I'm going to thrash all of them!

"What were you yammering about? This and that about some Heir Leaderboard rankings? However many you have, bring it on!" Levi bellowed at the assembly in front of him.

The crowd, incensed by his brazenness, continued to cuss at him.

They were determined to bring the wrath of Oakland City upon him in its fullest potency.

Jerry looked at Levi intently before stepping outside.

It was at that moment, his eyes had betrayed his deviousness.

Little did they know that he had purposefully pulled some strings to suppress word of this incident to keep it from a few of the ancient families. It was because he was concerned how things might change for him should the Lehmans become involved.

News were kept under wraps so that he might rid himself of Levi through the combined strength of the various imperial and royal families, and deny his rival the chance to clarify things with Zoey.

Jerry's true nature was that of a practicing hypocrite.

He saw a union with Zoey as a stepping stone into the ranks of the ancient Lehman family...

And it just so happened that Levi's emergence had thrown a wrench in his best-laid plans.

For this, Levi must die.

At that moment, Oakland City was in an upheaval.

Representatives of the Gotts, Prestons, Meyers, Cuviers, Trents, and the multitude of other imperial and royal families have descended upon Dynasty Manor.

Barring the notable absence of the first imperial family, the Stuarts and all the others were present.

Hundreds of cars were promptly left packed at the front as all the heads of the families quickly made their way inside with their men.

At that time, Conrad's screams of agony still reverberated off the walls inside the hall.

Levi, on the other hand, had his eyes closed and was at rest.

"Who was the one who hurt my son?"

"Who was the one who maimed Mr. Garcia?"

The stern shouting ushered in the arrival of several lavishly dressed elders and the large entourage propping up the rear.

They were spearheaded by Esmond of the Cuviers and Otis of the Trents.

The two men were joined by Jordan, Arvin, and Tiffany of the Meyers.

Prominent figures, who were rarely seen in public, had been brought together on this occasion.

"It's him! Levi Garrison!" The accusing fingers were concerted in identifying the guilty party.

Upon that, Levi surveyed the scene before him. "So is everyone present? Good. Why don't you lot come at me at the same time? I'd like to thrash all of you!"

"Arrogant fool! Die!"

A man took to his heel to rush Levi.

Bang!

Levi fired out the heel of his foot and sent his assailant sprawling as though struck by a five-ton truck. The downed man fell to the ground and remained motionless.

The crowd drew in sharp breaths the moment they witnessed that.

"Even the top pugilist from the Cuvier family was no match?" Their eyes popped in surprise.

"Kill him!"

A bevy of fighters then charged in concert towards Levi.

However, Levi deftly dispatched as many of them as there were, and no one had been able to displace him from his position on the chair.

He remained seated while his fallen foes were left groaning on the floor all around him.

"How could he be that good? This..."

Jordan and Arvin stared at Levi in disbelief.

Is this really the man that everyone called a good-for-nothing?

For a brief moment, they felt a smidgen of regret for calling off the engagement.

In the meantime, the others were going ballistic.

How was it that we could not get a handle on him even with so many skilled men?

Even Jerry was dumbstruck.

"Truly, the Garrisons could not produce anyone incapable. To think even a bastard of theirs is this formidable!" They sighed.

Propped up by the supporters around him, Conrad's eyes burned at Levi. "I don't care how good he is. Kill him, or I'll have to invoke the Garcias and the Garrison clan to deal with this personally. And when they do, I'll make sure to have all of you held collectively responsible!"

Faced with threats from the son of the Garcias, the heads of the prominent families present could only oblige.

"Listen to me. We must kill this man. For when the Garrisons hears of this, we should expect not blame, but reward!" Esmond rallied.

The morale of the aggressors were elevated in an instant.

"No! You cannot afford to cross this man, for he is the God of War!""

Everyone was stunned by Tiffany's hysterical shouting.

The hundreds of fighters stilled their hands, and the onlookers stood frozen with mouths agape.

The well-hidden Martin snickered.

All of you just messed with the wrong guy.

This is someone who could stand up against all the aristocratic families in Oakland City!

Martin could only credit his meeting with this man for his own ascension.

Silence ensued for one whole minute.

That was the duration for which everyone was rooted to the spot.

"The... The God of War..." someone swallowed hard.

Martin proclaimed aloud, "That's right. Standing before you is the rock of Erudia – God of War! Martin Preston hails the God of War!"

"Tiffany Meyers hails the God of War!"

Following the two person's affirmative voices, Conrad fell to the ground, and Jerry slumped back into his chair.

The eyes of all present almost popped from their sockets.

No one could have expected that the God of War was Levi Garrison.

In fact, everyone was in absolute disbelief.

Jordan and Arvin looked at Levi, and then at their progeny before they finally understood why Tiffany made the decision she did after her return.

"So Martin and Tiffany did not meet the God of War by chance. They had purposefully sought out Levi!"

"It was no wonder Levi agreed to the wager against Tyrone. He really did not fear the Garrisons!"

"Now I understand why Levi Garrison dropped off the radar. He embarked on a campaign north to eradicate the Blood King Palace! This was why he could not be present for the birth of his child and the match against the Garrison clan!"

All the missing pieces of the puzzle quietly fell into place.

In short order, everyone had figured out the facts behind the matter.

Conrad then understood why he ought to have steered clear of Abigail...

No one would be able to protect him as even the Garcia family might find themselves in crisis over this.

Thud

Thud!

The room was silent save for the rhythmic pattering of knees hitting the ground.

One after the other, those in the crowd prostrated themselves.

"The Prestons hail the God of War!"

"The Meyers hail the God of War!"

"The Gotts hail the God of War!"

There was silence as the entire room was held in fear and awe of the great man in their midst.

Only the dazed and hapless Jerry remained on his feet.

He finally caught on to what kind of explanation Levi had in mind for Zoey when he brought her to Oakland City.

Jerry shuddered at this own audacity trying to snatch the wife and child away from the God of War himself.

"What are you doing? Why aren't you on your knees?" His family anxiously gesticulated at him.

Jerry then fell onto his knees with a loud thud. "God of War, I was wrong. I shouldn't have..."

Levi smirked, "You may not have been a gentleman, but I shall spare you in consideration of your effort to convince Zoey and the others to come to Oakland City!"

"Thank you, God of War!" Jerry prostrated himself and bowed his head repeatedly.

"There are rules and traditions to observe in all matters. Could we not be so outrageous as to entertain the notion of concubinage? What makes any of you think it appropriate for you to conduct yourselves as the kings of yore do? Someday, someone would cure you of your arrogance!" Levi reprimanded.

Conrad shrunk even more as he bowed deeper in deference. "Never again! I swear!"

Levi then took Abigail and made their exit.

This was one of the most heart-stopping moments that the prominent families of Oakland City had ever experienced.

They now understood how the house of Stuart had fallen – Because Indigo Stuart was The Azure Dragon, a King of War.

The maimed Conrad was eventually stretchered back to the Garcias.

He dared not breathe a word of the truth behind what transpired.

"Who was it who crippled my grandson? I demand justice to be done!" Zed, the head of the Garcia family, howled.

The entire Garcia	family was	hurting as	Conrad	was the	apple of	f their eye	١.

It was excruciating to see him physically reduced to a cripple.

"Grandpa, Dad, let's not continue to pursue this matter!" Conrad yelled.

"What?" All of them looked at him quizzically as that seemed a little out of character for him.

In the past, Conrad was never one to tolerate even the least amount of aggrievement. He was the sort to wrought vengeance upon the tribe if anyone amongst them so much as looked him the wrong way.

They could not understand this change in his temperament, at least with regard to this episode.

"Will you stop asking and just let it go?" Conrad implored anxiously.

Revenge?

Seeking revenge on the God of War?

Are you f**king insane?

"Your Uncle Tyrone just called to inquire about the situation. He's very concerned!"

Even the Garrison clan had gotten word of Conrad's misadventure by now.

Everyone wanted to know who was responsible and throwing down the gauntlet to the ancient families.

Just then, Damien hurried over.

"Who did this to Conrad?"

When Damien saw the sorry state Conrad was in, his face darkened. "Give me a name, and I'll take care of it!"

Though Conrad was the one who experienced the pain, Damien felt the humiliation for him.

"No, Damien. This is my problem. I'm not saying anything, so stop asking!" Conrad was determined to take the truth to the grave.

Everyone found this behavior of his extremely bizarre.

They just could not figure out what could have broken the spirit of this once proud son of Garcia.

A cold glint flashed across Damien's eyes. "Have it your way. I'll go find out for myself!"

What Damien sought was what the ancient families of Oakland City were interested to know as well.

Word of the incident had reached the ears of Dale, as well as Zoey's.

"Was it that same Conrad?

Zoey remembered that Conrad had herself in his cross-hairs at one point. However, she was fortunate to receive Dale's timely intervention at that time.

"Right. He was reluctant to name the culprit despite being maimed and also declined to pursue accountability. It was totally unlike him – very strange indeed!" Dale furrowed.

"That reminds me, Zoey, has that Levi contacted you? Didn't he say he wanted to talk things through?" Edwin asked.

Zoey shook her head. "Not yet."

After arriving in Oakland City, it seemed as though Levi had vanished into thin air.

"That man is completely unreliable! What manner of an explanation is this? What is he trying to pull?" Edwin raged.

"Master, Jerry Gott is outside seeking an audience with you," the butler informed.

"Alright. Send him in, quick!"

Dale still looked upon Jerry quite favorably.

At the same time, Martin was going crazy after learning about Curtis's defeat.

In actuality, Jerry was the real top-ranking scion in the Oakland City's Heir Leaderboard.

Jerry arrived in the meeting chamber in short order.

He looked pallid and haggard beyond compare, as though he had just recovered from a major illness.

"By the gods, Jerry, what happened to you?" Everyone glared at him in astonishment.

Thud!

Jerry fell to his knee in front of the master of the house of Lehman.

"Mr. Lehman! I'm here to request the annulment of the engagement between Ms. Lopez and myself!"

Jerry choked up as he reconciled with the fact that he could never challenge the God of War for the hand of Zoey.

"What? Haven't we already come to an agreement on his issue? Why the sudden change of heart?" Dale was quite astounded.

"Is it because you dislike that Zoey had a child with someone else?" Edwin added.

Jerry shook his head vigorously. "No! It's nothing of the sort! It's because I'm unworthy of Ms. Lopez! Please consider my request, Mr. Lehman. I implore of you!"

Dale looked at him angrily. "What is your justification? Explain yourself!"

Dale was the master of an ancient family – A man who had seen it all.

He knew in a second that something was amiss as nothing about Jerry's erraticism could have escaped his eagle-sharp eyes.

"Speak to me. Tell me what happened exactly that led you to this decision!" Dale was adamant to know why Jerry was backing out.

Jerry sounded like he was on the verge of a nervous breakdown.

"I'm afraid..." he whimpered.

"Huh? What are you raving about? Afraid of what?" Dale pressed.

Jerry gritted his teeth. "Please don't ask anymore, Mr. Lehman. My reasons are personal. Please do agree to the annulment!"

"Aren't you scared of pissing me off then?" The old man erupted.

"I'm not! Annul the engagement, I beg of you! I will bear all the consequences, whatever they may be!" Jerry had left it all on the floor.

I would gladly offend the Lehman family over Levi Garrison.

"Huh?"

Jerry's blatant disregard for death shocked the members of the Lehman family present.

Even Zoey's curiosity was piqued.

What is this about?

What has spooked Jerry Gott so much that it made him so deathly desperate to call off the engagement?

Seeing that Jerry refused to continue further, Dale was dismayed. "You really are determined to keep your lips sealed, aren't you?"

Jerry nodded furiously. "Yes. It's personal and had nothing to do with anyone else."

His obstinate behavior had the elder hopping mad. "You really are convinced that I wouldn't do anything to you, do you?"

"Godfather, let's just leave him be!" Zoey urged.

"Fine. I shall honor the wishes of my daughter!" Dale finally relented.

"Thank you!" Jerry bowed profusely, relieved to be off the hook at long last.

"But don't think that I wouldn't find out just because you choose to kept mum! I will have the truth, one way or another!" Dale bellowed.

The day grew stranger by the moment.

First Conrad Garcia, then it was Jerry Gott.

What's eating them?

"Could it be that Jerry had decided to back out because he is fearful of that rascal Levi?" Dale speculated.

"Surely not, Dad? It's not like they've never met before. How could Levi have frightened off the third-ranking scion on the Heir Leaderboard? It's simply impossible!" Edwin quickly countered.

Zoey, too, did not see how that conjecture could have made sense.

The root cause for Jerry's conduct must run even deeper.

"Right. Where's that Levi Garrison then? Summon him here. I want him to explain himself to you in person!" Dale said as he opted to change the subject.

Zoey felt compelled to ring up Levi.

"Hey, have you arrived in Oakland City?"

"I'm here with Abigail. What's up?"

What's up? The nerve this guy has! Zoey was deeply unhappy to hear those words from Levi. "You're one to ask. Didn't you tell me that you would be here to explain yourself? Why haven't you shown up?"

"I'm sorry. Something else came up that needed my attention. Tell you what – why don't we meet up tomorrow?" Levi sounded apologetic.

Zoey scoffed. "It would seem to me that you never had the intention to see this through. If you wanted, you would have come over to the Lehman's to see me right away!"

"Alright. I'll be there soon! It's about time I properly thanked your godfather as well!"

Levi then parted ways with Abigail and made haste to the Lehman estate.

When Levi arrived, he was intercepted at the door.

"Wasn't I expected? Why deny me access now?" Levi frowned.

"You may enter, but not on your feet. You must come in obeisance!" Edwin stated coldly.

"What?"

"Aren't you ashamed of having disappeared on Zoey this past year and a half? Asking you to crawl in on your knees is meant to cleanse you of your sins!"

"Kneel! Repent!"

"Kneel! Repent!"

Levi surveyed the vicinity as the Lehman guards echoed in unison all around him.

This was what Dale had planned out for Levi.

Kneel first, talk later!

Levi regarded the spectators coldly and did not seem like he was going to comply.

"Where is your sincerity? Where is your guilt? Don't you think she has done enough to earn your repentance?" Edwin chided.

Upon hearing that, Levi was mildly annoyed. "Where is Zoey?"

"She is inside. But if you want to see her, you must show your worth by demonstrating genuflection!"

Levi laughed coldly, "Am I here to explain things, or am I here to bend the knee?"

"We will hear you out, without question. But for that to happen, the kneeling is a prerequisite!"

The Lehman family was especially harsh to Levi as they wanted him to understand in no uncertain terms how displeased they were.

Yet, Zoey had no idea that her family was going to intentionally make things difficult for him.

"Is this what Zoey wants?" Levi inquired.

Edwin nodded. "But of course! If you only knew how upset she was with you!"

Levi smirked.

As someone who understood Zoey better than anyone else, he was positive that there was no way she could be involved in this fiasco.

"Fine then. In that case, I should be going as for me, bending the knee is an impossibility!"

Levi then turned to depart.

"Hey, where do you think you are going?" Edwin bellowed.

Even so, Levi did not look back the slightest bit.

They had only intended to humble him just a little and had not anticipated this reaction.

"Insolence!" Edwin spat angrily.

In the Lehman family's hall.

"Huh? Where is Levi? He told me that he was at the door a minute ago." Zoey asked of Edwin.

Edwin replied, "This Levi Garrison is not a man! Guess what, Zoey? When I gave him a little ticking off outside and commented on how hard it had been for you, that kid blew his top! He also said that you must be insincere and distrustful of him since you were not there to receive him. After that, he questioned the need for him to explain anything! Said you changed the surname of his child, and he did not run away a year and a half and all that crap... I got into an argument with him over it, and then, he decided he was going to leave!"

Edwin added more concoctions into the mix but neglected to mention how he tried to get Levi to prostrate himself.

"Levi Garrison!" Zoey shrieked.

"I couldn't decide whose name the child would take after! My hands were tied as the Garrison family forbade it! You ought to give me a reason for your going missing during this time! If you do not see the need to explain yourself, then I have no wish to hear it!" Zoey was agitated to the point of tears.

"I wish I could deliver one tight slap across the face of that detestable fool!" Dale fumed.

"Right! He clearly had no intention of clearing the air. If he wanted to, surely there was no need to come up to Oakland City as he could have done so in North Hampton. He's obviously playing tricks on us! What more is there to explain? He abandoned his wife and mother. That is the plain truth that had been laid bare!"

Hearing the Lehman family's commentary reduced Zoey to a sobbing mess.

"Mom, don't cry. Don't cry..." Forlevia wiped at her mother's tears with her tiny hands.

In the meantime, Levi did not go back after leaving the Lehmans but made straight for the Garrisons.