

Chapter 1991

Still, just from the way Gerald looked and talked, Kay knew better than to doubt him.

Whatever the case was, seeing that Kay was about to escort them back to Shontell—to ensure that the holy stones wouldn't get stolen by other bandits—Tanner took the chance to walk up to Gerald and say, "Speaking of which, are you headed for Shontell, Mr. Crawford?"

"Indeed, we are!" replied Gerald with a nod.

"I see! Then... Why don't you come with us? After all, I still need to properly thank you for saving us!" suggested Tanner in a sincere tone.

Chuckling in response, Gerald then said, "You're being way too cordial, Captain Juans! Regardless, I'd rather not get in the way of your work! Don't worry about us, we'll head there later on our own!"

"Well... Alright then, but if you need anything or require any assistance in Shontell, you know who to look for!" replied Tanner in a slightly disheartened tone. Still, he wasn't going to force Gerald to go along with his plan.

With that, Kay, Tanner, and the rest of their men left the scene...

Gerald and Yale themselves only decided to set off once they were done with their meal.

While making their way to Shontell, Yale couldn't help but ask, "...Um... Why didn't you accept Captain Juans's invitation earlier?"

Yale, for one, felt that Gerald should've definitely accepted it. After all, he deserved the reward, and anyone else would've surely been overjoyed—to receive the invitation—and gone along with Tanner's plan.

Simply laughing in response, Gerald then said, "Didn't you see the look on General Lucarl's face just now? He clearly has trouble believing that I was the one who took all of those scoundrels out! With that in mind, it's best if we just go our separate ways to avoid any misunderstandings."

Though Yale now understood Gerald's point of view, he still couldn't help but feel that it was a pity that he had declined. After all, Gerald had let go of what could have potentially been a major favor from an influential person!

Now, if Tanner had asked him instead, Yale would've surely allowed Tanner to properly thank him! Dreaming about the scenario, Yale felt that Tanner's appreciation could've very well been at least a thousand holy stones!

While Yale was only thinking about riches and fame, the thoughts had barely even crossed Gerald's mind. He simply wasn't that kind of person...

Either way, after walking for a few miles, the two of them finally made it past the city gates of Shontell...

As it turned out, Shontell was just as large as Yale had previously described. The people here definitely lived prosperously as well, judging from how well-dressed everyone on the street was...

Regardless, as they walked on, Yale suddenly began tugging Gerald's arm toward a notice board of sorts while saying, "Brother Gerald! Look there!"

Raising a slight brow, Gerald then looked at the board to see what all the fuss was about... and soon enough, he saw what Yale was so excited about.

Of the many announcements on the notice board, one of them wrote, 'Come join the Shontell Martial Arts Competition! The grand prize is a hundred thousand holy stones!'

Naturally, Gerald knew for a fact that Yale was just after the holy stones. With that in mind, he turned to look at the skinny man before asking, "A martial arts competition, huh? What, are you interested in joining, Yale?"

"As if! Jokes aside, you should definitely join, brother Gerald! After all, there's a hundred thousand holy stones up for grabs!" replied Yale excitedly.

Still, as if someone like him would ever participate in such a competition! Being so proficient in martial arts, did Gerald even need to ask? Whatever the case was, if Gerald participated, he would definitely get the grand prize!

To Yale's dismay, however, Gerald simply said, "Sorry, not interested!"

"But... But why? With a hundred thousand holy stones on hand, we won't have to worry about not having enough ever again!"

Chapter 1992

Looking at how disheartened Yale was, Gerald could only sigh as he thought about it for a moment before replying, "...Fine, I'll participate!"

Naturally, the second he heard that, Yale instantly broke into a smile.

Regardless, the duo then began heading toward the arena where the martial arts competition was being held...

Upon arriving, they were slightly surprised to see how crowded it was. At the time, a woman and man were competing against each other, and each move they dealt gained loud cheers from the audience.

Shortly after, the woman landed a kick right in the man's chest, sending him flying out of the arena!

Following more loud cheers, what appeared to be the judge then stood up before declaring, "And Miss Yalinda Juans scores another victory! Is there anyone else who wishes to challenge her? Remember, if you win, a hundred thousand holy stones will be yours!"

Despite the promise of so many holy stones, the crowd instantly went silent. After all, they had all seen how powerful Yalinda was, so none of them even dared to dream about challenging her!

Seeing that nobody was stepping up, the judge then cleared his throat before saying, "Nobody at all? Well, I guess it's high time we announce the winner then! Now, without further ado, the champion of the martial arts competition is—"

"Hold it!" yelled out a voice from the crowd at the very last minute.

Surprised to hear that, everyone then turned to face the source of the voice... and standing there, was none other than Gerald.

Making his way through the crowd before leaping into the arena, Gerald then looked at the judge before saying, "I'll up for a challenge!"

Hearing that, the crowd instantly went into an uproar! As many of the audience members began discussing who this person was, the judge himself was momentarily stunned speechless, clearly not expecting anyone else to challenge her.

Whatever the case was, Yalinda herself simply scanned Gerald from head to toe before disdainfully scoffing, "Look, just give up and save yourself the embarrassment! I assure you that you're nowhere near capable of beating me!"

Raising a slight brow, Gerald simply replied, "Well someone sounds sure of herself..."

Before Yalinda could say anything else, the judge—who had finally snapped out of it—walked over to Gerald before asking, "Um... Are you ready, mister?"

Once Gerald nodded, the judge nodded as well before declaring, "Well... Without further ado, let the next battle begin!"

The second the declaration was made, Yalinda wasted no time and launched herself toward Gerald, aiming a punch straight for his chest!

While Yalinda was undoubtedly fast, she was nowhere near as fast as Gerald.

With that in mind, Gerald easily dodged her attack... though instead of moving away, he instead grabbed her by the wrist before using her attack's momentum to toss her into the air!

Of course, Gerald made sure to catch her before she fell to the ground. After all, he of all people knew how painful landing from such a height could get...

Regardless, as Gerald allowed Yalinda to get to her feet again, he soon realized that the entire arena had gone silent.

Then again, it wasn't all that surprising. After all, who wouldn't be stupefied to see the great Yalinda getting taken out with only a single move? It was simply unheard of!

Yalinda herself had her eyes wide open. To think that Gerald was this powerful... There was no way she was going to be able to defeat him!

Shaking his head, Gerald then turned to look back at her before saying, "Well... it's my win!"

Upon hearing that, Yalinda instantly frowned. She wasn't about to let him attain victory so easily! With that, she then yelled, "...That...! That didn't count! We start another round!"

Squinting his eyes slightly, Gerald then growled, "I beg your pardon? Didn't count? How exactly did that fail to count?"

Chapter 1993

Gerald, for one, really hated sore losers, and Yalinda had very clearly lost the match.

That fact was only made even more apparent by how the audience didn't step in to defend her. After all, anyone with the most basic common sense would be able to see the massive difference between their power.

Whatever the case was, after hearing Gerald declare that in the presence of so many people, she finally realized that she had messed up.

With that in mind, she stomped her foot before fuming as she growled, “You...! Fine! You win! Big deal! Just you wait and see...!”

Following that, everyone then watched as the girl turned to quickly leave...

Instead of cheering for Gerald, however, for some reason, the crowd now seemed to be more worried for him if anything. After all, all of them knew that in Shontell, Yalinda wasn't someone to be trifled with...

The judge himself quickly walked up to Gerald and handed him the holy stones before shaking his head. Following a sigh, the man then said, “It's best that you take the holy stones and leave Shontell while you can, mister! Miss Juans really isn't someone you want to pick a fight with...”

Before Gerald could even reply, the judge had already hurried off. The audience members themselves left shortly after, none of them daring to stay in his presence.

In no time flat, Yale was the only one left standing before Gerald in the arena...

Naturally, this left Gerald extremely bewildered. After all, he had won such a big competition fair and square! Why was he being given such cold shoulders?

Despite what Gerald was feeling, Yale himself seemed completely oblivious to everything that had just taken place, and he simply cheered, “You did it, brother Gerald! You were so awesome earlier!”

Hearing that, Gerald simply sighed in resignation as he walked over to Yale and handed him all the holy stones.

After staring at the skinny man for a while, Gerald then grumbled, “Seriously, what's so good about having so many holy stones? If you see any more of these competitions, you're on your own!”

Gerald was rightfully grumpy. After all, winning a competition was supposed to be a joyous event! Despite that, everyone had simply ignored him... How couldn't he feel gloomy?

Still, Gerald had to admit that having all those holy stones would surely make their coming days much more comfortable...

Regardless, moving back to fuming mad Yalinda, she had just gotten home when she bumped into her father.

Had Gerald been there with her, he would've surely recognized him. After all, Yalinda's father was none other than Captain Juans!

Seeing that his daughter was back, Tanner took the chance to ask, "Hmm? Ah, Yalinda, you're back! How was the competition? Did you win?"

Watching as she simply snorted in response before walking off, Tanner could already tell that his daughter must have lost. Still, he wanted to make sure of that, so he followed her to her bedroom before adding, "...I'm assuming you lost?"

"...I did... I could've won, you know...? But some random b*stard just showed up at the very last minute and took me down with a single move! I... I've never lost in such a humiliating way...! Did you have any idea how embarrassing it was...?" muttered Yalinda as her eyes began to tear.

"...Oh? Such a powerful person participated?" replied Tanner in surprise.

He, of all people, knew how powerful his daughter was, even among those in Shontell. With that in mind, to think that someone could defeat his daughter in only a single move! That person was definitely exceedingly powerful...

Regardless, the fact remained that his daughter had lost, and he wasn't about to be a sore loser about it...

Chapter 1994

"...Either way, there's no helping it. That person won fair and square, and we just have to accept that!" replied Tanner as he consoled his daughter, knowing full well that in the world of martial arts competitions, nobody could remain at the top forever...

Though Yalinda looked like she wanted to refute, she finally realized that there was a terrible scar on Tanner's arm! With that in mind, she quickly asked, "Huh? When did you get injured, dad? What happened?"

Hearing that, Tanner simply chuckled indifferently as he waved his good hand and said, "It's just a scratch! Regardless, I got the wound from some of Mount Tygress's bandits on my way back!"

"Those bandits? They're really getting more and more chaotic by the day! Either way, do consider increasing the number of men with you while you're out delivering things! If you don't, I swear I'm going to start coming with you as extra protection!" mumbled Yalinda after a short pause.

Simply patting his daughter's head in response, Tanner then dotingly said, "It's alright. Besides, I'd rather my daughter remained safe!"

At that moment, a guard's voice could be heard anxiously calling out from outside, "C-captain Juans!"

Raising a slight brow, Tanner then walked out before asking, "Yes? What's all the commotion about?"

"T-there are two men out there who wish to meet you! Though they claimed that they saved your life earlier, I wanted to make sure with you first before letting them in!" replied the guard.

"...Oh? Where are they now? Lead me to them!" ordered the surprised Tanner.

Nodding in response, the guard then began jogging over to the door, with Tanner following closely behind. Curious, Yalinda tailed along as well. After all, what kind of person was capable enough to save her father?

Either way, once they arrived at the door, Tanner's eyes immediately widened. As it turned out, Gerald and Yale truly were standing—with their backs facing him—at his front door!

"Mr. Crawford! What a pleasure!" declared the excited Tanner.

Tanner, for one, had earlier assumed that Gerald would never come over, causing him to be rather bummed out by that. It certainly explained why he was so glad to see Gerald at his doorstep.

Hearing his voice, the duo then turned around... and the second their faces were in view, Yalinda was so shocked that she couldn't help but point at Gerald while exclaiming, "I-it's you!"

Gerald himself was quick to point back as he incredulously yelled, "So it's you again!"

Seeing this exchange, the confused Tanner was prompted to ask, "You... know Mr. Crawford, Yalinda...?"

"Yeah! He... He's the one who defeated me earlier!" yelled Yalinda, her voice getting increasingly angry.

Upon hearing that, Tanner immediately laughed out loud.

As it turned out, the one who had taken her out was Gerald! It all made sense now! After all, Gerald had ungodly strength!

Whatever the case was, Tanner quickly cleared his throat before saying in a serious tone, "...Now, now, Yalinda, let's not be rude! Remember, Mr. Crawford is still the one who saved my life! Had it not been for him, I would've perished by now!"

When she heard that, Yalinda simply snorted angrily before leaving the scene, not wanting to see Gerald any longer than she needed to.

Worried that Gerald would get displeased by his daughter's behavior, Tanner then turned to look at the youth before saying, "Please don't take her words and actions to heart, Mr. Crawford... My daughter's just like that!"

"Don't worry about it, Captain Juans... She's only behaving that way since I defeated her, so I hope you'll forgive me for that!" replied Gerald with a subtle smile, feeling slightly embarrassed...

Chapter 1995

"Ah, don't worry about that, Mr. Crawford! It's normal to lose in a competition!" replied Tanner with a smile before inviting Gerald and Yale into his home...

Since the Martial Arts family was merged with the Juans Delivery House, it only made sense for Tanner and his daughter to live in the delivery house

Regardless, Tanner and Yalinda were both quite famous in Shontell. After all, the Juans Delivery House provided reliable service, and many of Shontell's residents tended to look for them whenever they needed holy stones or other goods delivered.

Due to their good name, it really was no wonder why those who used their service treated Tanner and Yalinda so politely. In fact, the Juans Delivery House even had several parties backing them up in Shontell.

Whatever the case was, once they sat down together in the lobby, Tanner found himself asking, "So... What are your plans now, Mr. Crawford?"

"First off, Gerald's fine... Calling me Mr. Crawford is a bit awkward..." replied Gerald with a subtle smile.

"Well, Gerald it is! Regardless, I'm assuming you don't really have a place to stay yet since you did say you were vagabonds before this. With that in mind, why don't you stay with us

first? Don't worry, I'll be sure to treat you well!" suggested Tanner after thinking about it for a bit.

"...Well, if you insist! Thanks for having us!" replied Gerald, feeling that staying here wasn't a bad idea. Besides, it wasn't as if they had found someplace else to stay in yet...

Fast forward to nighttime, Gerald, Yale, Tanner, and his daughter found themselves having their dinner together in the lobby...

Since Gerald and Yale hadn't eaten anything for most of the day, the second the food arrived, they immediately began munching down like there was no tomorrow.

Yalinda herself could only glare at Gerald in her annoyance. After all, she still couldn't get over the fact that Gerald was actually the person who had saved her father's life! While she was thankful about that, the fact that he had defeated her so humiliatingly made it much harder for her to just treat him nicely.

Despite his daughter's annoyance, Tanner was in a jovial mood, and he couldn't help but laugh as he said, "Slow down, the food's not going anywhere! If you need more, just say the word!"

Upon hearing that, Yalinda took the chance to scowl, "He's right! What are you two, pigs?"

Hearing her statement, Yale immediately stopped eating, now feeling rather awkward.

Tanner, on the other hand, raised a slight brow as he grunted, "Yalinda! Where are your manners?"

Seeing that Yalinda then promptly fell silent, Gerald cleared his throat before saying, "...Miss Juans, I hope you don't take this morning's events to heart. After all, had I known that you were Captain Juans's daughter, I wouldn't have challenged you in the first place! With that in mind, please forgive my insolence and let's move on from it!"

Watching as Gerald then held up his wine glass, Yalinda—who had noticed how intense her father's glare was—knew she had no choice but to have a toast with Gerald...

Once their glasses met with a 'clink,' Yalinda finished her wine in a single gulp before placing it down and declaring, "Let's have another match right after this meal!"

This, of course, caught Gerald by surprise. To think that this girl would still want to compete with him!

Sighing as he shook his head, Gerald then replied, "Look, don't you think having another competition is rather unnecessary-"

“No, it’s not. Unless... Could it be that you’re afraid that I’ll win this time?”

Chapter 1996

With his sentence cut short by Yalinda’s prideful and taunting tone, there was no way Gerald was going to say no now. If she wanted a fight, she was getting one, and he was going to make sure she never challenged him again!

“Fine, I accept! However, I have one condition!” replied Gerald.

“State it!”

“If I win again, you’ll have to start addressing me as brother Gerald. Needless to say, I hope you’ll start treating me less coldly by that point! Seriously... Do you have to keep glaring at me like I owe you all the money in the world?” declared Gerald.

Understanding how much of a sore loser Yalinda was, Gerald knew that he had to set clear rules or Yalinda would simply challenge him again in the future.

Whatever the case was, Yalinda immediately replied, “Deal!”

“Glad to hear it! Also, I’m sure you heard all that clearly, right, Captain Juan?” said Gerald as he turned to look at Tanner. With her father bearing witness to all this, Gerald was pretty sure Yalinda wouldn’t have the guts to be a sore loser once she lost.

Tanner seemed to catch Gerald’s drift as well, and he simply nodded...

Once dinner was over—and after a short rest—the group of four then headed to the garden together...

Momentarily staring at Gerald as he stood opposite of her, Yalinda took in a deep breath before growling, “Ready?”

“As ready as you are!” replied Gerald in a casual tone.

Hearing that, Yalinda immediately bolted toward him, using all of her strength to attack straight off the bat!

Even though Yalinda was clearly using all that she had, to Gerald, she was still lightyears away from his level. In terms of strength, she couldn't even come close to comparing!

With that in mind, Gerald calmly took a step back as Yalinda's kick flew right past him... and with a swift grab, Gerald held Yalinda's leg in hand! As Gerald then yanked it downward, Yalinda quickly made a split, hoping to avoid getting hurt.

Unfortunately for her, Gerald's immediate reaction to that was to pin her legs to the ground! Since she was now incapacitated, Gerald smiled faintly before saying, "Well, looks like it's my win!"

Upon hearing that, Yalinda's eyes instantly widened as she went red in embarrassment. To think that she had lost so easily again!

"I—"

"There's nothing else to say, Yalinda! You lost, so it's only fair that you accept it!" declared Tanner—who had been watching everything from the side—, not even giving his daughter a chance to refute.

Tanner, for one, could tell that his daughter was never going to be a match for Gerald. Aside from that, he was also well aware that Gerald had gone easy on her.

Whatever the case was, after hearing Tanner's words, Gerald then released Yalinda before adding with a subtle smile, "Your father's right, Miss Juans! Best not be a sore loser again!"

"H-humph! Who's being a sore loser? I admit that I lost!" scoffed Yalinda before running off, clearly having a temper.

'...Is this girl serious...? Ahh... To hell with all this!' Gerald thought to himself in resignation. What the hell happened to that deal where she wouldn't remain angry at him if she lost? As if that wasn't enough, she was even victimizing herself despite being the bully!

Chapter 1997

Shaking his head as he watched his daughter walk off, Tanner could only smile rather awkwardly as he turned to face Gerald before saying, "...Please don't take her childishness to heart, Gerald!"

Naturally, Gerald wasn't going to. After all, had he truly wanted to pick a fight with her earlier, he wouldn't have gone easy in the first place. As the saying went, 'true gentlemen didn't fight with women,' and Gerald fully agreed with that.

Regardless, he wasn't even going to bother further arguing with Yalinda.

Either way, with that done, Tanner got Gerald and Yale a rather spacious room to stay the night in...

It was later that night when Yale sat on his bed before saying with a wink, "Say, what do you think of Miss Juans, brother Gerald?"

Turning to look at Yale with a slightly raised brow, Gerald then replied, "What? Do you have a crush on her or something? If you do, go ahead and woo her without involving me!"

"A-as if I'd even consider such a thing! Besides, she'd never fall for someone like me! Regardless, I'm asking this for you! After all, with your immense strength, you'll definitely be able to win the heart of a woman like her!" exclaimed Yale.

Upon hearing that, Gerald simply rolled his eyes. After all, he knew for a fact that Yalinda was as stubborn as a mule when she put her mind to something. Feeling a headache coming the more he thought about her, Gerald simply sighed before saying, "Look, I'm not someone like her!"

Gerald wasn't kidding about that either. Not wanting to continue the pointless conversation, Gerald then laid in bed, looking at the ceiling for a while before eventually closing his eyes...

Dozing off shortly after, it was only the next morning when he awoke again due to the sounds of vigorous knocking...

Still slightly dazed, Yale—who had also awoken due to all the noise—was prompted to ask, "Who is it...?"

"It's Yalinda! Open up!" called out Yalinda from behind the door.

Hearing that, Yale got out of bed and quickly ran to the door...

The second it was opened, Yalinda rushed toward Gerald, leaving Yale—who was still standing at the door—completely at a loss.

Naturally, Gerald was surprised as well. After all, it was still extremely early.

'Could she be looking for trouble again...?' Gerald thought to himself as he turned to look at her.

"...So... why exactly are you here this early in the morning, Miss Juans? Are you hoping to duel with me again...?" asked Gerald in a helpless tone.

Upon hearing that, Yalinda didn't reply. Instead, she immediately knelt before Gerald! Cupping her hands together, Yalinda then respectfully said, "Please take me as your disciple...!"

Of course, Gerald was instantly stunned to hear that. Who could've guessed that she, of all people, would want him to be her master!

It took him a while, but once he snapped out of his confusion, Gerald—who had no idea what was going through her head—was prompted to ask, "...And why me specifically?"

"Because you're much more powerful than me!" replied Yalinda causing Gerald to go speechless.

What kind of reasoning even was that? Then again, her words did make slight sense... After all, powerful people were always looked up to and even worshiped by others.

Still, that would signify that Yalinda was a simple and crude person, and Gerald knew for a fact that she wasn't someone who liked fawning on others.

With that in mind, Gerald paused for a moment before eventually saying, "...Even so, I'm not looking to take in any disciples!"

"I'll keep asking till you accept me then!" declared Yalinda, her determination unwavering.

Realizing that she was just going to continue annoying him, Gerald sighed before saying, "...Just... give me some time to consider it at least!"

Chapter 1998

Seeing how hesitant Gerald was, Yalinda then proposed, "...Look, to prove how serious I am about this, please allow me to treat you two to breakfast! Just so you know, there's a particular bakery in Shontell that serves the most scrumptious bread on the planet! I'll treat you to a meal there, and after that, you'll take me as your disciple! How's that?"

Before Gerald could even reply, Yale—who hadn't moved from the door—nodded excitedly before saying, "I agree with her! After all, we haven't had breakfast yet, brother Gerald!"

Raising a slight brow, Gerald then paused for a moment before reluctantly saying, "...Fine! I can't deny that I'm a little hungry too! We'll talk more about this once we're done with breakfast!"

Following that, the trio began heading to the bakery Yalinda was talking about... Upon arriving, Gerald and Yale could immediately tell that Yalinda hadn't been exaggerating. After all, the entire place was crowded!

Regardless, upon noticing Yalinda's presence, the owner of the bakery immediately led the three upstairs and arranged a table for them. The owner then walked off for a while before returning with a plate of freshly baked bread...

Seeing that, Gerald and Yale began enjoying their breakfast...

Realizing that Yalinda wasn't eating, Gerald was prompted to ask, "Not having any?"

"I've already eaten! Either way, if there isn't enough bread, I can always order for more!" replied Yalinda.

"This is the most delicious bread I've ever tasted! Please order two more plates, Miss Juans! I just can't have enough of this!" exclaimed Yale, smiling like a kid the entire time.

Nodding in response, Yalinda then yelled, "Boss! Two more plates of bread please!"

"Coming right up!" replied a voice from downstairs almost instantaneously.

Soon enough, two more plates of pleasant-smelling bread were placed before Gerald and Yale...

Watching as Yale continued digging in, Yalinda couldn't help but look at Gerald as she asked, "So... is he your disciple too, master...?"

Upon hearing that, Gerald was momentarily at a loss of how to reply. After all, he only saw Yale as a subordinate.

"Not at all! I'm just brother Gerald's subordinate! I make a living with him!" replied Yale almost a bit too proudly...

Turning to face Yale next, Yalinda then asked, "Oh? Then I'm assuming you're proficient in martial arts as well?"

"...Nope! I... don't even have the basics down..." muttered Yale, now feeling slightly embarrassed.

"What? You don't know martial arts? Then why are you even by master's side? What were you thinking when you accepted him, master?" asked the now wide-eyed Yalinda. After all, if all that Yale had said was true, then Gerald had just accepted this random nobody into his party!

Ignoring Yalinda's question, Gerald instead asked back, "...Either way, what's the real reason you're so persistent on getting me to be your master? Just so you know, I don't have much to teach!"

"As I've said before, it's simply because you're much more powerful than me! That alone is enough to make me want you to be my master!" replied Yalinda determinedly.

Hearing that, Gerald simply nodded with a sigh before saying, "...Fine! I'll be your master under two conditions!"

"Please state them, master! I promise to do all that you say...!" exclaimed Yalinda as she nodded excitedly, glad that Gerald was finally willing to take her under his wing...

Chapter 1999

To Yalinda, as long as Gerald was willing to be her master, any conditions he stated would be fair. After all, she had never met a more powerful person than he was in Shontell. With his help, she would definitely stand a better chance in achieving her true goal...

And that goal was to participate in the competition between cultivators! With his tutoring, she would most definitely stand a better chance of winning in the competition...

Whatever the case was, Gerald then declared, "First of all, you can't tell others that I'm your master! Secondly, you can't have another master other than me! Can you do those?"

"Definitely!" replied Yalinda without a second thought.

"Very well, then! From today onward, you'll be my disciple!" said Gerald with a satisfied nod.

Gerald, for one, understood that Yalinda wasn't someone minor in Shontell. Aside from the fact that she had the Juans Delivery House on her side, Captain Juans was also her father. Now that he was her master—which would most definitely improve his relationship with her and her father—, his position in the Autremonde Realm would surely become more secure...

Fast forward to noon, Gerald could be seen resting alone in the garden when Yale—who appeared to be holding onto a piece of paper—suddenly came running toward him while yelling, "B-brother Gerald...!"

Raising a slight brow, Gerald was prompted to ask, "What's wrong, Yale? Why so anxious?"

Handing the paper to Gerald, Yale then explained, "J-just look at this pamphlet I received! It's about a competition between cultivators that's going to be held here soon, and Miss Juans's name is on it!"

Scrolling through the list of participants on the pamphlet, Gerald soon realized that Yale was right.

Putting two and two together, Gerald finally understood why Yalinda wanted him to be her master so much. As it turned out, she was probably thinking of learning a few new martial arts skills from him to secure the win in the competition!

It was at that moment when Yalinda came walking into the garden...

Upon seeing her, Gerald hid the pamphlet behind him and looked at her as he asked, "Yalinda... Are you hiding anything from me?"

Though she was momentarily stunned to hear that, she quickly smiled as she replied, "Nothing at all, master!"

Seeing that she had no intention of fessing up, Gerald then presented the pamphlet to her before saying, "Then care to explain this? Since your name is already on this pamphlet, I'm assuming you became my disciple to learn a few moves before the competition?"

Surprised that Gerald had managed to get his hands on the pamphlet, Yalinda lowered her head before awkwardly replying, "That... Where... did you get that, master...?"

"I gave it to him! They were making an announcement about the competition a bit earlier, and I just so happened to be there! After receiving a pamphlet and seeing your name there, I rushed back to tell brother Gerald about it! Regardless, why didn't you tell us you were participating in this? Brother Gerald and I would surely have come along to watch!" explained Yale.

Hearing that, Yalinda couldn't help but glare furiously at Yale. After all, she was sure that she had done a pretty good job concealing that fact from Gerald. To think that Yale would find out instead and even show the pamphlet to her master...!

Chapter 2000

Knowing that Gerald would definitely be angry at her now for lying to him, Yalinda immediately bowed before declaring, "I apologize for hiding it from you, master!"

“Yalinda, I get why you’re doing all this, but I’m slightly disappointed that you planned on participating in that competition without notifying me about it! After all, there’s no reason for you to hide it! I’d have helped all the same!” replied Gerald while shaking his head.

“I-I understand master! I truly apologize for not telling you about it! I swear on my life that I’ll share everything with you from this moment onward, master!” declared Yalinda with a nod.

“That’s what I like to hear! Regardless, since you’re participating in that competition, I’ll make sure that the first prize is yours to take!” replied Gerald, seeing no reason to be mad at her anymore.

“R-really? How wonderful!” exclaimed Yalinda excitedly.

“Indeed. Regardless, is the registration period for the competition between cultivators over?” asked Gerald.

“Nope, though it’ll be ending this evening!” replied Yalinda.

“Lead me there!” instructed Gerald, prompting Yalinda to immediately lead the duo to the registration area...

The three of them soon found themselves at the large entrance of Gardale City, and sitting there, was Jaymes Sudberg, the counselor responsible for the competition’s registration process.

Upon being told that Jaymes was the one he needed to talk to, Gerald walked over to him and declared, “Good day, I’d like to register for the competition!”

“Register? Which sect are you even from? Do you have any references?” asked James in a casual tone as he scanned Gerald from head to toe...

“Not that I know of-”

“Actually, he’s with the Juans Delivery House!” replied Yalinda with a faint smile before Gerald could even finish his sentence.

“The Juans Delivery House? Aren’t you the sole representative of the delivery house, Miss Juans? Why’s there a second person?” asked Jaymes as he raised a slight brow.

“Please make an exception for him, councilor Sudberg! The truth is, he’s my master...” replied Yalinda as she took a holy stone out from her pocket and sneakily handed it to Jaymes.

Realizing what she had just done, Jaymes quickly nodded before saying, "...Fine! What's your name?"

"Gerald Crawford!" replied Gerald, prompting Jaymes to write Gerald's name on a wooden token of sorts...

After handing it to Gerald, Jaymes then said, "Here, take this and keep it safe. It's proof that you've registered and you won't be able to participate if you fail to show up with it! Got it...?"

It was three days later when the opening ceremony for the competition between cultivators commenced...

While there were quite a number of participants, Gerald's attention was only caught when the announcer declared, "Next up, Yudele Mullington, the chief disciple of the Thundering Cloud Sect!"

Following a cheer, everyone watched as a woman with a longsword in hand—donning white, goddess-like clothing—walked past the city's gates...

Walking behind her, were two other women who had their faces covered with veils, and they were clearly her attendants...