

An Understated Dominance by Marina Vittori Chapter 311 -

Chapter 311

“Beat me?” Luther was first taken aback by the outrageous idea, followed by a series of explosive laughter. The other Boulderthorn disciples joined in and laughed at Dustin and Maximus as though the two were fools. Maximus might have been a formidable mentor for many of the disciples, but he was nowhere close to Luther’s level.

“Oh, you little jerk. Do you even know what you’re talking about?” Scowling, Luther challenged them, “I was the one who taught everything to that traitor. Even at his peak, he was no match for me! Are you asking him to fight me with a destroyed core after he’s lost all his prowess? And does he have the guts to do so?”

“Right! A trash like him doesn’t deserve the honor of fighting Dad!” Oliver, Brody, and the other disciples scorned at the same time.

Unfazed, Dustin challenged back, “We’ll know after the battle. The most important question is- are you brave enough to take on the challenge?”

“I have nothing to be scared of.” Luther sneered. “If that little traitor loves flirting with death, I shall rid him from my guild today!”

With that, he walked right up to the stone platform. Since the actual battle hadn’t started, he didn’t mind warming up the scene.

“Dustin, he was the one who taught me everything I can’t defeat him,” Maximus admitted with a serious expression.

Dustin assured him with a faint smile, “Don’t worry. If I said you could, you will. Didn’t he keep the three moves a secret from you? I will teach you those moves and throw in some hacks.”

“Do you practice the Illusory Sword Technique as well?” Maximus looked astonished.

“Well, just a bit. So, are you learning?” Dustin smiled again. He had researched and practiced many branches of martial arts from a young age and was particularly good at sword fighting. The Illusory Sword Technique

was one of the variations of a core technique, and with a glance, he could spot any flaws in the moves.

“Yes!” Maximus nodded gravely. The only way for him to rid his internal demons was to defeat Luther Williams, just like Dustin had advised.

“Cool. I’ll teach you now.” Dustin snapped a branch from a tree nearby and started his instructions. Maximus watched on intently, careful not to miss any detail.

“Hahaha! Dustin Rhys, are you kidding me? That’s some last-minute prep. Do you think it’s going –to work?” Brody mocked him.

Oliver chimed in, “Yeah. Do you think teaching him some sloppy moves will save him from a huge defeat? You’re delusional!”

Dustin ignored the heckling from the two guys and taught Maximus six moves in total. The first three moves were the ones that Luther kept from Maximus, and the final three moves were the solution to beat the first three.

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The moves appeared simple on the surface, but it was difficult to pick them up because the

practitioner would have to be proficient with the technique and build on the foundation. Copying the moves would not work in the battle. Thankfully, Maximus was a genius and a fast learner. After three rounds of practice, he had mastered the essence of the moves.

“You got it?” Dustin came to a stop.

“Yes. Roughly.” Maximus gave him a firm nod.

“That’s good enough. You only need to use these moves well to beat him.” Dustin smiled coolly. Maximus’ capability was not far off from Luther’s, and the only reason leading to his previous defeat was due to Luther teaching him the flawed moves. Now that Maximus was introduced to the complete moves, coupled with the additional hacks, he was ready to take on Luther by himself.

“You there! Why are you dragging your feet? Come up now!” Luther urged Maximus to join him in the ring.

“Go. Vent all your frustrations, and don’t go easy on him.” Dustin patted Maximus on the shoulder. “Thanks, Dustin!” Maximus bowed at him and marched into the ring, carrying his sword on his back.

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“Bear witness for me-after I kicked this traitor out, he felt vindicated and returned to challenge. me. Since the official battle hasn’t kicked off, I shall do some warmups to entertain you all.”

Luther’s booming voice instantly attracted everyone’s attention. He was keen to set up a precedent to deter any future traitors and rebuild his reputation!

“Hey! Why is your friend up there in the ring?” Ralph, Abby, and the others came up to Dustin with curious and odd expressions.

“He’s getting some personal grudge out of the way” Dustin offered a curt answer.

“Personal grudge?” Abby was a little doubtful. “Do you know who that other guy on the platform is? He’s Mr. Williams from Boulderthorn! Well, of course, he’s not as great as Tatum, but he’s decent! He’s at the same level as Grandpa!”

“And?” Dustin was unimpressed

“How can your friend fight off Mr. Williams with his subpar skills? He’ll be crushed and humiliated!” Abby shook her head.

Ralph nodded. “That’s right. I’d advise you to talk your friend out of the ring. Even I might not be able to fight Mr. Williams, let alone that young man”

“There’s no talking him out of it. The two are destined to fight today. Their fates are in the hands of God,” Dustin answered.

“You should listen to the wisdom of your elders lest you suffer unnecessarily. You’ll see what I mean later.” Ralph clasped his hands behind his back in a manner that suggested he had seen it all, but Dustin merely smiled at the old man.

In the ring on the platform, Luther stared straight at Maximus with a smirk. "You chose the harder path, didn't you? If death is what you want, I shall grant your wish!"

"Bring it on!" Maximus was cold and fearless.

"Killing you is a piece of cake!" Luther slowly unsheathed the sword, and with a leap, he broke into a run toward his opponent. When he got near Maximus, the sword in his hand started trembling. In a second, the air was filled with illusions of the sword, confusing the eyes of the viewers and making it hard to discern reality from illusion.

"He used the Illusory Sword Technique! That was a surprise. He went ahead with the technique that launched his fame! Seems like he wants this over with."

"Poor dude! Mr. William's Illusory Sword Technique is ever-changing and hard to defend against. Not even I could block the moves."

The crowd murmured and commented.

"Hmph!" With a shake of the body, Maximus unsheathed his sword and held it in one hand. He repeated what Luther did and launched his attack with the same moves.

Soon, the two were in the heat of the battle. The swords and their illusions created a web of flashes. Sparks could be seen flying along with the clanking of metal.

"Hah! I taught you all your moves, and now you're trying to use them against me! How ridiculous. Now, it is time to give you a taste of the third move you have never mastered!" While speaking, Luther waved his hand to make his sword turn back. The sword was aimed at Maximus' abdomen. It was the move that Luther had used to destroy Maximus earlier. He was confident that Maximus could not defend against the move, even if it were his second time experiencing it.

They heard the sound of the blade ripping through flesh, and suddenly, the arrogant Luther froze up. When his sword was inches away from Maximus' abdomen, he finally realized that Maximus' sword had pierced through his arm, immobilizing his move.

“How is that possible?” Luther’s expression crumbled. He had never expected Maximus to defend against the attack and counterattack by hacking those moves. How could Maximus gain that insight within a mere few days?

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“Luther Williams, you have gotten slower in sword fighting,” Maximus casually commented.

“No! That’s impossible! How did you manage to strike me? It must have been dumb luck!” Feeling indignant, Luther turned around and launched his attacks again, even though he was injured. This time, he did not hold back and put in his 100%, evident from his frenzied and merciless attacks that were hard to dodge.

During the ninth move, he switched it up and aimed his blade at Maximus’ throat with the intent to kill. However, Maximus didn’t shun the attack and instead slashed Luther in the abdomen with greater speed and accuracy.

Luther stumbled backward, aghast. He would have been gutted had Maximus’ sword slashed upward. “What’s going on? Where did that punk learn the trick from?” He pressed against his bleeding abdomen in shock. He could not wrap his mind around how Maximus had recovered from the grave injury with significant improvements to his skills all within a few days.

“Luther Williams, it’s my turn to make a move now” Maximus didn’t give his mentor any room to breathe. He swung his sword and charged at his opponent.

Luther hurriedly collected himself and raised his sword in defense. At this point, he lost his confidence and was forced to put on a defensive play due to his injury. In contrast, Maximus was getting stronger by the second and demonstrated great sword-fighting skills, bringing Luther to his knees.

“This is a good chance!” At the twenty-sixth move, Luther suddenly gathered all his internal energy, huffing and puffing as he made his final move in a bid to turn the tables. Just when he was about to gain the upper hand, he found a

blade pressing against his neck. If he made the slightest move, he would be killed on the spot.

“Huh?” Baffled, he dropped the sword onto the floor. He still didn’t understand how the three flawed moves he intentionally taught Maximus had, in turn, contributed to his own downfall.

“Why? Why did it turn out this way?” The crowd gasped at the sight of Luther’s defeat. No one had expected to see the second-in-command lose to his mentee in record time. Throughout the battle, Luther seemed to be put at a disadvantage.

“I-impossible!”

“How could Maximus Kane beat Dad? I thought Dad was the one who taught him all the moves.” Brody, Oliver, and the other disciples were covered in cold sweat. They had been proud and confident in Luther’s victory, but they were surprised to witness Maximus’ prowess which sent Luther into a defensive position, and the way Maximus ended the battle with a decisive sword

move.

“Our last-minute prep works.” Dustin looked amused. Upon hearing the remark, Brody and his gang looked shaken to the core. Did Maximus win with the few moves that Dustin had taught him? That would have been frightening!

“W-who did you learn the moves from?” Luther sweated profusely as he pressed against his bleeding abdomen.

“That is not the point. The point is that I will do the same to you based on how you destroyed my core in the past.” While speaking, Maximus drew his sword again.

“Hold on!” Luther pleaded in panic, “Max, I am sorry for what happened earlier, but it was a careless mistake. Please give me another chance.

“A chance? Did you give me a chance when you decided to destroy my core?” Maximus looked

grim.

“Max, I know I’m in the wrong! Please have mercy on me-we shared years of relationship!” Then, Luther fell onto his knees. “I have a lot of enemies If you destroy my core and my skills, I will not survive a day. Please spare me!”

Maximus fell silent at the sight. Despite his urge to seek revenge, a voice in his heart held him back. After all, he had learned everything in sword fighting from Luther, even though Luther had done so with an ulterior motive. At the end of the day, Maximus owed his swordsmanship to Luther’s teachings. Even though Luther was a merciless bastard, Maximus decided to be the bigger man.

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“Don’t ever show up in front of me!” Maximus kicked Luther aside and proceeded to leave.

“Got it...” Luther put on a fake smile. When Maximus turned his back against Luther, the man had a gleam in his eyes as he picked up the sword on the floor and plunged it into Maximus’ body.

“Look out!” Dustin yelled, and Maximus jumped aside at the final moment. Although Maximus wasn’t critically wounded from the stabbing, the sword left a long, gaping wound that oozed blood

on his waist.

Luther was taken aback when he realized that his ambush failed. Then, he threw the sword away and frantically pleaded, “Max! I’m wrong! I’m definitely in the wrong! I was blinded for a moment just now. Please don’t take it to heart!”

“You stubborn old donkey!” Fuming, Maximus took out his sword and attempted to slash Luther, this time showing no mercy at all.

“Stop!” a thunderous roar sounded out of the blue Next, a majestic figure descended from the air and shielded Luther.

The man, in his thirties, gave off a powerful air, and his eyes twinkled with a sharp and aggressive look. He was as grand as a mountain when he stood in the ring. The man was the so-called "Fanatic Blade"-Tatum Thunders!

Tatum bellowed when he noticed that Maximus did not stop, "I told you to stop!" He lifted a hand, and the figure of a palm appeared from thin air, punching Maximus in the chest. Almost immediately, Maximus coughed up a mouthful of blood and was thrown out ten feet away. It was clear that he was no match for Tatum.

"Shit! It's Tatum Thunders!"

"He's the ace of Royal Valor indeed! With a punch, the ace, who's ranked as one of The Heavenly Immortals, has severely injured his opponent."

"Pretty good of that young man to beat Mr. Williams, Too bad he ran into Tatum Thunders!"

"Tatum lives up to the nickname of Fanatic Blade!"

The crowd murmured in shock at Tatum's presence. From the first move, he demonstrated the awe -striking capability of The Heavenly Immortals, something that The Hundred Immortals could only dream of.

"That's our Tatum! He's so cool!" Abby clapped furiously while gaping at the man on the platform with looks of adulation. It was her lifelong dream to be ranked as one of The Heavenly Immortals. Thus, her future partner must be one of them as well.

"Hmph! How dare you hurt your mentor in public! How terribly wicked of you to do so! There's no point keeping a piece of trash like you in the martial arts field. Today, I shall carry out God's will!" After giving his self-righteous speech, he hurled a punch at Maximus again with the intent to kill.

"Oh no, that guy's done for!" Everyone shook their heads sympathetically. Although Maximus was talented and capable, he wasn't at Tatum's level. Just when Maximus was close to meeting his fate, a figure hopped onto the platform and fended off the incoming punch.

The winds from the punch died down, replaced by puffs of smoke. Dustin cast an icy glare at Tatum. "Boulderthorn disciples are all the same-shameless."

“Who are you? How dare you stop me?” Tatum narrowed his eyes, looking hostile.

“I’m the Dustin Rhys that you wish to battle,” Dustin replied.

“What? Is that Dustin Rhys?” The crowd froze in shock. Abby and Ralph gaped at Dustin. They had

no idea that the martial art genius they kept discussing was right beside them all along.

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“Gosh, who is that kid? He’s quite something to challenge Tatum in public! Is he asking for death?”

“He is gutsy but not the sharpest tool in the shed.”

Dustin’s presence became the talk of the town. No one had expected any martial artist to have a showdown with Tatum at the last minute.

“Hey! Why did you go up there? Are you mad? Get down here now!” After a slight pause, Abby loudly called out to Dustin. In her eyes, he was nothing more than a clueless young man who did not know his place.

“What is that dude doing? Doesn’t he know that he’s up against one of The Heavenly Immortals, Tatum Thunders? He’ll die in Tatum’s hands!” Ralph shook his head forlornly and looked on as though he could predict Dustin’s demise. After all Ralph wasn’t strong enough to take on Tatum, and he did not expect a no-name as young as Dustin to succeed too.

“Hmph! That reckless thing! How dare he insult Tatum? He’ll meet his end!” Brody and the others started cackling with glee. Not only would Tatum tid Boulderthorn of traitors like Maximus, but he would also get Dustin, the thorn in the flesh, out of the way.

“You little jerk! Who are you, and how dare you stand in my way?” Tatum scrunched up his eyes with a menacing look. So far, no one had dared to stop him from taking the lives of his targets.

“Tatum! He’s Dustin Rhys! Slay him!” Brody suddenly yelled at the platform.

“What? Dustin Rhys?” There was an audible gasp from the audience, who had initially taken Dustin to be a show-off, only to realize that he was the martial art genius who had gained fame recently.

“How could that be? He’s Dustin Rhys!” Abby froze up and found it hard to believe that the dark horse she had been talking about was by her side all this time.

“Good gracious! I almost missed the hidden gem!” Ralph was similarly stupefied. If Dustin was capable of defeating Joshua Hummer and confident enough to go for a battle with Tatum Thunders, he must at least be a martial artist who had achieved divinity. Ralph, upon realizing that Dustin must be way more advanced than him in the practice, felt rather embarrassed for offering to take Dustin under his wing.

“Had I known he was Dustin Rhys, I would have gotten on his good side just now!”

“Damn right! We missed our shot!” Ralph’s martial art colleagues were full of regrets upon learning the truth. It was common knowledge that the existence of a martial arts genius would give any guild a major boost, and this was especially true for the relatively small guilds. They’d enter a golden age if they produced a martial arts genius.

“Oh, kid, you’re Dustin Rhys?” Tatum snickered. “You are digging your own grave! As payback for killing Joshua, you will not be spared today!”

Joshua Hummer said something along those lines as well. But he’s dead now,” Dustin commented without flinching.

“Hah! You’re a bold one! Tatum scrutinized him. “But you’re gravely wrong to compare Joshua

with me! People like you have no idea how scary an individual from The Heavenly Immortals could be!”

“Scary?” Dustin merely scoffed. “More like ludicrous. You thought you were something, but you’re just a frog in the well.”

“What did you just say?” Tatum’s expression hardened. He had never been looked down upon ever since he gained fame.

“I was being kind, describing you as a frog in the well. Turns out you’re just a worm in the apple- rotten and foul!” Dustin didn’t hold back at all, and his insult evoked a collective exclamation from the audience, who didn’t expect him to be so rude and fearless from the start. Everyone shuddered at the thought of provoking Tatum Thunders, as that would be inviting death.

“Oh, great! Look at you, the stubborn one, not knowing you’re close to death. You’ll pee your pants when you’re staring at death!” Tatum, now enraged, hurled a punch in the air that morphed into a translucent shadow.

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The impact of the punch barreled toward Dustin with the weight of a mountain. A martial artist who achieved divinity could easily decapitate the opponent ten feet away by releasing his or her internal energy.

“He’s indeed one of The Heavenly Immortals! That punch could easily crush a car!”

“That rash young man shouldn’t have provoked Tatum Thunders. Now, he’s cornered.” The martial artists watching from the crowd shuddered when they saw the shadows of Tatum’s punch. In their opinion, the punch was indefensible.

“Hah...” Dustin smiled and tapped his feet on the floor. He disappeared into thin air and dodged the punch with ease.

“You’re quick! But let’s see how many times you could dodge my punches!” Scoffing, Tatum launched three punches, each quicker and stronger than the previous ones. Dustin skipped around speedily but calmly and dodged all the attacks with his freakish skills.

“Fuck! He’s like a slippery eel!” Brody was quite frustrated at the sight. He badly wanted to witness Dustin crushed to death, but Dustin was too agile and swerved out of the way of Tatum’s punches.

Meanwhile, Ralph was clicking his tongue, amazed at the sight. "I did not expect him to show off such talent at his young age.

"So what? He's just pulling off tricks. If he's really talented, he wouldn't have dodged the attacks. At the end of the day, he could not beat Tatum!" Abby pouted unhappily. Even after learning about Dustin's identity, she still looked down on him. In her opinion, a true man should face the fight. instead of hiding.

"Is this what 'Fanatic Blade' has to offer? That's nothing much." Dustin shook his head in disappointment, wondering if the standards of The Heavenly Immortals had decreased. A decade ago, only the best of the best was inducted into The Heavenly Immortals.

"You brat! Better not be arrogant!" Tatum's expression sank. "You think you can show off in front of me with a couple of tricks? I was warming up just now. And now, it's time to show you the skills gap between us!" Then, he tapped his feet on the floor and threw himself at Dustin. When he was close, he drew his hands in before throwing a heavy punch. Almost immediately, a gale started blowing, and the air was filled with shadows of the forceful punch hurtling toward Dustin.

"I-i-is that Tatum's signature move that launched him to fame? The Crushing Waves from the Poseidon Punches?"

"That's right. It's Crushing Waves, rumored to turn a punch into countless punches. There's no escape!"

"I guess Tatum must be furious, seeing how he served his signature move. That guy will be dead today.

The other martial artists stared at the punches in the air with horrified faces. Even from afar, they felt the force and tension that could easily rip them apart.

"Dustin Rhys! Time to die!" Brody chortled with malign and glee.

"That's a pity. He cannot escape his fate." Ralph let out a soft sigh filled with regret.

“Didn’t we tell him to stay low profile? He refused to listen and offended Tatum. No one can save him now!” Abby shook her head and braced herself for Dustin’s imminent death.

“These are just bells and whistles!” Dustin snickered and crushed the punches in the air with a slap, and the momentum of the counterattack hit Tatum hard in the face. Everyone heard an explosive sound. Tatum was seen flying and crashing flat onto the ground like a loose kite. The hall plunged into dead silence.

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An eerie silence hung over the scene. The spectators were wide-eyed at the sight of Tatum’s lifeless body on the ground. They struggled to make sense of the outcome, as it was totally out of their expectations.

They had assumed that Dustin would be defeated when Tatum used his signature attack. To their shock, Dustin sent Tatum flying with a slap. It was a sight that no one would have believed unless they saw it for themselves. They could not help but wonder about the reason behind the Fanatic Blade’s shameful loss. Was it a momentary slip-up, or was Dustin simply too powerful?

“Heavens! Did I see it wrong? Was Tatum... defeated?”

“A sight that was unseen and unheard of!”

After moments of utter silence, the audience exploded in a raucous chatter, punctuated by exclamations and expressions of shock, astonishment, confusion, and disbelief. No one had expected that the Fanatic Blade, one of the Heavenly Immortals, had been taken down by Dustin. “T-that’s impossible. How did that little rascal beat Tatum? He must have pulled off some fishy tricks!” Brody shook his head furiously, refusing to believe in the outcome. Meanwhile, Luther frowned grimly. “He’s really a freak.”

On the other hand, Abby and the others were too stunned beyond speech at the result. “This can’t be right! Is Tatum defeated?”

“Is that Dustin’s real capability? He’s really extraordinary!” Maximus looked on with admiration.. No one else could send the Fanatic Blade flying across the air.

“Aagh!” At that moment, Tatum suddenly let out a feral roar, and his body shot up from the ground. In stark contrast to his confidence and arrogance from before, he was transformed into a wild beast that was provoked.

“Oh! He woke up! He’s indeed one of the Heavenly Immortals-” Dustin was surprised by Tatum’s comeback. Even martial artists who achieved divinity would fall unconscious for half a day after Dustin’s slap.

“You jerk! You’re done for! I’ll tear you into pieces today!” Tatum bellowed, his eyes looking angry and crazed. As the ace of the Royal Valor and a formidable martial artist ranked as a Heavenly Immortal, he had never experienced this degree of humiliation. Imagine getting slapped and collapsing onto the ground in front of countless pairs of eyes!

“Someone get me my brass ring saber!” He turned around and yelled. Almost immediately, two men showed up carrying a weapon that was five feet long. It was heavy, thick, and wide, too difficult to be lifted by the average martial artist, not to mention waving it around.

“Great! Tatum is finally getting serious!” Brody had a look of joy on his face as he felt calmer. There was a reason Tatum received the nickname Fanatic Blade. Tatum had two signature techniques, the first being Poseidon Punches, which was good for offensive and defensive play, and it was unpredictable as well. His second technique was the Blade of Gale!

Rumors had it that once put in action, the Blade of Gale would render an area barren. In comparison to the punches, the Blade of Gale was more aggressive and ruthless, like a gust of

strong wind that blasted away all the leaves in its path, powerful and unstoppable!

“He should have used the blade from the start. A predator still needs to give it its all, even if it’s going after small prey.” Luther sighed in relief, knowing that having the blade made a world of

difference for Tatum.

“I almost forgot that Tatum is the best in his blade technique. Dustin is in trouble now.” Ralph narrowed his eyes and seemed pensive.

“Hmph! Tatum must have lost the round earlier because he was careless. Now that he’s getting serious, he can take down ten Dustin Rhys!” Abby tossed her head back as though she had regained her confidence again.

“Fuck! He agreed to a bare-handed fight, but he decided to get his blade all of a sudden. He’s shameless!”

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“You rarely see a decent man who’s from Boulderthorn. They’re all bullies.”

“That’s a pity. I wonder if Dustin could survive this

Some martial artists started worrying about Dustin’s fate. As the grassroots, they would rather Dustin win the battle. Given how conceited and bold they were, it would be great if someone could teach Boulderthorn a lesson. However, it was a tough feat to beat Tatum due to his killer technique -the Blade of Gale.

“You little rascal, I have to admit that you’re quite something. You’ve forced me to use the blade. Alas, this shall be the end of it. Dying under my blade today shall be an honor for you.” Tatum waved the brass ring saber with a sharp look in his eyes. He handled the heavy weapon weighing hundreds of pounds like it was a strand of straw, showing off the strength of his bicep.

“Just cut to the chase and come at me.” Dustin wiggled his fingers, a provocative gesture to get Tatum to start the fight.

“You’re asking for it!” The look in Tatum’s eyes hardened as he charged at Dustin with the saber in hand. The lengthy and cumbersome brass ring saber left a mark as it was dragged across the ground, leaving sparks flying from the friction.

“The Three Tornadoes!” When Tatum was close, he bellowed and started wielding the saber frenziedly. The shadows of the fast-moving saber formed the illusion of a web in the air as the weapon crushed toward Dustin’s head.

The audience struggled to breathe due to the horrific and stifling pressure from the impact.

“The Three Tornadoes technique is famous for a reason!”

“Even demons would get out of the way when it’s used. That rascal is going to die!” the martial artists exclaimed at the sight of the atrocious attack. Still, Dustin stood his ground without moving. He waited until the saber was about to split on his hand and reached out to grab the blade.

Amid an explosion, Dustin activated all his internal energy, crushing the web of blades in the air. The illusion of the blades scattered away in the wind. Meanwhile, Tatum’s saber was stuck in Dustin’s tight grip.

“How is that possible?” Tatum’s pupils wavered as he wore a terrified expression. He had never expected Dustin to grab the saber he slashed at full strength. He thought, “Who the f*ck is this monster?”

“Is that all you’ve got? That’s disappointing.” Dustin shook his head and added, “Since you have nothing more to show, I’ll end it here.” Then, he gave Tatum a kick in the abdomen.

“Ahhh-” Tatum yelled in excruciating pain as he was sent flying a good 30 feet away. When he landed on his knees, he started coughing up blood

Once again, the audience was left gaping at the scene. They had expected Tatum to regain the upper hand with the use of the saber, but he was badly defeated anyway. It left everyone wondering about Dustin’s background.

“H-how could you destroy my core?” Face flushed, Tatum was both appalled and enraged.

“You were trying to kill me. Why couldn’t I destroy your core?” Dustin replied coolly. “Bring a message to your mentor later-do not cause trouble for me. Else, I’d uproot the entirety of Royal Valor!”

The audience gasped and murmured at the daring threat, thinking that Dustin was crazy for threatening to ruin the Royal Valor.

“Fine! Just wait and see!” Tatum clenched his jaw and left the scene with his men, tails between their legs.

“How did that happen?” Abby was stunned by the sight of Tatum’s disgraced escape. She couldn’t believe that her idol had been defeated just like that at the hands of a man she looked down on. She thought, “God, are you playing a joke on me?”

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The audience was split in their reactions toward Dustin’s victory. Cheers exploded around Dustin, but some spectators seemed sour at the outcome.

“Fuck! Who’s that guy? How could Tatum lose to him?” a surly and fearful Brody hissed.

“Whoever he is, let’s get out of here before he notices us!” After the initial shock, Luther dared not stay a minute longer and planned his immediate escape.

“Stand still!” Dustin turned around and instantly spotted the few suspicious-looking men. “Luther Williams, did I tell you to leave?”

“Dustin Rhys, I’m the second-in-command at Boulderthorn. You’d better steer clear of me!” Luther warned him with a stern look. At the critical moment, he had no choice but to use the

Boulderthorn name as protection.

“The second-in-command? Hah...” Dustin scoffed and remarked, “Do you think I’d be scared of the second-in-command when I couldn’t care less about the guildmaster?”

“What do you want?” Luther’s expression sank.

“Give up your practice, and I’ll spare your life,” Dustin suggested calmly. He had to teach Luther a grave lesson for being a hypocrite who self-professed as a teacher and claimed the moral high ground.

“Dustin Rhys, that’s too much!” Luther’s face was scrunched up. If he gave up his practice, he would have no purpose and reason to exist in the martial arts field.

“Too much? Did you ever consider the consequences when you were f*cking around without conscience?” Dustin showed no respect for the old man.

“You” Luther gritted his teeth and tried to hold back his temper. “You shouldn’t burn your bridges. Aren’t you worried you’d become a common enemy of our field if you force me to the wall?”

“Courtesy is useless when confronting trash like you. If you aren’t doing it yourself, I will do it for you.” Dustin refused to engage in further conversation and bent his fingers to send a silver needle into Luther’s abdomen. Luther promptly yelped and collapsed onto the ground, grimacing.

“Maximus, I’m done destroying his core. I’ll leave his fate in your hands.” When it came to ending Luther, Dustin allowed Maximus to make the decision. After all, Maximus was the one who had a grudge against Luther.

“It’s fine. Since he’s basically paralyzed, I shall spare his life.” At first, Maximus lifted his sword, but he finally put it down after some thinking. He wasn’t doing so out of mercy. He knew very well that Luther had made countless enemies and would be a hot target after his core was destroyed. In the future, Luther’s life would be a living hell, and that was the best punishment for him.

“Consider yourselves lucky. Get lost now!” Dustin softly chided the Boulderthorn men. Upon hearing that, Luther and the rest immediately scampered away, leaving behind only the lady in white.

“Max Caitlyn went up to Maximus with a feeble look on her face. “I’m sorry, I said those cruel

words because I was under pressure. Please forgive me.”

At present, Maximus was stronger than Luther and had a bright future ahead of him. It was clear who she should suck up to.

“Forgive you?” Maximus snickered. “How dare you ask for forgiveness after what you’ve done?”

“Max, I know I’m in the wrong, but I had no choice. It’s hard for a weak woman like me to stand on my own feet in the martial arts field. Plus, Luther has gotten something on me. I couldn’t fight back. I am a victim too...” Her voice faltered and turned into a sob.

The way she cried softly would melt the heart of anyone watching, but Maximus said to her coldly, "Don't put on a show in front of me. That'll only disgust me."

"Whether or not you believe in me, I do love you a lot. I'm willing to run away with you and live like nomads!" she pleaded, tears glistening in her eyes.

"Did you say you love me?" He sneered. "Would you have said that if my core was destroyed? Would you have apologized if I hadn't defeated Luther Williams? You do not love me for who I am- you're only after my power, my potential, and my social status!"

"I..."

"That's enough. I do not want to hear any explanation. From now on, you and I shall go separate ways. There's nothing left between us!" He wore a steely expression.

"Max, I know I don't deserve you, but I'll still pray for you. When you're alone in the night, I hope you think of me, your mentee, and the beautiful memories we made in the past. I'll leave now and never show up in front of you. I wish you a great career ahead..." With that, she left with tears in her eyes

He opened his mouth but said nothing. He felt both love and hatred for Caitlyn, and he knew very well that they could never get back together. Once bitten, twice shy!

"Let's go. Time to drink." After settling the trouble, Dustin and Maximus left in no time. The battle started abruptly and ended in a similar fashion. Through this incident, Dustin's popularity skyrocketed, and he was known as a martial arts genius. Many believed that the martial arts field in Balerno would be shaken up with the arrival of Dustin Rhys after this battle.

"Mr. Dunn, if I recall correctly, Dustin Rhys came here with you, right? Does that mean you have laid claim to him?" a middle-aged martial artist from the crowd threw out a question.

"Well..." Ralph felt the eyes on him and forced a smile. "Since you found out about it, I shall not keep it a secret. To be honest with you, Dustin Rhys has become the principal disciple of the Steel Legion!"

His claim prompted a collective gasp.

“What? Has Dustin Rhys joined the Steel Legion?”

“My goodness! Mr. Dunn, you hit the jackpot!”

“Mr. Dunn, you hide your talents well. How did you manage to scout a genius like him? We’re envious!”

Congratulations, Mr. Dunn. Do remember me if you have anything good to share with the community.”

The martial artists started flattering Ralph and currying favor, especially the hot-blooded teens

who were itching to join.

“Mr. Dunn, do you still take in disciples? I want to join the Steel Legion!”

“Me too! Count me in!”

“The Steel Legion must have a solid foundation to nurture a genius like Dustin Rhys. I want in too!”

The young martial artists around them were a bubbling cacophony; each worried they’d be one step behind

“That is always open to consideration. The Steel Legion always welcomes upstanding men who fight for justice!” Ralph was beaming merrily at the enthusiastic response. He was taken aback by the effectiveness of name-dropping Dustin, which immediately garnered the interest of many young martial artists. If the trend continued, he believed the Steel Legion would prosper under his wise and courageous leadership!

“Uh...” Abby had a funny look on her face when she witnessed the crowd’s eagerness. Her grandpa’s brazenness came as a surprise—he wanted to associate the guild with Dustin, even though Dustin had clearly turned him down. She wondered, “Is this what they call the ‘real world’?”

An Understated Dominance by Marina Vittori Chapter 320 -

It was noon. At the clubhouse of the Hummer's residence, Edwin Hummer was struck on the head with a wine bottle. Blood trickled down his body, along with the merlot.

"Hummer! I was screwed because of you!" Tatum sat on the couch; his features contorted in anger. "Didn't you say that Dustin Rhys was a nobody? Why was he that powerful? Did you lie to me on purpose?"

At his mentor's request, Tatum had shown up to avenge Joshua Hummer. In the beginning, he thought he could show off his talent, but he was badly defeated in the end. Not only that, his core was destroyed. He had all the reason to be mad.

"Sir Thunders, in my records, Dustin Rhys did not come from a remarkable background. It wasn't wrong to describe him as a nobody. As for his actual abilities, I recall giving you a heads up, but you didn't take it seriously," Edwin murmured with his head hung low.

"Are you blaming me for being weak?" Tatum glowered at him. If he weren't hurt, he would have taught Edwin a lesson.

"In my opinion, it is unnecessary to issue a public challenge to men like Dustin Rhys. You can use whatever means to get him killed," Edwin further explained.

"Oh, are you f*cking teaching me how to get things done now? Tatum's expression darkened, his eyes gleaming with hostility.

"Of course not." Edwin lowered his head.

"I have no time for you!" Tatum looked irritated. "Didn't you get Substratumis from Dr. Linden Watkins? Give it to me now. I need it for my injuries"

Substratumis, the core restoration pill, was created to heal internal injuries. It was rather effective in restoring one's core. As long as the patient took it within 24 hours, they would stand a chance to regenerate their core. However, due to the preciousness of the ingredients, the Stoneray Valley only produced a few pills annually. Each batch of pills would be scooped up by members of various guilds upon hitting the market. Thankfully, Edwin had spent a fortune on one of those pills, just in time for Tatum to use it.

“Sir Thunders, I accidentally crushed the pill. So, I can’t help you. I’m sorry.” Edwin shook his head regrettably.

“You crushed the pill?” Tatum’s eyes narrowed, and he snickered. “Are you kidding me? Any sane person would take great care of that precious pill. How could you have crushed it? Your son’s dead anyway, so you can’t use it on him. Who else except for me will need your pill?”

“Sir Thunders, I am telling you the truth.” Edwin appeared serious.

“Oh, shut up! If you don’t hand me the restorative pill today, I’ll crush your legs!” Tatum threatened him spitefully.

Edwin stared at Tatum with his cold but bright eyes. “But, Sir Thunders, I wonder how you are going to do that, given that your core has been destroyed.”

“Hah! I might not have any bit of internal energy left, but killing a man like you is child’s play!”

Tatum was conceited.

“Is that so?” Edwin chuckled icily and brandished a gun from his back without warning. He pointed it at Tatum. “Can a man without internal energy defend himself from bullets?”

“Hmm?” Tatum’s expression hardened. “How dare you point a gun at me, you son of a b*tch. Do you know who I am? Put the gun down and cut your hands in front of me. If not, I’ll...”

Edwin suddenly pulled the trigger before Tatum could finish his sentence. Following a loud bang, the bullet shot Tatum in the forehead, leaving a splattered mess of blood on the wall.

Tatum grunted, his body trembling and his eyes wide-opened in disbelief. He’d never believe that Edwin would pull the trigger on him, and a fatal, point-blank shot at that.

Finally, Tatum’s body slumped heavily onto the floor, his eyes remaining open as he drew his last breath.

“Huh?” Fletcher Lawson, who had been standing by the side, appeared mortified at the scene. “S- Sir Hummer, what are you doing? Tatum Thunders is Sir Lincoln’s principal disciple. How are we going to explain this to Sir Lincoln?” He secretly thought Edwin had gone mad for having the guts to murder Tatum.

“Yeah, I killed him. Why do I need to explain that? Edwin took out a handkerchief and calmly wiped the spot of his head injury from the wine bottle attack.

“If Sir Lincoln learns about this, he will not let this slip!” Fletcher was panicking as he pictured the guildmaster of Boulderthorn, halfway to becoming a grandmaster. The man was powerful enough to massacre the entire Hummer Family!

“If we don’t tell, no one will know,” Edwin muttered emotionlessly.

“But Tatum died on our territory. How can we hide the fact?” Fletcher was drenched in cold sweat by now.

“You don’t have to panic. Just remember-none of us met Tatum Thunders today. He suffered a sudden death in his home after the battle with Dustin. We shall leave Boulderthorn to figure out the murderer, and we have no clue about it at all. Got it?” Edwin tilted his head, his eyes shimmering with a cold gaze.

“Sir Hummer, are you telling me to... shift the blame to Dustin Rhys?” It didn’t take Fletcher long to piece the puzzle.

“It was Dustin Rhys’ doing all along. When did we shift the blame to him?” Edwin questioned.

“Oh, right! It’s all Dustin Rhys’ fault!” Fletcher nodded furiously. At that point, he finally caught a glimpse of the depths of Edwin’s dark soul. Edwin had decided to kill a top ace like Tatum without blinking an eye. The mere thought of it was mind-numbing.

At the Boulderthorn branch in Millsburg, Clement Lincoln sat on the throne, his expression darkening when Tatum Thunders’ body was brought back. As the guildmaster of Boulderthorn who had extensive experience in the field, he never had anyone offending him in this manner. “Who was it? Who did this?” He gritted his teeth as his eyes bulged.

Sir Lincoln, it was Dustin Rhys!" Luther started fanning the flames. "Dustin Rhys pulled dirty

tricks in the battle and destroyed Tatum's core. Tatum was assassinated right after that!"

"Dustin Rhys! It's him again!" Clement banged his fists on the table out of rage, and the wooden table instantly cracked and split into pieces. First, it was Joshua Hummer. Now, it was Tatum. Clement had lost two beloved disciples, one of whom was his heir. It was tough not to feel anger and hatred at the culprit.

"Sir Lincoln, Dustin Rhys is sly and ruthless. He has a lot of tricks up his sleeve. If we don't get rid of him in time, he might be a pain in the ass in the future!" Luther added fuel to the fire.

"Send out my orders-The Royal Valor of Boulder thorn is looking to arrest Dustin Rhys!" Clement said with grief. "I'll use all necessary means and make any sacrifices to tear him into pieces!"

"Yes, sir!" His disciples bowed and took his orders The Royal Valor was shaken from the orders, and its aces were called back from all corners of the world for the quest. At that moment, Dustin Rhys was the most-wanted man on the Royal Valor's blacklist.