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“Please follow me.” Jack bowed and escorted them out.

“You got lucky today, punk. However, you won’t be this lucky next time.” Caelus shot Dustin a cold glare before leaving with the two young women.

“Dad, why do I feel like you’ve invited wolves into our house?” Natasha said meaningfully.

“These are special circumstances. Let’s put the interests of the whole above anything else. Now, we need the power of the Invincible Guardians, so let’s not turn them against us,” Hector reminded them.

“If he doesn’t get on my nerves, there won’t be a problem.” Natasha arched an eyebrow.

“You...” Hector shook his head helplessly. “Enough. You two should head out. I still have things to attend to.”

The two nodded. They quickly said their goodbyes without saying much.

After leaving the study, Natasha specially arranged a luxurious guest suite for Dustin, complete with a hot bath.

To put it nicely, a private bodyguard would get special perks.

Dustin wanted to turn it down at first, but he couldn’t stand the pleading and pestering, so he decided to stay for now. His main concern was Natasha’s safety.

The Dark Lord could attack at any time. Considering his treacherous tricks, he could easily take out several people at once. If he didn’t stay by Natasha’s side protecting her and something ended up happening to her, he’d regret it for the rest of his life.

Dustin practically lived in the Harmons’ home for the next few days. In his spare time, he gave martial arts training to Abigail or went flower viewing with Natasha. Occasionally, he’d call Nelson to ask about the results of the investigation

Something to rejoice about was that Nelson had already identified the culprit—a resident doctor at the hospital. After committing the murders, the resident fled to escape punishment. The Flame Dragon Gang and the Charging Tiger Gang were pursuing him.

Capturing the culprit was only a matter of time. Once they caught him, it would be clear who the mastermind was.

Three days later, on New Year's Eve, large, fluffy snowflakes descended from the sky, covering the ground in a layer of white.

Houses everywhere were brightly lit to welcome the new year, except the Harmons' home. The Harmon estate was heavily guarded, with outposts everywhere. In order to catch the Dark Lord, Hector had gone all out and invited a large number of martial arts experts to protect their home. Among them were several notable figures.

The Harmons' armed forces had strengthened greatly. However, it came with a downside; the entire courtyard was a mix of good and bad people.

At that moment, a family meeting was being held in one of the conference rooms. All of the core members of the family had gathered there. As the patriarch, Hector sat at the head of the table, while Trent and Jacob sat on his left and right, respectively.

"Hector, when tonight draws to a close, the year will end. Didn't you say before that the Dark Lord would come? Why hasn't he appeared yet? Could your information be wrong?" Trent was the first to speak.

"The source of the information shouldn't be fake. All in all, everyone needs to be careful," Hector said seriously.

"Could the Dark Lord have found out that there's an ambush and decided not to come?" Jacob rubbed his chin.

The Harmon family had invited so many martial artists to help. Right now, their home could be compared to a lion's den. If the Dark Lord was smart, he wouldn't barge in recklessly.

"It's nothing out of the ordinary if he doesn't show up." Dylan suddenly spoke up. "With me here, would the Dark Lord dare to act out of line?"

When the others heard him, they all nodded in agreement. The current Dylan was nothing like the old Dylan; not only was he extremely talented, but he also had the Scarlet Warrior backing him. No matter how strong the Dark Lord was, he'd have to think it over.

"Considering the Dark Lord's personality, he wouldn't give up easily. We can't let our guards down,

Hector warned.

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"Hmph, it's better if the Dark Lord doesn't show up. If he does, I'll lop his head off and release all the pent-up hatred!" Dylan spat fiercely.

As soon as he said that, one of the Harmon family guards suddenly ran inside in a panic. "Sir, it's bad! A fight broke out outside!"

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"A fight?" Upon hearing that, Hector got to his feet. Is the Dark Lord here?"

"Perfect timing! Everyone, come with me to kill the enemy!" Dylan shouted with vigor. "Kill!"

The Harmon family members all slammed the table in front of them and hopped to their feet, aggression rolling off of them.

"You've got it wrong!" The Harmon family guard quickly explained, "It's not the Dark Lord; it's the martial artists we invited. They got into a conflict and are now fighting in the ballroom."

"Huh?" When everyone heard that, they frowned. They had all thought that the great enemy had descended on them, but it turned out to be an internal fight amongst their own. All their

excitement and vigor had been for nothing.

What a waste of emotion.

“Come, let’s go take a look!” Without another word, Hector led everyone out of the conference room. If internal conflicts were not handled properly, it could very likely end in greater disaster.

At present, the Harmon family home’s ballroom was filled with martial artists eating and drinking together. It looked like people of all sorts of backgrounds and teachings were there-gazing across the room, there were burly, fierce-looking men, stout dwarves; poison experts with snakes crawling all over their bodies; swordsmen with swift auras; and monks holding golden wands. There were also inhumane-looking humans, unghostly ghosts, and peculiarly dressed fellows. At that moment, Dustin, Natasha, Ruth, Edmund, and Abigail walked in. Their appearance attracted a lot of attention; the three gorgeous women were especially eye-catching.

“Natasha, are these the external help that Dad invited? Why do they look so weird?” Ruth looked around with a strange expression on her face. Besides a handful of regular people, the rest were rather odd.

“The Dark Lord is an expert in the mystic arts. It would be difficult to fight him with normal martial arts. These strange people are our best options,” Natasha explained.

“I see.” Ruth nodded.

“I don’t quite like the way they’re looking at us,” Abigail suddenly piped up.

“Ms. Natasha, let’s take a seat first,” Edmund said with a smile.

It was New Year’s Eve; the Harmon family had specially thrown a banquet in the ballroom to host all the guests. However, these guests didn’t look like nice people.

As soon as they sat down, a group of martial artists with impressive waistlines walked over. “Oh, I didn’t think I’d be able to see such beauty here.”

The leader was a bearded man naked from the waist up. He was buff, muscular, and had a thick bush of chest hair. When he got close, they could smell the pungent odor coming from his armpits. “Hey, beautiful. Seems like we’re fated to meet. Are you interested in drinking a few glasses with

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me?” The bearded man regarded the women up and down, not even disguising the desire in his eyes.

“Not interested,” Natasha declined.

“Gorgeous, in the martial world, having more friends always trumps having more enemies. Don’t you think so?” The bearded man flashed the knife tucked in his belt. His words and actions carried a hint of threat.

“You stink, so please keep a distance from me. Don’t ruin our meal,” Natasha remarked coldly.

“Do I smell? Why do I not smell it?” The bearded man raised both his arms and sniffed his armpits. Instantly, his body odor filled the air. Everyone frowned at the stench. “Beautiful, I don’t think you know. That’s the smell of a true man!”

“That’s right! The heavier a man’s scent, the stronger he is. You should appreciate it.” “Hahaha...”

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The muscular men at the back began to poke fun. All of them were behaving brazenly, leering at them.

“Ms. Natasha, why don’t we leave for now? These people look difficult,” Edmund advised quietly, shrinking into himself.

“Why are you panicking, Dad? This is the Harmons’ home. What kind of trouble are they capable of kicking up here?” Abigail glared. She’d always looked down on her father’s cowardly tendencies, always recoiling at the most minor things. Was he even a man?

“You’d better get out of my sight while I’m not angry yet,” Natasha said, her expression cold as ice.

“Oh, you’re pretty feisty! I like it.” The bearded man rubbed his chin.

“Unfortunately, beautiful, those two wusses next to you can’t be your knights in shining armor.” As he spoke, he glanced at Dustin and Edmund. One was a much younger man, and another was a wrinkled old geezer. They were nothing to fear.

“Just me alone is enough to fight you!” Abigail said, slamming her palm into the table and jumping to her feet. Having been through Dustin’s training the past few days, her abilities had improved by leaps and bounds, which greatly boosted her confidence.

“Gorgeous, I’ll play with you, but I’d rather do it in bed,” the bearded man said, grinning sleazily.

“You-” Abigail was furious and humiliated. She was about to get violent, but Edmund stopped her.

“Abigail, don’t be rash. Harmony is of utmost importance.”

“You’re always like this. Can you grow a pair?!” Abigail frowned.

“I just don’t want you to get hurt,” Edmund said lamely.

“I don’t need your concern. Go away!” Abigail pushed her father aside and swung her fist at the bearded man’s face. She was going to teach these lechers a lesson.

There came a dull noise. The bearded man had easily caught Abigail’s full-powered punch without sustaining any injury.

“Huh?” Abigail’s expression changed. She finally realized that these people were far from ordinary.

“Beautiful, at your strength, your blows are nothing more than an itch for me. Take my advice and save your energy.” The bearded man grinned.

After he spoke, the other men behind him burst out into guffaws. They looked like a pack of hungry wolves setting their eyes on several sheep

At that moment, a furious roar rang out, "You scum of the martial world, let go of that young lady!"

Three young, upright-looking martial artists finally stood, denouncing the bearded man's actions.

"Oh, does someone finally dare to save the damsels in distress?" The bearded man smirked coldly, pulling the knife out of his belt.

"We should always help one another, but you're over there bullying a few women. You call that a

skill? Fight us if you dare!" one of them yelled.

"My knife never cuts those who are nameless. You, tell me your names!" the bearded man said.

"Listen up. We're the White Stag Trio!" the three of them shouted in unison.

"The White Stag Trio? What the hell is that? I've never heard of you," the bearded man said disdainfully.

"How dare you look down on us? You've got a death wish!" Upon hearing that, the three martial artists flew into a rage. Without another word, they brandished their daggers.

One side wanted to save the damsels in distress, while the other wanted to show off.

"You're in over your head!" The bearded man snorted coldly. Alone, he went up to fight the trio.

There was a series of metallic clanging. The bearded man was practically a tiger foraging into a herd of goats-he was unstoppable. After several rounds, he had cut everyone to the ground. The White Stag Trio was defeated!

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The White Stag Trio? Heh, you're nothing but clowns," the bearded man said disdainfully. He kicked the three of them and sent them flying.

“Huh?”

All the martial artists were shocked to see the three of them severely hurt and coughing up blood. Although they weren't exactly top dogs, they were still well-known in the martial world. Otherwise, the Harmons wouldn't have invited them.

However, even with the three's combined forces, they couldn't withstand a few moves from the bearded man. It was far from anyone's expectation

This clearly proved how powerful he was.

“Just who are you?” The White Stag Trio were both surprised and afraid.

“Listen up, I am the Glenstead Hoodlum, Marlon Cobb!” the bearded man said arrogantly.

“Marlon the Hoodlum?!”

Everyone was shocked to hear that, especially the White Stag Trio.

Marlon was a divine-level martial artist. He was extremely well-reputed in Glenstead. Because of his strength and ruthlessness, he gained the nickname “Hoodlum.” People cowered at the sound of his name.

If they had known who he was, they wouldn't have stepped forward and said anything.

“Who would've thought that even Marlon would be here? The Harmons seem to have invited a whole lot of experts.”

“Marlon the Hoodlum is a heinous criminal. I can't say if inviting someone like him here is a good or bad thing

The martial artists began to titter.

Although Marlon was strong, his personality was horrible. He didn't abide by the principles of the martial world at all. It wouldn't be an exaggeration to call him the scum of society.

After defeating the White Stag Trio, Marlon shifted his gaze to Natasha and the other women. Hey beautiful, I don't think anyone is going to stand up for

you anymore. What do you say? Do you want to go back to my room and have a good time?"

Finally, he was going to get lucky tonight.

"Asshole, you are too presumptuous!" At that moment, three people suddenly walked through the door. A man and two women, all dressed in white with swords strapped to their backs. They

appeared so dignified that they took everyone's breath away.

It was none other than Caelus, Maria, and Ivy!

"Oh, two more bombshells?" Marlon ignored Caelus and eyed Maria's and Ivy's bodies. The two women were beautiful and had slim figures. Their hair was neatly secured with a hairpin. The modest hairstyle made men want to dominate them

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"Marlon, you already have three gorgeous women serving you. Why don't you leave these two newcomers to us?" one of Marlon's lackeys said, laughing sleazily.

"No problem. After all, we're brothers. Good things are meant to be shared. You can pick which one you want. I want you to have a fun time," Marlon said heroically.

"Thank you, Marlon!" His lackeys brightened.

"I like that one with the big chest. Don't even think about fighting over her!"

"That one has a great butt. It looks super bouncy."

The lackeys pointed at the women while making all sorts of comments as if they were just toys.

"You shameless thugs, I'll cut your tongues out!" Maria and Ivy were infuriated. They pulled their swords out of their sheaths and charged toward Marlon and his lackeys.

As elite disciples of the Invincible Guardians, they had never experienced such humiliation before. If they didn't teach these bastards a lesson, they couldn't look anyone in the eye again.

"Come at me!" Marlon grinned, swinging his fist.

The three of them began sparring.

Maria and Ivy were exceptional swordswomen. They were also skilled at fighting side-by-side with their sharp and swift techniques. They performed move after move so quickly that it just seemed like a blur to everyone else.

On the other hand, Marlon's attacks were far simpler. He used both his hands as weapons to fend off their swords. He was not falling behind.

The women had excellent swordsmanship, but there was a significant power gap between them and Marlon.

Marlon was a divine-level martial artist, while the two women were only high-level martial artists. Sometimes, a gap like that could stretch into a chasm.

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Maria and Ivy gave it their all. In the end, after almost thirty exchanges, Marlon still found a chink in their armor and dealt a blow to each of them.

The two women staggered back from the impact, and blood came out of their mouths. Instantly, they couldn't even muster any internal energy.

"Not bad!" Marlon grinned. He looked like he was still riding the high.

"You're shameless!" The two humiliated women flew into a rage. They wanted to attack again, but Caelus raised a hand to stop them!

"That's enough. You two are no match for him. Allow me."

"Caelus, this asshole is utterly shameless. You need to teach him a lesson!" the two women said indignantly.

“Don’t worry. Leave it to me.” Caelus leveled a cold gaze at Marlon. He slowly unsheathed the sword on his back.

Maria and Ivy bit back their anger and stood off to one side.

“Punk, you want to play the hero and save those damsels in distress? Are you capable of doing that? Don’t regret it when I smash all your teeth in, Marlon sneered.

“I’ll defeat you in less than ten moves,” Caelus said arrogantly.

“Ten moves? Heh, is your head okay? If you were one of the Heavenly Immortals, I might have some reservations. Where did a nameless pipsqueak like you find the courage to say such outrageous things to my face?” Marlon laughed coldly.

“You don’t believe me? Then try me.” Caelus beckoned with his finger.

“Fine! I want to see what you can do!” Marlon was getting a little angry. He brandished his blade and slashed it down on Caelus’ head.

Caelus’ expression remained calm. He raised his sword in response.

In an instant, the room was filled with the glinting of swords. Bursts of energy filled the room.

Everyone else took a step back, putting space between them and the fight. They were afraid that they might get hurt.

“Miss, that bearded guy is really strong. Can your fellow disciple handle it?” Abigail asked out of the blue.

From the earlier battles, one could tell that Marlon hadn’t used his full strength.

“Hmph, Caelus is the senior disciple of the Invincible Guardians. He’s extremely talented and strong. It will be a piece of cake for him to take down that scum!” Ivy said with confidence.

“That’s right! Just watch closely. Watch how Caelus scares off the enemy!” Maria said arrogantly.

“I hope so,” Abigail muttered to herself.

While they were talking, the spar had progressed rapidly. After a few blows, Caelus thrust his

sword violently, hitting Marlon's blade. There was a clang, and the sword broke.

Following the momentum, the sword pierced Marlon's shoulder. The broken end of the sword fell to the floor.

Marlon's expression changed. He staggered backward from the impact, wobbling on his feet.

"Marlon!" The lackeys were shell-shocked. They immediately helped Marlon up. They'd never thought that the unbeatable Marlon would actually be defeated today. Even less so at the hand of a young swordsman.

"Who are you? How is your swordsmanship so sharp?!" Marlon said with a dark look.

"I am the senior disciple of the Invincible Guardians, Caelus!" Caelus swung his sword, shaking off the blood. He was in his element.

"The Invincible Guardians?" Marlon was shocked.

The Invincible Guardians were a well-known guild in Glenstead. Although they were few in number, they were all elite fighters. Among all the guilds in Glenstead, the Invincible Guardians were in the top ten!

An ordinary martial artist like him couldn't afford to piss them off.

When he returned to his senses, Marlon lowered his head in apology. "Caelus, I didn't know who you were. Please forgive me for offending you."

"Kneel and apologize," Caelus said with an arrogant expression.

"Huh?" Marlon frowned. He hesitated, but he still fell to his knees with a thud.

He clearly showed what it meant to know when to surrender.