covered with silver silk.” Dale Quicksilver said, pointing at the castle.

“I don’t think that’s possible Mr. Dale. If the accident happened thirty years ago, why does it still have this gray and black appearance. There should at least be some ivies or moss growing on it,” Grace speculated.

“No one knows the reason. Some said the ash stopped the plants from growing, and some said plants just wouldn’t grow there. There were many strange rumors about the castle, but they were all hard to believe,” Si Lan said.

“Did you ever ask the locals about it?” Grace scrunched her eyebrows and asked.

“No one lives around here. Farmers cannot grow anything on an area like this, and the closest towns are about 30 miles away,” Si Lan answered.

“We will be staying in the castle tonight, right? Do we have enough supplies?” Garen touched his fake beard and asked.

"We have more than enough. Me and Si Lan have stayed here for days, and the only problem was that we had to travel a long way to get back to the city. The environment here was good, and it was nice to stay in the castle. Let's go. We still have a long way to walk, maybe half an hour," Dale Quicksilver said as he nodded his head.

"What about the carriages?" Garen asked.

"Just leave them here and someone will drive them back. I have everything planned. We took the carriages to get here, but we will have to walk back after we visit. It's about a four hour walk from here to Canoe Town, the nearest settlement," Dale Quicksilver explained.

"We will have to stay here for several days I think," he continued.

"That's fine. I will enjoy my vacation I guess. Grace, can you go back to the city and tell my family not to worry about me? Just tell them I am staying at my friend's home and I will be back after several days," Garen said with a light tone.

"How about letting me drive the carriage back and I'll leave it in town?" Grace suggested. She knew Garen wanted her to hide the truth from his family. He was still a high school student and did not want his family to be worried about him.

"Sure," Dale Quicksilver nodded.

The three watched Grace and the carriage disappear at the end of the road.

"Let's go. It's better if we can get there before the evening," Dale Quicksilver said, shaking the long bag in his hand.

"I brought my rifle and we can hunt some wild animals for a barbeque," he added.

"Sounds great! You're really well prepared." Garen smiled.

"I brought some spices, tea, and coffee beans. There is a river nearby and we can get some water from there." Si Lan smiled and showed Garen the red pouch in her hand.

"Let's see if you can make some good coffee," Garen said.

"I have some secret techniques!" Si Lan had a mysterious smile on her face.

"I assume Mr. Kelly rarely goes camping. Unlike us detectives, sometimes we even have to camp in forests when chasing criminals, so we have to be prepared," she explained.

"You are right." Garen shrugged his shoulders.

“I only brought some emergency tools, some clothes, and some daily supplies. I am not as prepared as you,” he replied.

“Well, let’s get moving before it gets dark. We need to clean up a room for you. From here on out we’ll have to rely on the oil lamps I brought,” Dale Quicksilver said lightly as he looked at the setting sun.

“Sure, let’s go.” The three started to walk towards the Silversilk Castle.

Inside the Castle’s iron gate, Garen could see white ashes on the charred ground. It looked like the road was covered with a layer of soot.

There were two small triangular fire towers on either side of the road, and there were two braziers on top of them. A metal railing separated the castle from the trees on the outside, but Garen had no idea out of what type of metal it was made from.

Outside the railings, Garen could see fresh, dark green bushes. Beyond that, everything looked dead. The dying trees and withered lawn made Garen feel a bit depressed.

The three people entered the gate holding their bags in hand. They followed the dusty road to the door of the castle. The wooden door had a metal frame around its perimeter, and there was a white keyhole in the middle. Dale Quicksilver took out the key and unlocked the door.

The door opened and Garen followed Si Lan into the empty main hall. He checked around but there were no decorations, no furniture, not even a carpet. It was also dark since the wall lamps were also gone .

The sunlight entered the hall through the dormer on the side, opposite to the door, and it made the hall just slightly more peaceful.

“Which room you want? You can pick one and then we need to start preparing dinner.” Dale Quicksilver closed the door and put the key back to his belt.

“Cooking for myself in a castle in the middle of nowhere, this feels so novel to me,” Garen said and smiled.

Si Lan brought him to a room on the right side of the castle and made the bed for him. Garen put a blanket on the bed and was good to go.

After dinner, Garen could barely see anything in the dark and they did not have enough oil to keep the lamps going, so they decided to go to bed early and explore the castle tomorrow.

Garen went back to his room and sat on the bed.

The room was extremely quiet. There was a door sized window on one side, the floor was made from light red hexagonal tiles. There was only a large bed in the room, surrounded by metal racks upon which mosquito traps used to be placed.

Garen could barely move on the bed as he did not want the rust to flake off the metal bedframe. There was an oil lamp on a chair beside the bed, the only thing that was keeping the room in light. He walked towards the window in his underwear and looked down. He could see nothing but darkness.

He couldn't see anything on the lawn; the whole castle was dead still. Dale Quicksilver and Si Lan were sleeping in two different rooms, so Garen was the only one awake in the castle.

Garen opened the window, and a chilling wind gusted into the room. Garen could hear owls hooting from the forest, barely illuminated by the shining moon in the sky.

"I should go to bed. I will see what Dale Quicksilver can find here tomorrow. I am not sure if he knows I am undercover. I don't know if he is a genius or not, but I know he's observant," Garen thought. He practiced some Fist Arts in the room, before closing the door, and laying down on the bed.

After a while, Garen turned over on the bed. Strangely, he heard the sound of the door being opened; it sounded like someone had opened it from the outside. Surprised, he sat up and looked at the door. The door was ajar, but otherwise not moving. He got up and closed the door carefully.

"It was the wind," he thought.

Garen lay down on the bed and began fell asleep, but the sound of the door opening stopped him again.

Garen woke up one more time and he grabbed the oil lamp by the side. He stared at the door carefully, but nothing was there.

"Are you playing with me?" Garen yelled.

"Dale?" he yelled again.

His voice echoed in the room, down the grand hall across the castle, and finally back to him. But no one answered. It was still quiet outside.

Garen put on his slippers and walked towards the door with the lamp in his hand. He closed the door again and locked it. He fastened the door with the latches so that no

one would be able to open it again. Garen took a deep breath and returned to the bed. However instead of sleeping, he just sat there and tried to figure out what was going on.

Suddenly, he heard the sound of someone putting a key into the keyhole of his door.

Garen stood up immediately and forcefully swung the door open. The noise stopped. No one was outside. He was really confused.

"I... thought I locked it?" Garen looked at the latches, and was surprised again.

"I locked the door and fastened all the latches!" he yelled. He was sure he had locked the door, but the door had just opened without any resistance.

"What the hell?!" Garen yelled. He slammed the door closed and stepped back. His scalp tingled and he stumbled on the corner of the bed.

"If I find whoever it is that's pulling this prank, you're dead!" Garen yelled with anger.

Chapter 35: Silversilk Castle (3)

"Kelly! Wake up, Kelly! Come on!"

Upon hearing the sudden shout, Garen opened his eyes. The bright light in front of him forced his eyes into a tight squint. Dale Quicksilver was anxiously tapping his face.

"What's going on? Why're you here, Dale?" Garen sat up, realizing that the event that had just occurred was only a dream.

"Why are you asleep down here in the basement?" Dale looked at Garen curiously. "Were you here looking for something by yourself and ended up falling asleep? Didn't I tell you to wait for me to move together?"

At this moment, Garen found himself lying against the wall in the basement. Dark and narrow walls made from cold stone bricks surrounded him. The room was completely empty.

The basement was partially underground. Sunlight spilled in from a window near the ceiling, making this place resemble a dungeon more than a basement.

"What's going on? I clearly remember going to sleep in the bedroom..." He lowered his head as a wave of excruciating pain rose.

Suddenly, his heart skipped a beat — the sound of silence greeted him.

In the blink of an eye, Dale Quicksilver had vanished right in front of him.

The room was empty again.

“Dale?”

“Dale!”

Garen crawled up from the floor and yelled again. There was no answer.

A sharp pain arose from within his head once more, and then he remembered: Dale had woken him up from the basement. That had happened three days ago.

“Three days ago?” He covered his head, his vision blurry. “What happened? If that was three days ago, what was I doing in these past three days? How come I don’t remember anything? He was right here in front of me!”

He felt the pain assault his temples again. His mind was in chaos.

“No, I can’t stay in this castle any longer!”

He pushed open the door and rushed out of the basement, running toward the castle’s gate through a straight and empty path.

His footsteps echoed inside the castle.

‘Peng!’

The castle door was slammed open. He then stumbled through the door and fell down the stairs, tumbling onto the grass.

‘Gasp’

He lied on the grass, breathless, gasping for air. Suddenly, he felt a sense of drowsiness encroaching upon him. Unable to resist the drowsiness, he passed out.

Not knowing how long it has been, he slowly opened his eyes. he was still lying on his bed inside the castle.

“Kelly, are you up yet?” Dale Quicksilver’s voice came from outside.

“I’m back here again? Was that all a dream?” Garen sat up from the bed. “This place... this place is too strange!” Goosebumps formed all over his body. Even though sunlight was shining on him through the bedroom window, he didn’t feel any warmth. Thinking back, the images in this room seemed more real than those in his dreams.

“Was it all a dream?” He took a deep breath.

After getting up, he quickly dressed up and opened the door. Dale Quicksilver was standing there with a surprised look.

“What’s wrong? You look like you stayed up all night.”

“It’s nothing, just a nightmare.” Garen forced out a smile.

“Nightmare?” Dale Quicksilver laughed. “A nightmare could scare you like this? What happened in it? Come, tell us and grab some breakfast.”

“Fine.” Garen rubbed his eyebrows. He knew it was ridiculous. “Although that nightmare was unbelievably real.”

“You go down first, in the main hall downstairs. I’ll lock the doors.” Dale Quicksilver tapped Garen’s shoulder. “Seems like I shouldn’t have shown you that document.”

“It’s okay, I’m not so easily frightened.” Garen laughed and left for breakfast. He didn’t notice Dale Quicksilver’s gloomy expression behind him.

Main hall

Garen followed the stairs down to find Si Lan sitting in the corner of the hall. She was drinking a cup of tea, wearing a dark brown hunting uniform. Her blonde ponytail hung from her back, contrasting against her clear skin.

“Mr. Kelly is up too? You don’t look too well. Did you not have a good rest?”

“I had a nightmare... it was ... too real.” Garen rubbed between his eyes and sat down at the table.

“Have some tea. I got it from the Garfield Province.” Si Lan made an inviting gesture.

“Thanks.”

Garen lifted a cup of hot black tea and put it up to his nose, smelling the fresh minty scent mixed with a hint of milk cream.

He sipped from the cup and found that the tea tasted like mint water.

“What kind of tea is this? Tastes a little weird.”

“I’ve added some other spices so it will help you wake up. One of my uncles is a doctor at Sirius University and he taught me how to make this,” Si Lan said.

Garen nodded. “Not bad, I’m already feeling better.”

Dale Quicksilver came to the table and sat down as well. He took a cup of tea and chugged the tea down his throat.

“So here’s the plan: We’ll go hunting first, get the food for lunch and dinner, then get some water and clean our equipment. Then we’ll spend the rest of the afternoon investigating the castle and its surroundings.”

“You’re the expert, you make the plans.” Garen shrugged.

“Oh and Mr. Kelly—”

“Just call me Kelly.”

“All right, Kelly. You said you had a vivid nightmare. Just what kind of nightmare could it be to have exhausted and dispirited you so?”

Garen drank some hot tea, allowing the hot water, combined with the cool mint flavor, to bathe his throat. The tea flowed into his stomach, filling his body with warmth, and sobered his mind.

“I dreamed” — he paused for a second — “of someone opening my door at night, over and over again every time when I’m about to fall asleep.” His eyebrows furrowed. “This is very strange. I’ve never been here before, so I didn’t expect to have this kind of dream on my first night.”

“I remember the documents I showed you contained information about the deaths of the three owners of this castle. It was mentioned that the previous three owners all had nightmares before their deaths. Maybe you were worried after reading that document, causing you to have a nightmare,” Dale Quicksilver analyzed.

“Do we have information on what their nightmares were about?”

“We don’t know anything about that. I had a dream last night as well. It wasn’t a nightmare though.” Dale Quicksilver looked up through the window, his expression told Garen he was reminiscing about something.

“You are thinking about it again?” Si Lan seemed worried. “It’s been that long, yet you still can’t let it go?”

“If only it was that easy,” Dale Quicksilver laughed, somewhat bitterly.

Garen was completely silent, carefully watching their expressions.

After the morning tea, they had some breakfast. The three of them went to prepare their weapons and gear.

Dale Quicksilver held a rifle and suited up in a military hunting uniform with a top hat. Garen had a half-meter long saber and wore the same clothes he had on the day before, which were completely unsuitable for the occasion. In the end, he also grabbed a sack, ready to help with logistics.

They cleaned up the dishes and headed out of the castle.

After locking the door, Dale Quicksilver led them toward the right side of the castle. "There's a hole in the fence. We can get to the forest through there." He loaded the rifle as he spoke.

"There aren't many animals around here. It's a good thing we don't have many mouths to feed. Even small prey would be enough for a few meals."

Garen nodded in reply. He didn't speak, but instead raised the sack in his hand, indicating that he was going to be taking care of the prey. The rest was on Quicksilver.

Dale Quicksilver laughed and tapped his rifle without saying a word.

The three arrived at the right wing of the castle. Located on the black steel fence was a giant hole as wide as two people. The poles on the fence had been destroyed by some force, bent inwards haphazardly.

Dale Quicksilver carefully sneaked past the gap and waved from the other side.

Si Lan and Garen followed him through the hole, and Garen almost caught his clothes on the fence.

Outside the fence was a dark and green forest. Trees around four to five meters tall filled the area, while thick and wild bushes scattered around the ground. A cold aura could be felt emitting from deep inside even before they entered.

The morning sunlight could not pierce through the dense leaves. Even the warmth could not penetrate through. The sounds of birds chirping continuously came from within the forest, with the occasional noises coming from the bushes as something moved inside.

"That's the noise of mountain mice, sounds like big ones." Dale Quicksilver lowered his voice and crouched down, trying not to make any noise. "I didn't expect to have something good this quick."

Si Lan smiled while moving behind Dale.

Even if Garen had never hunted before, he knew not to make a sound at this moment. He tipped his toes and followed behind.

“Bang!”

Garen looked forward and saw Dale Quicksilver lower his rifle, smoke snaking from the barrels with the smell of gunpowder permeating through the air.

“Your aim is pretty good, Dale! How did you hit it so accurately through all that grass? The mouse was moving so fast!” Garen gave him a thumbs up and said, “Looks like we’ll have enough food for today.”

“That’s not enough at all. We’ll have to gut it and skin it. After that, there would hardly be any meat left. We’ll need some more,” Dale Quicksilver said, shaking his head.

Garen had never hunted wild animals before. Although he didn’t know what was going on, he was fascinated by everything. His bad mood from last night’s nightmare improved.

The three continued to wander inside the forest. Garen followed behind with the giant mountain mouse in his sack. It was quite heavy, around twenty pounds.

While walking behind Si Lan, Garen checked his attribute pane. The attributes had not changed much, although his strength did grow a tiny bit from the original 2.08 to 2.09. This was mostly as a result of his White Cloud Secret Arts.

“Many people know about the effects of the level three White Cloud Secret Arts, but no one has reached level four before. I don’t think anyone knows what kind of effect it will have. My martial arts are heading on the right path now, but my Potential Meter stopped growing again. If only I could find the reason behind the increase of potential from the Antiques of Tragedy, I will have a direction to look in, instead of blindly blundering everywhere like I’m currently doing.”

Garen reflected on his current situation while closely following behind Dale and Si Lan. These few days, due to his combat training with his senior brother and sister, he had grown to resemble a real martial artist. This was a change from within, a natural change, caused by his increase in strength and experience.

After a while, with no new prey in sight, Dale Quicksilver turned around and shouted, “There’s a castle dungeon in the front. Do you want to go check it out? Since we are already close, we can go there to take a break. I think the gunshot had scared the other animals. There’s nothing to hunt around anymore.”