

## **CHAPTER 2001**

Regardless, Gerald found himself momentarily stunned by the woman's beauty. To think that there would be someone this charming in the Autremonde Realm... What more, just about anyone could tell that she was an extremely extraordinary woman...

Either way, once all the representatives of the major sects arrived, a simple opening ceremony was held before they were allowed to return to their respective rooms to rest...

Gerald himself was sharing a room with Yalinda since they were both representing the Juans Delivery House...

Fast forward to that night, a few black figures could be seen leaping across the rooftops of Gardale City... From the looks of it, they were headed for Yudell's room.

Thankfully, before they were able to get too close to her, Gerald noticed their presence. Since they were heading in the direction of Yudell's room so sneakily, Gerald immediately had a hunch that these were bad people.

Knowing that Yudell could possibly be in danger, he quickly left his room and headed toward her room as well to investigate.

Meanwhile at Yudell's room, her two attendants could be seen standing at the door. Though they were sent over by the Thundering Cloud Sect to protect her, the dark of night would soon cost them their lives since they were unable to react in time to the two knives that flew toward them at that moment!

Getting stabbed right in their chests, the two of them promptly slid to the floor, dead...

Naturally, Yudell heard this, and she immediately drew her blade before glaring intently at her room's door.

Due to all the footsteps outside, she knew that they were here for trouble.

At that moment, a barely audible 'thud' could be heard above her, prompting Yudell to look up... only to see Gerald there waving at her from the open roof!

"Come with me, hurry...! Those men out there are after you!" whispered Gerald, prompting Yudell to look at the door again.

Hearing the footsteps slowly inching toward her door, Yudell knew she didn't really have much of a choice but to leap up the roof and hide with Gerald....

Thankfully, she managed to do so just in time before the door to her room was opened.

Following that, the few black figures rushed into the room, hoping to deal with Yudell. To their dismay, she was nowhere to be seen!

“She’s not here, leader! What should we do now?” asked one of the black figures.

“This lucky b\*tch...! It seems that we’ve been discovered! No matter! Let’s head off for now!” scoffed what appeared to be the leader as he snorted before leading his men away...

Once they were gone, Gerald and Yudell leaped back into the room...

Looking at her, Gerald was prompted to ask, “So... Who exactly were they? And why were they looking for you in the first place?”

Ignoring his question, Yudell simply walked out the room... and when she saw that her two attendants were dead, she couldn’t help but frown.

After a short while, she turned to look at Gerald before asking, “...Who are you? And how did you know they were coming after me?”

It was at that moment when Gerald came to realize something. While Yudell looked even more beautiful up close, Gerald was more stunned by the fact that her aura was extremely similar to Yalinda’s...

## **CHAPTER 2002**

Since Gerald was staring at her so intently, Yudell couldn’t help but blush slightly as she raised her longsword, pointing it at Gerald as she said, “Why are you looking at me like that? Also, why haven’t you answered my questions?”

Snapping out of it, Gerald quickly replied, “...My name is Gerald Crawford, and I’m a participant representing the Juans Delivery House in the competition between cultivators! As for why I’m here, I couldn’t sleep so I came out here for a stroll. While walking about, I happened to notice the black figures from before bolting toward your room, so I simply followed them here!”

While Yudell wasn’t completely convinced with his explanation, she put her sword away before saying, “...I see. Either way, you may leave now. Since none of this concerns you, you saw nothing tonight! Understand?”

Hearing that, Gerald was left utterly speechless.

'I just saved you, you know? Would it kill to show a bit of gratitude? Your temper's as bad as Yalinda's!' Gerald thought to himself as he left the scene...

Regardless, once morning came, the first day of the competition between cultivators officially began. By that point, a spacious arena had been set up in Gardale city for the participants to duel...

Once everyone was there, General Lucarl walked up the arena before declaring, "Good day, ladies and gentlemen! Before anything else, allow me to apologize to Miss Yudell, the representative of the Thundering Cloud Sect! From what I've been told, she was attacked last night, and I'm sure this stems from the fact that our guards didn't perform their garrison duty properly! As a result, not only was she nearly attacked, but her two attendants were killed in the process!"

Upon hearing that, all the audience members turned to look at Yudell who—unlike the day before—was now standing alone...

Seeing that, an uproar immediately sprung up, with many among the crowd discussing why the murderers targeted solely Yudell when so many representatives from other sects were present.

In the end, the majority agreed that the Thundering Cloud Sect must have offended some major party...

"While all this is deeply upsetting, it doesn't change the fact that the competition between cultivators is still on today. With that said, the competition will commence as planned! As for our first contenders, the first duel will be between Yudell Mullington from the Thundering Cloud Sect and Watts Jobe from the Sect of Steel! Contenders, please prepare yourselves!"

Hearing that, everyone was slightly surprised, including Gerald. After all, who would've expected that she would be first to fight?

Still, Gerald didn't see that as a bad thing. After all, he would now be able to witness how strong she truly was. Yalinda herself had previously told him how powerful she was, so he was keen on finding out how true that statement was.

Either way, it was shortly after when both Yudell and Watts entered the arena...

The Sect of Steel was equally as famous as the Thundering Cloud Sect, and it was located in Liverbrook Valley south of Shontell. From what Gerald had heard, Watts was also the first disciple of the sect, which was probably why he was sent here to represent them.

Regardless, it was a pleasant surprise that such major sects would be dueling straight off the bat. It definitely made everyone excited.

Whatever the case was, Watts gave a good look at Yudell before smiling smugly as he said, "You know, the Thundering Cloud Sect has always won first place in the past... I wonder if you can maintain their winning streak!"

"Cut the cr\*p! My sect is definitely going to win first prize again!" scoffed Yudell arrogantly.

While Watts definitely appeared confident, his smug smile would make anyone feel pissed...

### **CHAPTER 2003**

Regardless, once the battle commenced, Yudell took the initiative to draw her sword out before running toward Watts!

Watts himself wasn't going to be easy to be dealt with. After all, he was the first disciple of the Sect of Steel, which meant that he had much more experience than Yudell. Due to that, he didn't fear Yudell in the least, and simply drew his own sword out when he saw her running toward him... before launching an aurablade at her!

Seeing that, Yudell instantly moved to the side to avoid the hit before launching her own aurablade toward the attack!

With an explosive sound, the two aurablades met, creating such a massive blast that both Yudell and Watts had to take a few steps back to steady themselves.

As it turned out, both of them were evenly matched...

Staring wide-eyed at all that had just happened, Yalinda couldn't help but whisper, "It looks like Yalinda and Watts have about the same amount of strength!"

"Not quite. Just so you know, Yudell hasn't exerted all her strength yet!" replied Gerald in a confident tone.

While Yalinda was left confused as to why he had said that, Yudell herself simply raised her blade before closing her eyes...

Upon seeing that, Yalinda couldn't help but squeal before saying, "Master! If my guess is correct, Yudell seems to be ready to attack with the Blintz Sword Technique! It's the Thundering Cloud Sect's most powerful sword attack!"

"Hmm... Is it really that powerful...?" asked Gerald slightly skeptically.

“It is! Just so you know, only disciples of that sect are allowed to even learn the technique!” explained Yalinda, prompting Gerald to nod.

As for Watts, he could already tell that Yudell was about to attack with her strongest move. Knowing that, Watts—who was unwilling to just lose like that—immediately began setting up his own skill. After all, it was the only way to get past her attack!

Unfortunately for him, he was a bit too late.

“First move of the Blintz Sword Technique... Cloud Execute!” roared Yudell as she opened her eyes!

Following that, her sword began glowing in a dazzling aura... and barely a second later, Yudell disappeared!

Naturally, this made Watts’s heart skip a beat, and he immediately went into a defensive position, exerting a strong aura that would possibly help him withstand her attack a bit better.

Sadly for him, the second his aura was all set to go, a ray of light shattered it into pieces!

Now standing right before him, Yudell—who wasn’t giving him any room to defend himself—immediately yelled, “Second move of the Blintz Sword Technique, Clear Moon!”

The second she said that, several shadowy blades that flickered like moonlight began bolting toward Watts!

Unable to even respond in time, Watts could only accept his defeat as multiple shadowblades slashed at him, eventually causing him to stumble right off the arena! He never stood a chance against Yudell’s attack!

Then again, it was the most powerful sword technique of the Thundering Cloud Sect. With that in mind, it was pretty obvious that not anyone could survive it...

## **CHAPTER 2004**

“Holy cr\*p...! That attack was so terrifyingly awesome...!” exclaimed Yalinda, unable to help but wonder if she’d even stand a chance against Yudell if she ended up having to duel against her...

“It truly is... Still, it has its flaws. It’s a pity that Watts wasn’t able to find a way to properly deal with it!” replied Gerald rather casually.

Unlike other people, Gerald's trained eye was immediately able to identify how to counter that attack.

"...Huh? Have you already found a way to counter the attack, master?" replied Yalinda in disbelief.

"Of course I have!" said Gerald in a confident tone.

With how confident his reply was, Yalinda knew better than to doubt her master.

Whatever the case was, now that Watts had been beaten, General Lucarl stepped forward before announcing, "And the winner for this round is... Yudell! The Thundering Cloud Sect's representative!"

Hearing that, Yudell then sheathed her sword... Since this was simply a competition, there was no need for her to overdo things. Besides, if she had really wanted to kill Watts, she wouldn't have held back her full strength earlier...

Watt himself was naturally dissatisfied with the results. However, he knew better than to be a sore loser before all those spectators. Doing so would only bring shame to his Sect of Steel...

Regardless, Kay then cleared his throat before declaring, "A stunning first fight! Let's proceed with our next contestants, Gerald Crawford, the representative of Juan's Delivery House, and Clyde Gower, the Gower family's representative! Please prepare yourselves!"

"Oh? I didn't think you'd go up against Clyde, master! If he's your opponent, you're definitely going to win!" said Yalinda rather excitedly.

"You seem familiar with him... How powerful is he?" asked Gerald.

"He's about as strong as I am. In other words, he's nowhere near your level!" explained Yalinda.

Nodding in response, Gerald then walked into the arena...

Clyde himself was already there, and the second he saw Gerald, he immediately frowned before scoffing, "Why are you representing the Juans Delivery House instead of Yalinda?"

While the others didn't know it, Clyde had specifically trained himself to deal with Yalinda for the longest time. With that in mind, he was understandably grumpy now that this random nobody showed up instead of her.

'Who even is this guy...?' grumbled Clyde in his mind.

Simply chuckling in response, Gerald then smiled subtly before replying, "You won't be able to take her on with me here!"

Upon hearing that, Clyde grew even more gloomy. Still, Gerald didn't look particularly strong to him, so he wasn't planning on taking him seriously...

While all this was happening, Yudell herself kept a close eye on Gerald, her eyebrows slightly furrowed. After all, since there was a chance that she'd face him later, she wanted to see how strong he truly was.

"Ahh... Who cares if the Juans Delivery House has two representatives! I'll just take you down first so that I can beat Yalinda later!" scoffed Clyde confidently, knowing full well that the weak-looking man before would never be able to pose a threat to him!

## **CHAPTER 2005**

"While it's good to be confident, arrogance will only lead to downfall!" retorted Gerald.

"Cut the cr\*p and let's just get this over with!" scowled Clyde with a snort before bolting angrily toward Gerald!

Still, just as Yalinda had earlier said, Clyde was about as strong as she was. With that in mind, there was no way in hell he could ever defeat him!

Before Clyde could even get to Gerald, the youth had already launched him out of the arena with a single kick to the chest!

The second Clyde landed, he immediately passed out... and upon snapping out of their shock, the audience members instantly got to their feet before turning to stare wide-eyed at Gerald! To think that he had taken Clyde out in only a single move! Who would've thought that Gerald was this powerful...!

Even Yudell was shocked by this turn of events. After all, Gerald had moved so quickly that by the time she knew it, Clyde was already flying out of the arena! What inhuman speed...!

Kay himself had his jaw dropped. No wonder the contestant's name sounded so familiar! To think that Gerald had joined the competition as well!

He remembered meeting Gerald outside the city when Tanner was attacked, and he also recalled Tanner telling him that Gerald was incredibly strong. While he had his doubts back then, he was now completely sure that Gerald had monstrous strength...!

While it was true that Clyde wasn't particularly strong, he wasn't weak enough to be taken out in just a single attack! With that in mind, it was obvious just how strong Gerald was...

Whatever the case was, Kay quickly snapped out of it before ordering, "Men! Carry Clyde away to let him recover! Also, the winner for the second round is Gerald from the Juans Delivery House!"

With that announcement made, Gerald then returned to his seat.

Once he sat beside Yalinda, she immediately praised, "You were so strong earlier, master! To think that you were able to defeat Clyde with just a single attack!"

Yudell—who was seated opposite of them—, on the other hand, couldn't help but stare closely at Gerald. Since he was this strong, she knew it was going to be far tougher now to get first prize...

Moving on, the following rounds weren't particularly noteworthy, and the duels for the first day soon came to an end...

With nothing more to do that day, everyone simply returned to their rooms to rest up, knowing that there would be more duels to come tomorrow...

Yalinda herself was apparently going to duel tomorrow.

Regardless, not everyone who lost on the first day would be immediately disqualified. It all depended on the scores everyone got, and only the ten people with the lowest scores would end up getting disqualified...

Since Gerald had successfully gained one point, he was currently in the lead...

Fast forward to nighttime, Yalinda—who was currently in her shared room with Gerald—couldn't help but ask, "Say... If you end up having to face Yudell, what will you do, master...?"

Upon hearing that, Gerald realized that he hadn't thought about that.

After a slight pause, Gerald then replied, "Well, what do you propose I should do? Defeat her? Or maybe you're thinking I should just throw in the towel?"

“That... I’m... not sure, honestly... Regardless of what your choice is, I’ll still respect it, master! Still, I do believe that Yudell won’t ever be able to take you on!” said Yalinda. After all, she, of all people, knew that nobody in Shontell was as powerful as he was...

## **CHAPTER 2006**

Hearing that, Gerald simply chuckled in response. Still, he had a feeling that he was going to have to go easy on Yudell if they really did end up facing each other...

After thinking about it for a bit longer, Gerald was prompted to ask, “Is there any actual advantage in winning the first prize?”

“There are! For one, you’ll obtain the extremely honorable title of ‘national scholar’ in Shontell! The champion will also be given a chance to choose and obtain one of the precious treasures from our national treasury!” explained Yalinda rather excitedly.

“Oh? Are there many treasures in the national treasury?” asked Gerald in a curious tone.

“Of course!” exclaimed Yalinda, her eyes glinting with excitement as she nodded.

“I see! Then I’ll definitely have to win first prize then!” replied Gerald, his interest now piqued.

“Glad to hear that, master! While I may not have a very high chance of getting first place, you’ll surely have no problems with that, master! Once you’ve won, the Juans Delivery House’s popularity will surely skyrocket!” said Yalinda in a joyous tone.

Since Gerald was representing the Juans Delivery House, if he won, Tanner and his daughter would also be winners. It was a win for all of them!

Truth be told, she had initially participated just to have some fun. She never imagined that she would actually be able to enjoy the benefits of getting first prize...

At that moment, knocking could suddenly be heard coming from their door.

Instantly growing vigilant as both of them glared at the door, Yalinda was first to ask, “...Who is it?”

“It’s Yudell! I’m here to ask Gerald something!” replied Yudell.

Upon hearing that it was Yudell, Yalinda immediately looked surprised. Turning to look at Gerald, she then whispered, “To think that Yudell would come looking for you, master...!”

Whatever the case was, Yalinda then opened the door for her...

Once Yudell was inside, she turned to face Gerald before saying, "There's something I need to talk to you about, Gerald. Would you mind sparing a minute?"

Hearing that, Gerald then looked at Yalinda before nudging toward the door's direction.

Understanding what he meant, Yalinda then walked out and closed the door behind her...

Standing right outside, Yalinda waited there patiently, knowing that her master and his future wife had important things to discuss...

Regardless, now that Yudell and Gerald were alone in the room, Gerald gestured at a couch before politely saying, "Please, have a seat."

After doing so himself, Gerald then added, "So... Why exactly have you come looking for me this late, Miss Mullington?"

"There's just something I need to ask you!" replied Yudell without beating around the bush.

"Go on..." muttered Gerald.

"Essentially, I've seen how powerful you are, and I know I'll never be your match! However, I hope you'll allow me to win first prize! Becoming champion is extremely important to me...!" pleaded Yudell with a serious expression on her face...

## **CHAPTER 2007**

"...Fine. However, you'll owe me one, and I can ask for your help whenever necessary! Deal?" replied Gerald.

Though she was slightly surprised to hear that, Yudell had a feeling that it was alright making such a deal with Gerald. With that in mind, after a brief pause, Yudell replied, "...Deal!"

With the agreement made, Yudell then left Gerald's room...

Fast forward to morning, Yalinda and Gerald returned to the arena. While everything else remained mostly the same, an old man was now the representative of the Thundering Cloud Sect.

Regardless, it was finally time for Yalinda to enter the ring today...

Truth be told, she had only ever participated in small competitions before this. In other words, this was her first time participating in such a major competition, which explained why she was feeling so anxious right now...

Not long after, Zenon Lightning stepped forth before announcing, "Good day to all! It's the second day of the competition between cultivators, and the first match will be between Yalinda Juans, the representative of the Juans Delivery House, and Levi Homewood, the eldest son of an aristocratic sword family! Please prepare yourselves!"

Hearing that, both Yalinda and Levi walked to the center of the arena, staring intently at each other throughout the process...

Once they were standing right in front of each other, Levi smiled subtly as he said, "Well, well, who'd have thought we'd be going against each other today!"

Chuckling in response, Yalinda then replied, "Indeed! I hope you'll go easy on me today, Mr. Homewood! After all, I've heard countless tales of your swordsmanship! While I'm glad to be able to widen my horizons through our upcoming duel, let's try not to overdo it, alright?"

As Yalinda had said, this was just a martial arts competition, and such competitions were usually held to deepen bonds between the challengers. Killing was naturally prohibited, so defeating the opponent was usually good enough.

"But of course, Miss Juans!" replied Levi.

Since both of them came from rich and powerful families in Shontell, Yalinda believed that Levi was a nice person. At the very least, he probably wouldn't do anything too despicable...

Regardless, now that they had agreed on that, both of them drew their weapons...

While Yalinda was wielding a long, black whip, Levi had a longsword—that was manufactured by his family—in hand.

Being an aristocratic family in Shontell, not only were the Homewoods well known for manufacturing excellent swords, but they were also famed for their swordplay. Time and again, the Homewoods' swordsmanship had evolved for the better, and few were able to win against them. Due to that, they received fewer and fewer challengers by the year.

With that in mind, not many people had been able to witness the Homewoods' true sword-fighting capabilities in recent years, which explained why Yalinda was feeling so honored to be able to duel against the eldest son of the Homewood family today. Even if she did end up losing, she'd still be left satisfied...

Whatever the case was, after staring at each other for a bit longer, the duo then rushed forward simultaneously!

Taking the initiative to strike, Yalinda lashed her whip, creating thunderous sounds that almost made it feel like the air was getting shattered into pieces...!

While that was certainly impressive, Levi wasn't about to let her take all the action. With a swift slash of his sword, the sheer power of it caused Yalinda's whip to get flung backward!

## **CHAPTER 2008**

Despite Levi's counterattack, Yalinda was quite skilled with her whip. With that in mind, she immediately switched up her attacking style, constantly barraging Levi with ranged whip attacks that prevented him from coming too close.

Upon seeing that, Gerald—who had been watching the fight from the moment it began—couldn't help but widen his eyes in surprise. After all, he had never seen Yalinda use a whip before. Still, with how skillful she was with the weapon, Gerald had a feeling that Yalinda had spent ages training for the competition.

While he had to admit that Yalinda was skilled with the whip, Gerald knew that she wasn't Levi's match. After all, he could tell that Levi was still going easy on her.

If Levi truly decided to get serious, then Yalinda would surely have zero chance of winning... It wasn't as if he was trying to look down on his disciple, but this was simply the reality of the situation...

Regardless, it wasn't long after before Levi began displaying his true capabilities. Enveloping his sword in a shadowy aura, Levi then began sending shadowblade after shadowblade flying toward Yalinda!

Seeing that, Yalinda immediately retracted her whip, spinning it rapidly before her to form a protective aura against his attack! Unfortunately, Yalinda was a bit too late...

Before she could even fully get her protective shield up, one of the shadowblades struck the base of her whip, causing it to fly right out of Yalinda's hand!

Upon realizing what had just happened, Yalinda instantly knew that she had lost. With that in mind, she immediately yelled, "I admit defeat!"

Yalinda, for one, wasn't an idiot. The second Levi began using his true strength earlier, she already knew that she wasn't his match. Honestly, she was thankful that he hadn't used too much of his strength. Otherwise, she would've surely been unable to end the match unscathed...

Either way, upon hearing that, Levi sheathed his blade before smiling at Yalinda as he said, "I have to say, I'm quite impressed by the way you use your whip! I hope we'll have another chance to spar again in the future! Perhaps we could learn a thing or two from each other then!"

Smiling in response, Yalinda then nodded as she replied, "Of course, Mr. Homewood! Also, thank you for going easy on me!"

Following that, both of them bowed politely at each other before leaving the arena...

With that, Zenon took the chance to announce, "And so it's been decided! Mr. Homewood from the aristocratic sword family is the winner!"

Shortly after, Yalinda returned to her seat beside Gerald. Lowering her head rather meekly, she then muttered, "...I'm sorry for losing, master...! I must be an embarrassment to you...!"

Smiling in response, Gerald simply replied, "There's no need to apologize... After all, you did your best. Besides, I could already tell from the start that Levi was much stronger than you were. It was just your luck to have to deal with such a strong opponent straight off the bat! Still, winning and losing is all part of competitions like this, right?"

Gerald himself truly meant what he said. After all, his disciple was clearly daring enough to go against someone much tougher than her.

Whatever the case was, now that he had said that, Gerald was prompted to ask, "Speaking of which... How famous is the Homewood family in Shontell...?"

Based on his question alone, it was clear that his interest in that family had been piqued...

## **CHAPTER 2009**

"Well, pretty famous I'd say! After all, not only are the Homewoods one of the top aristocratic families in Shontell, but they're also well known for the swords they manufacture as well as their swordsmanship! In fact, they're the only people who know how to utilize the Homewood Sword Technique!" explained Yalinda.

"I see... Could you introduce Levi to me then? I'd love to get acquainted with him!" replied Gerald.

“...Oh? Why so sudden, master?” asked Yalinda rather curiously.

“Well, there’s nothing wrong with getting to know more people. Besides, I have a feeling that Levi is a nice person!” explained Gerald with a subtle smile.

“Well... Alright then! I’ll bring you over to meet him once I’m done later!” replied Yalinda. After all, she had no reason to reject her master’s suggestion.

Regardless, the morning session of the competition came to an end at noon, and it was then when Yalinda led Gerald to Levi. They were just in time too since Levi was about to leave Gardale City when they found him.

Seeing that, Yalinda immediately yelled, “M-Mr. Homewood! Wait up!”

Upon hearing Yalinda’s familiar voice, Levi then turned around and waited for them...

Once they were before him, he then smiled before asking, “To what do I owe this pleasure, Miss Juans?”

Simply laughing in response, Yalinda then said, “Well, I’m not the one looking for you... My master’s the one!”

“Oh? Your master, you say?” replied Levi, feeling slightly puzzled as he turned to look at Gerald.

Levi, for one, had witnessed Clyde’s defeat by Gerald’s hands yesterday. While it was true that he greatly admired Gerald after that, he still couldn’t believe that Yalinda’s master looked to be around the same age as he was!

Either way, since Levi wasn’t saying anything, Gerald took the chance to smile before saying, “Good day, Mr. Homewood! As Yalinda said, I’m her master. You can call me Gerald Crawford!”

Hearing that, Levi then snapped out of it before replying, “...Ah, yes! Forgive the silence, I was just surprised that you wanted to meet me in the first place! Regardless, I remember seeing you defeat Clyde with just a single move yesterday... Quite impressive, I must say!”

“You flatter me, Mr. Homewood! Either way, Yalinda’s already told me about you some time ago, and it truly is an honor to meet you in the flesh, Mr. Homewood!” replied Gerald, knowing full well that rich young masters like Levi loved it when others fawned on him.

As expected, Levi instantly smiled widely after hearing that. Laughing heartily, he then declared, "Now you're just exaggerating, Mr. Crawford! Regardless, I'm about to head out to have a grand lunch now. Would you two like to join me?"

"Well, since you've invited us so courteously, how could we say no?" replied Gerald.

Yalinda herself simply smiled while nodding. Wherever Gerald went, she would go as well...

With that, the trio left Gardale City together...

Unbeknownst to them, however, two men had been keeping an eye on the party from a high platform within Gardale City...

## **CHAPTER 2010**

"...It looks like Gerald has gotten acquainted with Yalinda and Levi, young master!" muttered one of the men to the youth donning luxurious clothes standing beside him.

The youth himself was none other than Clyde! He had felt extremely humiliated ever since Gerald took him down in a single strike, and his resentment toward Gerald knew no bounds! After all, he hadn't been humiliated before in his life, so he was going to teach Gerald a lesson if it was the last thing he did!

"As if I care! Gather the four great envoys! I want Gerald dead by the end of this! That way, he'll no longer be able to continue participating in the following competitions!" scoffed Clyde, grinning sinisterly as he looked at the man standing beside him.

"Understood, young master!" replied the man with a nod before swiftly leaving the scene...

Naturally, Gerald and Yalinda had no idea what dangers they would soon come to face...

Regardless, the three of them soon arrived at a restaurant and sat at a table. After chatting while eating for a while, all three of them almost seemed like old friends who hadn't met each other in ages...

Funnily enough, despite Levi and Yalinda coming from famous and prestigious families in Shontell, they had never personally contacted each other before this. To think that the competition between cultivators would be the push they needed to finally get to know each other...

Whatever the case was, after eating for a while, Levi turned to look at Gerald before curiously asking, "Speaking of which... I wonder which sect you're from, Mr. Crawford?"

Levi was asking since he had never seen anything similar to the aura and move that Gerald had used in his battle with Clyde yesterday. With that in mind, he was pretty sure Gerald wasn't a local.

Chuckling in response, Gerald then replied in a rather embarrassed tone, "You'll have to forgive me, Mr. Homewood... My master's forbidden me from revealing his title and sect!"

While Levi was stunned to hear that, he didn't continue inquiring...

Seeing that Levi wasn't pressing on, Gerald himself took the chance to ask, "Actually, I do have some questions of my own, if you don't mind me asking, Mr. Homewood..."

"Oh? Go on!" replied Levi.

"Well, I heard that your aristocratic family manufactures swords, right?"

"Indeed we do! Honestly, almost everyone in Shontell—who's proficient in swordsmanship—uses blades made by my family! Why the question, though? Could it be that you're interested in manufacturing swords as well?" asked Levi rather curiously.

Nodding with a slight chuckle, Gerald then sheepishly replied, "You caught me red-handed, Mr. Homewood! I'm just interested since I've never seen how swords were made before. Besides, I also wish to possess a suitable weapon for myself!"

Gerald wasn't kidding either. After all, if things went swimmingly, there was a chance that he would be able to get the Homewoods to manufacture a perfectly suitable weapon for him. That way, he wouldn't have to fight others unarmed anymore.

"I see... Well, since you're Miss Juans's master, I'll just have to pay you some respect! Very well, then! You can follow me to my family's smithery after lunch! You can pick a suitable sword for yourself then!" replied the sensible Levi, without the slightest hesitation...