

The Man's Decree 491

Chapter 491 Continue With Your Pretense

"Mr. Mikkelson, is there an abundance of gemstones here?" Isaiah looked at Bruce and asked.

The latter nodded readily. "This place is indeed not too shabby. The entrance to the vein mine should be in the northwest. Send people to search in that direction!"

"Sure!" Isaiah was over the moon. Once the location is confirmed, finding the entrance to the vein mine is just a matter of time. It seems like the entire Mount Hickoria will become mine in time to come!

Just as he was thrilled by his thoughts, he noticed another group of people walking out from the jungle. And within them was none other than Jayden!

Seeing how Jayden had managed to lead his group out while remaining unaffected, the smile on Isaiah's face vanished at once.

"H-How did you guys get out?" A look of bewilderment washed over Isaiah's face.

Simultaneously, Bruce furrowed his brows and asked, "Did someone walk out from there?"

"Yeah, it's the Snyders! They didn't get trapped at all! They've all managed to get out," Isaiah responded.

"How is that possible?" Bruce's brows drew even tighter together.

"Isaiah, do you think your illusionary technique is enough to trap us up? How naive of you!" Jayden burst into a peal of laughter.

"What are you talking about, Jayden? What illusionary technique? I don't get it at all!" Isaiah pretended like he did not understand those words.

"Continue with your pretense! The day where you won't be able to act anymore will come!" Jayden shot a glare at Isaiah before turning to his subordinate and commanded, "Relay the message; find the entrance to the vein mine immediately!"

In no time, the Snyders began the search as well. But given that the mountain was so huge, finding the entrance to the vein mine was not an easy feat.

At the sight of the Snyders searching around blindly and clumsily, Isaiah lifted the corners of his lips into a mocking grin. We've already secured a clear direction. I'm sure the search will be much smoother and faster for us!

Just then, another commotion broke out from the jungle. What followed was Christopher leading the Larsons walking out, but unlike the previous group, many of them looked visibly worn out. Not only that, their headcounts had seemingly decreased by half.

Walking out, he looked at Jayden and Isaiah with a darkened expression. "Which one of you tried to play dirty and used illusions to set me up?"

Evidently, that revelation had hit him after his group had suffered the impacts.

“Who else other than Isaiah, that lowly scoundrel? We just got out of the jungle too!” Jayden pointed at Isaiah as he explained.

“Jayden, how dare you accuse me? Did you see it with your eyes? I can say you’re the one who’s playing all these tricks too! How is it possible that you can walk out so safely if you’ve fallen prey?”

Without a doubt, Isaiah did not want the Snyders and the Larsons to forge an alliance as that would only put him at a disadvantage.

At that point, the three parties stared at each other cautiously.

Meanwhile, Jared was in a state of exhilaration upon his arrival at the mountain top. He could sense the immense spiritual energy bubbling upward, almost as though it was erupting through the tip of that mountain.

There must be plenty of spiritual stone below this place.

“We found it! We found it!” one of the Fergusons suddenly shrieked at the top of his lungs.

At that, everyone ran in the direction where the voice sounded. The sight that became visible was that member holding onto a pickaxe and standing in front of a small opening that had a diameter of less than one meter.

As the opening was pitched dark, no one could see what was inside. However, according to past experiences, they knew they would be able to get to the vein mine if they continued to dig deeper from that hole.

With the emergence of the entrance to the vein mine, the tension in the air continued to mount. It seemed almost like a battle would break out any time soon!

“No one can be sure if this is indeed the entrance to the vein mine. It’s purely our guess on whether or not gemstones are abundant here. Why don’t we join forces and break open this opening to see the inside before drawing a conclusion?” Christopher suggested to Jayden and Isaiah.

Chapter 492 A Collapse

Christopher knew the Larsons were the weakest in power among the three families. He figured that given how things were still in a vague mess, it would be futile for the three parties to engage in a fight. After all, there was a possibility that there might be nothing in the vein min.

“Sure, I agree to it!” Jayden nodded since he felt the same way.

Upon seeing their reaction, Isaiah could only follow suit. “All right. Let’s break open the opening together!”

After finishing his words, he turned to his men and ordered, “Get ready the explosives to blow the entrance.”

Meanwhile, Jared had been monitoring the condition of the top of the mountain, and upon hearing Isaiah’s commands, he immediately rushed forward and urged, “You can’t do that! The mountain top might crumble if you blow up the entrance!”

Being able to tell that it was hollow beneath the mountain top, Jared knew the destructive impact from the explosion would build up within the mountain and result in a collapse.

Throwing a glance at the man, Isaiah coldly uttered, "What do you know? We've mined for years, and that's what we always do. Get out of my sight now! I'll settle scores with you when I get down the mountains!"

No one paid heed to Jared's words, and in the blink of an eye, explosives were set up at the venue.

In the next second, an ear-splitting sound echoed through the air. The hole, which only had a one-meter diameter, had instantly turned into a giant one!

Darkness remained inside the hole, yet the reverberation of the collision of stones was rather apparent.

"That must be from the gravels after the explosion. Let's head in and take a better look," Isaiah suggested.

A sudden sequence of tremors that resembled an earthquake became apparent just as the trio prepared to step inside. It left everyone present awfully shocked that they hastily staggered a few steps backward.

Not long after, the crowd realized that cracks were starting to form on the ground below their feet. Not only were they spreading, but they were growing wider too.

"Aaaahh!"

The majority chorused their screams as they scuttled away.

Reacting swiftly, Tessa grabbed ahold of Jared. He was the only person she trusted at that point.

Like many others, Dominic was scurrying for his life. Yet Jared pulled him back and exclaimed, "Stop running. You won't be able to get away!"

Holding onto Tessa and Dominic, Jared leaped off the ground without warning. Subsequently, the entire mountain top, which was the size of several football fields, caved in after a loud rumble resonated!

Of course, everyone plunged inward at once since they could not react in time to the sudden collapse.

Fortunately, it was only a few meters deep, and thus there were no fatalities. Only several members had sustained injuries after getting hit by the giant boulders.

"Look! There's imperial jade..."

"Oriental jasper... That's an oriental jasper!"

Getting stuck in that massive pit, the crowd noticed the plethora of stones sticking out from the ground. The colors were so bright and luscious that anyone could spot them without the need for any tools and equipment.

"Hahaha! We're going to be rich! This place is indeed a vein mine full of gemstones! How amazing!" At the sight of the gemstones around him, Isaiah began laughing maniacally.

Jayden and Christopher also fell into jubilation. This place is way more valuable than a gold mountain!

While everyone else was mesmerized by the stunning appearances of those gemstones, Jared's attention deviated to an unremarkable stone that was about the size of a fist, sharing a resemblance to a cobblestone.

Immense spiritual energy radiating from the stones covered the entire venue. Having not experienced such a phenomenon, Jared opened his arms and immersed himself in the atmosphere in an attempt to draw all the energy to him.

A few moments into their excitement, Jayden, Christopher, and Isaiah swiftly turned on their alert mode and looked at each other cautiously.

"Jayden, Christopher, I'm the one who found the entrance. Logically speaking, I should start mining first. But since you guys are here too, I'll let you two equally split between the mines I have out of Mount Hickoria," Isaiah generously said to Jayden and Christopher.

Chapter 493 Stop Blabbering Nonsense

"That's total bullsh*t, Isaiah. The entrance is the result of the collapse. How can you attribute it to your hard work?" Jayden could not hold himself back and started cussing.

Christopher did not fare any better as his expression hardened. "Exactly. How can you take all the credit?"

"Then what do the two of you want?" Isaiah's eyes brimmed with menace as he scrunched his brows together.

Instantly, Christopher fell silent. He knew he was in no place to voice any opinions since he was considered the weakest among the three of them.

On the other hand, Jayden took a simple glimpse at George. Only upon receiving a nod from the latter did he confidently boast, "Now that the mine's entrance has emerged, we should decide who gets to begin mining based on that person's abilities!"

"Fine, Jayden! Don't regret what you've said!" Isaiah did not beat around the bush either. Upon agreement, he turned to Bruce and gave him a polite bow. "Mr. Mikkelson, I'm counting on you now!"

"Rest assured, Mr. Ferguson!"

A flame first ignited on Bruce's palm but was put off within seconds. Consequently, a dense layer of smoke filled the place.

"It's the same trick again? That useless illusionary technique won't work on me!"

George let out a cold snort and uttered, "Daxton, go and teach that old man a lesson!"

"Got it!" As soon as Daxton's words rang out, he charged toward the lingering smoke without hesitation.

The sounds of furious fighting rang out amidst the smoke. Nonetheless, no one had an idea of the situation since they could only stare from outside.

Jayden clenched his fists so tightly they were sweating profusely.

“There’s no need to worry, Mr. Snyder. Daxton has long inherited my skills. A mere mage is no match for him!”

Having learned that Bruce was a mage, George was unfazed by the situation before him.

With those words of assurance, Jayden could finally feel a little relieved.

But right as George finished speaking, a figure flew right out from the thick fog and crashed onto the ground with a loud thud.

“Daxton...” The sharp-eyed George could tell that it was his senior apprentice with one glance!

Daxton’s chest sunk deep in. It was a clear indication that he had a few of his ribs broken. There was also a trace of blood from his mouth. He had wanted to open his mouth to say something, but fresh red-colored blood spewed everywhere as he tried doing that.

Bruce stood tall within the dissipating smoke, with shades on his face and his hands tucked at the back.

“Who says a mage only knows magecrafts and doesn’t know how to fight?”

With an icy sneer, he removed his shades to reveal a pair of eyes that had no black pupils on them. Regardless, he still waved his hand at George as though he could see where the latter was and uttered, “Even without magecrafts, I’ll be able to win!”

“You’re skilled in both mage and martial arts?” George’s face grew increasingly grave.

“Cut the crap. Let’s get started if you have what it takes. Otherwise, get lost!”

Bruce broke into a wide grin. His voice rang out like thunder, leaving everyone present freaking out.

George could only feel a chill down his spine as the confidence within him had long faded. It was out of his expectations that his opponent had such immense capabilities. Won’t that mean that I don’t stand a chance at winning?

Nevertheless, he figured there was no other way out for him with how things had turned out. Bracing himself and tensing his chiseled muscles up, he strode toward Bruce.

“Let me teach you a lesson for wounding my apprentice.”

With that said, George dashed forward swiftly in the direction of where Bruce was standing.

This time, Bruce did not use magecraft. Instead, his ears were twitching continuously, and every time his opponent launched an attack, he was able to shun it successfully.

The battle between the two soon grew so intense it was like a fierce whirlwind, leaving the crowd dodging the flying stones around them.

“You can do it, Mr. Jenson!” With his fists tightened, Jayden secretly cheered for George. The latter was the only person he could depend on, which meant that his loss would only signify dire consequences.

Bang!

With the loud boom, the two silhouettes went their separate ways. Not only did George stumble a few steps back before managing to steady himself, but Bruce was also in a similar predicament. It turned out the latter was not as indestructible as how others had perceived him to be!

Chapter 494 A Messy Fight

“Seems like I’ve underestimated you. Come again!” Bruce immediately sprang into action after finishing his sentence.

Figuring that his opponent only had rather average skills, George’s confidence skyrocketed, and without hesitation, he pushed himself off the ground and charged toward his opponent.

Just as he did that, he saw Bruce waving his hand. Within seconds, he was shrouded in a cloud of smoke that only grew increasingly thicker.

He hurriedly tried to move backward but heard a howl of wind behind him. His agility allowed him to lower his head relatively quickly to avoid the abrupt attack.

“Despicable jerk! Didn’t you say that you won’t use magecraft?” George snarled.

“I’m only using my capabilities. How am I despicable?” Bruce let out an insidious laugh.

In that fight they were in, he knew he had the ultimate power while George was only but a headless chicken running around aimlessly.

Witnessing the dreadful sight before him, Jayden became boot-faced as he figured doom was approaching.

Indeed, several moments later, George’s body was sent flying out of the thick smog, with bloodstains at the corner of his mouth and his body slightly shaking as he lifted his gaze to look at Bruce.

“Skilled in both martial arts and magecraft... You’re undoubtedly capable. I concede defeat,” George muttered with a pale face.

“I assume you’re from a prominent background too. I’ll let you off today. Scram.” Bruce waved his hand in dismissal.

In response, George clasped his hands together and gave a salute before ordering his men to carry Daxton up and take their leave.

“Mr. Jenson, you can’t leave. You can’t leave just yet. What do I do if you’re gone? I’ll pay extra; tell me how much more you want!” Jayden grabbed onto George’s arm and generously remarked.

“Mr. Snyder, this has nothing to do with money. I’m honestly no match to Mr. Mikkelson. There’s nothing I can do!” George forcefully shoved Jayden’s hands away and departed without looking back.

Astonishment struck Jayden. His body felt so weak he was on the brink of collapsing onto the ground.

“Dad!” Tessa hurriedly held onto the man.

“How is it? I’ve given you a chance, but sadly you don’t know how to cherish it. Now, not just this, but all of the other vein mines on Mount Hickoria belong to me! Whoever dares to disagree will have to die today!” Isaiah convulsed with laughter.

“Isaiah, I promise that the Larsons won’t fight with you. All we ask for is retaining the ownership of the vein mines that are originally ours!”

It was the decision Christopher had derived after proper judgment.

“It’s too late now. You two shall lead your men and get out of Salinsburgh at once. I don’t want to see anyone else, other than the Fergusons, mining here!” Isaiah declared triumphantly with contempt written all over his face.

“D-Don’t push your luck, Isaiah!” Christopher was seething with fury.

“Why? Even if I do that, what can you do? Do you want to start a fight too?”

Isaiah shot a look of disdain at Christopher. Arrogance within the former had reached its peak!

“Isaiah, even if I die, I won’t leave Salinsburgh. I’ll take you down with me if I have to!” Jayden gritted his teeth as rage welled up.

Then, he turned to Christopher and said, “Chris, let’s join forces. I’m confident we’ll be able to outwit Isaiah with our combined powers. When that happens, we’ll split the vein mines equally!”

Seeing how cocky Isaiah was, Christopher nodded readily. “Absolutely! Let’s do that!”

Despite watching the agreement for a collaboration between the two, Isaiah could not care less. The expert Jayden brought along with him has already left. How powerful can he still be?

“Since you two are asking for death, don’t blame me for my ruthlessness then!”

A murderous intent flashed across Isaiah’s eyes, and as soon as he motioned his arm in the air, the experts he brought with him speedily pranced forward. As Bruce lightly moved his fingers, streaks of black smoke began wafting toward the Larsons and the Snyders. “After them! Kill all of them!”

“Charge!” Christopher and Jayden’s roars filled the air. They knew it was a serious matter concerning their survival.

Instantaneously, an intense battle unfolded between the two groups of forces. The almost two meters in height bulky man, whom Christopher had brought along, headed toward Bruce straight away. His humongous figure was just like a hill!

Chapter 495 Scratching An Itch

“Hmph. Insolent fool!”

Up against that mountain of a man, Bruce’s eyes suddenly blinked. In place of the whiteness that permeated his pupils before was a black sprightliness—The clarity in his eyes showed he was never blind in the first place!

“Arghhh!” Roaring, that colossus launched a fist right at him!

He niftily dodged that blow and aimed one into the man's back!

Bam!

Akin to a hammer upon steel, a resounding thump ensued. he was sent staggering back several paces outright, with his hand tingling with numbness!

"So, you practice the martial discipline of invulnerability!" Bruce broke into a slight furrow.

Enraged after getting struck, the large man turned and strode forth once more in Bruce's direction, with every step of his pounding resoundingly upon the ground like an earthquake.

"Hmph!" With a snort, two streams of black smoke burst out from between Bruce's dancing fingers and straight for that colossus.

The large man saw them coming and tried to take evasive countermeasures, but those two black streams shot up his nose like specters, causing him to clutch at his own throat in an expression of shock and obvious pain!

Pfft!

One mouthful of spurted blood later, the two-meter-tall body came crashing onto the ground. The large man's gawking eyes, as well as every single orifice on his body, oozed crimson. Apparently, he was dead from poisoning!

Be it the Snyders or the Larsons, the two families began to see casualties, collapsing to the ground and succumbing to those same symptoms in short order.

Confronted with the scene that played out before them, Jayden and Cristopher both became shocked in equal measure!

"Hahaha. Pitting yourselves against me? For not taking the chance I've gifted you before with both hands, all of you shall perish here this day!" Isaiah guffawed at Jayden and Cristophe who had, at this moment, become lambs to the slaughter.

The latter pair had an awful expression on their faces. Finally, the hapless Cristopher exhaled. "I'm willing to relinquish the Larsons' control of the vein mine over to you, and henceforth retire away from Salinsburgh!"

His compromise left Jayden looking even more distraught!

"What about you, Jayden?" The sneering Isaiah regarded Jayden with frivolity.

Jayden gnashed his teeth. With his own forces almost completely spent, he had no chance of turning the tide no matter how capable he was. His only way out was to relent and beg for mercy.

"I, too, will do likewise!" said Jayden with his head bowed.

"Hahaha! Hahaha..." Isaiah reared his head and laughed a pompous laugh.

His cackling made Jayden and Cristopher feel like they were being trampled savagely underfoot. From this day on, it would seem that there would be no place left for the Snyders and the Larsons in all of Salinsburgh!

“I may spare you yet, Jayden. Your famous daughter Tessa looks like she could make for good company. Leave her with me for a day or two, then I’ll let you both walk away when I tire of her!” said Isaiah after he recollected himself.

Jayden went blue in the face upon hearing that. To think that even forsaking everything to his name was not enough to get Isaiah to let him off.

“We’ve been acquainted for so many years, Isaiah, to the point that Tessa almost saw you like her own uncle. How could you...” Jayden regarded him with his eyes boiling over with rage.

“Don’t try to cozy up with me with this nonsense about uncles and whatnot. I’ve long been enamored with your daughter’s salacious figure, so now is the time for me to scratch that itch!”

Isaiah looked at Tessa with a pair of brazen eyes.

“You knave. You monster...” she cursed at him, red in the face with fury.

Isaiah’s face stiffened. “For daring to swear at me, I shall have my way with you in front of all of them here today, wench!”

Upon a wave of his hand, two of the Fergusons’ underlings then dashed right for Tessa.

In spite of his best efforts, there was nothing Jayden could do to stop it!

Seized upon by the Fergusons’ two henchmen, the frail Tessa found herself dragged toward Isaiah!

Chapter 496 Hardly In A Position For Heroics

“Ah—” the visibly shaken Tessa squealed in panic. “Help, Jared. Save me...”

She could only turn to Jared at this moment, for she knew his strength well!

“Let her go!” Jared said steadily.

“Hardly in a position for heroics when you can scarcely save your own hide. Wouldn’t you agree, kiddo?” said the scoffing Isaiah as he regarded Jared.

Ignoring him, Jared turned to Jayden instead. “Give me half of this vein mine, and I’ll save your daughter, as well as rid you of the Fergusons!”

The snootiness and casualness of his inflection made it sound as though eliminating the Fergusons was a triviality unworthy even of mention.

Stunned, Jayden looked at him, seemingly at a loss.

“Do you even know what you are saying here, brat? Rid him of the Fergusons? Aren’t you worried about being made to chew on your own words?” Isaiah howled at Jared in displeasure.

He was not convinced that Jared possessed the ability to follow through on that, for he was buoyed further by Bruce's presence and had no cause for fear.

"Have you come to a decision yet, Jayden?" Jared continued.

Jayden had an awful look, caught between a rock and a hard place.

If he were to accede to Jared's request and should the latter prove to be more bluster than he was worth by getting himself killed, all the Snyder family would have to contend with the fate of total eradication.

However, were he to refuse, Jayden could not live with himself seeing Tessa sullied at the hands of Isaiah either.

"Aside from turning to me, do you have any other options? Do not pin your hopes on other people's good conscience!" sneered Jared when he saw Jayden's trepidation.

"Come on, Dad. Agree to his terms..." Tessa wailed away. Though she understood her father's reservations, she had seen Jared catch a bullet in mid-flight with her own very eyes. That was not something any average person could muster!

"Mr. Chance's capability goes beyond what your eyes can perceive, Mr. Snyder!" advised Dominic who, by this point, could not allow himself to be sidetracked by other distractions.

The slightly apprehensive Jayden looked to Tessa and finally replied between gritted teeth, "If you could save my daughter, Mr. Chance, I'd be willing to give up my entire vein mine to you!"

"Like I said, half of it is what I ask. Nothing more."

With that, Jared turned to regard Isaiah. "Let Ms. Snyder go, and perhaps I might consider granting you a merciful end."

"Hahaha. Are you deluded, brat, or have you lost your mind? How do you expect to kill me?" The latter chortled with scant regard for him.

Without saying another word, Jared's body spurred into action. Following that, the two of the Fergusons straight-up hit the deck. With Tessa swept into his arms, Jared then drifted back onto Jayden's side.

While her arms wrapped around his neck and eyes fixated upon him, her heart throbbed.

Jayden responded to Jared's remarkable display with much glee inside.

"You can let go of me now!" said Jared haplessly to Tessa who did not seem ready to relinquish her grip on him.

"Oh!" She blushed and promptly loosened her hold.

"Your daughter is now back safe and sound, so I shall see to Isaiah next. Do not forget what you've promised me, though," Jared said.

"I won't. I definitely will not forget it!" Jayden nodded his head vigorously.

Jared about turned and looked to Isaiah with a subdued smile. "Let us not waste time here. Come at me with everything you've got!"

With that, the terrifying aura of Jared's exploded all around him!

"You're asking for it!"

Incensed, a Grandmaster from amongst the Fergusons started toward Jared!

With movements as swift as lightning, the Grandmaster saw a series of deafening rumbles arise from between his palms. It was the sound of energy churning through the air.

This terrifying force surged directly at Jared, stirring up a storm of dust in its wake. Jared, nonetheless, kept his hands calmly behind his own back while he regarded that Grandmaster with reticence!

Chapter 497 The Heavens Smile Upon Us

Jared's zen-ness came across as a massive slight in the view of the Fergusons' Grandmaster. With both fists extended, the Grandmaster's intimidating aura increased in intensity several-fold and shrouded Jared outright, as though he meant to crush the latter with it.

"Too weak..." Jared shook his head in disapproval.

In the next split second, Jared transformed himself into the epicenter of a massive eruption of energy that mushroomed out in all directions with a simple tap of his right foot. That Grandmaster's expression fell when he suddenly felt himself being assailed by this overwhelming tsunami of energy.

The Fergusons' Grandmaster tried to evade but to no avail. Sent flying like an untethered kite by this uncanny force, he then fell heavily to the ground, motionless!

Without having exchanged even one blow, a fighter of the Grandmaster's caliber was struck dead, just like that. That instantly got Isaiah in a rightfully severe mood and even put a frown upon Bruce's brow!

"Fantastic. Simply marvelous..."

Upon witnessing this, Jayden exclaimed in sheer delight. Never had he ever expected that Jared would possess such potency.

"Why have you kept such a formidable fighter hidden if you had him within your ranks all this while?" Christopher asked Jayden.

The latter had a look of embarrassment about him for he did not know how to answer that. This was because he had no idea Jared was that capable, to begin with.

"You ought to be convinced that Jared was the one who saved me by now, right, Dad? He caught the bullet that went off last night. It would have come straight at me otherwise!"

When Tessa related to Jayden the events from the night before, Jayden's look was that of startlement followed by a gnawing sense of dread. Would she not have been struck by the bullet had Jared not been beside her?

“Blessed with Mr. Chance’s presence, the heavens smile upon the Snyders. Hahaha...” Jayden laughed haughtily.

Having the ability to catch bullets with one’s own bare hands would propel one into the league of immortals. Who could possibly rival that?

The sight of Jayden’s delight became a juxtaposition against Isaiah’s own dismay.

“I ask of you, Mr. Mikkelson, to tear this kid to pieces!” Isaiah seethed between gritted teeth.

“With pleasure!” Bruce strode forth and regarded Jared frostily. “For one as young as yourself to boast of such ability is a rarity. Walk away now, and I may spare you your life yet!”

“Are you afraid that you may not be able to match up with me? Seeing how it couldn’t have been easy to reach your level of attainment, I’d rather not kill you. So, you can jolly well buzz off!” the smiling Jared said stonily.

“What’s that, you rascal? Me, afraid?” Bruce was instantly livid. “I’d say, that even if you were to possess the prowess of a Grandmaster right now, you’d still be nothing in my esteem, for I’m the one in command inside of my arcane array!”

With that, Bruce’s eyeballs flipped. The black of his eyeballs disappeared in the same instant, turning his pupils white once more.

“A good thing then that I know a thing or two about arcane arrays too. What do you say to us having a little fun with it together?” Jared replied with a faint smile.

“What? Might you be adept in both the arcane and martial arts as well?” asked Bruce in astonishment.

“Do not be taken in by his tomfoolery, Mr. Mikkelson. How could one who’s as wet behind the ears as he possibly knows that much?” reminded Isaiah from the side.

That seemed to make a certain sense to Bruce. Hence, with both hands in front of him, he weaved out layers upon layers of white fog until it had Jared completely surrounded!

As the fog spread, so did its thickness amplify. Soon, Jared and the Grandmaster himself became enveloped within, visually cut off from everyone from the outside.

“This is not good...”

Jayden was taken aback at this development because he was aware of Bruce’s elite mastery of magecraft. How is Jared to battle an opponent that he cannot even see?

Chapter 498 None Remained Intact

Tessa held on fast to Jayden’s arm amidst her own mounting tensions inside.

“Hahaha. Abandon all your false hopes, Jayden. Inside Mr. Mikkelson’s own arcane array, he is practically God-like in his ability to dictate everything within. None would be able to defeat him!” Isaiah convulsed with laughter.

Bam! Bam! Bam—

Very quickly, the sound of skirmishing between the duo emanated from within the fog, but no one could ascertain what was happening inside!

“Rather unimpressive, I should say, of this arcane array of yours!”

Only Jared’s scoffing was audible before that dense curtain of fog dissipated. Quick as the eye can see, the silhouette of both men presented themselves before the masses once more.

While Jared stood as he was before, Bruce was seen with the fresh imprint of five fingers prominently upon his flush face!

The grandmaster blinked and recovered himself. While he glared at Jared, his eyes evoked strains of rage.

“Are you all right, Jared?” Tessa hastened to ask.

“Do I look like I’m not? You should be asking that old fogey over there because I reckon none of his teeth are still intact!” said Jared with a chuckle.

Seeing Bruce’s expression, Isaiah then cautiously asked, “Are you all right, Mr. Mikkelson?”

“I...”

The moment the grandmaster opened his mouth, all the teeth inside came pattering out.

“Hahaha...”

Tessa could not refrain from bursting out in laughter when she saw that, and Cristopher and Jayden, too, partook in her merriment.

Even Isaiah himself felt the same urge when he saw Bruce turn out the way he did, but he fought hard to contain himself.

Bruce’s eyes were ablaze. “I’d kill you right now, you little bastard!”

With that, his white mane billowed by itself like a demon.

“Cut the crap and show me what else you’ve got!” Jared goaded.

The unleashing of his magical technique saw Bruce’s eyes turning a deep claret. Following that, the tendrils of black mist that emerged from his body suddenly blared fangs and claws and lunged toward Jared like a vengeful spirit.

“This mist is venomous, Jared...” Tessa hastened to warn Jared when she saw this.

She felt the impetus to caution him because many who preceded him had fallen prey to this poisonous mist.

However, Jared did not seem at all bothered. Conversely, he opened his mouth wide. “How could I pass on such a delicacy?”

After that black mist was sucked into Jared outright, he patted his own belly. “Are there more? I’m not quite satiated yet!”

“Hahaha. Do you have any idea what that was before you absorbed it into your own stomach, kiddo?”
Surprised that Jared took in the black mist, Bruce broke into laughter.

“Whatever that was and however more of it that you can throw at me, I can take it all in!” came Jared’s nonchalant reply.

“Hmph. An excruciating death from poisoning would soon visit upon you. That’ll blunt your arrogance!”
Bruce scoffed dismissively, and when he leaped forward, a massive aura trailed toward Jared!

“Death by poisoning, from this? Not even close!”

With that, Jared similarly unleashed waves upon waves of terrifying aura of his own.

Sand spiraled and stones flew with the two sets of auras set upon a collision course. Amidst the chaos, more than a few large rocks were altogether smashed into smithereens!

Bruce was set into a furrow. He did not expect that after being poisoned by his mist, Jared would still be able to muster up such an awe-inspiring aura.

However, Bruce was not about to let up. He knew that Jared’s poisoning was close to taking effect, hence there was no better time for him to claim the latter’s life than in the present!

Following a lift of his hand, an enormous palm manifested in the air and upon it a burned a tempestuous firestorm!

“Have a taste of my Flaming Palm, brat!”

The gigantic palm descended toward Jared, and the series of heatwaves those blazing fires brought with it sent the surrounding onlookers scurrying far and away!

Chapter 499 A Chaste Maiden

When Jared lifted his head to regard the Flaming Palm hurtling down toward him, his lips curled into a smirk.

“Yeah. Now that’s something. I guess I’ll be helping myself to this as well!”

Seeing Jared’s laid-back demeanor came to Bruce as a surprise. The latter then put more power behind his hands and increased the intensity of the flames.

Rumble, rumble, rumble...

The massive Flaming Palm pinned Jared underneath with a loud bang and engulfed Jared within with its roaring flames. Even those sturdy rocks on the ground had caught fire, one after the other.

The fiery cauldron that rocketed several meters skyward could melt walls of steel, not to mention a person!

“Jared!”

“Mr. Chance...”

This time, Jayden, Tessa and the others were scared witless.

Dominic, too, regarded those devastating flames in sheer disbelief. He could not believe that Jared had died just like that!

“Hmph. Insolent child. You should have known better than to challenge me...” Bruce cursed in contempt.

“It is over, Jayden, Cristopher. Once I finish you, all of Salinsburgh will belong to me.” Isaiah regarded the duo with smugness all over.

Left ashen-faced, Jayden and Cristopher were now bereft of all illusions!

Conversely, Tessa bit her lip. “I cannot allow this beast to taint me, Dad. I’m sorry for being unfilial, but I can only hope to make it up to you in my next life!”

With that, Tessa dashed head-along toward a massive boulder!

“Within the entertainment industry in this day and age, a chaste maiden like you is a rare breed indeed.”

Just as Tessa was preparing to kill herself, Jared’s voice suddenly rang out.

When she turned sharply in its direction, she saw Jared standing there completely unscathed. Even his clothes remained pristine and intact!

“This... What’s going on here?”

Tessa could not believe her own eyes.

The others were equally in shock. None of them could fathom how such a massive fire could do no harm whatsoever to Jared.

“Impossible. This is just impossible...” With eyes widened, Bruce howled like a madman.

“What’s so impossible about that? Haven’t your mentor taught you that all things are possible in this world?” The corner of Jared’s lips lifted.

“I don’t believe it. I refuse to believe that I cannot kill you...” Bruce roared and then bit hard upon his own finger. The fresh blood that flowed from it fell upon the stones on the ground below.

It was uncertain how many drops it took but the rocks that were stained with his blood moved as though under someone’s control!

Shortly after, those rocks piled up and merged into a nearly two-meter-tall stone golem. The earth where the stone golem strode upon trembled in its wake.

“Even if I should bleed out, I shall have your head!”

The voice might belong to Bruce, but his speech emerged from within the stone golem.

Its thunderous voice made everyone’s head spin and compelled them to cover their ringing ears.

“Is this the stone morphing? Now it’s getting interesting!”

Jared evoked a chilling smile. Bruce’s magecraft is indeed something to behold. No wonder I’ve felt the flow of his spiritual energy a cut above the others!

The stone golem inched toward Jared, one step at a time, and with every step, it left behind a deep crevice where all the rock underneath was crushed to bits!

All eyes were upon that animated being, beheld in stunned silence. The observers then variously retreated until they had themselves brought right to the very edge!

Rumble, rumble, rumble...

When the stone golem reached Jared, it threw a punch toward the latter so violently that it threatened to tear the entire mountain apart!

Chapter 500 Time To Get Serious

In response to that stone golem's ferocious onslaught, Jared's answer was equally voluminous. Concentrating the spiritual energy within himself, he channeled it into a sphere of light around his own fist as radiant as the sun itself!

Boom!

Jared met that stone golem's fist head-on with his own. To the masses, however, the former's knuckles seemed so puny in comparison to his counterpart's. Even his entire person was dwarfed when lined up against that massive fist of rock.

Surprisingly, in tandem with a fulmination of golden light and a loud bang, the stone golem was knocked down to the ground in a burst of flying debris.

Reduced to a pile of rubble, the stone golem's former humanoid form had long since disintegrated beyond recognition!

Everyone regarded Jared with awe. It was inconceivable how his tiny body could have overpowered the stone golem's hulking frame!

With terror reflected within his eyes, even the color drained from Bruce's face.

"Mr. Mikkelson..." Isaiah shouted in alarm.

"Even if I were to die, so be it. But I shall not have my reputation despoiled this day!"

In his eyes appeared a smidgen of determination, as though he had arrived at some resolve.

With that, he slapped his abdomen with two fingers. His originally pallid face flushed red while he thrust his upper body forward and expunged a large spray of crimson orally. The blood fell like rain in a drizzle upon a mass of rocks!

Rumble, rumble, rumble—

An even larger stone golem, twice as big as its predecessor, arose in no time at all. The completion of this ritual, however, caused Bruce to appear significantly more haggard than before. Like a candle at the tail end of its burn time, Bruce could very well have keeled over had it not been for the support Isaiah lent.

"Kill him..." bellowed Bruce with the last muster of his strength.

This gargantuan stone golem lumbered toward Jared and caused the earth to quake every step of the way.

“All right, time to get serious.”

When he regarded the stone golem, Jared’s face evoked a sliver of irascibility.

As soon as he was done talking, Jared swiftly took to the air until he was brought level with the stone golem. Then, he aimed a fist right at its head.

Boom!

When the fist connected with a thunderous bang, the stone golem was grounded to dust upon impact, with its remnants scattered to the four winds!

Pfft!

When Bruce saw that, he spat out a fountain of blood and collapsed, slumped upon the ground.

Jared then came right upon the grandmaster in a single bound, prompting the latter to beat a hasty retreat.

The visibly weakened Bruce regarded Jared with a bitter smile, as though he had come to some realization. “You... are neither a martial artist nor a mage. You are... a...”

Bruce’s head tilted to the side lifelessly before he was done. Toward the end, he recognized Jared to be a cultivator!

Jared regarded Bruce’s corpse with a slight frown. The latter’s recognition of himself as a cultivator was proof that he was aware of their existence, or had otherwise, encountered his own like in others.

Jared was a little miffed. Had he known better, he would not have allowed Bruce to die this easily because he very much wished to know where else he might find other energy cultivators like himself.

Getting up steadily, Jared then looked toward Isaiah. All the Fergusons were shaking in their boots, and no one dared breathe a word.

“I-I was in the wrong. I’m willing to give up on the vein mine and forever depart from Salinsburgh!” the trembling Isaiah said.

Jared shook his head. “I’ve already pledged myself to the destruction of the Fergusons. Thus, I must deliver.”

“No, please...” Isaiah got down on his knees before Jared. “Do not kill me, I beg of you. Whatever you ask, I’d be able to provide! I can give you the entire Ferguson family!”