"Playgrounds of the Gods"

Date: 6/10/2025
Location: Napoleon House, New Orleans LA

The front door to the restaurant opened and the man walked in and headed for the first open table, quickly picking up a menu and ordering several restaurant staples-Crawfish Bread, a seafood gumbo, and a glass of Pimm's Original with a Coke before he sat down at the table and got himself situated.

Before Elijah Dante Slayton, it was going to be a very long weekend.

As the waitress returns with the first half of his order, Dante's face splits into an almost rapturous smile as he picked up a piece of the Crawfish Bread and took a bite out of it, closing his eyes as his face had an almost rapturous look on it as he chewed the bite and then swallowed before turning to address the camera itself.

"So, I didn't win the torch as you might have noticed and yet some of you might be wondering why I am treating myself to such a rich treat instead of simply wallowing in my own misery." he says with a wry grin before taking another lustful bite of the meat infused bread before he put the remains of the piece back down onto the plate. "While I would've enjoyed having that unique little advantage over the rather…verbose…Giovanni Aries, I do enjoy one of the many ways that I take after my father."

Dante's smile grows into a rather more…wolfish one.

"I do enjoy the hunt a little bit too much. The work, the effort, and most importantly the struggle…I mean yes, there is a certain level of perverse enjoyment to hold an item that creates a hundred percent chance of being able to challenge for a world title at your opponent's weakest moment…but honestly, where is the fun in that??" he asks with that wolfish grin on his face before picking up his glass of Pimm's and taking a pull before setting it back down. "And yes, I am rather enjoying myself because I am in a profession that allows me to pick fights in the playgrounds of the gods. For instance, this coming week on Breakdown I go from here and the Superdome all the way to Saint Louis Missouri to the Enterprise arena to fight for the Supreme Championship Wrestling Television championship against ***YOU***...Marissa Swanson!!"

"How does that feel, little young miss? To know that in just a few short days that you are going to be standing across the ring from the only second generation wrestler in this ***ENTIRE*** company that actually gives two flying fucks about the actual ***INDUSTRY*** rather than their over inflated fucking ***EGO***?"

The smile slips from Dante's face as he shakes his head in slight disgust for the briefest of moments before returning his attention back to the camera.

“Yes, I may be one of the bigger assholes in this industry, a true blue dyed in the wool villain with an arrogant streak a mile long with a vicious streak twice as long, but I’m not some third rate little fucking has been like Selena Frost who goes around and demands that people acknowledge her non-existant greatness. I ***AM*** Dante Slayton and I demand nothing but the fucking *best* out of those who step into the ring with me because if anyone who gets into the ring with me gives me anything less than a hundred percent…then I break you.”

“Physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually if I have to…we Slayton’s enjoy our sadism just as much as we enjoy being some of the most honest and respectful wrestlers in this industry, and all of that will be on full display in Saint Louis, Marissa, because you drew the unlucky ticket in this lethal lotto that puts you and that championship that you have strapped around your waist firmly before me. And if you don’t give me your best, then I will gladly take that championship from you and give it the proper defenses that you won’t or can’t.”

The wolfish grin returns to Dante’s face as he picks up another piece of the crawfish bread and uses it to motion at the camera.

“But then again, that’s going to happen nonetheless, Marissa. You see, the difference between me and the other people that you’ve fought over these past few weeks since you won the TV title is that while some of them live and operate off of their ego, standing on this side of the camera to proclaim that you can’t beat them because they say so…I’m going to beat you and take your title, Marissa, because I ***can***, pure and simple. I can honestly come at you from one of a dozen different directions, lock you into submissions that you’ve only heard of and keep you in one until you scream…or make you wish that you can scream…and I can do this Marissa, not because I’m sitting here surrounded by rich and lovely food in an attempt to get into your head and simply say that *“I’m better than you”*.”

“No.”

“I’m saying this to you, Marissa, because at Breakdown I’m going to show it to you first hand. I’m not going to just brag about my talents and then be proven to be nothing more than some pathetic blow hard….no, you will know that for a fact as my fingers tighten around your slender neck and if you can beat me, and there is that gnat’s eyelash long of a chance for that to happen, then I’ll gladly shake your hand and send you on your way…but that’s not going to happen, and I’ll make sure that I whisper that to you as you slowly start to fade to black in the very heart of the Enterprise Arena that night.” he says before taking another bite of his bread before stopping as the main part of his meal arrives at which point he dug into the bowl of gumbo and had a few bites before leaning back in his seat, a faint grin playing about his lips.

“But seriously, Marissa. Before you start planning about how you’re going to cut a promo on me, I want you to do something.” Dante said in a very casual and conversational manner as he leans back casually in his chair, looking directly at the camera. “I want you to go back and rewatch my past matches here in SCW. I want you to take a good, hard, and long look at each one of them and I want you to study what I can do in that ring and then I want you to do the

same to yourself…I want you to rewatch your past three title defenses and then I want you to compare the lengths that I'm willing to go to in order to not just to win a match but to also the depths that I'm willing to go in order to get the job done and then put it against your own desire to retain that title…then talk to me of my chances of beating you."

Dante's face then breaks out into a wolfish smile once more as he motions to the camera. "So Marissa. Do your homework and then come and join me at the Enterprise arena in downtown Saint Louis…and then let us discover which is greater. Your desire to remain champion ... or my desire to claim my first championship here in SCW." he says in a very casual tone with an undercurrent of a total and dark confidence in his voice. "So come and join me on the Fury Road, Marissa…I'm waiting."

Dante then moves to resume his lunch as the screen fades to black.
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Sometime later, Dante is walking around the Garden district with his hands in his pockets. The child of the Reaver was enjoying the sunny day as he listened to the people around him talking, enjoying the sights, the faint sounds of the New Orleans flavor of music to the tastes of the various "native" foods that was brought on the wind around him.

While he enjoyed being a Bostonian, with that city's rich cultural history, he could understand why so many of his friends would want to make a home here in New Orleans.

But as he turned down to face the house….mansion actually…at 1410 Jackson street, he couldn't help but smile just a little bit before he crossed the street and opened the black wrought iron gate which instantly sent shivers through him despite the fact of how warm it was and Dante shook his head to clear it as he drew close to the front door of the mansion which suddenly opened and a slender red-head stepped out onto the front porch where she crossed her arms over her pert chest. "Of all the people to come by this day, I was not expecting you." the woman stated.

Dante couldn't help but smile at the woman. "Good to see you too, Gwen. I was in the area and thought that I'd stop by and see the two of you before I headed out." he said in an easy tone. "Is he in by any chance?"

Gwen's lips curled up into a smile, "Of course he's here…where else would he be?" she pointed out before motioning him to come and join him inside which Dante did without hesistation, once inside the mansion proper Gwen lead him through until they reached a sitting room on the far side of the house on the second floor that overlooked the near-by Trinity Church, the sole occupant of the room was sitting slightly in the shadows that covered the room. "Alex, we have company." Gwen said in a low tone.

The person sitting in the chair turned his head to glance over at Dante and gave him a slight smirk, “Caught your pay per view match for SCW.”

“And?”

“Was kind of curious why Alex and Wil weren’t in the match…and that one student of Devon’s suddenly made an appearance?” the man said, raising his right eyebrow ever so slightly.

Dante shrugged, “Well Alex the Lesser didn’t want to get caught up in that cluster fuck of a mess, and as for your brother…well, you know that he usually fights for a reason and apparently what he could’ve won at the end of that particular rumble wasn’t to his liking.” he explained. “And as for Devon’s student in Ethan Stryfe…well he and Konrad Raab have been talking and he convinced him that maybe being a Shinagami would be a better deal than what he was getting over in ECWC maybe.”

Alex nodded. “So why come by here? Checking up on the old guard as it was?”

Dante took a moment and looked between Alex and Gwen before reaching into the inside of his jacket to withdraw a letter that he then placed on the table next to Alex’s chair.

“What’s that?” Gwen asked after a few seconds, indicating the letter.

“Two favors being asked.” was all that Dante would say.

Alex raised an eyebrow as he reached over and picked up the letter, opening it and withdrawing the small sheath of documents within and as he started to read, the expression on his face changed from confusion to total and complete shock before he dropped the papers, causing Gwen to quickly rush over to him as Alex stumbled backwards into his chair.

Gwen picked up the papers from where they fell to the ground before going to her boyfriend’s side. “What the hell is going on, Dante?!” she snapped at Dante.

The middle child of the Reaver took a deep breath as he crossed his arms over his chest, dark eyes focusing on the slightly older man in front of him who had a very surprised look on his face. “Alex’s just been given another chance to indulge himself…”
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Date: January 13th, 2022
Location: Leeds, England

Kevin Harrison’s hand went down for a third time, the bell rang, and Fall Out Boy’s cover of Michael Jackson’s “Beat It” started to play as the crowds inside of the First District arena in Leeds England exploded with cheers that could be heard for miles.

The reason was simple.

On this night, despite all odds a rookie not even a full year into his career managed to keep his career alive against the older and more experienced veteran of over ten years as Kyle “Bam Bam” Valentine of the Phantom Troupe tag team had managed to defeat the Dominion’s powerhouse in the form of the “Fire Fist Ace”, Alex Pierce.

As the music and cheers flowed around him, Alex slowly and painfully rolled over onto his stomach and looked up at the kid who had just ended almost fourteen years of his career in a single night as DJ Hunter held up his younger teammate’s hand in victory as their masked ally in Ruiner pressed a slowly darkening white towel against the still gushing injury on his forehead while Kanaida and David were quickly hitting the ring to help Alex up.

“It’s cool how you’re helping to give the kid extra style points by not getting up as quickly, Lex.” David said as he helped his friend and long time tag partner up.

The moment that Alex’s right foot tried to touch the ring, a wave of pain and an intense desire to puke hit his system like a runaway train. “It’s not an act…I think something is wrong with my right leg.” he said quietly to his fellow Dominion members.

Kanaida only nodded his head and a few minutes later they were in the trainer's room, Alex’s right leg now was swollen to a large amount. “We need to get you to the local hospital, I think that you’ve torn something in your right leg.” said the head doctor for Pro Wrestling Nova who then quickly left the room to find transportation.

Alex on the other hand, covered his eyes with his left arm and let out a low growl of frustration as the rest of the Dominion stable entered the trainer room, young Dante came in last with the Dominion’s flag draped over his shoulders. “So, what’s the verdict?” Jacob Tyrell asked, his bearded face etched with concern.

“They’re taking me to a local hospital, Ja. The trainer thinks that I’ve torn something in my leg.” Alex said as he motioned to the heavily swollen limb.

Ryo Sakazaki, the “Grinning Demon of the Dominion”, nodded as he took a look at Alex’s right leg. “Could be a torn quad or something…at least this way you can sell having to quit professional wrestling due to Zahn’s bullshit.”

Thomas Zahn, the vice president of Pro Wrestling Nova, had made the match for this particular show between Alex and Kyle as a feud ender as the loser of the match was to retire from professional wrestling entirely and surrender all of his gimmicks and such up to the victor-all of which was Zahn’s idea to help further everything planned for the continuing feud between Kyle and the Dominion.

It was at that moment there was a knock on the door and everyone turned to witness Kyle Valentine standing in the doorway, holding a fresh towel to the gash on his face where Alex had tagged him in the match… but at the moment it wasn't "Lighting" Kyle Valentine who was standing there in the doorway, full of energy and fury;

No… it was David Striker, a talented young rookie who was just now seeing the very core of his own arrogance…

<TBC>