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At almost the same time, far away in Harbor City.

Conrad sat on a skerry at the Dammer Fishing Grounds with a fishing rod in his hands as he stared with focus at the fish maw that danced in the waves.

Waves smacked against the skerry and wet the leg of his pants, but the man remained frozen in place.

He had lived this lifestyle for around a week.

Behind him stood his confidant, Valentine.

"The tide us rising, Mr. Monty. We should return soon."

Valentine told Conrad softly.

Conrad waved his off and replied, "I haven't caught a single fish today, I can't leave yet."

Valentine sighed gently at how stubborn Conrad was.

"I don't like seeing you like this, Mr. Monty, it feels wrong to me. I'd rather you vent about it," Valentine said sincerely.

Conrad smiled and replied, "I know what you want to say, Valentine, but you worry too much. What is there for me to vent? Victories and losses are common in war, and it's not the first time I've lost to Jasper anyway. After a few losses, you start to get used to it.

"Plus, I quite like the kind of life I'm living now. It doesn't have any of that fighting and aggression, and a single fish brings me joy for a very long time.

"Father told me that I was being too hasty and that I should learn to calm down and have some patience. I didn't understand him then, but now that I look at it, Father knew me too well. After these past few days of peace, I've finally realized where I went wrong.

"I was too impatient."

Valentine opened his mouth to refute but did not make a sound.

He knew that there were some things someone of his status and identity could not say. He should never touch on the topic of the Monty's father-son duo's core interests.

"Mr. Monty, Mr. Atticus sent an invitation two days ago. Are we really not going to meet him?

"After all, Mr. Atticus and we share a common enemy in Jasper, and we could potentially work together to defeat him. Not to mention that Mr. Atticus isn't someone we can easily afford to offend," Valentine brought up.

Conrad smiled and replied, "He's in more of a rush than we are, so don't worry. He'll come and look for me. It'd be too cheap of me and unbefitting of my person to seek him out because of one single invitation."

As if to prove Conrad right, a yacht sped toward them from not too far out in the sea soon after he finished talking.

The yacht's destination was clear as it made a beeline for Conrad's skerry. The yacht stopped around a few dozen meters away as a speedboat pulled out from behind the expensive-looking yacht.

The speedboat arrived before the skerry with a man standing atop it. He spoke to Conrad courteously, "Are you Mr. Conrad Monty?"

Conrad replied calmly, "I'm fishing."

The man gave a small smile and said, "Mr. Atticus said that you're welcome to go fishing on Mr. Atticus' yacht if you wish, Mr. Monty. There are larger fish in deeper waters, and they're easier to catch."

Conrad arched a brow and answered, "Since Mr. Atticus is already here, then it would be disrespectful of me to not take his offer. Bring me over, then."

The speedboat pulled up to the skerry and Conrad got on. At the same time, Valentine made an instinctive move to follow.

Yet, the young man immediately raised his hand to halt him. His tone was polite but firm as he said, "My apologies, Mr. Atticus invited Mr. Monty alone."

Valentine looked at Conrad.

"Valentine, bring my fishing rod back first. It seems like today isn't a good day for fishing," Conrad told Valentine as he waved him off.

Then, he made way to the yacht alongside the young man on the speedboat.

. . .

On the third deck of the yacht that sat in international waters, Conrad found Fabian lying on a sofa.

The man wore nothing more than a pair of shorts, his top bare, oozing with an air of untamed fierceness. There was a woman in his arms and a few more surrounding him.

Fabian snapped his fingers when he saw Conrad walk up. "A handsome man from the Mainland is here, beautiful. Go give him a taste of our Miss Harbor Cities.

"I'll reward whoever works the hardest to earn a place in Mr. Monty's bed with 1 million Harbor Dollars."

At that, a few beauties immediately flocked to Conrad, surrounding him and using all their skills to seduce him.

"What if I carry all of them to bed, Mr. Atticus? Aren't you afraid I'll make you lose a large sum of money?" Conrad asked calmly.

Fabian laughed out loud and replied, "It's just money, and that's the last thing I lack. As long as we're happy, any amount of money is worth it."

Conrad soon went to sit on the sofa. He did not reject the ladies by his side, holding one in each arm while another peeled him fruits.

"You sure know how to enjoy life, Mr. Atticus," Conrad said.

"I've had an endless supply of money ever since I was born. I didn't even need to think of how to earn more, since the interest from putting just a small portion of it in the bank was enough to let me live comfortably for the rest of my life.

"For a person like me, what would differentiate me from a piece of trash if I didn't know how to enjoy life?" Fabian laughed out loud as he kneaded the flesh of the girl in his arms.

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Conrad chuckled and replied, "Of course. You've certainly got a better understanding of things than I do, Mr. Atticus.

"But what I hate most are eyesores that just keep blocking my view. The moment someone becomes an eyesore, I just feel the need to kill him.

"The more comfortable this person gets, the more uncomfortable I grow. Therefore, Mr. Monty, I'll get straight to the point with you."

Fabian then clapped his hands and the women around him, as well as the ones around Conrad, got up understandingly. They immediately left the third deck to play downstairs.

The third deck was instantly left vacant except for Conrad and Fabian.

Just then, Fabian plopped himself right next to Conrad and reached out to hook his arm around the other man's neck. He grinned as he said, "I want to get rid of Jasper and I know you do too. So, let's work together."

Conrad glanced at Fabian's arm around his shoulder and frowned slightly.

He was not used to having physical contact with others.

Fabian may seem brash, but he was actually a sensitive man. He immediately realized Conrad's discomfort.

However, he did not let go of Conrad. Instead, Fabian pulled him in tighter so that Conrad would have to lean into Fabian's chest unconsciously.

Fabian placed his mouth by Conrad's cheek and spoke casually, "Do you know what I love doing most?"

Conrad shook his head as a sign of him not knowing.

"I love doing what makes people unhappy."

Fabian laughed out loud. "I get a rush when you people look irked but can do nothing to stop me!"

Conrad commented expressionlessly, "You've got quite the unique tastes, Mr. Atticus."

Fabian's smile fell and he let go of Conrad's neck. He got up and spread his arms wide, facing the open sea as he said.

"Look at this yacht underneath my feet. How much do you think it costs?

"50 million, whilst maintenance alone costs 4 million. There are tons of expenses similar to this, but don't we live for the rush—the thrill—in life? If we didn't, it'd be a waste of such a great life we've been blessed with."

The corner of Conrad's mouth twitched. While everything Fabian said was morally wrong, Conrad had to admit that the other made some sense.

"That's why we have to have fun with life, and it's also why anyone that stands in our path deserves to die," Fabian said, his expression hardening.

Conrad looked up at Fabian and asked with a frown, "I'm curious, Mr. Atticus. Why do you feel the need to get rid of Jasper? From what I know, you two have never even met before."

Fabian chuckled and replied, "I just don't like the surname 'Laine'. Is this reason enough for you?"

Conrad replied calmly, "It's alright if you don't want to tell me why, Mr. Atticus."

"Conrad," Fabian's smile vanished as he said indifferently, "Of all of Jasper's enemies that I've won over, you're the one I admire the most. Because of this, I can tell you one of the reasons. Anna Law, understand?"

Conrad was stunned for a moment before he nodded. "Because of a woman, I understand."

"There are countless beauties in Harbor City, all so pretty, so dignified, and with such great figures. They can all be yours as long as you're rich, but there's only one Anna, and I've loved her for a whole decade!" Fabian's gaze turned sinister and cold.

"I spent all of last year overseas but when I came back, Jasper that little sh*t actually got into an amorous relationship with Anna. So tell me, does he deserve to die or not?"

Conrad replied calmly, "He deserves it."

A bright and warm smile instantly returned to Fabian's face. The stark contrast between the two expressions would have given people the impression that Fabian was crazy.

"Alright, that's enough nonsense with you. Have as much fun here in Harbor City as you want. Eat, drink and play. I'll show you a luxurious life of pleasure you can never experience in the Mainland."

Fabian patted Conrad's shoulder intimately and continued, "But you're going to have to start working for me once you get back. I'm a nice employer. Do your part well and I will reward you generously."

Conrad frowned slightly and replied, "You misunderstand, Mr. Atticus. I'm currently..."

"Misunderstand what?" Fabian interrupted Conrad coldly.

"Are you telling me that you've surrendered to Jasper or that I'm unreliable?"

Conrad swallowed his words of rejection. He knew that if he angered Fabian now, the man would have no qualms throwing him directly into the ocean.

Fabian would also not be held responsible for anything either.

"Most of the Teo Chamber of Commerce are my men, and they're about to deal with Jasper.

"How hilarious, that despite being thrown out as a forsaken pawn, Jasper still decided to jump back in because he thought he'd be owed a favor."

Fabian picked up a glass of red wine and swirled its contents slowly. Infinite confidence shone in his eyes.

"I'm sure Gale, that old sly man, would know who to choose between the Atticus family and Jasper.

"Hahaha. Jasper's is said to never have lost a single time ever since he started his business, but this is a setup I planned myself, and I'd like to see first-hand how tragically he loses."

Conrad frowned slightly at Fabian's words.

"But doing so would only bruise his self-esteem at most. What else would it do?"

Fabian laughed out loud when he heard this and slowly answered, "Here's what you don't understand. When it comes to people like Jasper, you attack his confidence first. The moment he has a taste of failure, he'll lose all the composure he's accumulated through his many wins. That's when we make our move."

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"Have you seen whalers at sea?"

Fabian patted Conrad's shoulder and continued meaningfully, "Whalers first find the whale, then follow it until it grows tired. They attack the moment it gets distracted.

"Whalers only get one chance to attack, because the moment they fail, an irked whale will capsize the entire boat and flee into the deep waters.

"We're like whalers. The moment we attack, we aim to kill.

"I know of the processes and plans that you've used against Jasper before. You made the mistake of being too careful with all sorts of buildup and traps, but they all proved to be useless. Rather, you've only caused him to be wary of you.

"Hence, there are only two steps to my attack. The first, I hit his confidence hard. Then, I'll follow it with the ultimate move right after. After all that, it'll be time for us to taste the fruits of victory."

Conrad fell deep in thought when he heard Fabian.

After a long while, he nodded. "Perhaps you're right."

"Then I look forward to working with you, hahaha."

. . .

Waterhoof City, at the beach.

Jasper frowned as he aimlessly walked along the landscape route with Henry following beside him blankly.

The latter would glance at Jasper from time to time, yet, Henry did not disturb him when he saw that the other was still thinking.

He was used to Jasper's occasional strange expressions, since the man always managed to find a lead within a messy haystack of clues. This was something Henry could never come up with no matter how hard he wracked his brain.

"Henry, did Fabian leave Harbor City recently?" Jasper asked.

"I don't think so."

"This is the first time I've seen you so cautious about someone. Does he worry you?" Henry joked.

Henry had always thought that Jasper would be able to solve any complicated issue or person easily from how the latter always acted. However, this was the first time Henry had seen such a conflicted expression on Jasper's face.

"Do I look like a god to you?"

Jasper glared at Henry. "The last thing this world lacks are capable people. If I can't understand that, then death is right around the corner.

"I may never have met Fabian, but do you know what he reminds me of?"

Henry shook his head. As a qualified supporter, he asked cooperatively, "What does he remind you of?"

"A venomous snake."

Jasper narrowed his eyes and stated heavily.

"Hidden in the dark and rarely attacking. However, the moment he does, it's done with tremendous power!

"If I don't make the proper preparations, I'll likely die from just one bite. To be frank with you, I really don't want to be targeted by someone like him if possible."

Henry was stunned for a moment. Even so, he must have thought of something as he suddenly laughed out loud. "You got that right. This man really is a venomous snake that will go to any lengths to get what he wants."

Jasper placed both his hands on the railing and stared at the steady flow of Harpoon River. "We already know that Fabian's contacting my past enemies and they're going to team up to attack me.

"But other than that, we have no idea when, in what way they plan to attack, or even who exactly Fabian has contacted. We have too little leads to derive any useful information.

"Hence, there's nothing we can do now but wait. We can't make our move until we've got more information."

"The worst-case scenario is that we are forced to take everything he prepared head-on unprepared."

Henry could also sense the severity of the situation and spoke up whilst standing beside Jasper, "Aren't we playing a very passive role, then?"

"There's nothing we can do about that. After all, they know everything about us, but we know nothing of them. It's not like we can run over to Harbor City to ask them what their plans are either."

Henry was overjoyed when he heard Jasper's suggestion. "I don't see why not."

Jasper waved him off and replied happily, "We'll take this one step at a time. It's unrealistic to overthink this."

Seeing Henry's blank and careless expression, Jasper suddenly said, "There's going to be an asset forum conference in two days. Do you want to come with?"

"What's the point of those conferences anyway? They're so boring. Just a group of crafty old people trying to get rid of each other, while each smiling brighter than the last as they show off." Henry pouted.

"Boring? Other conferences might be boring, but I promise that this one won't be.

"Are you coming or not? I'll give you the identity of a special guest if you are."

Henry nodded and replied, "Sure. Not like there's anything I need to do in two day's time anyway. I sure hope some stupid f*cker appear so I can bully him."

Jasper thought back to Dudley, whom he had met today, and chuckled. "There might just be one."

Henry's eyes lit up and he asked, "Can I f*ck with him if one appears?"

"Go wild."

Jasper patted Henry on the shoulders. "This is one of the reasons why I invited you. You're the best when it comes to being as cruel as possible, and I'll also need you to test out their reactions to some things. If all goes according to plan, we might be able to prove quite a lot."

"Alright. Don't tell me all this as I won't understand you anyway. But if I can screw with someone then that's good enough. I've never stepped over any trust-fund children here in Waterhoof City before, so I wonder how it feels. Hahaha."

"He's from the Teo Chamber of Commerce, not Waterhoof City."

"Doesn't matter! They're all the same to me."

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That midnight, Julian had quickly driven between Nauritus City and Waterhoof City twice.

It was in the early morning when Tiffany and Julian arrived at Waterhoof City.

The two did not disturb Jasper, who was already resting. Julian immediately checked Tiffany into a hotel room before he went to rest.

The next morning, Jasper saw Tiffany in the hotel.

"How are you feeling? Was it tiring traveling all day yesterday?" Jasper asked.

Tiffany shook her head and replied cautiously, "Not at all. It's just that Waterhoof City is flourishing with life. I even saw a few foreigners when I arrived at the hotel yesterday."

"Of course it's flourishing—it's the largest financial center in the country.

"This is a five-star hotel so it won't be weird to see foreigners here. Foreigners are also people like us, and there are also scums and failures among them. Therefore, there's no need to treat them with extra respect just because they're foreigners, understand?" Jasper taught her.

Tiffany did come from a small village after all, and this was the first time she had been to such a large city like Waterhoof City. She was only doing fine now because she had Jasper watching out for her.

Unfortunately, Jasper could not stay in Waterhoof City forever while Tiffany had to spend four years of university here. Hence, Jasper had to shape her understanding of values and worldviews now in case this innocent lady ended up being scammed by someone in the future.

Tiffany nodded vigorously and replied, "Alright, I'll remember that!"

"Let's go eat breakfast, then I'll bring you to the department store for new clothes before I send you to school," Jasper said.

Tiffany quickly replied, "I brought clothes."

Then she asked embarrassedly, "Or are my clothes too reflective of my poverty?"

"Tiffany."

Jasper sighed slightly and sat by Tiffany's side. He spoke gently, "I think there's a huge problem with you right now, and that's your mindset of inferiority.

"You keep thinking of how poor and broke you are, and how you haven't seen the world. Because of this, you have no courage in anything you say and do, which isn't a good thing.

"You need to be more confident, you have to believe that your state of poverty is only temporary. I can't say that your poverty means nothing, but the truth with society is that the wealthier you are, the more respected you will become. Sayings about how poor and rich people are the same are lies people tell their children.

"But you have to remember that what differentiates a good person from another is their morals and their capabilities. Not their bank balance, the brand of clothes they wear, or the kind of car they drive."

Tiffany looked at Jasper intently after she heard him speak. A long while later, she nodded slowly and said, "I'll do my best to rectify that, Jasper."

"Good. Now let's go eat breakfast."

Jasper ruffled the top of Tiffany's head with a smile. After he did this, Jasper quickly realized how overly affectionate his actions were and that he might have crossed some boundaries.

After all, Tiffany was not Wendy nor was she a child. Such an act was inappropriate between adults unless they were a couple or biological siblings.

Tiffany seemed shy but her eyes shone with more elation than aversion.

After they ate at the buffet, Jasper then brought Tiffany to shop for clothes at a department store nearby.

Henry joined as well since he had nothing better to do, while Julian left to carry out the task Jasper had entrusted him with.

Jasper did not know much about female clothing brands, but this was the year 2000 and only high-end brands could secure a lot in Waterhoof City's large department stores.

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Tiffany's figure and appearance had already surpassed most girls; she was just rather lacking in the confidence department. However, this did not stop her from bringing out the beauty of most clothes she tried out.

Thus came the scene every salesperson in the department store was envious of.

Tiffany kept taking clothes that the salesperson, Jasper, or even Henry picked out for her to try on. Jasper did not comment on whether the clothes looked nice or not when she tried them on, so she tried them one after another.

After some time, Jasper turned to the salesperson while Tiffany returned to the changing room and said, "I'll buy all the clothes she tried on just now."

The salesperson widened their eyes in shock. "These... sir, these clothes aren't cheap..."

There was no novel-like scene where the salesperson looked down on Jasper, while the man's attitude remained kind and warm toward the store staff as well. He said with a smile, "I know. Please package them up for me, I'll take all of them."

The salesperson's eyes grew starry and they quickly went to pack the clothes and print out an invoice.

Just then, Tiffany came out to see dozens of clothes on the counter and quickly pulled on Jasper's sleeve to stop him.

"Jasper, I saw the price tags on them and each of them costs a few thousand. Let's not."

Before Jasper could speak, Henry piped up first.

"A few thousand only? Seriously, silly lady, you have no idea how rich this man in front of you is, do you? If you're talking about making money, this man earned more than a million in interest alone during the time he spent shopping for clothes with you."

The salesperson's hand shook by the side as they typed out the invoice. Their hearts were about to jump out of their chest.

As a salesperson in a department store, they had seen all sorts of people. Among them were quite a few business owners who brought their lady friends out to shop. However, it was rare to see someone rich enough to buy tens of thousands worth of clothing while remaining so unfazed.

After all, the monthly income of people working in Waterhoof City was a little more than a thousand.

This purchase was enough to support an ordinary household of two for two years.

Jasper took the invoice and told Tiffany, "Wait for me here, I'll go get the bill."

"Okay," Tiffany replied softly.

She looked at the large pile of clothes beside her with a frown and began to think about the few ten thousand she 'owed' Jasper this time... She felt lost, seeing how she was beginning to owe him more and more money.

There was normally a specialized common counter for payment when buying things in a large department store. All bills from the department store tended to be paid there instead of at the individual shop.

Jasper took the invoice and walked out of the shop with Henry in tow so he could swipe his card and pay for the clothes at the counter not too far away.

"Hey, are you interested in that lady? She's pretty pure, and cute too." Henry nudged Jasper with his elbow and snickered.

"You're not afraid that Anna's going to fly over and cut the both of us down with an axe?" Jasper said without looking up at him.

Henry's expression hardened. "This has nothing to do with me. My job is just to monitor and make sure you don't flirt around and hurt my sister. She already said that an opponent like Wendy has caused her enough of a headache."

Jasper's hand paused while he looked down, about to sign the receipt. "What else did she say?"

"You wanna know? Bribe your future brother-in-law then," Henry said gleefully.

He had just finished speaking when a sharp cry sounded from the clothing shop behind them, followed by the sound of a woman's piercing scolding.

"Where did this country bumpkin come from? Are you blind or what? Do you even know how expensive my clothes are? Can you even compensate me after dirtying it? Cheap sh*t!"