

Chapter 2081

"Do you smoke?" After taking two puffs, Takuya threw the cigarette case to Gerald.

Gerald caught it, took one out, and lit it.

"So, you were just acting. You wanted to force me to cancel the marriage contract with the Kanagawa family by using the status of a couple?" After taking two puffs, Takuya squinted his eyes and looked at Gerald. His being the head of the family was enough to prove his ability in reading people's faces and words.

"No, we truly love each other!" Fujiko said quickly.

"I don't care if you are genuinely in love or if you're trying to put on an act in front of me, but I will not let you have any connection with the youngest son of the Kanagawa family. I will try my best to persuade the family members. As for the Kanagawa family, I'll find a way to deal with them. No matter what, I will not trade my daughter's happiness and reputation for the rest of her life for the future of the family."

Takuya clenched his fists. He couldn't imagine how his daughter's life would be once she married a man like Kai. If he hadn't known of the situation this time, he would have personally pushed his daughter into the fire.

"Chief Takuya, there is something I'm not sure if I should ask you, " Gerald said after crushing out his cigarette.

"You can just ask. You are the savior of the Futaba family, and now, you are Fujiko's boyfriend. As long as you want to know, I will tell you." Takuya waved his hand.

"What kind of grudge have you had with the Hanyu family? As far as I know, this family will hardly make a move against people in the Japanese territory. Why did they send assassins to assassinate Fujiko this time?" Gerald asked.

This question had been on his mind for a long time. Only after he knew about the grudge between the Futaba and Hanyu family could he help Fujiko better. Besides, he didn't want to get involved in the fight between large families in Japan without knowing about it.

Although he was doing this for the sake of Yearning Island, he would not get into trouble unnecessarily.

"The grudge between us and the Hanyu family started a few hundred years ago. But this is the only information passed down by the ancestors. For as long as I can remember, we have not had any encounters or conflicts with the Hanyu family. This time, I was also a bit caught off guard when the Hanyu family suddenly tried to kill Fujiko. Maybe they knew that our situation was not good, and they wanted to take this opportunity to eliminate us."

Takuya shook his head helplessly.

Before, when the Futaba family was still doing well, the Hanyu family had been very quiet. So quiet that he even wondered if there were really any grudges between the families. But now, just when his family was showing signs of regressing, the Hanyu family had been unable to sit still anymore.

This really made him sick. At the same time, he decided that if his family could recover, the Hanyu family would be the first one he wanted to deal with. At the very least, he would not let them target his family again.

"When they dared to attack Fujiko, it meant that they had planned it a long time ago. So, it won't be just this once. We have to be more careful in the future." Gerald didn't get any valuable information from Takuya.

"Indeed. Fujiko is a special forces officer in Japan, and she has the title of 'Queen Soldier'. She is very strong, but still, she was not even the opponent of the assassins. From this, we know that the Hanyu family must have sent out top assassins. If they didn't want to kill Fujiko, they must have been planning to kidnap her to threaten me, then."

Takuya very much agreed with Gerald's words. So, before Gerald had finished his sentence, he quickly said what was on his mind.

"The assassins were indeed very strong." Gerald nodded in agreement.

Chapter 2082

"Let's not talk about the Hanyu family for now. The priority now is to solve the matter of the Kanagawa family. I can agree to it, but the other members of the family won't agree. How about this? You go and rest first, and I will bring you to meet them to discuss the matter together."

Takuya had no interest in the Hanyu family for now. All he could think of now was his daughter. If he married his daughter to Kanagawa Kai, he would live in regret and remorse for the rest of his life.

"Let's go. We should go and rest first." Fujiko grabbed Gerald's hand naturally.

"Then, we'll go back first." Gerald nodded and said stiffly.

Looking at the backs of his daughter and Gerald, Takuya sighed quietly. If the family had not encountered these changes, he would have raised his hands and agreed to his daughter dating Gerald. Not for any other reason, but just because her daughter was willing to. Besides, Gerald was capable and could protect his daughter.

But now...

Takuya lit another cigarette and contacted all the senior members of the family, telling them they had to come to the main residence tonight to discuss something important.

In the room, Gerald let go of Fujiko's hand the moment they walked in through the door.

Although it was just a show to fight for her happiness, holding hands with another woman when Mila was still in danger made him feel very uncomfortable.

"Thank you." Fujiko blushed. She was content to hold hands with Gerald.

"Can I take a look at your pendant?" Gerald pointed at the special pendant necklace of the Seadom tribe around her neck and asked.

"Of course you can." Fujiko took off the pendant naturally and handed it to Gerald.

Holding the pendant, Gerald studied it carefully. The pendant was indeed a little different from the other common pendants. Moreover, the material was also special. Logically, a pendant that was worn all the time should be warm from resting around one's chest. However, this pendant was strangely very cold.

"This is your ancestral pendant?" After examining it for a moment, Gerald returned it to her in order to not cause suspicion.

"Yes. My father said that when I was born, my grandfather put the necklace on me and said that this is a very important item and I must not lose it. But until now, I don't know what the meaning of this pendant is." Fujiko put the necklace back on and spoke somewhat strangely.

"Maybe this is very important for your family." Gerald smiled. He believed in Fujiko. This should mean that she was the princess of the Seadom tribe, but she did not know about the Seadom tribe nor Yearning Island.

"Are you interested in this pendant?" Fujiko touched the pendant and felt the coldness of it.

"Not really. I'm just a little curious because I have never seen this kind of pendant before." Gerald shook his head and said casually.

"By the way, I still don't know your identity. Why do you have such strong powers that you could even fight off the top assassins of the Hanyu family? Are you a mysterious expert from the army of Weston?" Fujiko looked at Gerald suddenly and chuckled, covering her mouth.

"I'm not from the army. I simply self-trained myself since young, so I have that little bit of power. I was just lucky when I fought against the people of the Hanyu family. If I were to fight alone, I'm not necessarily a match for him," said Gerald, smiling.

"Hmph. I don't believe that!" Fujiko pouted.

Chapter 2083

Until now, she could remember clearly the situation where Gerald had made his move. It was just a flash, and the assassin, who was about to kill her, had been thrown more than ten meters away instantly. She had never seen such strength, not even in the Japanese army.

"Haha! Then, I'll tell you later when I have the chance." Seeing that he couldn't hide it from Fujiko, Gerald could only laugh and reply.

In the evening, at the request of Takuya, all the senior members of the Futaba family returned to the manor. They originally lived in the manor to manage all the estates and businesses, but ever since the family had started regressing two years ago, only a minority were still holding on to their previous work while the majority had left the family and lived outside.

On one hand, they used their identity as a Futaba to earn money. On the other hand, they didn't want to stay in the family, fearing that they might be affected when something had happened.

But now, Takuya had asked them to come back as the family patriarch. So, even though they were reluctant, they still had to come back. After all, now that the Futaba family had not completely fallen, Takuya was still their family leader.

Moreover, they might gain some benefits if they came back.

In the meeting room of the manor, all the members started coming in and exchanged information with each other about what had been going on outside these days. They did not bother about Takuya, and not even one of them greeted him.

"These ungrateful people!" The members who had stayed in the family turned their heads toward Takuya and spoke in a low voice fiercely.

"Forget it. Don't bother about them. There is an old Weston saying that goes 'a husband and wife who were previously birds in the same forest will fly away on their own when trouble comes'. Even a husband and wife are like this, isn't it normal when we are just a family?" Takuya smiled calmly. He had seen through all these things years ago.

Besides, he could take this chance to kick out those who were not as loyal to the family. Once there was a chance for the family to recover, getting rid of these pests would only bring benefits.

"Patriarch, how's the preparation for the marriage of Fujiko and Kanagawa? We have planned this for so long. I think we should settle it as soon as possible. This is for the good of the family as well!" Not long after, someone said to Takuya.

The person speaking was Futaba Suke, Takuya's nephew.

He was the first one to leave after seeing the signs of the downfall of the Futaba family.

Once he had said that, all eyes were on Takuya. They knew clearly that once Fujiko married into the Kanagawa family, the Futaba family would receive help, and they would be able to get a lot of benefits from the family.

"I called you here today to talk about this matter." Takuya swept a glance over them and said calmly.

"Did you call us here to inform us of the wedding date? Don't worry, Patriarch, We will find time to attend even if we're busy. It's just that I wonder if the Kanagawa will do what they promised. Fujiko cannot marry into that family for nothing!"

Suke opened his eyes wide.

"We'll talk about this when Fujiko is here." Takuya waved his hand.

Hearing this, everyone stopped talking and started calculating in their minds, thinking that once Kanagawa's help arrived, they could fish the benefits into their hands.

Chapter 2084

Nearly half an hour later, amidst the eager eyes of the crowd, Fujiko walked into the meeting room. However, what surprised the crowd was that Fujiko was holding the arm of a man whom they had never seen before. He was a total stranger.

As the youngest son of the Kanagawa family, Kanagawa Kai was considerably famous in Japan, and everyone here knew him.

If he was a more capable man than Kanagawa Kai, they wouldn't mind. But if he was an ordinary youth, their plans would all be in vain.

"Kid, who are you?" Thinking of this, Suke didn't hesitate to stand up and ask Ashe spoke, he kept looking at Gerald, trying to identify this man from his temperament and clothes.

"This is the matter that I want to talk about with you all today. About the marriage contract of Fujiko and Kanagawa Kai, I've decided to cancel it due to two reasons. One is that Kanagawa Kai is not a good man. If you were to go out, simply grab a man, and ask him now, you will know what he has done. Secondly, it is because Fujiko and Gerald are in love with each other, and they have established a romantic relationship. As her father, I will not separate them."

Takuya beckoned to Fujiko.

Gerald and Fujiko walked to Takuya amidst the astonished eyes of the crowd hand in hand.

"What a joke!"

"Indeed. It's not that we don't know about the situation of the family! We have been waiting for Miss Fujiko to marry into the Kanagawa family to get help from them! Now that we have unilaterally breached the contract, don't even mention help, the Kanagawa family will surely come and look for trouble!"

"That's right, Patriarch. How can you be so silly!"

In just a short time, the meeting room was filled with the sounds of discord. Although there were many voices, they were all saying the same thing, and that was, to condemn the decision made by Takuya.

"Silence. How rude you are to quarrel here. Do you still respect me as your patriarch?!" Hearing their voices, Takuya's heart burned fiercely. Finally, he couldn't hold it in and banged the table.

No matter what, Takuya was the head of the family. Hearing his words, the meeting room quietened down, but the majority were still looking at Gerald warily.

"It's impossible for me to hand my daughter to someone like Kanagawa Kai and see her suffer for the rest of her life. I would feel very guilty as a father!"

"I'll handle the Kanagawa family, They have nothing to do with you."

Looking at the crowd, Takuya spoke with a frown.

"But Patriarch, this is not just your family matter, but a matter of our entire family. Only when Fujiko marries into the Kanagawa family will we get their help to overcome the crisis this time! Now that you say that Fujiko is not getting married, what about our family?"

Chapter 2085

Suke was the first to speak up.

"I have my own way." Takuya crossed his arms across his chest. If there were not so many people here, he would have slapped Suke right away. After all, Takuya was his uncle, but Suke had actually gone against him in front of so many people, not even sparing him a glance.

"You have a way? What can you do? If you indeed had the ability, you wouldn't have let our family regress into this state. You have only become the patriarch for less than twenty years, and the once glorious family has gradually regressed in your hands. I think that it is better to choose a more capable patriarch to take your place!"

This time, the one speaking was a white haired, thin, and hunchbacked old man.

He had a high status in the Futaba family and was Takuya's uncle. He was also one of the strong competitors to become the patriarch when Takuya's father had passed away. However, because Takuya was the biological son of the patriarch, he had received more support in the family and had won over the old man with a slight advantage.

But now, things had changed. Many of the older generations who had supported him had passed away. Even though some were still alive, they had handed over their power to the next generation and retired.

"Uncle Masaru is right. Since you are the patriarch, you must think for the sake of the family. Now, you're actually giving up on the future of the family for the sake of your daughter. I think you're not fit to be the patriarch!"

Right after Masaru had said that, there were immediately echoing voices. Taking advantage of the high status of the old man, they attacked Takuya.

They knew clearly that if a new patriarch was appointed, they could make Fujiko marry into the Kanagawa family by the order of the family. Even if Takuya opposed it, there would be no use, because the family motto that had been passed down since ancient times was that all clansmen must obey what the patriarch said unconditionally.

Of course, Takuya was an exception now.

"What do you mean? Are you trying to rebel?!" The reaction of these people was beyond Takuya's expectations. He knew that there would be opposition, but he did not expect that he would be treated this way.

"How could we want to rebel? We just hope that you can make the right decision for the family. Sacrificing Fujiko's happiness in exchange for the glory of the family is a very worthwhile thing!"

Masaru sneered and said.

"I've told you that this is impossible. I won't hand over Fujiko to someone like Kanagawa Kai!" Takuya flung his sleeve and said very firmly.

"I can see that you have no intention to discuss it with us. Instead, it seems like you have made your decision and just wanted to inform us. Since that's the case, it is better to disperse!" Masaru did not give in at all. He had been dissatisfied with Takuya ever since he had not been chosen to become the patriarch, and now was the best opportunity to overthrow him.

As long as Takuya could step down, he was sure that he himself or his son would succeed in taking over the position.

By then, although the problem could not be solved, he would be able to get more benefits out of the family before it had completely fallen. And even if the family did not fall completely, it would have nothing to do with them as they had already gotten what they wanted, as they had no more feelings for the family.

"In that case, you can leave!" Takuya did not try to be nice to them either.

In just ten minutes, the family meeting was completely dissolved. Other than a small number of people, the rest chose to leave. They had originally thought that they would be able to get something from the marriage contract between Fujiko and Kai.

It seemed that now, not only would they not get any benefits, but they might also be dragged into it as well.

Everyone was thinking of ways to cut relations with the family so that they wouldn't be affected when the family went into a downfall or get involved the moment Kanagawa appeared at their doorsteps.

"Sigh, this is the current situation of the Futaba family now. If someone who doesn't know us well comes, he or she would even think that we're a third class family!"

After they had all left, Takuya slammed his fist onto the table and exclaimed in fury.

He knew that the people in the family would definitely be against it after the news broke out, but he didn't expect them to be so brazen and outright confront him. This made him extremely uncomfortable.

"Don't be angry about it, Patriarch. From the moment they gave a cold shoulder toward the family when it was going downhill and left right then, they were no longer a part of the Futaba family. We don't have to be enraged because of people like them," One of the family members rushed over to Takuya and massaged his shoulders.

"Don't worry, Fujiko. This time, I won't allow a lousy man like Kanagawa Kai to take you no matter what!" Takuya held his daughter's hand and reassured her in a determined tone.

This was a promise made by a father to his daughter.

"I know!" Futaba Fujiko wiped away her tears. She knew how pressured her father must be by not allowing Kai to marry her, and he might even be facing some big trouble because of this.

"You all can go now. Gerald, stay here. I have something to tell you." Takuya released his daughter's hand.

Gerald nodded and stayed at the same spot.

The family member who left the last closed the door before exiting.

"Gerald, now that it's just the two of us here, I'll ask you something, and you have to answer me honestly," Takuya said after fixing his eyes on Gerald for a long while.

"You can ask me anything, Patriarch Futaba." Gerald nodded.

"I've always been curious about your identity. Fujiko says that you have a strong ability, yet you're not from the special forces who participate in those big competitions. So, can you tell me who you are?" Takuya rubbed his hands together.

"Sorry I can't tell you about my identity. I'm just an ordinary citizen of Weston, and I'm only here in Japan to accompany a friend who's joining a war competition for special forces." Gerald shook his head, chuckling.

"Alright. Then, you and Fujiko are just pretending to be a couple, right?" Takuya was already mentally prepared for it. He understood that someone as strong as Gerald wouldn't be just an ordinary man for sure and was certainly of a special identity that couldn't be disclosed to just anyone for fear that he might get killed once he exposed himself.

"Yeah." Gerald nodded without objecting.

"To tell you the truth, I, as Fujiko's father, really hoped that you two could be together as a real couple. Although it hasn't been a long since I've met you, I know how responsible you are as a man, plus, you'll be able to protect her with your ability," Takuya released a sigh and said slowly.

"Patriarch Futaba, Ms. Fujiko and I are just acting. I still don't have the heart to think about things like romance and relationships for now." Gerald immediately waved and refused, fearing that the acting would grow into something real, and he wouldn't be able to get out of it.

"I know, I know. It's just my wishful thinking." Takuya waved him down too.

"I'll protect Ms. Fujiko until everything's settled. Don't worry about it, Patriarch Futaba." Gerald smiled as he smoked.

Chapter 2087

"Thank you for helping us at this time, but we, the Futaba family, can't really offer you anything. You might even face troubles and danger because of us." Takuya's eyes became red, and his hands were trembling uncontrollably as well.

All this while, he was most worried about the danger his daughter was in, but Gerald's words were like a pill of reassurance to him. He too believed that it wouldn't be difficult for Gerald to protect his daughter based on his ability. Funagawa or any top assassin from the Hanyu family wouldn't be able to do anything to him as well.

"I'm not scared of that," Gerald said casually.

"Yes, but I still have to thank you properly." Takuya nodded. He himself didn't even know how lucky he was to have met such an excellent young man just when their family was facing a crisis. Although it couldn't be considered as much help, he could at least protect Takuya's daughter.

"You can just tell me anything if you need me, I'll definitely help if I can." Gerald lit another cigarette.

"No problem. I'll tell you if anything happens." Takuya nodded even harder.

After chatting for a while, Gerald left the living room, planning to go back and ask Master Ghost and Aiden about the situation these days so that he could be one step ahead and eliminate the special forces from Yanam. Although he had done everything perfectly, it couldn't be guaranteed that they wouldn't be found out for sure.

If they had been exposed, they needed to settle the issue immediately, otherwise, Aiden would be affected, and even Weston.

Walking out of the living room, Gerald headed toward his guest room and strode past the bamboo forest, reaching the garden behind the manor. The night was approaching, and it was getting dark Gerald's brows instantly scrunched up upon his arrival.

His intuition was telling him that someone was waiting for him here.

"Come out now," Stopping in his steps, Gerald said casually.

"Looks like you're something else, aren't you?" Just as Gerald had finished his sentence, two shadows appeared from behind the bushes.

They were none other than Futaba Masaru and Futaba Suke whom Gerald had seen during the meeting.

"Do you need anything from me?" Scanning them with his eyes, Gerald asked in a slightly impatient tone. It was a waste of time talking with people like them. Even sleeping would be a better choice.

"Of course we do. I'm warning you to leave this place as soon as possible. Don't get yourself involved with our family matters. Don't think that Takuya will be able to protect you just because he's the patriarch. The Futaba family now isn't like before anymore, and he does not have any actual power as a true patriarch whatsoever."

"Even Fujiko can be ambushed by someone from the Hanyus, so you should be able to contemplate this yourself!"

Suke took a step in front of Masaru and pointed his finger at Gerald's nose as he talked.

"How did you know that Fujiko was attacked by an assassin from the Hanyu family?" Gerald frowned suddenly, finding some sensitive words amongst what Suke had said.

Takuya had claimed before that their family ensured perfect protection around Fujiko, so only a handful of people knew of the fact that Fujiko was Japan's 'Queen Soldier'. Suke was obviously not one of them, plus, it had been long since he returned to the family, so he wouldn't have been able to know about this.

On the other hand, the Hanyu family would definitely not spread the news of their wish to kill the princess of the Futaba family.

Analyzing these two points, it was definitely strange that Suke knew about Fujiko getting ambushed by the Hanyu family's assassins. There might even be something more to it.

"What does this have to do with you?!" Realizing that he had said something wrong, Suke's face turned red, but he quickly regained his composure and yelled at Gerald as he pointed at the latter, "I'm warning you again, everything that's happening here has nothing to do with you at all! Get out of here as soon as you can, otherwise, you won't even be able to die in peace!"

"Are you threatening me?" Gerald smiled slightly and asked.

"Of course it's not a threat! This is simply the last exemption given to you." Gerald's nonchalance triggered Suke even further, and he would have for sure fought this man from Weston if it wasn't because they were in the manor.

"Alright, I understand. Now, if there's nothing else, you two should leave instead of waiting for Patriarch Takuya to see you and kick you two out himself," Gerald left them with some sarcastic words as he walked past them slowly with his hands shoved into his pockets.

"That piece of trash!" Seeing Gerald leave, Suke clenched his fists tightly and was about to dash toward him.

"Don't be rash. You should go back with me first because we're still members of the family. If this is spread out, it won't be any good to us!" Futaba Masaru instantly pulled him back and persuaded him in a low and raspy voice.

"Grandpa Masaru, this man, Gerald, is simply too annoying!" Suke didn't dare to go against Masaru's words and could only stop, but he was still suppressing his anger deep down his chest.

"I want to ask you as well. What is this about Fujiko? How did you know she was ambushed by an assassin from the Hanyu family?" Masaru grabbed Suke and headed toward the outside of the manor as he questioned him. "I'm telling you, Fujiko is still part of our family, and the Hanyu family is our family's lifelong rivals. If you have any connections with them, you're one step into hell!"

"Grandpa Masaru, you're overthinking it. You witnessed me growing up, and you should know that I'm not that kind of person! I just heard this from some friends coincidentally!" Suke broke into a cold sweat and quickly explained.

"That would be for the best. Don't let me discover any connections between you and the Hanyu family. Remember, we're just having an internal conflict within the family, so don't get involved with our lifelong rivals. I'll make sure to settle you by myself if I find out something is going on between you and them!" Masaru snorted coldly and left Suke behind as he walked forward slowly.

"I'll help you, Grandpa Masaru! " Seeing that, Suke trotted to catch up with him.

Back in the room.

Gerald didn't let their threats bother him at all not trouble his mind, because he already knew that troubles would come if he was protecting Fujiko.

However, Suke's words had caught Gerald's attention. As someone who didn't live in the family manor, he had known about the attempted assassination of Fujiko. This simply sounded too strange. Gerald couldn't help but doubt any connection between him and the Hanyu family. Suke might even have played a part in the attempted assassination.

"Looks like we'll have to investigate Futaba Suke," Gerald smoked and mumbled to himself, tapping his fingers on the table.

However, this was all just talk. Gerald didn't plan to do anything since Suke didn't pose any sort of threat as of yet. Moreover, he didn't have the time to care about such people. He would definitely look up on it carefully after all the dangers had been eliminated.

After all, the only one in this world who dared to threaten him had already been buried deep down in the earth.

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The next day.

Chapter 2089

Just as Gerald had awoken, he heard someone knocking on his door.

"What's the matter?" Pushing the door open, Gerald saw Takuya's underling, who followed the latter everywhere, standing outside.

"Patriarch wanted me to call you over because someone from the Funagawa family came over asking why you took Ms. Fujiko away after not even a few days of staying at their family place. He especially stated that he wanted to see you. Our patriarch didn't stop him and could only ask me to send you over," The underling spoke up when he saw Gerald.

"Bring me over there, then," Gerald spoke as he reached out to grab a coat and put it on.

"Patriarch wants you to tell him what actually happened, and let the Funagawa people know clearly what Kanagawa Kai has been doing all this while." The underling followed Gerald closely behind.

They went into the living room, just like the previous night.

The only thing that had changed was that the ones sitting there were people from the Funagawa family, and they were all acting intimidatingly, almost as if they were going to question someone by force.

"You're Gerald Crawford, aren't you? Why did you take Ms. Fujiko away from our Funagawa manor? Is it because you two have some special relationship? Or you simply wanted to stand against us, the Funagawa family?" Seeing Gerald's arrival, someone amongst the Funagawa representatives immediately stood up and reprimanded.

"Before asking me, why don't you ask your young master, Mr. Kai, what did he do?" Gerald snickered and sat down opposite of them, crossing his legs as he replied casually.

"Oh? Let's hear what Young Master Kai did, then." The man was still in disdain. He had never respected anyone from the Futaba family, not even Takuya.

"Kanagawa Ryuka, are you sure that you want Gerald to tell everyone about it?" Seeing that Gerald was going to continue, Takuya raised his arm to stop him and cut in. He didn't want the situation to become too bad itself, plus, he knew that if they really exposed everything Kai had done, the relationship between the two families would be completely over.

Even if Takuya was mentally prepared for the consequences and how to tackle them, he still believed that they should avoid the situation as much as possible, not wanting the family to offend another family with great power.

"Patriarch Futaba, I'm very interested in what he has to say. I would like to know the reason as to why he brought Ms. Fujiko out of our Funagawa family's manor by himself." Ryuka sneered and set his eyes upon Gerald.

"Seeing how interested you are, I'll tell you about it, then."

"Your young master forced and tried to get Fujiko into bed with him without her consent. If you don't believe this, you can ask Young Master Kai's two faithful servants about it."

Gerald's eyes met his without any hint of backing out.

"So, it's just about some small matters like this. Ms. Fujiko and Young Master Kai are already engaged, so it wouldn't be unnatural even if they did such a thing. Why would an outsider like you intervene?"

Of course, Ryuka knew what kind of person Kai was, so he responded carelessly.

"You should note the main point of my words, though. It was Funagawa Kai who wanted to force Ms. Fujiko into having sex."

Chapter 2090

"If I'm not mistaken, this is considered a very serious matter in Japan's law. Kai might even face a few up to tens of years in jail, and he would even have to wear the special ankle tracker after coming out of jail. This would definitely bring shame not only to Kai but also the Funagawa family, wouldn't it?"

Gerald accepted the water passed over by Takuya and took a sip before he spoke.

"Mr. Gerald, do you honestly think that such a small matter like this can't be settled by us?" Hearing Gerald's words. Ryuka roared in laughter. "Let me tell you the truth. Even if it's rape or murder, our family would be able to settle all these matters with ease. I bet Patriarch Futaba can confirm this as well, right?"

Takuya's face turned dark. Ryuka wasn't wrong. Based on the Funagawa family's status and power in Japan, it would be a piece of cake to settle a rape case. Moreover, the police and courts wouldn't dare to touch someone like Funagawa Kai for fear of offending the Funagawas.

"You can make a call to Funagawa Kai and ask whether he minds if I lodge a police report." Gerald still had a neutral expression on his face, completely unaffected by Ryuka's words.

"Sure, I can!" Ryuka took out his phone right away and dialed Kai's number.

The phone was picked up, and Ryuka explained the situation to him, waiting for him to agree to lodge a police report so that they could embarrass Gerald before moving on to questioning Takuya.

Unexpectedly, Kai actually bellowed in anger from the other side of the phone, saying that if the Futaba family did indeed lodge a police report, Ryuka would never be able to step into the Funagawa family ever again.

After howling all of these things, Kai hung up on Ryuka, leaving him completely dumbfounded.

He didn't understand why the young master had spoken that way, but what he needed to do now was to stop Gerald from reporting this to the police without exposing any of the details of the call.

"So, what did Kai say about this?" Gerald could already guess what was the call about judging by Ryuka's change in expression. Pushing other facts aside, Kai would never allow even a tiny possibility of leaking out what had happened that night.

"Mr. Kai says that you can make a police report, but he's forgiving enough to not pester you about this matter to respect Ms. Fujiko and the Futaba family. However, he warned you to not do such things anymore, otherwise, you'll be dead!"

Ryuka quickly thought of something and formed a series of words that seemed to have no loopholes to pretend nothing had happened as he spoke to Gerald.

"Thank Young Master Kai for me, then."

"Also, please pass on my words to him. If he dares to do anything like that again, I'll have him repay it in exactly the same way." Gerald smiled.

"Well then, Patriarch Futaba, I'll be returning if there's nothing else." Ryuka got up and bowed pretentiously to Takuya before leaving immediately.

He wanted to go back and ask Kai what exactly had happened. That way, he would at least know how to act and speak the next time he had to contact the Futabas again.

After Ryuka had left, Takuya and his underlings all sighed in relief.

They were all worried about the Funagawa family making a punitive expedition against them, fearing that any conflicts would arise. This would definitely make the family's situation even worse.

"Gerald, what exactly did you do at Funagawa's place? Why did Ryuka act that way after just a call?" After ordering the servant to close the door, Takuya immediately asked. He too had noticed the abnormal change in Ryuka, but he had not shown his suspicion just now.

"It was just a few small tricks. You shouldn't ask more about it, Patriarch Futaba."

"However, I can guarantee that Kai won't dare to come over and seek trouble for a while."

Chapter 2091

Not knowing how to even begin talking about what he had done, Gerald simply gave vague details.

Understanding that Gerald didn't want to talk about it, Takuya then said, "... I see. Well, whatever you did, I'm fine with it as long as Kai doesn't come looking for more trouble."

"Glad to hear that. Speaking of which, I'd like to ask about Suke... What exactly is his relationship with the Futabas? And how long has it been since he had any contact with the family?" asked Gerald as he recalled last night's incident.

"... Hmm? Where's this coming from? Did he look for trouble with you yesterday?" asked Takuya as he instantly raised a brow. Though he wasn't as powerful as the Kanagawas, he was still the head of the Futaba family. With that in mind, it was within his power to deal with troublemakers within the family.

"I have nothing against Suke. I'm just a little curious about him," replied Gerald. Till he properly made a thorough investigation, Gerald wasn't about to share his speculations and accidentally wreak havoc within the family.

"... I see. Well, Suke... isn't exactly the nicest man around. It's been three years since he's left the family, and he's never contacted me till recently. I'm not too sure if he's been in contact with the other family members, though I do know that he respects Masura a lot. I'm afraid that's all I know about him..." replied Takuya without mincing any words.

Scratching his chin, Gerald then said, "I see..."

After looking at Gerald for a while, Takuya couldn't help but cross his arms before saying, "Whatever the case is, don't take what they said yesterday to heart. They just want to snatch

my post as the family head away. Even so, I won't go down without a fight, even if those two cooperate!"

Smiling subtly, Gerald simply replied, "Got it."

Meanwhile, Ryuuka who had just made it back to the Kanagawa manor immediately began searching for Kai. Why had Kai reacted that way during the call? Had he said something he shouldn't have back when he was at the Futaba manor? Would his status in the family be threatened because of that?

Hoping that wasn't the case, Ryuuka then yelled, "Kai? I'm back!"

Kai himself had just had a call with Ryugu and learned that Gerald would be assassinated soon. With that in mind, he was in a rather good mood.

Upon hearing Ryuuka's shout, he turned to look at him before asking, "Hmm? What brings you here?"

"Well, you sounded rather dissatisfied when I called you earlier, so I was wondering if I had said something I shouldn't have to the Futabas..." replied Ryuuka who couldn't help but breathe a sigh of relief when he saw the smile on Kai's face.

Waving his hand, Kai simply said, "It's nothing. Regardless, make it known that no one from our family is allowed to meet or even contact the Futabas without my permission for the time being!"

"... But... I only went because the family head told me to..." replied Ryuuka in a slightly bitter tone.

"I don't care. From now on, none of the Kanagawas are allowed to meet up with the Futabas! If dad asks about it, just tell him the order came from me! Do you understand?" retorted Kai as he glared at him.

Chapter 2092

"G-got it...!" replied Ryuuka as he immediately nodded, fearing that Kai would fly into a rage if he didn't agree.

Whatever the case was, though Ryuuka was well aware that the family head had the final say in things like these, he also knew that the patriarch deeply adored Kai. With that in mind, if he ever chose to disobey Kai, Ryuuka knew that the family head wouldn't step in to back him up. In fact, Ryuuka was pretty sure that the family head would simply kick him out of the family, just to please Kai!

"I'm glad you do. Now leave and resume work. Also, remember to notify me if there's anything else," said Kai in a slightly impatient tone as he gestured for Ryuuka to leave.

Kai, for one, knew better than to make a move when Gerald was still alive. After all, that b*stard could easily reveal all that had happened that night! With that in mind, though he

eagerly wanted to get Fujiko back from the Futabas, Kai understood that his current best play was to have the Hanyu assassins finish Gerald off first. Once Gerald 'mysteriously' disappeared off the face of the planet, Kai would finally be able to do as he pleased without any repercussions...!

Regardless, upon hearing that, Ryuuka who already had beads of cold sweat rolling down his forehead quickly replied, "T-then if there's nothing else, I'll be taking my leave..."

"Just get out already!" grumbled Kai as Ryuuka bolted out of the room...

Once Ryuuka was no longer there, Kai's eyes instantly went gloomy again. Clenching his fists, he knew that if word about what he had done that night got out to the police, Gerald would be first in line to expose all his misdoings. If things really did get to that point, then Kai would surely be doomed for good...! With that in mind, Kai couldn't help but call Ryugu again...

The second Ryugu picked up, he immediately said, "Kai? How can I help you?"

"Let's not beat around the bush. When do you plan on finishing Gerald off?" asked Kai who had gotten slightly nervous again after learning of what Ryuuka had earlier done at the Futaba manor. If Gerald had considered Ryuuka's actions as a challenge, then he could easily expose Kai's misdoings at any time he pleased!

"With all due respect, Kai, it's just been a few days. Remember, Gerald's not some run off the mill beggar that we can easily take out without any repercussions. He's a guest of the Futabas! Besides, while I'm not sure what he did at your place, I'm sure Takuya will be much more protective over Gerald now. With that said, it isn't exactly easy to kill him," replied Ryugu in a slightly helpless tone. Still, he knew better than to be sassy with Kai, so he held his tongue.

"Do you think I care? Look, finish the job in a week. If Gerald hasn't vanished off the face of the planet by then, you'd better start thinking about how you'll explain the situation to the patriarch!" growled Kai before instantly hanging up.

With his phone still against his ear, Ryugu could only stare into the distance for a while. Seven days he said... Ryugu wondered if he would even be able to break into the Futaba manor by then... Even after he found a way to sneak in, he would still need to locate Gerald and do further planning for the assassination... A week was simply too short!

Still, he knew he couldn't just disobey Kai's orders. After all, Kai was the powerful and influential young master of the Kanagawa family, a family that was much more powerful than the Hanyus, at least in Japan...

As if that wasn't troubling enough, he was already in hot water with Sujin since he had failed to locate the individual who had thwarted Saburo's assassination attempt... If Kai reported his inability to Sujin as well, then he would really have to drop his position as the leader of the assassination team...!

The more he thought about it, the angrier he became. He was the leader of the assassination team for heaven's sake! Second only to Sujin within the Hanyu family! Hell, throughout Japan, even most of the prestigious people and high ranking officials had to pay him some degree of respect! Everything used to go his way! How had he fallen so much in just half a month?!

"F*cking hell...! Where the hell do all these problems keep coming from?!" roared the angered Ryugu as he slammed his fist onto the mahogany table beside him, causing it to smash into a million pieces...!

Chapter 2093

Upon hearing all that noise, a few of Ryugu's men instantly burst through the door and asked, "Team leader! What's wrong?!"

"... Everything's fine. Regardless, call over all the leaders of the secondary assassination teams immediately. There's something important I'd like to discuss with them. Also, tell them to bring along any clues they've found regarding the Futabas!" ordered Ryugu as he shook his head with a sigh.

There was no way he was going to risk lowering his image by sharing his bad position with his subordinates. It was the reason why he had made sure to put up a leader like façade while ordering his men.

Whatever the case was, after exchanging glances with each other, his men then nodded before yelling, "Loud and clear!"

It was about ten minutes later when eight new faces could be seen gathered in Ryugu's room. These men were the leaders of the secondary assassination teams, and they operated under the orders of Ryugu.

After looking at them for a while, Ryugu detailed them on Kai's conditions. As he was doing so, however, he couldn't help but notice that several of the leaders occasionally lowered their heads to whisper among themselves...

Annoyed that his subordinates were talking bad about him right in front of his face, Ryugu eventually growled, "If there's anything you'd like to say, say it to my face!"

"... With all due respect, team leader, we're only discussing the mission."

"He's right, team leader. Remember how Saburo failed to kill Fujiko back then? Don't you think that the Futabas will be much more vigilant about us now...? With that in mind, there's no way we would be able to assassinate him without being found out!"

"Indeed! Why don't we wait till things deescalate a bit...? I suggest that we talk about this mission once more when things have calmed down!"

Not daring to whisper anymore, the group of men immediately revealed what they had been discussing. Still, though they each said it slightly differently, the contents of their

conversation were more or less the same, that being the fact that they couldn't just deal with the Futabas right off the bat after Saburo failed to assassinate Fujiko.

While it was true that the current Futabas weren't as strong as they used to be, they were still considerably better off compared to other families. With that in mind, if the Hanyus launched another assassination mission so soon and the Futabas noticed, that family would surely be compelled to spread the news about their assassination attempt to the other families in Japan. If things got to that point, there was a high chance that the Hanyus would get taken out overnight!

After all, the only reason why the Hanyus had been able to operate in Japan for hundreds of years was because they mainly dealt with assassination attempts overseas. If word got out that they had attempted to assassinate a fellow Japanese citizen, any initial tolerance from the other Japanese families would surely be thrown out the window. After all, if they dared to assassinate a Futaba, who's to say that the Hanyus wouldn't assassinate them next?

With that in mind, the possibility of several families working together to take them down was very real. By that point, none of the Hanyus would be able to escape judgment...

"... Do all of you seriously think that I hadn't put that into consideration before calling you over?!" growled Ryugu as he clenched his fists.

While he certainly agreed with them, he only had seven days to get rid of Gerald... Aside from that, he only had half a month to locate the man who had thwarted Saburo's assassination attempt... There really was no time for him to be idle...

Chapter 2094

"Does... Kai have anything to do with your decision, team leader...?" asked a few of the men who had a feeling that that was the case.

"... There's no point talking about it. Whatever the case is, I called all of you over today to discuss how we should deal with Gerald. I remember some of you saying you had clues related to the Futabas. Do you have them?" replied Ryugu as he glared at all of them.

"Here they are!" said one of the men as he retrieved a hard disk from his pocket and placed it before Ryugu.

Following that, another subordinate quickly connected it to the computer in the room... and soon enough, all sorts of information began popping up on the screen. Essentially, it was a compilation of all that the Hanyus had learned about the Futabas in the span of a little under two years. The information included personal and business relationships of all the Futabas as well as elaborate details regarding Takuya.

Scanning through the information, Ryugu eventually clicked on a file, instantly revealing a bird's eye view of the Futaba manor after a slight flicker of the screen... Sensing that it was a bit too bright, one of the men quickly closed the room's curtains, instantly making the video feed much clearer.

Pointing at an area in the manor, Ryugu then said, "This is where their guest room is, so I'm assuming Gerald is staying there. However, since he's a distinguished guest of that family, it's possible that he's staying someplace else. Since we aren't even certain about this yet, we need to prioritize finding out where exactly he's staying within the manor!"

"I'm assuming you're planning for the assassination to be held indoors... However, won't killing him be easier outside the manor?" asked one of the team leaders as he stared at the screen.

"It would be, though I'm not sure if the chance will present itself," replied Ryugu with a slight frown. Turning to look at one of the taller men in the group who was standing at the back, Ryugu then added, "... Suneo, I want you to send two trustworthy subordinates to keep a constant eye on the Futaba manor. Once they locate Gerald, stalk him and report whatever they find to me!"

"Loud and clear, team leader!" declared Suneo as he took a step forward.

"... Also, if any of you have any ongoing missions, drop them for the time being. Our main focus now should be to take Gerald out and find the individual who had thwarted Saburo's assassination plan! The truth is, the patriarch has already told me that if we fail to deal with these two missions, I'll have to resign from my position as the leader of the assassination team. If that ends up happening, you team leaders will end up losing your posts as well! What more, you'll also have to undergo the most severe punishment our family has to offer! That said, I'm sure all of you understand why this is so important now, right?" declared Ryugu.

"Y-yes...!" replied everyone rather anxiously. After all, this was the first time they had seen Ryugu this worried and serious. Then again, putting Suijin's threats into consideration, Ryugu's reaction was completely understandable...

Whatever the case was, though the missions were far from simple, they knew they had to make haste. They also had to be careful not to mess up or punishment would surely await them...

Either way, now that Ryugu had gotten his point across, he pointed at two men who had been standing close to the front before saying, "You two. Stay here. As for the rest, prepare yourselves for the missions!"

The men he had chosen were the team leaders of the first and second teams. They were both subordinates whom Ryugu had promoted, and for good reason. After all, not only were they capable men, but in terms of strength and martial arts skills, those two could easily make it into the family's top five strongest men. What more, they had never failed any of the tasks that they

Had been given, so their record was pretty much perfect.

Regardless, once everyone left, Endo took a step forward before asking, "What can we do for you, team leader?"

Nodding in response, Ryugu then gestured for the door and windows to be tightly shut. Once that was done, Ryugu pointed at the screen as he replied, "Tell me, what do you two think about all this?"

Chapter 2095

Gently pulling on his goatee, Endo then said, "...I don't think dealing with him outside the manor is going to be easy. Since Takuya already knows that we tried to assassinate his daughter, he'll surely have guards around Gerald at all times, especially when he leaves the house. After all, he is a distinguished guest to the Futabas."

After hearing that, Ryugu then turned to look at the other man before asking, "And what about you, Izumi?"

Puffing on the cigarette he had just lit, Izumi then replied, "Endo pretty much said what I wanted to. If we really do plan on doing things outdoors, by the time our subordinates take out the Futaba bodyguards, I'm sure there will already be eyewitnesses. With how famous our family is, it isn't a stretch to say that one of them will recognize us. If that happens, news about us assassinating fellow Japanese people will surely spread like wildfire."

"My thoughts exactly. It's simply too risky to do things outside. It's why I suggested doing the assassination within the manor in the first place. While it may be a bit difficult to pull it off, at the very least, we won't be seen by outsiders. Regardless, I didn't request for both of you to stay here just to listen to your ideas. As you may already have guessed, I'm tasking both of you to

Complete this mission. I just can't help but worry if I leave the mission to the others," said Ryugu as he stared at the two men.

A week was simply far too short for there to be any room for error. If they failed to get rid of Gerald in their first attempt, there wouldn't be a second one. By that point, they would surely fail Kai's mission and Ryugu's fate of dropping his position would be sealed...

Regardless, upon hearing that, Endo and Izumi exchanged glances clearly not expecting Ryugu to even suggest that before replying, "You want us to do it?"

Hearing that, Ryugu frowned slightly as he replied, "... What, you don't want to?"

"No... We're definitely up for it, just... We didn't think you'd need both of us just to take out a single guest of the Futabas," said Endo as he shook his head.

After all, the last time he had been paired with Izumi, they were tasked with killing the leader of a terrorist organization. Due to their excellent teamwork, the terrorists weren't even aware that their leaders had been assassinated until quite some time after Endo and Izumi had stealthily returned to Japan. All that had simply taken them two days to accomplish.

With that in mind, it puzzled them that Ryugu decided to order both of them to fulfill such a simple task. In their perspective, just ordering one of them should've sufficed, and that it was a waste of time and resources if both of them went together.

"I get where you're coming from, but I have a feeling that Gerald isn't going to be all that easy a target. After Kai gave me the mission, I asked him to give me a few more details. Apparently, Gerald had managed to save Fujiko and leave the Kanagawa manor completely unscathed. Adding that to the fact that Kai wants him dead so much, I have reason to believe that Gerald is quite capable. While I know that both of you are equally capable, we only have one shot at this. Once the Futabas are alerted that we're after Gerald's head, everything will be lost," replied Ryugu as he sighed before lighting a cigarette.

"Understood. Izumi and I will work together then. If there isn't anything else, we'll start preparing ourselves for the mission," said Endo with a nod.

"Glad to hear it. Remember, Gerald must die without any of the Futabas noticing you. If you get caught, kill them too. No evidence should be left behind!" replied Ryugu as he waved his hand.

Honestly, he was starting to regret agreeing to Kai's request...

Chapter 2096

Had he not done so, he could've simply focused on investigating the person who had intercepted Saburo's attack! Oh, how he yearned to not have this extra weight on his back..! Truth be told, Suijin who probably knew how difficult the case was was already being quite understanding for giving him half a month to investigate...

If only he hadn't taken up Kai's mission, then he would've had much more time to investigate, thus lowering his chances of getting punished! Whatever the case was, getting rid of Gerald was now as important as finding Saburo's assailant...

Either way, Endo who was quite confident with his strength then nodded before saying, "Worry not! Since both of us are in this together, the mission will surely be a success! If luck is on our side, we may even be able to bring you good news by tomorrow morning!"

Endo, for one, was so strong that he could easily take on ten Japanese Special Forces members at a time, and Ryugu knew that. With that in mind, Ryugu sighed and replied, "Let's just hope that that's the case..."

Following that, he gestured for them to leave. All he wanted to do now was to get some rest without having to think about anything else for a while...

With that said, Endo and Izumi then bowed before Ryugu before leaving together...

Part of the preparation process included getting their respective teams ready, and the two were prepared to select their best men for the job. After all, the Futabas were already on high alert after finding out about Saburo's assassination attempt. With that in mind, this mission had to be carried out flawlessly...

Moving back to Gerald, after Ryuuka had left, Gerald returned to his room in the Futaba manor before giving Aiden a call to learn about their situation in the past few days. After being updated by Aiden, Gerald told him to pass the phone to Master Ghost for a bit.

After finding out that they were both safe, Gerald couldn't help but breathe a sigh of relief. Still, it wasn't all that surprising. After all, he was the one people were looking for trouble with, not them.

Regardless, after learning that they were fine, Gerald added that he was going to meet up with them before the special forces competition that was less than a week away. Of course, he wasn't just doing that to meet up with Aiden and Master Ghost. Since Fujiko was still participating in the competition, Gerald figured that he may as well come along to ensure her safety.

Whatever the case was, upon hearing that, Aiden was naturally delighted.

Following that, Gerald hung up and rested his hands behind his head as he laid in bed... While resting, he couldn't help but think about the sea map. After all, though he had constantly observed the map whenever he was free in the past few days the island simply never reappeared.

Despite that, Gerald wasn't all that anxious. After all, he had a gut feeling that he was getting closer to uncovering the secrets of Yearning Island...

What's more, whenever he was close to Fujiko, the sea map seemed to emit subtle bursts of heat... Whatever that heat was, it further confirmed that Fujiko's special pendant was linked not only to Yearning Island, but also the sea map...

At that moment, a few knocks could be heard at the door, followed by a voice calling out, "Are you there, Mr. Crawford? The patriarch has invited you for dinner!"

"I'll head there in a bit," replied Gerald as he pinched the bridge of his nose. He would have to think about the sea map later. With that, he got off the bed and slipped on his coat.

Shortly after, Gerald arrived at the dining room. As usual, he was having dinner with Takuya and his daughter, with several of Takuya's subordinates standing at the ready, occasionally serving them with more food...

Gerald, for one, could clearly see that Takuya hadn't smiled much ever since that meeting with the other Futabas. Though Takuya had claimed that it didn't bother him, it was obvious that that was a lie. In the end, he was still the head of the family, and having to watch his family gradually fall apart was definitely a sad thing...

Either way, after a brief silence, Takuya placed both his hands on his knees before saying in a slightly embarrassed tone, "The... special forces competition is going to be held in less than a week, Mr. Crawford... With that in mind, if you head there to support your friend,

please keep an eye out on Fujiko as well... I'm just worried that Hanyus will try assassinating her again..."

Chapter 2097

Takuya had reason to feel ashamed. After all, ever since Gerald showed up, he had constantly been protecting Fujiko. Despite receiving so much of Gerald's help to the point where he even rescued his daughter from getting raped, not only had Takuya failed to repay Gerald's kindness, but he kept on troubling the youth...

Even so, Takuya didn't really know anyone else who was reliable enough to protect his daughter during the special forces competition...

Regardless, before Takuya could say anything else, Gerald simply waved his hand before replying, "Don't worry about it. Even if you hadn't asked me to, I would've done it anyway. "

Gerald, for one, knew that the closer he got to the Futabas, the higher his chances of learning about Yearning Island...

Whatever the case was, upon hearing that, Fujiko instantly found herself blushing.

With how casually Gerald had accepted his request and how hard his daughter was blushing, Takuya couldn't help but say, "I do wonder whether there truly is something between you two..."

Hearing that, Gerald immediately replied, "Please don't overthink it, patriarch..."

"Honestly, I don't really mind. As Fujiko's father, I'm grateful enough as long as you keep her safe..." replied Takuya as he shook his head with a smile, knowing that it was a good choice to entrust Fujiko to Gerald...

Upon hearing that, Gerald didn't attempt to further explain himself. If Takuya continued misunderstanding him, so be it. He would simply clarify the misunderstanding after learning about the secrets of Yearning Island.

Either way, after dinner, Gerald and Fujiko left the dining room together with the intent of talking about the special forces competition... It definitely beat being alone.

However, as they continued walking around the manor, Gerald couldn't help but feel slightly awkward. After all, though there really wasn't anything between them, Gerald couldn't deny that their relationship had gone far beyond the point of just being regular friends. With that in mind, whenever he was alone with her, he couldn't help but feel guilty toward Mila.

His train of thought was cut short when he heard Fujiko sigh before saying, "I wonder if the Hanyus will continue trying to assassinate me now that I'm participating in the competition again..."

Fujiko, for one, had been training her martial arts skills ever since she was a young girl. Though she eventually got to a point where she even gained the title of 'Queen of Soldiers', she recalled how weak she truly was against Saburo back when he attacked her. It was at

That moment when she realized that no matter how much she trained, she would always have an unfair disadvantage against a man's physique...

Shaking his head, Gerald simply replied, "Don't worry about them. I'll be sure to protect you."

Shortly after he said that, however, Gerald quickly found himself frowning. His Herculean Primordial Spirit had sprung to life, which meant that danger was close by...!

Watching as Gerald stretched his arm out to hide Fujiko behind him, the puzzled girl couldn't help but ask, "... Um... Is something wrong, Gerald...?"

"... It seems that the manor isn't as safe as we'd like to imagine," replied Gerald with a faint smile.

"... Huh? What do you mean...?" asked Fujiko, confused as to what was happening. However, it didn't take long for her to realize what he meant.

Leaning in closer to him, Fujiko then whispered, "... Are you saying that our manor has been broken into...?"

"Unfortunately, that seems to be the case," replied Gerald with a nod.

"... T-then, what are we still waiting here for? I need to tell dad about this so that he can send out our men to capture those trespassers!" said Fujiko as she immediately attempted to notify Takuya about all this.

However, before she was even able to make it past her first step, she felt as Gerald grabbed onto her arm...

Chapter 2098

"We're a bit far from where your father's room is. With that in mind, there's a high chance that we'll get attacked along the way. Just so you know, these people are stronger than the person who had attacked you that night. Besides, if you notify your dad about this, the entire manor will surely end up in chaos. After all, the family's already in pretty poor condition, so if word about this gets out, things will only continue getting worse," explained Gerald in a low voice.

"... Then... Are you capable of taking care of them alone...?" asked Fujiko.

"But of course, I am. They don't seem particularly difficult for me to take out, so I'd very much prefer if you focused on defending yourself. Besides, by confronting them, I'll get to know whether these people are Kanagawas or Hanyus," replied Gerald with a smile as he rolled up his sleeves.

Following that, he went completely silent. Though he looked relatively relaxed, the truth was, he was vigilantly scanning his surroundings the entire time. After all, though he was confident in his strength, being careless could always lead to failure. Gerald was also aware that he couldn't go all out since that could potentially expose his true identity as a cultivator to the Futabas, and that was something he didn't want happening since the Futabas were most probably descendants of the Seadom tribe...

Regardless, upon hearing that, Fujiko took a deep breath before taking a few steps back and saying, "... Please, be careful then..."

Following that, instead of running off to hide, she entered a subtle fighting stance, making it evident that she was keen on helping Gerald out...

Throughout the following ten minutes, the two came across several members of the Futaba family who each greeted the duo respectfully. Not wanting to cause any worry, Gerald made sure to keep a calm façade on throughout this period.

Either way, just when Fujiko was starting to think that Gerald was being a bit too sensitive about the manor's safety, two figures could suddenly be seen leaping off a large branch and landing not too far off!

Noticing the familiar glint of two daggers illuminated by the moonlight, Gerald immediately stood before Fujiko and said, "Keep yourself safe."

"Got it," replied Fujiko as she took a few steps away from the duo, prepared to make a run for it if she needed to. She, for one, knew that she wasn't a match against them, so she would rather do as Gerald had said rather than potentially end up as a burden.

The duo themselves were none other than Endo and Izumi who had arrived at the manor about five hours ago to prepare for their assassination. Now that it was rather late and the patrolling guards were in another area, it was high time for them to finally take action!

Either way, the second Fujiko started moving away, the duo immediately bolted toward Gerald, their daggers aimed for his chest! It was clear that they were trying to end things in a single attack!

Under normal circumstances, if their victim hadn't been able to notice their presence, they would've surely died on the spot, unable to even realize what had killed them. Unfortunately, their opponent this time was Gerald.

Gerald, for one, had already sensed where they were hiding before they had even shown themselves. Even so, he hadn't made a move since he wanted to see what they were up to. Were they planning to kill someone specific? Or were they here to create chaos? Whatever they were doing, Gerald had remained calm so that he wouldn't scare them off. He had also done so to avoid alarming the other Futabas who were passing by.

Whatever the case was, he now knew that they were assassins. What surprised him, however, was the fact that he was their target!

Regardless, he easily dodged their attack and quickly broke a nearby branch to use as a weapon! Following that, he dashed toward the two men who were bolting toward him once more!

Within a split second, the sound of metal clanging could be heard...

Now sandwiched between Endo and Izumi, Gerald had successfully managed to block their simultaneous attacks with his branch! Naturally, this slightly surprised the two men. After all, though the duo who were both leaders of separate assassination teams hadn't cooperated in ages, they had both grown and trained under Ryugu...

Chapter 2099

Before they were promoted to being team leaders, the two men had worked side by side for the longest time.

Due to that, their cooperation was impeccable. With that in mind, how the hell had Gerald managed to intercept their attack?!

Alternating his gaze between the two men, Gerald who still had his branch held up couldn't help but smile subtly as he said, "Both of you are quite strong."

Their combined strength wasn't too far off from what he had expected, which meant that they were only minor threats to him.

Regardless, upon hearing that, Endo revealed a sinister smile as he replied, "You're quite cocky for a soon to be dead man!"

Following that, he lifted his dagger and immediately attempted to stab Gerald's underarm! With how tricky the angle was, normal people would've definitely been unable to avoid the attack.

Unfortunately for him, Gerald had already anticipated that attack, which meant that he had plenty of time to smack Endo's wrist with his branch! Despite the weapon being a simple branch, since Gerald was wielding it, he was able to make it hit like a truck!

With that in mind, the second Gerald's counterattack collided against Endo's wrist, the pain was so excruciating that he couldn't even continue holding onto his dagger! Seeing that, Gerald took the chance to grab the dagger as it was still falling to the ground!

Noticing that Endo was trying to escape, Gerald then made a horizontal slash against the man's chest! Unable to avoid it in time, Endo soon found himself struggling to keep himself on his feet, a deep gash on his chest...!

With blood spurting out of his now exposed chest, Endo felt his vision darken as he roared, "F*cking hell...! It hurts...!"

Though he desperately attempted to regain his bearings, the man had lost far too much blood too quickly. After staggering for a few more steps, the dizzy man soon slipped and fell to the ground...!

Now lying on his back, Endo weakly attempted to cover his wound with his hands. However, blood simply continued gushing out like no tomorrow... With how much pain he was currently in, Endo could simply shudder uncontrollably...!

Eyes widened in rage after witnessing all that, Izumi couldn't help but growl, "You... How dare you hurt Endo...?!"

To think that the most powerful Hanyu assassin aside from their team leader would be taken out so easily by Gerald in less than a minute...!

Ignoring Izumi's question, Gerald then turned to look at him before saying, "So, do you work for the Hanyus? Or perhaps the Kanagawas? Tell me the truth and I may just consider letting both of you off. Just so you know, your friend here is pretty severely hurt. He may still make it out alive if you send him to the hospital now. Any later than that, however..."

Watching as Gerald then sneered before turning to look at Endo, Izumi couldn't help but grit his teeth as he retorted, "Like hell I'd tell you!"

Though he knew how bad Endo's current situation was, Izumi had grown up in an assassin family. In other words, it had already been ingrained into him that completing the mission was always more important than the life of a fellow assassin...

"Oh? Is that so? Well, to be completely honest, I don't think the Kanagawas would have anyone as strong as you two. I guess that means you're both from the Hanyu family?" replied Gerald as he raised a slight brow.

"We don't belong to any of those families! We simply wish to end you!" yelled Izumi, not wanting Gerald to realize that his guess was correct...!

Chapter 2100

"Sure you aren't. Well... no matter. Even if you refuse to tell me, I'll validate my guess sooner or later. Regardless, I was just giving you a chance to live," replied Gerald who hadn't really been expecting much in the first place.

After all, throughout the years, less than a third of the people whom Gerald had caught to interrogate had willingly revealed their identities. To Gerald, those who had given in so easily were simply cowards who were afraid of death.

There were many others who would rather grit their teeth and die loyal to their families or hirers, though that wasn't necessarily a good thing.

Whatever the case was, upon hearing that, Izumi couldn't help but retort, "You're looking a bit too highly of yourself, Gerald...!"

Though Izumi now knew that he had no chance of ever defeating Gerald, he couldn't just let Gerald have the last laugh...! Even if he was to die today, he was at least going to terribly hurt Gerald...!

By this point, Izumi's hatred toward the youth had peaked. After all, Gerald had made it personal since that b*stard had hurt Endo so badly! With only murder on his mind, it was no wonder why Izumi's usually precise attacks became rather clumsy.

Watching as Izumi's dagger came inches away from him, Gerald couldn't help but shake his head. It was like a toddler was trying to hurt him.

Easily grabbing onto Izumi's attacking arm, Gerald gave it a simple twist... and just like that, several sickening cracks were heard...! Almost all the bones in his arm had just been broken!

Howling as he recoiled in pain, Izumi couldn't help but wonder how long it had been since he had last felt pain like this... Whatever the case was, like a maddened man, Izumi then pounced toward Gerald while roaring, "Go to hell!"

Before he could even lay a finger on Gerald, however, he was kicked right in the stomach! By the time Izumi finally stopped moving, he had landed right next to Endo...

With one of them seriously wounded and the other having several broken bones, it had taken less than five minutes for two of the mightiest leaders of the Hanyu assassin team to get utterly defeated by Gerald...

"... S-so strong...!" muttered the shocked Fujiko who had witnessed all that had just taken place, her trembling hands now covering her mouth.

Back when she had first been saved by Gerald, the night was dark and she was already wounded. With that in mind, while she knew that Gerald was strong, she didn't know how strong he truly was. Tonight, however, she finally found out how inhumanly powerful Gerald was...! To think that she had once considered herself to be quite powerful among the others in the military... She now knew that before Gerald, her strength was only comparable to that of a child's!

With how strong he was, Fujiko felt that Gerald would probably be able to easily defeat all the experts in Japan! Hell, he could probably even take out the legendary ninjas who remained well hidden to this day!

Moving back to Gerald, seeing that Izumi didn't wish to cooperate, he then began walking toward the duo, the blood stained dagger in hand... With how strong these two were, if he let them live, they would surely end up becoming a threat to him in the future. With that in mind, he was going to finish them off tonight.

Once he stood before them, the duo could only glare at him, unable to even get to their feet. Knowing that this was it, they closed their eyes as Gerald lifted his dagger while saying, "Since you refuse to cooperate, may both of you rest in pieces!"

Just as Gerald was about to plunge the dagger into the trembling Endo's chest, a familiar voice suddenly yelled, "Wait! Don't kill them, Mr. Crawford...!"

Upon hearing that, Gerald stopped the dagger just millimeters away from Endo's skin. Had the shout come a split second later, the dagger would've already been firmly implanted into Endo's heart, and not even the most capable of doctors would be able to save him then.

Tossing the dagger to the side, Gerald then turned to face the source of the voice as he said, "Patriarch..."