

Strongest Mage with the Lust system #Chapter 811: Cold-Hearted People - Read Strongest Mage with the Lust system Chapter 811: Cold-Hearted People

The town was bustling with activity.

All the buildings were full of people, and many more could be seen on the streets, some going about their business and some lying on the corner, sitting or sleeping.

"Is the town lord really not allowing people to stay here for more than a week?" Ellie muttered in surprise.

"It seems way more people survived the sacrifice than I had thought." Max said, feeling his heart lighten.

"If I'm not wrong, most of these should be from the three empires because the major cities there had grade seven protection formations." Esme added.

Max nodded in agreement.

Right then, a young man, who looked no more than eighteen years old, dressed in ordinary grey robes, approached them with a smile.

Surprise flickered in Max's eyes when he saw him because this guy looked similar to East Asian people on Earth.

If his looks had surprised him, his greeting and name surprised him even more.

He cupped his hands in front of him and bowed slightly, "Greetings, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Ling Han. I can help you find accommodations if you want."

'Don't tell me these Chinese people are spread out in all worlds just like it is mentioned in those cultivation novels?' Max thought, his eyes flashing.

Then, another thought crossed his mind: 'Then shouldn't it mean Earth is not an ordinary world either?'

A moment later, he shook his head. 'There is no use in thinking this now. I'll just try to find the truth when I go back.'

Esme and others looked at him, waiting for him to decide whether to avail themselves of this guy's services.

Max used his bloodline sense and scanned Ling Han.

'Four Star, Early Stage.' Max was surprised.

How could he not be?

Seeing how this guy was most likely working at an inn, meaning he didn't have a strong background, but he still managed to reach the Four Star realm at such a young age.

'Is he a genius, or can everyone here progress so fast?' He thought,

Esme seemed to realize what he was thinking and told him through mental communication that because the mana density was higher, people could cultivate faster.

Also, the central plains had several times more resources, and because the powers there weren't controlling mortal rank resources too much, as long as ordinary mages had enough mana stones, they could buy them, or if they were daring enough to venture into the forests and mountains, they could find them there.

This was also why everyone from the kingdoms who knew about the central plains dreamt of living here.

Unfortunately, because of how dangerous the journey was for people beneath the King realm, very few could arrive here.

Max nodded at Ling Han, "Sure. Just tell us how much your fee is."

Ling Han smiled, "Just a hundred high-grade mana stones, young master."

The corner of Max's lips twitched. Was there a need to add 'just'?

'It's a good thing those people didn't know what was good for them.' Max thought, thanking those people who eyed the beauties in his group on their way here. After he dealt with them, he naturally didn't let their wealth go to waste and took it.

Before entering the town, he had a total of three thousand high-grade, almost a million mid-grade, and around half a million low-grade mana stones.

Although Esme and Gene had told him everything in the central plains was expensive, he had thought he wouldn't need to worry about resources for at least a few months, but even before they entered the first town here, he was down nine hundred high-grade mana stones, and this guy, just to help them find a place to stay, wanted a hundred.

He had the urge to shoo him away and try his luck, but seeing how people were forced to sleep on the streets, he suppressed it and nodded, "Alright."

Ling Han smiled and turned around. "Please follow me."

...

A while later, they arrived at an inn called Breeze Inn not far away from the town gate.

Ling Han walked up to the receptionist, a lady in her early twenties, and said with a smile, "Hello, Miss Aki. I brought you some customers."

"I hope they are not dirt poor like the ones you brought earlier." She said in displeasure and glanced at Max's group.

Immediately, her expression turned awkward. "Ah, please don't mind words just now, Senior Emperor. It's just that most people who come from the desolate region don't have..."

"How much do you charge for a room?" Max interrupted her.

Though it was understandable that she looked down on people from the desolate region since most really might not have enough high-grade mana stones, he still didn't like it, and what displeased him even more was the fact that despite knowing what the people from the desolate region had gone through, these people had not even a hint of sympathy in their hearts. Instead of trying to accommodate them as much as possible, they had raised their prices, intent on extorting them.

The guards were the same, Ling Han was the same, and he was sure this inn owner was also the same.

Aki narrowed her eyes, a hint of anger flashing within them.

How dare a mere Four Star mage interrupt her, a King mage, so disrespectfully?

She was about to scold him when Esme released her aura. "Did you not hear him?"

Aki's expression turned dark, but she nodded. "I did hear him. It's just that his rudeness took me off guard."

Max glanced at Ling Han and said, "Bring us to another place."

"Ah, young master, other places might not have—" Ling Han began saying while signalling Aki to appease them.

However, before he could finish his sentence, Max interrupted him, "Do you really think so?"

This silenced Ling Han. He obviously knew other inns also had empty rooms since very few people could afford to stay in them, but he fell into a dilemma.

He earned some commission from this inn, not others. So, not only would he miss out on the commission if he took them to some other inn, it would displease Aki, and she might forbid him from bringing any more people.

He looked at Aki, who was expressionless, but he knew she was simmering in anger, and he would really no longer have anything to do with the Breeze Inn if he agreed to Max's request.

After struggling for a few moments, he gritted his teeth and nodded, "Okay. Please follow me, young master."

"Ling Han!" Aki shouted out, surprised and furious, "Have you thought this through?"

Ling Han turned to her and bowed his head, "Please forgive me, Miss Aki. I have already taken money from them. So, I have to do my duty."

"Good!" Aki nodded, killing intent flashing in her eyes. "Find some other inn to do your duty. You are no longer allowed to step in this establishment. If you do, I'll kill you on the spot."

A pained look flashed in Ling Han's eyes when he heard this. Then, he nodded, "I understand," and led them out of the inn.

Max, Esme, and others looked at Ling Han in surprise. They hadn't expected him to go against her for them.

"You are not too bad." Max couldn't help but say, which made Ling Han smile bitterly and shake his head. "Many call me foolish."

"You should always do what your heart says is right. Everything else doesn't matter." Max said.

Anna looked at him when he said this, her eyes flashing. Then she fell into deep thought.

"You are not wrong, young master. But it's not easy ignoring everything else." Ling Han sighed and chuckled wryly, "This was the fifth inn I have been banned from."

Max's eyelids twitched when he heard this, but his impression of him grew. Esme and others also gave him another look, which made Ling Han squirm uneasily.

"How many inns are there in this town?" Max asked,

"Around fifty," Ling Han said after a thought.

Max shrugged nonchalantly, "What's there to worry about then?"

Ling Han understood what he meant and couldn't help saying, "Young master, it isn't easy finding work in another inn after others have banned me. It's only because of the sudden spike in the number of people coming from the desolate region that Miss Aki even allowed me to work for them."

Max nodded in understanding. Reputation was indeed a thing.

"Why don't you go to some other town? It's not like you are a native of this town." Gene said before asking, "You are not, right?"

Ling Han nodded, "Yeah, I am not."

"Then just go to some other town when you are no longer able to find work here." Gene said. She then thought of something and asked, "You are... a Four Star mage, right?"

"Yes," Ling Han nodded.

"Then why don't you just leave the border region and head toward the inner region? With your strength, you can easily find a good-paying job there."

Ling Han sighed but didn't say anything in response.

His silence told them he also had some difficulties of his own. They didn't try to pry into it, as they weren't so familiar with each other.

A short while later, they arrived at another inn half a mile away from the Breeze Inn. He went in to ask whether they had empty rooms.

A while later, he led them inside.

The receptionist was a gray-haired, middle-aged man. Just like Aki, he was also a King Mage.

Max couldn't help but sigh at the difference between the Green Leaf kingdom and the central plains.

Just a border town's inns had King mages working as receptionists, while in the Green Leaf Kingdom, the King mages were extremely rare and were top figures who people couldn't ever imagine doing such odd jobs.

"Welcome, everyone. Please tell me how many rooms you want." The man greeted them with a polite smile. He then gestured to a board behind him that had the prices of rooms written while explaining,

The inn was four stories tall.

The ground floor was the dining area.

The rooms on the first floor cost 100 high-grade mana stones per day, and a maximum of three people were allowed to stay in one room.

The second floor's rooms cost 200 high-grade mana stones per day. Unlike the first floor's rooms, there was no maximum limit set for the people that could stay in a single room.

The third floor's rooms were the most expensive, with a room costing 500 high-grade mana stones per day. But they guaranteed the privacy and safety of the occupants, and there were free meals.

Everyone's expressions darkened when they read this.

Max turned around, wanting to leave, but Ling Han stopped him and whispered, "Young master, don't be hasty. Compared to other inns, this one's prices and services are decent."

Max narrowed his eyes at him, causing him to hurriedly explain, "I know you must be concerned about the privacy and security on the first two floors, but there is no need to worry.

Even if you rent them, no one below the emperor realm will be able to spy on you, as there are grade six isolation formations in the rooms. And as long as someone in the emperor realm doesn't try to barge into your room, the inn wouldn't allow anyone to reach your room without your explicit permission.

As for why the third floor's rooms guarantee privacy and safety, it's simply because those rooms have grade seven formations that only you'll be able to control from inside your rooms."

Max raised his brows and glanced at the middle-aged man. "Is what he said true?"

The middle-aged man nodded, "Yes."

"Then you should've just mentioned it on the board to avoid people from misunderstanding." Max scoffed.

The middle-aged man smiled, "You are not wrong."

Max's lips twitched. His expression told him this was done deliberately.

Shaking his head, he took out five hundred mana stones and said, "Give us three rooms, two on the second floor and one on the first."

"Sure thing." The man nodded, took out three wooden badges from the drawer, two bronze-colored and one silver, with room numbers written on them.

"Here. Please enjoy your stay."

Max took the badges from him and turned toward his group before handing one silver badge to Esther and the other to Noah.

"You, Anna, Gene, Rima and Ellie take one room, and Noah, you and this..." Max began speaking when he realized he didn't know the name of the woman beside him.

Noah had apparently fallen in love with her when Max was in the Cloud Academy, and though they had not married yet, they were clearly man and woman, and seeing Esther and Anna had no objection to her, they clearly accepted her as a family member.

If he was to be honest, she had impressed him by not leaving Noah's side after Ashton crippled him and the tragedy befell the Garfield family.

Although she wasn't too beautiful, she had gentle features and was pleasant to look at.

Seeing Max didn't know her name, she didn't show any displeasure, and his bloodline sense told him she wasn't feeling any either.

"I'm called Nyra, brother-in-law." She said, lightly bowing her head in his direction.

Max felt a little awkward but didn't show it on his face and nodded before addressing Noah, "You and Nyra stay in the second room."

Esther, Anna, Gene, and Esme looked at him with raised eyebrows before looking at Ella, who had her head lowered, a light blush adorning her cheeks.

"You..." Gene pointed at him, clearly angered, but seeing Esme give her a look, she just harrumphed, turned around, and climbed the stairs.

Esther, Rima and Anna did the same. After giving her mother a concerned look, Ellie also went upstairs.

Noah awkwardly nodded at him before taking Nyra's hand and heading up too, leaving Max, Esme, and Ella standing there. Oh, right, Ling Han was still here.

Max acted as if he didn't sense the awkward atmosphere and glanced at him. "What is it?"

He had already paid him, and since he had helped them find a place to stay, his work was done, but he was still standing there.

Ling Han waved his hand and took out fifty high-grade mana stones and sent them flying toward him, saying, "Here, young master. I only charge fifty. The reason I told you it was a hundred was because I wanted to see whether you would be able to afford Breeze Inn's rent."

"Oh? I see." Max nodded, thought for a moment before sending them back toward him, "I appreciate you telling me this, but since I have already given them to you, just keep them."

Ling Han didn't show much hesitation and put them away before bowing toward him, "Thank you, young master. Now, please excuse me."

After he left the inn, Max took Esme and Ella to the room on the first floor. Though the first floor's isolation formation should be the weakest out of the three floors, with his bloodline energy, he didn't need to worry about anyone spying on them.

After they left, the grey-haired middle-aged man chuckled lightly, "What a guy! Ai, I wish I was young too."

...

The room wasn't too big but was spacious enough.

A large bed on which three people could sleep comfortably was placed in the middle. On the left side was a table with three chairs, and placed near the right wall were three cultivation mats.

The first thing Max did after entering the room was to conjure an isolation barrier with his bloodline energy.

He then walked over to the bed and flopped on it.

"Nice!"

Feeling the cushiony mattress under him, he couldn't help but let out a comfortable groan.

Though he carried a bed in his spatial ring, because everyone else was sleeping on the ground and makeshift beds on the journey, he did the same. The only times he used the bed were when he got intimate with Esme.

Esme smiled seeing this and then looked at Ella and asked, her voice carrying a hint of envy and desire, "Is it... My Lord's?"

Ella blushed. Touching the slight bulge on her abdomen, she shook her head, "No. It's my late husband's."

"Oh, I see." Esme almost sounded relieved, which even she didn't notice.

"I'm sorry for your loss." She said, "If you don't mind me asking, how did he die?"

A pained and sad look flashed in Ella's eyes as she recalled the memories of that day and said, "It was demons. They suddenly appeared in our village and started slaughtering people left and right. Everyone died. If Lord Max hadn't come on time, I and Ellie would have died too."

Esme became silent. Then, after a while, she grabbed her hand and brought her to the bed.

Ignoring Max, they sat down next to each other and started making small talk.

Max smiled wryly.

He knew after realizing Ella was also his woman, Esme was trying to get familiar with her so there wouldn't be any awkwardness between them, but she was also doing this to make her dissatisfaction known.

'No matter, after I pamper her, all her dissatisfaction will vanish.' He thought, a lewd smile appearing on his face.

Esme suddenly felt as if she was being eyed by a beast and shivered. Knowing this beast was none other than Max, she blushed, anticipation building within her heart, already knowing he would be giving her a lot more attention in a while to coax her.

After resting for a while, Max stood up, and both Esme and Ella straightened their backs.

Noticing this, Max chuckled, shamelessly saying, "Relax, ladies. I'm going to take a bath first before I take you."

As soon as he finished, he rushed away, not staying and giving Esme an opportunity to scold him.

Both ladies' faces had become red from embarrassment, and when their gazes met accidentally, they almost melted from shame.

After a while, Ella gathered her courage and said, "Lord Max seems to like you a lot."

Esme blushed while a sweet feeling rose in her heart. She really liked hearing this, but quickly regaining her senses, she said, "Since you are also his woman, I'm sure he will like you the same."

Ella smiled wryly, not believing her because if this were to be the case, he would have taken her too in this past month, but he didn't even touch her.

Suddenly, Ella's eyes widened. 'Wait! Am I envious of her?'

The realization made Ella stare blankly in front of her while tears fell from her eyes.

Esme was shaken out of her embarrassment when she saw her crying and hurriedly asked, "What is it, Lady Ella? Why are you suddenly crying?"

Immediately after she asked, her eyes flashed with realization. 'She is feeling guilty.'

Ella seemed to have not heard her and continued staring blankly, her face rapidly turning pale.

Seeing this, Esme's expression turned solemn, and she hit the back of her head, immediately knocking her out.

...

Max took a nice and long bath, thoroughly scrubbing his body clean. Even if he could use his mana to clean himself, the feeling of taking a bath was different.

"I should do it often." He muttered,

After he was done, he evaporated the droplets of water with a wave of his fire elemental mana and donned a loose robe before leaving the bathroom.

Just as he stepped into the room, his brows furrowed when he saw Ella passed out and Esme deep in thought.

"What happened?" He asked.

Esme looked up at him and said with a sigh, "She realized she was falling for you, and this made her guilty."

Saying this, she added, "It's all my fault. If I hadn't asked her about her late husband, causing her to remember him, this wouldn't have happened."

Max stayed silent.

He knew women were emotional creatures. And unlike the majority of women on Earth, who were becoming increasingly disloyal, most women here, at least the ones he had encountered until now with the sole exception of Eva, were loyal. So, if they had to betray their lover or spouse, they would naturally feel guilty and would be repulsed by themselves.

...

Ten minutes later, he walked out of the room, dressed in proper clothes, and headed upstairs.

Since Ella had experienced intense emotions and Esme was blaming herself for it, they needed time, which meant he had to wait before he could make love to them.

Since this was the case, he decided to explore the town. He asked Esme to accompany him, but she refused, wanting to stay and take care of Ella in case she suddenly regained consciousness and once again fell into the endless spiral of self-loathing and intense guilt.

He could go alone but realized it was an opportunity to spend some alone time with Anna and help her clear her mind.

Since he had seen the room badges, he knew the room numbers.

Knock! Knock!

He knocked on the door and stepped back.

Just a few seconds later, he felt someone looking at him and realized it was Esther and others using the formations to see who was outside.

A moment later, Esther opened the door, a surprised and confused look in her eyes.

Though she didn't speak, the look on her face was clearly saying, 'How come you are here instead of being with your women? Were you not able to appease them?'

Feeling awkward, he rubbed the tip of his nose before saying, "I'm going to explore the town a bit and wondered whether Anna wanted to come along."

Esther's gaze sharpened, and she stepped out, closing the door behind her.

'Uh, oh.' Max almost sighed seeing this, already knowing what was coming, and he wasn't sure if he was in the right state of mind to deal with that.

But what could he do? Tell her they would talk about it later? Wouldn't that be too presumptuous of him?

"You and Anna... What's going on between you two?" She didn't beat around the bush and directly asked.

Max also was straightforward and said, "We love each other. It's just that we haven't been able to consummate our love yet. And everything that has happened in the past

few months has made her emotionally vulnerable. So, after seeing me be with other women, she is disappointed and angry at me and is confused about whether she really wants to be with a philanderer like me."

Esther stared at him, slight astonishment flashing in her eyes.

After noticing the tension between Anna and him, she already knew they held feelings for each other, so his confession didn't surprise her. What surprised her, however, was his straightforwardness and lack of hesitation to admit it.

She stayed silent for a while.

Max patiently waited for her to speak and stopped using his bloodline sense, not wanting to invade her privacy without a reason.

"Max..." She finally said, her expression solemn, "I think you two should end things here."

"Why?" Max narrowed his eyes, suddenly feeling displeasure and anger rising in his heart. Did she want him to stay away from the woman he loved?

Max knew he was being a little too possessive and knew the reason behind it. If this were any other time, he would have tried to suppress his surging emotions, but at this moment, he didn't bother to because he really felt this way.

She was his woman. Unless she herself said she didn't want to be with him, he wouldn't let anyone else butt in, regardless of who they were.

But when he heard her reasoning, he calmed down.

"You two belong to two different categories. You are a genius in cultivation, while Anna clearly is not. Because of her limited talent, she wouldn't be able to accompany you... for long. When the time comes for her to... both of you will be hurt." Esther said.

Max took a deep breath and nodded. "I understand what you mean. But what if I... have a way to help her reach higher realms?"

Esther raised her brows, surprise and even shock flashing in her eyes. Then, after a moment, she nodded, "Then there is no problem. Just make sure... you don't leave each other no matter what."

Max saw the pain in the depths of her eyes when she said the last part.

She was about to turn around and open the door when he grabbed her hand, stopping her.

Esther looked at him, waiting for him to say what he wanted.

"Will you... forgive him if he comes to his senses and returns to you?" He asked.

"I... won't." She answered without much hesitation, though her heart beat slowed down and her fists were clenched when she said this.

She turned around, placed her hand on the door, and said, "I also like to think it's his bloodline that influenced him, changed him, but... if he wasn't like that deep down, he would have been able to resist its influence, no matter how strong it was. Moreover..."

Her voice turned cold and slightly hoarse, affected by her emotions. "...I saw it in his eyes before he left with them, that apathy and coldness. He knew Amelia had died, but he didn't feel even a hint of sadness. He knew the rest of us might die as well as the situation worsened, but he was completely uncaring."

Finished saying this, she took a deep breath and wiped her eyes with her sleeves. Then, she pushed open the door and entered the room. "Wait a moment, I'll ask if she wants to go with you."

Max stared at her back view in a daze, his thoughts muddled.

He didn't know how much time had passed when he heard Anna's concerned voice, "Little Max? Are you alright?"

Immediately, he snapped back to his senses and forced all the thoughts to the back of his mind.

"Y-Yes, I'm fine. Was just thinking about something." He said, forcing a smile on his face.

Then he noticed she was wearing a new dress, which made him relieved and happy. Since she dressed up to go out with him, she clearly wasn't as angry with him as he thought she was.

"You look beautiful!" He blurted out before he knew it.

"Thank you." Anna nodded, a hint of glee appearing in her eyes, but it was quickly overshadowed by her concern.

She wanted him to share his worries with her, but seeing he wasn't willing to tell her, she didn't ask again.

But she realized something—he was carrying too much burden on his shoulders.

'No matter how I was feeling, I shouldn't have treated him so coldly,' she thought, feeling bad for her behavior this past month.

A while later, they left the inn and were walking on the streets, taking in everything they saw and heard.

"Strength is really important," Anna muttered when she saw people sleeping on the streets, looking haggard and miserable.

Most of these people were weaker than Five Star because those in the Five Star realm or above were able to find a place to stay even if they didn't have enough mana stones.

"It indeed is," Max agreed.

Just then, they heard a commotion, and many people gathered in the distance.

"Let's see what's happening there," Max said, and after hesitating a little, he extended his hand toward her.

Anna looked at his outstretched hand, took a breath, and grabbed it, which put a bright smile on Max's face.

Seeing this, Anna felt a surge of warmth in her heart.

When they reached the crowd, Max forced his way in. This naturally displeased the people who were standing in his way, but before they could lash out at him, he swept his gaze across them, and they immediately stiffened in place.

Max ignored them and pulled Anna in with him.

Most of these people were weaker than Five Star, so when he enveloped them in his aura, they realized he was a lot stronger than them, making them dare not mess with him.

"Please don't do this! My family is starving."

Max and Anna saw a mid-stage Five Star mage wailing on the ground, looking at two people—Peak Five Star mages—who stood in front of him.

"Hmph! How does that concern us?" One of them scoffed coldly. "Now disappear from my sight, or I'll kill you on the spot."

Confused, Max asked a female Four Star mage standing beside him, "What's happening here?"

The female mage glanced at the Five Star mage duo and hurriedly shook her head.
"Ask someone else."

Max didn't mind her and glanced at a man standing nearby, a low-stage Five Star mage.

However, before he could even ask, the man's lips curled up in disdain, and he ignored him, making Max sigh and release his aura.

Yi!

Immediately, the man shivered.

[Kindly tell me what's going on here, sir,] Max asked via mental communication.

The man gave him a wary look and hurriedly explained what was going on before leaving the crowd.

After Max heard him, his eyes turned cold.

The man on the ground was a survivor from the desolate region, which he had already realized. Having spent all his savings on the town's entry fee, he and his family of three were broke and had nothing to eat.

Desperate, he found work in their Inn. He was to clean the empty rooms and work as a waiter in the inn's restaurant.

Today, it was his third day working there, and as they had agreed when he started working, he was supposed to get paid today, but right before his shift ended, he was moving dirty dishes when someone made him trip, causing the dishes to fall down and shatter.

Not only did these two, who were apparently from the central plains and part of the inn's management, ignore the real culprit who made him trip, but they also beat him before throwing him out.

When he asked about his pay, they beat him up again and said his pay would be used to settle the loss the inn suffered because of it.

Noticing his expression, Anna asked him what he found out. When he told her everything, Anna's expression frosted over.

"These bastards, they really don't treat people from the desolate region as humans," she said through gritted teeth.

How could she not be angry? It was evident he was set up, and the inn didn't have any intention of paying him from the beginning.

As soon as she said this, a hushed silence fell over the place.

Swoosh!

All the surrounding people moved away from her like she was some plague.

Killing intent flashed in the two Peak Five Star mages' eyes as they moved their attention from the man on the ground to Anna.

"Did you just curse us?" one of them asked, his voice cold.

Anna realized she had brought unnecessary trouble to them, but she was too angry right now and met his gaze and said in an equally cold voice,

"Did you expect me to praise you after seeing how ruthlessly you are exploiting a desperate person?"

"You got courage, little beauty." The other man laughed, his gaze looking her up and down. Then, he licked his lips and sneered, "But you are going to pay a terrible price for disrespecting us."

He then walked toward her, step by step, his aura flaring out and enveloping Max and Anna.

Anna's expression turned pale. She was just an early-stage Three Star mage. How could she endure a Peak Five Star mage's aura?

However, right then, she felt Max give her hand a reassuring squeeze. Immediately after which, the oppression of the aura vanished without a trace.

She glanced at him, a guilty look on her face. "I'm sorry for inviting unnecessary trouble."

Max smiled. "There is no need to apologize. I would have taken action regardless."

Anna bit her lip and nodded.

She wasn't worried in the slightest about these two because she had already seen Max deal with people stronger than them.

However, knowing they were part of the main management of the inn, she knew stronger ones would come out after he dealt with them.

'Should I message Esme?' she thought.

The man's eyes narrowed when he saw they were unaffected by his aura.

Immediately, his focus shifted from Anna to Max, a hint of surprise and caution appearing in his eyes.

But then he saw them converse as though he didn't exist, and his temper flared.

"Die, you bastard!"

With an enraged shout, he flashed in front of Max and punched toward his head, wanting to kill him before dealing with Anna.

Max stared into his eyes, his own flashing crimson as he slowly reached out with his hand and...

Pat!

Easily captured his fist.

The man's pupils constricted into pinholes.

Although he hadn't used any magic spell in the punch, his mana and aura were reinforcing it. Even a high-stage Five Star mage would have difficulty blocking it, but he, a mere Peak Four Star mage, blocked it, and seemingly without any effort at that.

'He hadn't used any magic artifact to negate my aura's effects.' Realization struck him.

Horrified, he wanted to pull back, not wanting to face this monster of a person, but... no matter how hard he tried, he couldn't pull his fist out of Max's grasp.

His companion was feeling dissatisfied because he had the same intentions as him—he wanted to lay his hands on Anna first but was slow to react, causing him to lose the opportunity.

After seeing the scene playing out in front of him, however, all his dissatisfaction vanished, and he even let out a sigh of relief.

He had realized Max was one of those monsters who could battle across realms, and seeing how completely unbothered he looked facing his companion, who was no weaker than him, he knew they were definitely not his match, at least not individually.

However, he didn't want to join forces because no matter what, Max was a savage from the desolate region and was just a Four Star mage. How humiliating would it be to join forces against him?

Just as he was sighing in relief and thinking what he should do...

"Ryder, come help me!" He heard his companion's shout, which made him curse him in his heart.

'You want me to suffer with you, bastard, don't you?'

However...

Despite his reluctance, he had no choice but to help him because not only were they fellow workers, but also because if people saw he was scared of Max, he would be even more humiliated.

Swoosh!

Just as he took a step forward, rushing toward Max, he saw Max raise his other hand, and then...

Crack!

Bang!

He heard a crisp bang and saw his companion's head explode and watched, horrified, as red and white matter flew in his direction and stained him from head to toe.

"You... You killed him?!" He asked in disbelief.

Max calmly pulled his hand back and released the now dead man's fist, letting him fall to the ground.

Thud!

As everyone shuddered, Max nodded, his eyes filled with killing intent, as he uttered coldly, "Just the fact he wanted to kill me was enough for him to die, but he had to go and harbor ill intentions for my woman. How could I not kill him?"

Anna stared at him in a daze, her heart racing.

"Do you... not know we are from the central plains?" Ryder asked, not able to understand what gave him the courage to kill someone from the central plains.

Shouldn't he be afraid of them? They had, after all, strong backing, while he was just a refugee in their home.

"I do," Max nodded, taking a step toward him, "But, so what?"

Ryder inhaled sharply and...

Swoosh!

Immediately turned around and rushed toward the Inn. He knew he had met an unreasonable fellow, and seeing how his killing intent still hadn't vanished, he knew Max wanted to kill him too.

How could he have the courage to stay there and face him?

Though he made the good decision, how could Max let him leave? After all, he also had lewd intentions regarding Anna in his heart.

Swoosh!

Max appeared behind him, grabbed his neck, and lifted him up in the air as though he was nothing but an ordinary man and slammed him down on the ground.

BANG!

Kuhhgg~!

The violent impact shook Ryder's organs, causing them to rupture, while many of his bones, including the spinal cord, snapped. Blood burst out from his mouth, nose, and ears while his eyes went wide, seemingly on the verge of popping out of his eye sockets.

Hiss!

Everyone felt chills run down their spine and took in a cold breath.

"Is he... really just a Peak Four Star mage?"

"It seems so."

"Then why can he manhandle peak Five Star mages without breaking a sweat?"

"...He is a monster!"

While the crowd broke out in murmurs as they watched the scene playing out in front of them with disbelieving looks in their eyes, Max looked down at Ryder and coldly uttered,

"You know why you are going to die, right?"

Ryder's vision was blurry, and because his throat was filled with blood, he could barely croak out a few words.

"P...lease, for...give me. I... don't... guhg... want... to die."

"No one does." Max said, emotionlessly. "Do you think that guy who you were extorting wants to die? No, he does not. That was why he worked in your inn, but did you care whether he and his family would die when you beat him up and threw him out without paying his earnings? No, you did not."

Saying this, Max was about to clench his grip and break his neck, but right then...

"Stay your hand!" A shout echoed.

Max acted as though he didn't hear anything and put strength in his grip.

Boom!

Right then, a terrifying pressure swept out from the inn in front of him and flung him away.

Swoosh!

While Max tried to regain control of his body in midair, a man in red robes appeared beside Ryder.

He looked down at him and noticed that... Ryder was already dead.

His expression darkened, and he shouted, glaring at Max, who had just managed to land on the ground and was wiping the blood from the corner of his lips.

"How audacious!"

Boom!

His aura flared, and everyone standing around him was flung away, crashing into the building on each side of the street.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Max's eyes narrowed the moment he released his aura because Anna was standing just a few meters away from him; however, before he could move to protect her, the man appeared in front of him, his hand clawing toward his neck to capture him.

Max's anger flared, and he released his aura field, strengthened by his bloodline energy, to slow him down while the mixture of fire elemental mana and his bloodline energy converged around his right fist, setting it ablaze with dark crimson fire.

Without hesitation, he punched toward his claw.

The attacker was a mid-stage King mage, and being someone from the central plains, he was significantly stronger than the King mage of the desolate region and a lot more prideful—mainly because Max was a savage of the desolate region.

So, when he saw him release his aura field to stop him, disdain flashed in his eyes, but it soon turned into slight surprise because it had managed to slow him by a beat.

He snorted and released his own aura to counter, instantly relieving all the pressure off him.

Then he saw Max prepare an attack, and he immediately flew into a rage.

Did this ant really think it could resist him? How delusional!

Before, he was simply going to grab him, but now he covered his hand in his mana and clawed toward Max's incoming fist, wanting to crush it into a bloody pulp.

However...

Bang!

When Max's blazing fist rammed into his claw, his expression changed drastically because he could feel his skin burning and the bones in his palm and fingers about to shatter.

Swoosh!

He immediately pulled his hand back and jumped away while slapping with his other hand, manifesting a palm imprint.

Unlike the simple grab just now, this palm was a magic spell attack and contained over seventy percent of his strength.

Max's expression turned somber, and without hesitation, he unleashed the strongest attack in his repertoire—the Annihilation Finger.

His mana and bloodline energy rushed out of his body in large quantities before fusing to create a slender finger that radiated extreme might and flew toward the incoming palm.

BOOM!

When they clashed against each other, they exploded in a storm of energy, the shockwaves of which sent Max—who couldn't dodge in time because he wasn't able to react after activating his bloodline ability—flying and created a large crater in the middle of the street.

Shockwaves hit the building too, but the defensive formation activated briefly and negated them.

"How is this possible?!"

Seeing Max managed to defend against his attack, the man was shocked beyond belief.

How could he not when Max was two entire realms below him?

'This guy is a monster.' He also realized this, and his killing intent skyrocketed.

He had to kill Max now more than ever because no matter how powerful his background was, he couldn't afford to offend someone like Max and let him live.

'I'm still no match for a decent King mage, huh?' Max thought, picking himself up from the ground, his gaze locked onto the attacker.

'Fortunately, it won't be long before I can break through to Five Star; otherwise, I would have no choice but to remain extremely cautious while I'm in the central plains.' He thought.

He could see the man had decided to kill him. So, his next attack wouldn't be something he could defend against... if he didn't use his trump card, the Nascent or Death Energy.

But the problem was, he didn't want to expose them.

The next moment, his gaze became steely, and the black core orbiting around his mana core trembled.

As Death Energy surged out from Max's dantian and into his mana veins, the man suddenly felt a sense of danger arise in his heart, which doused his burning killing intent and made him frown.

He didn't want to believe he felt this premonition because of Max, but since it was already established Max was no ordinary mage, he had no choice but to believe it.

He gritted his teeth and hesitated whether to disregard the premonition or not.

In the end, he took a deep breath, and even as his expression turned ugly and his mind cried at him to kill Max lest he become a problem in the future, he decided to stay his hand—he didn't want to be seriously injured or, worse, die while trying to prevent a future problem; it wasn't worth it.

Surprise flickered in Max's eyes when he felt his opponent's killing intent recede like a tide.

'What an extraordinary sense of danger!' He exclaimed in his heart. After thinking for a moment, he decided to suppress his rage for him and returned the Death Energy back to his dantian.

If he could avoid exposing it, even if he had to compromise on taking his revenge for him attacking him immediately, he would.

Besides, he had already killed the main culprits who originally incited his killing intent.

The man sighed in his heart when he felt the sense of danger disappear. He then thought for a moment and swept his gaze across the crowd.

When he noticed the man who Ryder and his companion had thrown out lying against the wall of a nearby building, looking listless, he waved his hand and sent a hundred high-grade mana stones flying toward him.

"Your three days' pay is 45 high-grade mana stones. The extra 55 is for the injustice you faced and for your injuries."

The man's listless eyes brightened when he heard him and saw the mana stones flying toward him. Quickly jumping to his feet, he grabbed them and stored them in his spatial ring.

After that, he bowed toward the king mage before giving Max a deep bow and said in a voice full of sincerity, "Thank you, young master. I'll never forget the life-saving help you have provided me. Thank you so much!"

Max nodded and waved his hand. "It's alright. Now, go and feed your family." He then glanced at the king mage before saying to the man, "I'll be staying in this town for one or two days. If you encounter any problem, come find me in the Candle's Inn."

The man gave him another deep bow before leaving the place.

The King Mage watched on expressionlessly as the man left. When he noticed Max had turned his gaze over to him, he took a deep breath and clasped his hand toward him and said, "I'm ashamed of my rash behavior just now. I should've tried to find out what was happening before taking action."

Saying this, he took out a pill bottle and threw it toward Max. "Here, take these Grade Six Mana Surge Pills as a token of my apology."

"What? Grade Six Mana Surge Pills?"

Someone in the crowd cried out in surprise, but when the king mage swept a displeased gaze over, he immediately fell silent, and others who were about to discuss his apology token kept their mouths sealed.

Max looked at the pill bottle curiously. He didn't know what effects these pills had, as it was his first time hearing of this name, but since they were Grade Six pills, they were clearly worth quite a bit, so his sincerity could be seen from this.

He thought for a moment before looking at him.

"What's your name?" He asked,

The king mage knitted his brows. Shouldn't he just forget about the matter and be on his way since he had already apologised and have given him such an expensive gift? What's the point of asking his name?

After hesitating for a moment, though, he succinctly said, "I'm John."

"Oh? You don't have a family name? That's... sad." Max said, looking at him with a look of pity on his face.

John's expression turned dark, killing intent once again flashing in his eyes. Only the bastard children didn't have a family name, so by saying this, he was insinuating that he, John, was a bastard.

How could he not be angry?

However, since Max seemed to possess a trump card strong enough to make him feel dread, and seeing how he was completely unafraid, casually revealing he was going to stay in the town for a few more days, he guessed he had good backing, possibly a few emperors behind him.

So, he drank his rage and said, "Raelion, I'm John Raelion."

"I see," Max nodded. "I accept your apology, Sir Raelion. I just hope your inn no longer treats people of the desolate region any differently. We are all natives of the human continent, after all."

In the crowd, most were from the desolate region and nodded in appreciation upon hearing him.

But then they sighed in their hearts, knowing his words would make no difference because John and everyone else from the central plains were used to looking down on them and thought that they were nothing but savages.

"I understand," John nodded before turning around and entering his inn, his heart aflame with fury. Ever since he came to this town, he had not been so humiliated.

When he entered the inn, he saw many of his employees had strange looks on their faces, which they were trying hard to hide. Immediately, he had the urge to beat them

up, but because there were many guests there, he controlled himself, which made him even more frustrated and angry.

"Send number 3 and 4 to my room." He coldly ordered an employee and entered the room behind the reception desk.

A while later, two girls, dressed in maid uniforms, entered the room, swaying their hips.

Seeing him sitting on the bed with a dark look on his face, they went toward him and knelt on their knees near his legs.

As they moved their hands up his legs, they asked, "What orders do you have, my Lord?"

Slap!

John slapped their hands away and coldly ordered, "I want you to find as much as you can about that bastard. You have until nightfall to report back to me."

"We understand," The girls nodded in unison, stood up, and left the room.

[A/N: Thank you very much Brave827 for the Gift!]

After John left, Max walked over to Anna's side.

"You are injured?"

When he saw there was a small wound on her forehead, he felt his suppressed rage start to boil again, but Anna shook her head and said, "It's nothing serious."

Seeing it was not enough to calm him down, she took a step forward, grabbed his hand in hers, and while looking into his eyes, she said in a serious tone,.

"I know you care for me, no, all of us, and want to keep us safe, but you have to know we are also mages. If you keep us sheltered, we won't be able to grow, and I want to grow stronger so instead of a burden, I could become a shoulder that you can rely upon when in need."

"You are not a—" Max began to say when she interrupted him and spoke in a slightly raised voice,

"I know you don't think that, but... I do. When I see you fight alone, carrying all the burden and worries, I feel helpless and miserable inside. Despite wanting to help you out, carry some of your burden, I can do nothing but watch. It's frustrating."

Max stared at her in a daze. He had also thought about this matter but was afraid they would be harmed, which he didn't want to see.

Anna recovered her composure after a few moments, and when she saw him blankly staring at her, she blushed and became anxious.

'Did I anger him?' She thought and was about to say something when she saw Max suddenly smile bitterly and heard him say,

"I always thought I wasn't selfish enough, but now I realize I've been too selfish. Because I was afraid of seeing you getting hurt, I tried to shield you all from hardship—even though, deep down, I knew my doing so was holding you back more than helping you."

Anna shook her head, unable to bear to see him blame himself. "No, don't say that. You were just—"

Max smiled, "It's alright, Anna. I know I was wrong. I should've thought about you all too."

Taking a deep breath, he added, "Thank you for saying that and helping me realize this."

Anna's beautiful eyes became misty, but she had a smile on her lips as she nodded silently in response.

"Hey, no need to be so emotional." Max chuckled roguishly before wiping her eyes, which made Anna pout and glare at him threateningly, "Do you want to get beaten?"

Max acted afraid and quickly shook his head. "No, please forgive my transgression, milady. I shall not tease you anymore."

Anna let out an exasperated sigh and turned to walk in the direction of their inn. "Let's go back. There is nothing to explore in this town."

Max nodded and walked beside her, his hand naturally slipping into hers, which made Anna blush.

After they left, number 3 and number 4, dressed in black robes, left the inn and moved in the direction of Breeze Inn.

As they left, they didn't notice someone was watching them. It was Ling Han, who had watched everything from the crowd.

"He is a good man and has great potential, but his temper is also great." He muttered, smiling wryly. Then, he vanished from the place without anyone noticing.

...

Max and Anna had just returned to the Candle's Inn when they heard a few people nearby discuss something animatedly.

"Is this true? A peak emperor power in the central plains is really allowing people of the desolate region to join them?"

"Of course, it is. I heard this from two Central Plains King Mages. I mean, I was nearby when they were talking about it."

"So, what kind of power is this Beast Emperor Hall? Do they have something to do with beasts?"

"I don't know. I just heard they had opened the recruitment."

"As long as you are younger than 25 years and are at least a Three Star mage, you can take part in recruitment tests to become an outer rank disciple. If you pass, you can even take a maximum of three members with you whose safety the Beast Emperor Hall would ensure as long as they follow the rules."

"Then shouldn't we go and try our luck?"

"Yeah, we should, but first we have to find out where this power is situated."

"..."

"..."

"What? They didn't mention its location so how can I know about it? It's my first time stepping foot in the central plains."

"Let's go and ask around..."

...

"Oh? Someone is recruiting people from the desolate region? And with such lax requirements and an attractive incentive?" Anna said in surprise.

Right now, what most of the survivors wanted was to figure out a way to establish themselves in the central plains so they wouldn't starve.

However, because everything was too expensive and their services, especially the lower-ranked mages', weren't needed, coupled with the fact they were looked down on, this had become a tall task.

So, when they suddenly hear that a force, an emperor ranked no less, was cordially inviting them to take part in the recruitment and was even allowing them to take their companions along as long as they passed, wouldn't they immediately flock there?

But as they say, nothing happens without a reason. So, there had to be a reason, a hidden agenda behind this, no? Otherwise, why would they suddenly become so friendly?

"Or maybe people in the deeper regions don't really care where we are from, and it's just these border towns that treat us so badly?" She wondered.

Max shook his head, "I doubt it."

"Doesn't Gran—Esme and Gene—treat us well?" She asked,

"It's because we are family. Besides, when they came, didn't you see they didn't like to interact with anyone?" Max smiled.

Anna nodded. "You are right, but it could be because of—"

"Alright. Let's just go and ask Esme." Max said, which made Anna grumble, "Why hadn't they told us anything about the Central Plains until now? If they had, we could have prepared ourselves."

"Maybe because she didn't want to increase our worries?" Max said, smiling.

While saying this, Max was about to enter the inn when he suddenly turned around, his aura flaring.

Swoosh!

"Wait! It's me, young master."

Max was just about to attack when he heard the cry and saw who it was.

"Ling Han? What are you doing, sneaking up on us like that?" Max asked in displeasure.

"Young master, my apologies for that, but I had something to inform you about, so I rushed over." Ling Han said, bowing his head toward him and then Anna.

"Hm? What is it?" Max asked, retracting his aura.

Phew!

Ling Han exhaled a breath of relief and then said, "We should talk inside, young master."

"Alright. Come in, then." Max nodded, turned around, and entered the inn.

"Welcome back, dear customers. I hope you had a pleasant walk outside." The grey-haired middle-aged man greeted them, raising his head from the small booklet he was reading.

Max glanced at him—he was sitting on the chair, and his legs were placed on the reception desk. Even after seeing them enter, he didn't bother to remove them and sit properly.

Nodding lightly in response, he walked toward the sofas placed in the hall, a few meters away from the reception desk.

He sat down in one with Anna and gestured to him to sit on the other. Ling Han smiled politely before taking the seat.

"So, what is it?" Max asked again. Anna paid attention, curious.

Ling Han nodded and began speaking, "I was nearby when I saw you walk toward that crowd earlier and witnessed everything that happened afterwards."

"Oh? You were there?" Max was surprised, and his gaze became deeper as he looked at him. His bloodline sense was active all the time, so he had taken note of everything as he and Anna strolled through the streets. Therefore, it was difficult for him to miss anything or anyone unless...

"Yes. I was in the distance, so you might not have noticed me." Ling Han nodded, "Anyways, what I came to tell you is that you should be wary of that person, John Raelion, young master."

"Oh? Why is that?" Max asked, his expression turning serious.

Ling Han also wore a solemn expression as he answered, "From what I have heard, he is very vengeful, and even though he isn't too strong himself, the family he comes from—the Raelion family—has three emperor mages, one of whom is his elder brother, Slav Raelion, who is an elder of an emperor-rank power in the inner regions."

After a pause, Ling Han continued, "Because their parents had passed away when they were kids, Slav had raised him and dotes on him very much. No matter what kind of trouble John causes, he always comes to defend him."

Just a month ago, John had taken a fancy on a young girl from the central plains and forced himself on her before killing her. When her family, a peak King rank family, found

out about it, several King Mages descended to kill him, but Slav asked the town lord, who is his friend, to save him and deal with the matter."

"So, it's most likely he will target you, and because young master has scared him, and there is also an emperor in your group, he wouldn't dare to take action himself but will most likely use his brother's name and employ some emperors." Ling Han finished.

Max fell into thought, his brows knitted together in concentration.

He couldn't say he hadn't thought something like this might happen when he clashed with him because even though he was yet to meet anyone who relied on their background to bully others, he knew, since this world was a strength-driven world, it was only a matter of time before he ran into someone.

Anna became worried when she heard this and started blaming herself, "If only I hadn't said that—"

Max put his hand on hers and said in a heavy tone, "Calm down!"

"But little Max. What if he really—"

"Don't worry, we'll find some way to handle it." Max said before glancing at the grey-haired middle-aged man and saying with a light smile, "Worse comes to worst, we'll just rent the rooms on the third floor and stay there until Wyomin and Rose leave the desolate region."

The receptionist's lips twitched when he heard this and thought, 'Should I just... remove the part about safety from the third floor's rooms too?'

His words managed to put Anna's worries at ease a little.

Max then glanced at Ling Han and asked, "Can you keep an eye on him for me? I will pay you."

Ling Han's eyes widened in disbelief, and he began to say, "Young master, it'll be dangerous. If John finds out that I'm—"

"Can he find out though?" Max asked with a meaningful look in his eyes.

Ling Han's lips twitched when he saw this. Then, he let out a sigh and said, "Young master is really an extraordinary person indeed."

Saying this, he stood up and nodded, "Okay. I'll keep an eye on him. As for the payment... we can discuss it later. For now, let me tell you that he has sent two of his people, two women, after you, most likely to find out about your background or maybe to assassinate you. So, be careful."

Dense murderous intent flashed in Max's eyes when he heard this and asked, "How strong are they?"

"Because I'm just a Four Star mage and don't have any identification artifact on me, I couldn't discern their cultivation." Ling Han said, giving him an apologetic look.

But then he continued in a pondering tone, "However, they are surely stronger than me but should be weaker than John."

Saying this, he added, "However... from their movements, they seemed to be skilled assassins, so their lethality can't be determined based on their strength."

Max nodded in understanding. Kriss was a great example of this.

Even though he was just a Five Star mage and most likely would have a hard time dealing with others in the same cultivation realm, he succeeded in assassinating tens, if not hundreds, of Five Star demons on the battlefield and even cut off the head of a Demon King.

"Alright, please excuse me." Ling Han said and left the inn after giving the middle-aged receptionist a respectful nod.

Max watched him leave in silence, his eyes flickering in thought.

Anna kept quiet, not daring to disturb his thoughts.

"Come, let's tell everyone about this." Max said after a while as he stood up to head upstairs.

[A/N: Kindly read the note in author's thoughts. Thank you and have a wonderful day/night everyone!]

chapter 820

In one of the rooms on the second floor, Esther, Garima, Rima, Maria, Gene, Ellie, Nyra, and Noah were sitting on the bed, sofas, and chairs, wearing grim expressions on their faces as they stared at Anna and Max.

Anna was clenching the hem of her sleeves as she kept her head down, an apologetic expression apparent on her face.

Sitting beside her, Max looked calm and unbothered. Even if he was worried, he couldn't show it on his face as he was the group's backbone and moral support.

"Anna..." Esther broke the silence and called out to her. Anna, however, didn't dare to raise her head and meet her gaze.

Esther sighed and stood up from the bed and walked over to her. She then raised Anna's head with her hand, forcing her to look into her eyes.

"I'm sorry, Aunt Es—" Anna began apologizing, feeling guilty, but Esther interrupted her with a small but proud smile on her usually cold and indifferent face.

"There is nothing to apologize about. What you did was right. If I were in your place, I would have—no, I wouldn't have done the same because I don't really care about others. But if it was Amelia... she would have definitely done the same. In fact, even if she didn't have Max beside her, she would have still spoken up, and if she were strong, would have taken action herself."

Speaking until here, she sighed.

"I don't need to say this, as everyone knows it—your mother was a very kind woman, someone I wholeheartedly respected and wanted to be like. So, seeing you have inherited Amelia's good qualities, I feel happy and proud. You also should feel proud of having done the right thing instead of feeling guilty."

"But Aunt Esther, I caused trouble for everyone."

Though Anna felt emotional and happy upon hearing Esther's words, she couldn't overlook the fact that what she had done had indeed caused trouble.

Esther shook her head and stepped to the side, allowing Anna to see Garima, Rima, and everyone else.

Glancing at them, she asked, "Do any of them look like they blame you?"

Anna looked at them one by one, and whoever she looked at gave her a smile and an assuring nod—even Nyra and Noah did the same.

"Everyone..." Anna was moved. She didn't know what to say, so she just bowed her head toward them and said, "I'm sorry."

"Tsk! You should say thank you for us being so supportive." Rima clicked her tongue and playfully scolded her.

"Besides, this big bad boy beside you is the one who escalated things. If anything, you should blame him instead of blaming yourself."

Anna blushed, feeling like she was a little girl worrying over nothing.

Of course, despite their positive and uncaring attitudes that made her feel like this, she knew this trouble was not just 'nothing'.

Esther went back to sit on the bed beside Garima, Rima, and Maria.

"So, what are we going to do now? Have you thought about something?" Garima asked, looking at Max.

Max glanced at Rima, who gave him a charming smile, before sweeping his gaze across the rest and nodding.

"I have."

"What is it?"

"There are two solutions, but they depend on the situation." Max spoke after thinking for a moment.

"First is Esme. She will be perfectly healed in a day or two at max. She is a mid-stage Emperor mage, and since she belonged to a Monarch Rank power, she shouldn't have any problem handling a high-stage emperor or multiple mid-stage ones."

"Of course, as long as Granny regains her peak battle power, mere mid-stage emperors and even a few high-stage emperors won't be her match," Gene proudly stated.

Garima nodded in understanding and said, "So, as long as that person doesn't bring multiple high-stage emperors or a peak emperor, we should have no problem escaping unscathed."

"That's correct." Max nodded and continued, "In case the people he gathers are something Esme can't handle, we'll book a room on the third floor and stay there until Wyomin and your master leave the battlefield and return to the Central Plains."

Garima immediately frowned. "We can't rely on probabilities. Who knows when the master will return? If she doesn't return soon, we'll have exhausted all our mana stones and will be kicked out of the inn."

Everyone else became concerned upon hearing her and looked at Max, who calmly said, "If they haven't come before our mana stones are all used up, we'll just leave."

His words and the nonchalant tone made everyone look at him in wonder.

"What do you mean?" Anna asked.

What if John brought stronger people—people Esme couldn't handle—like they had just discussed?

"What I mean is..." With a deep look in his eyes, Max said, "...Even if he brings a peak emperor, we still would be alright."

"What do you mean?" Everyone became curious.

Max shook his head. "I'll tell you what I mean a few days later. For now, I'm going to upgrade our rooms."

Saying this, he stood up, took the room's keys from Noah and Esther and left the room.

While Garima and Gene frowned in displeasure because he didn't tell them, and Nyra and Noah felt a little uncertain, Rima, Maria, Anna, and even Esther were perfectly calm—though a little curious. Needless to say, they completely believed in Max.

A few seconds later, Max was standing in front of the grey-haired middle-aged man with a smile on his face.

The man kept his focus on the booklet in his hands and acted as if he didn't notice him, but when Max knocked on the table and called out to him, he had no choice but to look at him.

Seeing the smile on his face, he couldn't help but ask, "Oh, you can still smile? You've got quite the guts."

Max raised his brows slightly at his words before asking with a curious look on his face,

"Hm? What do you mean, old sir? Why don't you explain a little and broaden my horizon?"

The grey-haired man shook his head and stood up before putting on his professional, expressionless look as he asked, "So, what can I help you with, dear customer?"

Seeing this, Max knew he wasn't willing to tell him anything, which made him shake his head.

What a pity!