

A Man Like None Other Chapter 717

Chapter 717 Water From The Spirit Spring

"Sure! We're more than happy if the Empyrean Sect is willing to reconcile with us!" Poison King replied at once, over the moon.

After all, there were countless sects other than Mapleton and the Empyrean Sect in the whole of the southwest. Subsequently, everyone fought over the limited resources for cultivation and expanding their turfs. That explained why Poison King had discreetly instructed Fabian to work his way to Jazona.

Since Mapleton and the Empyrean Sect had been battling against each other and sustaining losses for decades, other sects had benefitted from it. In other words, their members had steadily been gaining tremendous advancement in their combat prowess, whereas the martial prowess of Mapleton had been stagnant.

Nowadays, most of the members from the other sects had become Martial Arts Grandmasters one by one. Nonetheless, Poison King was still stuck at Top Level Senior Grandmaster without the slightest sign of

having a breakthrough. As a result, he was feeling pressured and anxious.

That was the reason he wished to cultivate a cadaver king desperately. He presumed the other sects would not be a threat to Mapleton any longer if they could cultivate one successfully.

"Poison King, since you have no objection, it's time the Empyrean Sect and Mapleton let bygones be bygones. To express our utmost sincerity, I've brought some goodies exclusively for you this time around," Carlos uttered earnestly.

The next second, one of the subordinates standing behind him whipped out a glass bottle containing crystal-clear water.

Poison King looked at it and asked quizzically, "Mr. Xuereb, it looks like ordinary water from mountain springs. How could it be an invaluable treasure?"

"Poison King, since the Empyrean Sect and Mapleton will mend their relationship and form an alliance, I'll not keep things under wraps from you. Do you know how we've become stronger so fast within these few years? So far, there are almost twenty new Senior

Grandmasters in our sect. Moreover, my father even became a Martial Arts Grandmaster within a short span after being stuck at Top Level Senior Grandmaster for ten years!" Carlos stated, smiling mysteriously.

Poison King shook his head. "I've no idea. Mr. Xuereb, can you tell me why?"

Poison King could hardly wait to know how the Emyrean Sect became that much stronger. All the other members of Mapleton perked up their ears out of curiosity too.

In the meantime, only Jared kept his eyes glued to the glass bottle. He racked his brain on why he could seem to detect spiritual energy from it.

There was no way for the glass bottle to contain spiritual energy. Thus, he was convinced that it was from the water in the bottle. But how is it possible for the water to contain spiritual energy? Ah! Could it be water from the spirit spring?

As Jared was deep in thought, Carlos continued to explain, "Poison King, let me be frank with you. Three years ago, a mountain spring suddenly appeared somewhere near our base on the mountain. Initially,

there was nothing unusual about this mountain spring. But somehow, all our disciples love to drink the water from there because of its natural sweetness. Not long after that, we gradually discovered that it could strengthen our bodies and health. Furthermore, consuming the water long-term boosts our combat prowess other than curing our injuries and illness. My father had great advancement and finally became a Martial Arts Grandmaster after consuming the miraculous water too!"

Poison King was dumbfounded. Meanwhile, Weston and the others wore a look of sheer disbelief. There are many mountain springs on our turfs too. Moreover, the water from those mountain springs forms a stream that flows across our land. Hence, most of us from Mapleton has been consuming the water from the mountain spring. Yet, why didn't we feel anything after consuming it?

"Mr. Xuereb, you're not bluffing me, are you? Do you mean to say that water from a mountain spring is able to enhance our health and let us achieve a breakthrough?" Poison King asked in bewilderment.

To him, it did not make sense that water from a mountain spring could do miracles. How is it possible for someone stuck at the same level for ten years to gain a breakthrough abruptly after drinking the water from a mountain spring?

"Poison King, what's the point for me to lie to you? I've brought some water from the mountain spring. If you don't believe me, you can give it a try yourself."

Next, he handed the glass bottle to Poison King.

Chapter 718 He Intends To Marry Lyanna

The moment Poison King twisted open the bottle cap, he was greeted by a whiff of sweetness and felt refreshed instantaneously.

"Poison King, don't drink it impulsively!" Nevertheless, Weston stopped him when he was about to take a sip.

Weston could not help but snort inwardly. Mapleton and the Emyrean Sect have been harboring grudges against each other for such a long time. How's it possible for both parties to mend the relationship with just a few words? If the water was poisoned, Poison

King would only be putting himself on the line if he takes it!

"Haha! Master Weston, you're really cautious. Who could know better than all of you from Mapleton about poison in the whole southwest region? Anyone who dares to challenge you on that must have lost their minds!" Carlos mocked and took the bottle back. After that, he took a mouthful to convince them.

Meanwhile, Poison King reprimanded Weston, "Get out of my way now!"

He was flattered by Carlos' words. Hmph! Those who dare to poison us must be digging their own graves!

"Mr. Xuereb, please excuse my subordinate's rudeness," Poison King said in embarrassment.

Next, he took the glass bottle and gulped down the water.

Seconds later, he felt refreshed and even sensed an instant ripple of warmth flowing continuously in his elixir field.

"Poison King, how do you feel now?" Carlos asked, flashing him a smile.

"Wow! It's indeed a goody!" Poison King gasped, tossing away his earlier doubt of Carlos' words.

"Poison King, I'll bring you more next round since you like it. I believe it's a matter of time for you to break through your current stage and become a Martial Arts Grandmaster with the help of this magical water." Carlos chuckled.

"Mr. Xuereb, you've brought us such a wonderful treasure. We feel bad if there's nothing to give you back in return. Just tell me right away if there's anything you wish to obtain from us." Poison King cut to the chase.

He was sure as h*ll that the Emyrean Sect had an ulterior motive for offering him something so miraculous.

Carlos cast a look at Lyanna alongside him before his lips curved into a smile. "Poison King, I've fallen for Ms. Lyanna ever since I first set my eyes on her many years ago. Now that we've grown up, I hope you can grant my wish to marry her. By then, the Emyrean

Sect and Mapleton will be in-laws. Isn't that fabulous since we're going to form an alliance?"

Poison King furrowed his brows as he threw a glance at Lyanna. Undeniably, he had long since treated her as his woman after bringing her up painstakingly for twenty years. Now that Carlos had requested to marry her, he was reluctant to let go of her.

Nevertheless, the miraculous water from the mountain spring was irresistible for Poison King. Prevailed by his desire to break through his current stage and become a Martial Arts Grandmaster, he eventually gritted his teeth. "Okay! Mr. Xuereb, I'll grant your wish. When do you plan to escort her back to the Emyrean Sect?"

"Three days later!" Wearing a look of sheer triumph, Carlos held out three fingers.

Even though Carlos was seemingly an eligible bachelor, Lyanna did not like him. Her heart thumped when Poison King gave in to Carlos. The next moment, she knelt in front of him and pled, "Godfather, I feel that I'm still young. I wish to be by your side forever, so I don't feel like marrying anyone..."

Poison King glared at her and snapped, "The decision lies in my hands. Lyanna, are you planning to go against my will, huh?"

"No! Godfather, I would never have such an intention!" Lyanna yelled out apprehensively. She had no choice but to bite her lip as she got to her feet and stepped backward.

On the other hand, Jared had been scrutinizing Carlos all this while. He was astounded that the latter seemed to be emanating negative energy. His gut instinct told him that Carlos must have gone through Demonic Cultivation. Hmph! This fellow must have something up his sleeve since he insists on marrying Lyanna!

"Lyanna is mine! How dare anyone requests to marry her?" he suddenly fumed and wrapped his arms around Lyanna. There was even surging fury in his eyes.

The sudden twist caught Lyanna off guard. Carlos was also flabbergasted. Initially, he assumed Jared was just an ordinary member of Mapleton. It never came to his mind that the latter would dare to hug Lyanna, claiming that she was his woman in front of everyone!

Chapter 719 It Does Not Matter

"Poison King, who is he?" Carlos questioned grimly.

"Oh! He's just a foolish punk..." Poison King explained hastily. He then yelled out, "Bring him away and lock him up!"

Without hesitation, Weston and the others stepped forward to grab hold of Jared and drag him out.

Jared struggled frantically, putting on a show that he seemed to have lost every bit of his martial energy.

"Let go of me! Lyanna is mine!" he continued to squeal at the top of his lungs, but nobody gave any hoots to him. Moments later, he was dragged away by Weston and the others.

When Carlos did not sense anything amiss, a faint smile broke out on his face. "It seems many others have fallen head over heels for Ms. Lyanna!"

"Ah! Mr. Xuereb, how can those small fries be comparable to you! Three days later, I'll ensure Lyanna is glamorously dressed before waiting for your arrival!" Poison King smiled gleefully.

Other than him, only a few members of Mapleton knew that Lyanna was born with the aptitude to bewitch. Hence, he would continue to keep mum about it to Carlos.

"Hahaha! I'd better go back now for the necessary preparations. Please excuse me." Carlos rose and waved to Poison King respectfully.

"See you, Mr. Xuereb. Kindly see yourself out," Poison King replied courteously.

Once Carlos stepped out of Mapleton, his lips contorted into a smirk as he mumbled triumphantly, "Haha! The aptitude to bewitch is undoubtedly awesome. Look at how that foolish fellow is bewitched by the Seduction Technique! After absorbing Lyanna's life force energy later, I'll be able to reach the level of a Martial Arts Grandmaster!"

Meanwhile, Lyanna was on pins and needles. Her hands were intertwined as she feared that Jared would not be able to endure it when the venomous creatures in the room attacked him.

Even though Jared's combat prowess had not been affected by the dissipation powder, all the venomous

creatures in the room were deadly. Thus, Lyanna was worried sick that he would not be able to withstand them for long.

Soon, Weston and the others were back and updated Poison King, "Poison King, we've locked the brat up in the room. He's yowling inside now, but we wonder if he can endure it for seven days!"

"It doesn't matter if he can stand it. As long as I can break through my current stage and become a Martial Arts Grandmaster, it won't be any issues even if I can't cultivate the cadaver king successfully." Poison King smiled placidly.

"Poison King, don't you doubt if Carlos Xuereb is trustworthy? Why do they need to talk us into allying with them when they have slowly come to prominence lately? Not to mention, they still have their mystical water from the magic spring! Could it be he's not solely thinking of marrying Ms. Lyanna?" Weston asked warily. Somehow, he sensed something awry.

"Hahaha! Do you think I'll be easily fooled by him? Regardless of what kind of ulterior motive they have, I'll get Lyanna to delude him with the Seduction

Technique after they get married. It will gradually drive a wedge between him and his father, causing them to turn on each other. When the Emyrean Sect is in an absolute mess without its leader's guidance, it will eventually fall into our hands!" Poison King guffawed.

His eyes glistened with utter anticipation as though he was already standing on the peak of the mountain where the Emyrean Sect was located.

"Poison King, you're indeed our ray of hope!" Weston and the others buttered him up hastily.

"Lyanna, you're not allowed to step out of Mapleton these few days. Stay at home obediently till I wipe out the Emyrean Sect. By then, I'll surely upgrade your prowess!" Poison King tried to reassure Lyanna.

"Noted, Godfather!" Lyanna dared not retort or go against his will.

"All of you must keep an eye on her. Don't let her sneak out!" Poison King instructed Weston and the others, fearing that Lyanna would flee at any moment.

Consequently, Lyanna did not manage to check on Jared's condition as she could not even step out of her room.

In the meantime, dozens of venomous creatures were darting hither and thither in an enclosed room in Mapleton.

The room was pitch-black, and a toxic gas suffused it.

Chapter 720 None Shall Escape

A man sat cross-legged in the middle of the room, seemingly unbothered by the innumerable poisonous creatures biting and gnawing at him.

Instead of killing him, the toxic energy released into the room was being absorbed into his body at a rate visible to the naked eye. The creatures found their fangs and claws shattering against his skin.

Jared's body was, at that moment, impervious to anything. Despite the myriad of poisonous creatures unleashed onto him, none was successful in piercing his skin.

His eyes were lightly shut as his entire being was held at attention on the Focus Technique. Initially lethal and relentless, the poisonous creatures were soon scurrying away from him to hide in the shadowy corners of the room now that they had been rendered harmless and disarmed. Some that were desperate for survival crawled their way up to the sealed windows only to fall back down with a disappointing thud.

"None shall escape!" Jared proclaimed as his eyes gleamed greedily. The bugs are valuable training resources. It'll be a waste to let them go!

Smashing them open one at a time, Jared inhaled the venomous essence that was released with relish before transmuting it into spiritual energy and storing it carefully away in his elixir field. Soon, the pile of dehydrated remains of the creatures grew to a small mountain.

By nightfall, the poisonous creatures that were locked up with Jared had greatly dwindled in number. Given the faith an average member of Mapleton had in the potency of their monarch's critters which they held in such high regard, they would have been undoubtedly

shocked and insulted to see how Jared had unceremoniously crushed such a large number of them.

At that very moment, Lyanna was pacing anxiously in her own bedroom. As worried for Jared as she was, the men standing guard outside her door made checking up on Jared impossible.

Just when Lyanna was about to lose her nerve and consider an escape, Weston opened the door a crack and poked his head through. "Ms. Lyanna, Poison King requests your presence."

"Godfather wants me there?" Lyanna asked, her brow creasing warily.

"Yes. Right away, he specified."

Without waiting for an answer, Weston withdrew his head, threw open the door, and strode ahead.

Lyanna jogged to keep up with him as they headed in the direction of Poison King's chambers.

Upon reaching the landing of the second floor, Weston pointed at a set of doors at the far end of the corridor

and instructed, "You're expected to go in alone. He's waiting for you."

Without another glance, Weston descended the stairs and left Lyanna rooted to the spot. He has never allowed me into his chambers until now. Why today? Could he have found out about what I did yesterday?

With a growing sense of trepidation, Lyanna walked up to the door and knocked.

"Is that you, Lyanna? Come in." Poison King's voice came from within.

The door swung inward at her slightest touch. It was several moments before she realized that he was having his dinner at a table laden with several dishes and a bottle of wine.

Lyanna entered the room and closed the door behind her softly.

"You wanted to see me, Godfather?" she asked, approaching him timidly when he beckoned.

"Have a seat. Join me for dinner." He indicated a stool next to him.

Lyanna said nothing as she sat down. He poured her a glass of wine.

"Have a glass with me," he said, as he slid the glass toward her.

Unable to find the words to reject him politely, Lyanna took the cup and drained it out of sheer awkwardness.

Poison King's smile widened as the last drop disappeared down her throat. "You're the one who took the photographs on the table, didn't you?" he asked casually.

Lyanna shuddered before resigning herself to the fact that he must have already known from his strange tone. Unable to keep the lie going any further, she decided to come clean.

With a resigned nod, she placed the photographs on the table. "Who is the woman in the photograph, Godfather? Why does she look so much like me?"

"Of course she does," Poison King replied, "she's your mother, after all."

Chapter 721 Twenty Year Old Grudge

"My mother?" repeated Lyanna, stunned. "How did you know my mother?"

"Your mother and I were childhood friends. Your grandfather, her father, was once the Poison King of Mapleton. After sustaining heavy injuries during a battle with the Empyrean Sect, he betrothed your mother to me in addition to naming me his heir to the throne as he knew that he did not have long to live."

Poison King paused to drain another glass of wine before continuing. "On the eve of our wedding night, your mother ran away with another man from Mapleton. It took me a year to track them down before I learned that your mother was pregnant. Imagine my fury when I found out. After all, she was meant for me! Backing out of our wedding and carrying another man's child was all the insult I can bear."

As he spoke, the cold glint in his eyes became more pronounced. It was obvious that the passage of time had done little to assuage his resentment.

Lyanna's eyes went wide with surprise. "Did you have my parents killed?"

Poison King nodded after recovering from his momentary surprise. "That's right, I did. When I found out that your mother was pregnant, I ordered for them to be hunted down like dogs in my rage. In the end, after being wounded by my wasps, I found out that she had already given birth to a girl. I brought the child back and raised her as my own. I think you're smart enough to piece the rest of the story together."

Lyanna was nonplussed. "If you hated my parents so much, why didn't you have me killed back then? Why bring me back?"

"You will find out very soon," replied Poison King with a leer which sent a shiver down Lyanna's spine.

"By the way," he added, "how did you find out that your parents died by my hand?"

"When I was in Horington to capture Jared, I met a woman who look exactly like me. She turned out to be my younger sister. My mother had given birth to twins back then. You didn't know that, did you? You'd only managed to steal away one! They'd put her up for adoption when they were on the run from you. I found out that my sister's adoptive parents were killed by

wasp venom native to Mapleton. So, I put two and two together."

Lyanna gazed coldly at her godfather with sudden and intense mistrust. The man who raised me turned out to be the one responsible for the death of my parents.

Poison King was stunned. "You have a sister? No wonder your parents didn't seem too upset about leaving you behind after sustaining heavy injuries! Turns out there was another girl. They must have abandoned you to protect your sister, Lyanna."

"I believe the choice to leave me behind must have been a difficult one to make," she said curtly, bristling with rage. "I've made my peace with their decision. Your words are not going to hurt me."

Since he'd shown his hand, I'll show mine too.

"I do regret not being more thorough in my investigation," Poison King lamented. "If I had, I would have two of you who looked exactly like your mother."

There was suddenly something primal in his gaze upon his goddaughter.

Lyanna became deeply uneasy. Turning around with the intention to leave, she slumped over as soon as she got up which necessitated her to brace herself against the table for support.

"What was in that wine?" she gasped with a terrified gaze at him.

"Oh, just something to loosen you up. You asked me why I kept you for twenty years instead of killing you along with your parents, didn't you? Well, it's for this very moment. I will have you please me in your mother's place."

By that moment, the maniacal glint in Poison King's eye was no longer fleeting. His lust was becoming insatiable.

"You scum!" Lyanna's eyes blazed with fury as she attempted to raise her hand to slap him. To her horror, her body failed to obey her.

"Calm down. We have all night," Poison King crooned as he scooped her up and dumped her on the bed. "Soon, you will be begging to be ravished. After waiting twenty years, I'm not going to let my hard work go to waste by letting Carlos have the pleasure of deflowering you. I'll have my way with you before

delivering you, used and degraded, over to him. Treat me well tonight and you might get to keep your life. If you don't... I'm sure you're aware of what the parasites are capable of."

Chapter 722 How Is That Possible

As the minutes passed and the strength to retaliate started to fade, Lyanna's face was flushed and her breathing became pants for air.

Poison King savored the sight of Lyanna writhing with discomfort on his bed as he sipped the bottle of wine at a leisurely pace.

"You look exactly like her," he repeated. "You have no idea how much that turns me on. You'll be begging for me to take you any moment now."

Poison King was in no hurry. He knew that the drug needed time in his victim's system to reach its full potency. When it does, she will be my very own nympho.

The fever arising from the pit of her stomach was beginning to cloud her judgment. For some reason, Poison King was beginning to look irresistible to her. Lyanna felt a mad impulse driven by a vast, urgent

emptiness within her to pounce on him and have him fill her void.

Clinging on to the last shred of her rationality for dear life, Lyanna resisted her urges. Her lips were bloody from being bitten down to overcome the impulse. Shaking uncontrollably, her hands began to claw at her collar to dissipate the suffocative heat around her neck.

"Keep going, girl. Let's see how much longer you can fight it." Poison King leered as he took another gulp of wine.

At that same moment not far away, Jared stood up slowly and smiled in satisfaction at the corpses of the poisonous creatures that littered the floor.

Although he had not managed to break through to the next level, it had brought him much closer by allowing him to replenish his elixir field.

"I wonder how Lyanna is doing," he muttered to himself as he gazed about the room, realizing with a start that he had completely lost track of time.

With a ferocious kick, he removed the metal door from its hinges only to realize via a glimpse at the outside world that night was already upon them.

Circumventing the sentries, Jared arrived stealthily at her bedroom to notify her of his wellbeing.

To his surprise, her bedroom was empty.

It's the middle of the night. Where else could she be?

With a sudden sense of foreboding, Jared dashed out of Lyanna's bedroom and headed straight for Poison King's chambers.

Meanwhile, Lyanna had already removed her top. Poison King's eyes gleamed with suspense at the sight of her red undergarments.

"Hahaha! Twenty years of work!" he proclaimed, his eyes remaining fixed on Lyanna. "All for this moment."

Lyanna was drenched in sweat from the sheer exertion of controlling her lust. Succumbing to the effects of the aphrodisiac, she found the last traces of her resolve slipping from her grasp.

In her desperation, she had even considered committing suicide by biting her tongue. Unfortunately, she no longer had the strength to do so.

The drug had saturated her bloodstream. Her pale skin was so flushed with anticipation that even a breeze would send her over the edge.

Just as Lyanna was about to remove the last of her undergarments, the sound of glass shattering preceded Jared's sudden arrival, to Poison King's shock.

Were my poisonous creatures unable to even make a dent on him? How is that possible?

Jared ignored Poison King. Instead, he strode over to the bed where Lyanna lay, almost completely naked, and grabbed her hand to initiate the transfer of spiritual energy into her body.

Lyanna lost control the moment she saw Jared. "Give it to me!" she moaned as she threw herself on him and kissed his neck. "Give it to me, please! I can't take it anymore!"

Driven mad with lust, Lyanna clawed at Jared's clothes, ripping them to shreds.

Chapter 723

Although sheepish about the intensity of her unsolicited advances, Jared did not restrain Lyanna. With one hand maintaining the energy transfer, the other stood at the ready in a defensive pose in case Poison King attempted an attack.

Despite the incessant inflow of spiritual energy, it did nothing to stabilize Lyanna's condition. Jared frowned in consternation as the effect of the drug was more potent than he had anticipated.

Poison King was livid. "I'll kill you for this, Jared!" I'd spent twenty years raising Lyanna. Just when I'm about to reap the fruits of my labor, she's currently moaning for Jared in his arms!

He threw a punch at Jared but did not exert his full force behind it for fear of injuring Lyanna. He was aware of the fact that he did not have what it takes to bear the wrath of the Emyrean Sect should anything happen to her.

Jared had to physically restrain Lyanna from removing his pants and was unable to block Poison King's strike. As a last resort, he took her in his arms and leaped out of the window just before Poison King's fist made contact.

The fact that Lyanna was unclothed was the last thing on his mind at that moment. Jared's main priority was to bring her to a location where the process of energy transfer could continue undisturbed. He was worried that he might not be able to hold off the advances of the ravenous girl in his arms.

Poison King and his men who had heard the commotion gave chase. The flickering flames of their torches illuminated their murderous expressions as they stormed through the night in pursuit of their prisoner. Jared maintained his lead despite the effort of holding Lyanna's writhing body in his arms. After placing a considerable distance between them and their quarry, Jared produced a pouch of needles and speedily administered a needle each at three specific acupoints. As the effect of the drug was not counteracted by spiritual energy alone, the only other option was to force the toxins out with the help of acupuncture. Lyanna ceased her fierce struggling at once. She stared at Jared for several seconds before coughing up blood that was as black as tar. Immediately, her eyes regained their usual sparkle as the lusty haze in them dissipated. The flush in her cheeks, however, did not.

Upon regaining her own mind, Lyanna stared at her bloodied nails in horror as she made the connection between her own naked body and Jared's torn clothing. Before she could say a word to Jared, Poison King's men arrived and had the pair quickly surrounded.

Jared removed his tattered shirt at once and wrapped Lyanna up in it.

Poison King noticed the absence of the haze in Lyanna's eyes and was startled to see how quickly the drug had worn off. How did Jared heal her this quickly?

Poison King rumbled sanctimoniously, "As a member of Mapleton, you knew that it was against orders to release Jared and engage in an illicit affair with him. Do you confess to your crimes, Lyanna?"

With so many of my subjects, including the five leaders present as witnesses, I can't confess to the attempted rape of my goddaughter and that Jared had actually rescued her! That act would be met with condemnation by everybody in Mapleton. I'll be dethroned and exiled in disgrace. Poison King thought to himself.

Lyanna was speechless with indignation at being falsely accused. At a complete loss for words, she merely glared at him with hatred in her eyes.

Jared was incensed by the lie as well. "How dare you

drug and tried to rape her, you old scoundrel? I was the one who rescued her from you! Don't you dare turn this around on us!"

"Preposterous!" Poison King shouted with convincing defiance. "Everybody in Mapleton knows that she is my goddaughter. I have raised her for twenty years and think of her as my own. How dare you accuse me of doing something as heinous as this? You were the one who sweet-talked her into letting you out and engaging in a forbidden union. The state of your clothes is proof enough! If I did not stumble in on you, who knows what else you might have done?" **Chapter 724**

The members of Mapleton glared at Jared resentfully as Lyanna's beauty was a source of pride for many of them. It was a great offense to them for an outsider to swoop in and claim her in such a dishonorable fashion.

"You can't talk your way out of this one, Jared! Listen to yourself! Poison King raised Lyanna as his own. How dare you suggest something so disgusting?"

"Exactly. Lyanna is the one to have behaved indecently. She has broken every law we have."

"Let's kill them and be done with it!"

Soon, the cries for blood from the members of

Mapleton grew to a deafening chant.

Lyanna wrapped Jared's shirt tighter around her, resigned to the futility of trying to defend herself. Jared suddenly began addressing the crowd with a satisfied smirk. "Fine. You got me. I took Lyanna's virginity. And what a pleasure it was! What are you going to do about it?"

His provocation incensed the crowd further, though nobody dared to take the first step as the memory of him slaying a Martial Arts Grandmaster remained vividly in their minds. As angry as the mob was, they were hesitant about stepping forth only to be killed on the spot.

Jared turned his smug smile to Poison King. "Look at all you cowards. Does nobody dare step forth to defend her honor? How about you, old man?"

Poison King glowered at Jared as he grounded his teeth almost flat in anger. "Don't imagine for a second that you've become invincible for having slain Xander!

Although I have yet to achieve the rank of Martial Arts Grandmaster, I am still Poison King, and this is still my kingdom. This slight will not go unpunished."

His anger materialized into a tangible aura around him. By this point, I am forced to act.

As the rage of a Senior Grandmaster burst forth in all directions, the trees in their vicinity creaked and groaned as they were bent from the shockwave.

With zero regard for Poison King's rage, Jared said impatiently, "Oh, is that so? Why don't you come at me with something more realistic than empty threats?"

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"You will be regretting your words very soon. Don't push your luck just because you have a tough body. You're not invincible, as you shall soon learn."

At those menacing words, Poison King began to emit a dense black gas that spiraled upward and over the top of the trees of the jungle all throughout the valley. A deafening rustle ensued like the discordant march of billions of insects.

In an instant, innumerable jet black beetles gathered in midair where the black gas was most concentrated in a swarm so dense that it blocked out the moonlight.

Jared was pleased to see the insects. Given his immunity against their venom, he was looking forward to consuming the essence of the beetles to enhance his own elixir field.

The members of Mapleton scurried out of the way at

the sight of the swarm. Even the five leaders had their jaws hanging open in shock.

To Jared's surprise, the insects did not attack him as he had expected them to. Instead, they swarmed all over Poison King with the frenzy of starving piranhas.

"Be careful, Jared!" Lyanna cried out behind him.

"Those are steel beetles!"

Before long, Poison King's body was completely covered. The beetles' exoskeletons twinkled in the moonlight at every shift in gesture. With meticulous precision, the beetles rearranged themselves rapidly to adapt to their master's posture like an organic, interactive suit of armor.

Comprehension dawned on Jared's face as he understood that the arrival of the beetles served a more defensive purpose rather than an offensive one.

"Hmph! It doesn't look very practical," he remarked disdainfully before lunging forward and throwing a solid punch directly onto Poison King's chest.

Thud!

Although the blow which reverberated like a gong was a testament to the raw power behind it, Poison King did not even lose his footing. The spot on his chest where Jared had struck revealed an empty patch as several

dozen beetles fell to the ground, dead from having absorbed the impact of the strike. Almost immediately, more beetles scuttled upward to patch up the armor.

"Hah!" Poison King roared with maniacal glee. "I've spent my life perfecting this suit of armor, Jared. You won't find a chink of weakness anywhere no matter which angle you strike from!"

Jared smirked at his adversary's confidence. "No weaknesses, huh? We'll see about that!" **Chapter 725**

As soon as Jared spoke, he let loose a terrifying aura that unnerved the members of Mapleton in the vicinity and forced them to scurry further backward.

"Jared seems to have gained a substantial increase in power," remarked Weston in awe and terror.

We'd fought Jared back in Jadeborough once before. I don't recall him being this powerful!

Poison King doubled the intensity of his own aura before letting it loose at Jared's. The shockwave caused by the collision of both auras uprooted trees in a radius around them like a violent hurricane.

"The beetle's exoskeletons have been enhanced to be tougher than steel, Jared," Lyanna cried out. "And their wings are literally razor blades. Be careful!"

Jared soon found out that the beetles did not only

form armor. When they flapped their wings, they turned Poison King into some sort of a grotesque and deadly porcupine. Covered in a hide of razor blades from every conceivable direction, any adversary who got too close would find themselves shredded to pieces.

"I'll deal with you after killing Jared, traitor!" Poison King glared at Lyanna before swinging a fist at Jared's face.

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The momentum of his arm which was already formidable on its own was enhanced to superhuman proportions by the frantic flapping of millions of beetles as they worked together to propel a meteoric fist toward Jared's cheek.

Almost blinded by the metallic wings glinting malevolently under the moonlight, Jared threw a punch wildly to parry Poison King's incoming one. Although the gust of supersonic wind caused by the velocity of his fist reduced many beetles to dust, a portion of them managed to pass through his defenses and cut his skin.

As he had given his shirt to Lyanna, Jared's sunburnt, copper skin was defenseless against the sharp wings of the beetles. The brief contact with the beetles had left his body covered in tiny cuts. Although microscopic, every inch of his exposed skin was similarly ravaged.

Poison King was elated at the sight of Jared's blood. "Hah! It seems that I've overestimated the toughness of your body."

Keen to press his advantage, Poison King leaped up with his arms raised to deliver another attack. The formidable gust of wind conjured by his momentum sank the battlefield by several inches. The members of Mapleton scurried further back still.

As if swept up by the gust, the beetles on Poison King's body suddenly left him as they made a beeline for Jared.

Boom!

Lost underneath the cacophony of murderous buzzing, the spot where Jared stood seconds ago caved as it collapsed under the collective weight of the metallic swarm.

Dust and debris permeated the air as a thunderous

sound reverberated through the night sky with a sense of awful finality.

"Jared!" Lyanna screamed.

Poison King smiled triumphantly. Even if Jared hasn't been flattened by my strike, he would most definitely be squished from the combined weight of my beetles.

"Drag this traitor back. I will be teaching her a lesson she will never forget." Poison King glared at Lyanna before issuing the command.

The five leaders nodded and started toward Lyanna.

"I'm going to avenge my parents one way or another," she threatened him. "Even if you kill me tonight, I will haunt you for as long as you live."

Without warning, Lyanna lunged toward a rocky ledge with the intention of smashing her head against it. I would rather kill myself than allow Poison King to contaminate me.

Watching this, Weston grabbed hold of her in midair and foiled her plan.

Lyanna struggled fiercely to no avail. "Let go of me! I'd rather die than go back there!"

Just when the five leaders were prepared to present her to Poison King, a cold voice rang out.

"Let go of her, and I might spare your lives."

As the members of Mapleton exchanged nervous glances, a silhouette emerged from the crater. The five leaders gaped in shock. "How are you still alive?"

"Jared!" cried Lyanna with tears of joy streaming down her face, giddy with relief.

A faint yellowish glow emitted from Jared's body. Beneath his feet, the beetles spilled clumsily out of the crater by the millions. Not a single one of them was still in possession of its wings.

"You have so much potential to become cadaver king," lamented Poison King after a moment of silence. "What a waste." **Chapter 726**

Jared sneered as he licked his lips. "Your poisonous creatures reserved for cadaver king training have been consumed by me. By the way, I wouldn't mind being locked up again if you have more delicious creatures to spare."

Poison King took a deep breath to suppress the ball of rage rising in his chest. All of the work in cultivating my deadly creatures is now in his belly and making him more difficult to kill!

"Only one of us will be walking out of here alive, Jared." Poison King threw out an arm forcefully as he spoke.

Obeying their master's summon, the wingless beetles attached themselves all over his body into the familiar formation of the beetle armor.

"I shall oblige you, then!" Jared shouted in response as he leaped to his feet and appeared before Poison King in the blink of an eye.

Crash! Thud! Pow!

Jared's powerful fists landed in a flurry on a bed of steel beetles. With every ferocious strike, a handful of beetles fell to the ground, only for more to scuttled up within the next second to replace their fallen counterparts. No matter how many beetles I kill, more will just keep coming. It feels impossible to kill them all!

Poison King's eyes flashed with savage pleasure. "You can't touch me!" he gloated. "It's my turn now. Let's see if your body is truly cadaver king material!"

With that, Poison King landed a heavy punch on Jared's chest. Although the force behind it was immense, it did nothing more than give him a bruise.

As the exchange of blows persisted with no definitive outcome in sight, it soon became clear that both combatants were of equal skill and strength.

Despite the fact that Poison King's abilities were not on

the level of a Martial Arts Grandmaster, he had been teetering on the edge of achieving Top Level Senior Grandmaster for many years. His own formidable power aside, the beetle armor granted him enough leverage to engage in single combat against Jared and hold his ground.

Thump!

The prolonged exchange culminated in the collision of both fists which sent Jared and Poison King stumbling backward several paces each, placing some distance between them.

After delivering several dozen ineffective strikes apiece, both combatants paused to catch a breath as they eyed the other with wariness across the small expanse of space they had created.

"Jared, my beetles are limitless," Poison King boasted.

"Let's see how many more strikes your body can withstand."

Jared frowned. I hate to admit it but he's right. If this goes on, I may exhaust my own spiritual energy before succeeding in exhausting his supply of beetles.

"Jared!" cried Lyanna suddenly. "The beetles are afraid of fire!"

Jared's eyes glimmered with hope at once. It's so

simple yet potent! How have I not thought of this before?

Poison King appeared frightened for a moment before regaining his swagger. "Other ordinary beetles, maybe. But this particular genus has been specifically trained to withstand its own biggest weakness. Watch."

To Lyanna's horror, Poison King grabbed a torch from one of his men and waved it above an armored arm. Despite the flame being close enough even for humans to feel uncomfortably hot, the beetles did not even twitch.

"We'll see about that," Jared promised as a ball of blue flame leaped into existence in his palm.

The spiritual fire he had summoned at the expense of his spiritual energy was incomparable to ordinary fire. Poison King's sneer turned into a grimace of fear at the sight of the light blue flames dancing on Jared's open palm.

With a sudden, swiping motion, Jared flung his arms and turned the flame in his hand into a meteor headed straight for Poison King. Even his men standing at the edges of the battlefield dove into the vegetation for cover from the immense heat.

Poison King jumped out of the way as well, but not

before catching a lick of the scorching flame on his arm, resulting in a sickening sizzle. Upon contact with his armor, the flames soared ten feet high. Combustion of the beetles fed the flame steadily for a long while before it subsided.

Amidst a nauseating smell of burning flesh and exoskeletons, the beetles poured off of Poison King's body in an almost silent rustle. Even those that had managed to scuttle away from the roaring bonfire fueled by the main body of beetles did not get very far before bursting into flames. **Chapter 727**

The smoldering remains of dead beetles, along with the writhing and twitching of soon-to-be-dead ones that littered the ground proved a gruesome sight.

Poison King was livid at how his entire horde of carefully cultivated beetles had been burnt to a crisp. Aside from his venomous wasps, his beetles were his next best weapons.

"Mmm," Jared grunted appreciatively as he inhaled deeply through his nose. "What a waste that they had to burn away. I could have used the extra nourishment for my elixir field. Well, there goes your beetles. What else do you have to use against me?"

With a cold chuckle, he appeared before Poison King in

the blink of an eye. Before the latter could react, Jared had struck his chest with a ferocious punch. Without the protection of his armor, Poison King's body flew backward with such force and velocity that it was only after he had landed on the ground thirty feet away that the collective crunch of all of his ribs shattering was heard.

Struggling to stand up, Poison King let loose a roar of frustration.

Jared suggested, "If you kill yourself right now, perhaps I can spare you some dignity."

"Kill myself?" repeated Poison King as he spat in contempt. "You underestimate me."

Suddenly, poisonous black gas emitted out of him. He did not attack Jared with the gas but continued to rise above the trees, as weightless as the gas he conjured. Once he had ascended high enough, every poisonous creature in Mapleton flocked toward him like a monstrous beacon of destruction.

Jared was pleased with the prospect of refilling his spiritual energy after having expended it in his fight. However, the creatures did not attack Jared. Instead, they began to tear at Poison King's skin without the slightest hint of objection from him.

"Is he poisoning himself? What's he doing?" Jared muttered, nonplussed.

Soon, Poison King's skin hung loosely down his bones in tatters. He appeared to be bleeding profusely all over, except that the blood was as black as tar.

"I'm taking you down with me, Jared!" Poison King bellowed, the hole in his cheek making his muffled threat all the more menacing.

Despite already becoming impossibly dense, the gas continued to accumulate before finally solidifying in midair.

"This is Poison King's secret technique, Necromastery!" screamed Lyanna in terror. "Be careful, Jared!"

The other members of Mapleton, too, fell to their knees as they quaked in fearful reverence. Not a single one dared to look up.

The gas condensed into a tangible figure of a giant as tall as a mountain. Throughout its formation, It glared down at Jared from its great height.

When the last remnants of black gas flowed out from Poison King's body, he toppled over with a final shudder and seemed to deflate before their very eyes. In less than a second, his ravaged corpse shriveled up as if it had been exposed to desert gales for centuries.

"Go to hell, Jared!" the shadowy figure boomed in Poison King's voice.

"Retreat!" yelled Weston in fear as he leaped to his feet.

The other members of Mapleton hurried in his wake. Nobody dared remain.

"Run, Jared! Run for it!" Lyanna screamed before turning around herself.

Hmm... Seems like this Necromastery has really got the Mapleton folks scared witless.

Jared craned his neck to address his monstrous adversary. "Your body is already gone," he taunted.

"Why should I be afraid of you?"

Boom!

Without warning, the figure swooped toward the ground. Suffocating under its immense weight, the fact that it was comprised of gas suddenly made no sense to Jared as it seemed to have solidified into something denser than rocks.

Jared was driven into the earth up to his knees from bearing the brunt of the impact. Even then, the crushing weight did not abate.

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"Jared!" Lyanna screamed, yearning with all her heart

to rescue him but was rooted to the spot by her paralyzing fear of the immense shadow.

*Stay where you are!" Jared called back. "A mere shadow can't hurt me!"

As soon as he spoke, his body glowed yellow like he was engulfed by the sun. The pitch black of the mountainous forests became momentarily brighter than day.

The intense beam vaporized the shadow upon contact. As the blinding glow subsided gradually, only the mummified remains of Poison King were left behind. Not a trace of the apparition remained.

The members of Mapleton, who had been cowering behind the trees surrounding the clearing, wore similar expressions of awe and terror. That was Poison King's ultimate skill brought to life by extinguishing his own. But it still did not stand a chance against Jared!

Chapter 728

After glancing at the dehydrated remains of his former adversary, Jared studied his surroundings and found the members of Mapleton staring back at him in fear, much to his amusement.

The five leaders regarded Jared as if he was the devil himself.

"Is anybody going to step out to avenge your fallen king?" Jared demanded.

The members of Mapleton, numbering in the hundreds, did not dare utter a single word. Even the five leaders did not know what to say.

Lyanna stepped forward. "Let them go, Jared."

No matter what had transpired, I have called Mapleton my home for twenty years. I have loved ones here who love me back.

It did not matter to her whether or not some of them in the crowd had participated in her parents' persecution now that the man who gave the order was dead. Lyanna wanted nothing more than to put the matter behind her.

"That depends on them." Jared narrowed his eyes as he watched the crowd closely for the first signs of rebellion as it was in his nature to be harsh with his enemies.

"Poison King is dead," Weston declared as he drew himself to full height. "This was a grudge between Mr. Chance and Poison King. Nobody in Mapleton is going to inherit the grudge. Consider it resolved."

He was aware that nobody else was going to say a word if he did not take the initiative. In a manner of

speaking, Weston was, at that moment, the highest-ranking member of Mapleton before the appointment of the next Poison King was finalized.

"We won't be seeking trouble with you, Mr. Chance," the other members of Mapleton chimed in, each one more courteous than the last.

Jared was pleased.

I like that. This is a society that recognizes strong leaders.

"Let's get out of here, Jared," Lyanna pleaded as she tugged at his arm. "I never want to see Mapleton again. All I want to do now is to look for my sister."

Before he could answer, Weston fell to his knees before her with a dull thud.

"Ms. Lyanna, you can't go!" he sobbed. "If you do, we're all done for!"

"Carlos from the Empyrean Sect is coming to marry you in three days, Ms. Lyanna," he continued with a sniffle.

"If you leave, they will have cause to attack us. With Poison King gone, it is going to be genocide when they come. Please stay for our sake!"

"Please stay, Ms. Lyanna!" The other members of Mapleton followed his lead as they fell to their knees.

Before he died, Poison had been a formidable enough adversary to the Emyrean Sect to hold them at bay. With their biggest obstacle to conquest removed, the Emyrean Sect would waste no time in taking advantage of the power void in Mapleton.

If Lyanna was not ready to be wed in three days when the Emyrean Sect came for her as promised, it would definitely anger them enough to raze the entire town. Lyanna bit her lip in pity for the men on their knees. As much as I care about them, I can't be throwing away my virginity to Carlos!

However, Lyanna's heart softened once more at the recollection of two decades worth of memories shared with many of them.

"Let's leave in a couple of days," Jared suggested. "I'd like to meet the members of the Emyrean Sect."

Lyanna gazed up at him with gratitude, certain that he had agreed to remain behind for her sake.

Evidently, the members of Mapleton felt the same way.

"Thank you, Mr. Chance! Thank you for your mercy!"

Unbeknownst to them, Jared had his own motives. He was planning on ascertaining the existence of a spirit spring behind the walls of the Emyrean Sect.

As planned, Jared and Lyanna remained behind in

Mapleton. Over the duration of their stay, the residents of Mapleton revered Jared like a deity. They made sure he dined and wined well and made him feel most welcome.

Lyanna's impression of Jared had improved as well. Often, she would pour her heart out to him and parade herself before him in deliberately skimpy clothing to stoke his desire. Well, he has seen everything anyway. Might as well make it easier for him!