

Chapter 751

Gerald gave her his word instantly.

He knew that the Fenderson family was still out looking for Xara. He of course, was no fool and did not wish to create unnecessary trouble for himself.

But, at the same time, Gerald was pretty curious about what happened between Xara and her own family all those years ago.

He wanted to know in what way he was related to Queta.

Realizing that Gerald was asking her about it, Xara became quite frank, and she started spilling out the truth without holding back.

Turns out it's something along the lines of this.

Peter Crawford, who Xara mentioned, was the second young master from the Crawford family back then. He was young and handsome. He was also Queta's father.

'Through logical deduction, the man named Peter should be my uncle who my dad talked about when I was young.'

'Back then, he'd always tell me that my uncle was working out of town, so he rarely visited home.'

‘No wonder there was a sense of familiarity when I met Queta for the first time.’

‘It turns out that Queta is my cousin.’

But clearly, the grudge between the Crawford family and the Fenderson family was not that simple.

From what Xara said, it sounded like the Crawford family wanted to obtain something from the Fenderson family, which is supposedly why the grudge between them still exists after so many years.

Twenty years ago, the Crawford family sent Peter over as a spy in order to approach the Fenderson family and gain the object that they wanted.

Xara wore a sweet smile when she started describing that part.

She was as lovely as a flower and devastatingly beautiful two decades ago. She was also the president of a large listed corporation under the Fenderson family. She was certainly a strong and independent woman.

And Peter had to invest much effort, just to approach Xara.

Firstly, he entered the marketing department of the company.

After that, he was appointed the general manager of the company because of how extremely capable he was.

In two years' time, he grew very close to Xara.

Peter was dashing handsome. His working capabilities were extremely strong too. These were the two probable factors that made Xara fall for him.

But the Fenderson family had strict family rules. From time to time, Xara would feel a spark of love between them, but due to said rules, she quickly erased these feelings and denied their existence.

That was until a later incident.

After the company's annual party, Xara was driving home alone.

On her way home, she was ambushed by her business rivals. There were around twenty people who surrounded Xara's car, and they wanted to kidnap her.

Luckily, Peter rushed to her rescue in the nick of time. Not only was he smart when it came to work, but he also had a great EQ as well. To add to that, he was extremely proficient in martial arts.

Despite sustaining injuries, he still managed to defeat all twenty of Xara's assailants.

He then picked her up and ran off with her.

That was the classic tale of a hero rescuing a damsel in distress.

At that moment, Xara thought she had finally found the man whom she could rely on for the rest of her life.

After that, they recognized the feelings they had for each other, and they started seeing each other.

That was part of the reason why the resentment between the Crawford family and the Fenderson family worsened. It also led to unthinkable incidents where Queta was abandoned, Xara being booted out of the Fenderson family, and the sudden disappearance of Peter Crawford.

At first, Xara wanted to keep it a secret when she found out that she was pregnant. But how long could one hide away from that fact?

On that day, the truth was revealed and an uproar happened.

Peter's identity was exposed. Angered by this incident, the patriarch of the Fenderson family ordered his subordinates to kill Peter Crawford for the wrong he had committed against his family.

In order to save Peter, Xara did not hesitate to set things clear with the old patriarch and renounce her membership in her family. After that, she stormed out of the Fenderson family, bringing along only her personal maid with her.

Gerald listened to what Xara said intently.

He wasn't feeling great. He realized that what he was doing currently was more or less the same as what his uncle did in the past.

Unfortunately, his uncle was a passionate lover and a self-willed man. Too bad he had to fall in love with the young lady from their mortal rivals.

Their love was destined to fail, no matter how much one struggled.

“What happened after that? If only it involved you and me...and Peter Crawford, I'm sure the hatred between the Crawford family and the Fenderson family would never be so complex. No?”

Gerald asked curiously.

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Something inside Gerald told him that this was still not the time to reveal his identity as the young master of the Crawford family.

“That's right. If only that was the case, then Dylan would not have attacked the Fenderson family in such a crazy manner!”

Xara said.

Dylan was the name of Gerald's father.

Gerald's heart skipped a beat when he heard her mention his father's name. He said nothing and listened to Xara quietly.

"It was because something else happened after that incident..."

"After that, the master of the Crawford family—Dylan put Peter under house arrest. But Peter was worried sick about me and my daughter. So, one night, he said that he wanted to elope with me. Queta was already born at that time and we were supposed to lay low at someplace where no one could find us and where we would lead a proper life!"

Xara said...

It was the night when Xara brought her maid—Xenia to go and find a hotel room in a hurry.

Although she had nothing to do with the Fenderson family following her self-imposed exile, the Fenderson family still hired somebody to keep an eye on her because of some complicated issue.

It was raining heavily that night. Xara was still holding her daughter, and she went to meet Peter according to the route which they had planned out.

After all, they needed to hide from the Fenderson family.

They left in a hurry. That was when Xara left her jade pendant as collateral for the stay at the hotel since she had no cash on her.

And the person who sent the money over the next day was the personal driver who Peter sent over.

At first, everything went according to plan. The next step in their plan was to meet each other in Merry City.

But unexpectedly, an accident happened on their way there.

Something happened to Peter.

He disappeared from the radar following that unknown incident.

The driver confirmed that Peter did arrive at Merry City. But she failed to contact him nonetheless.

Peter went missing just like that.

Dylan thought that the Fenderson family was behind his younger brother's sudden disappearance. Hence, he started a campaign to seek revenge on the Fenderson

family. The already bitter relationship between the two families became even worse. Since then, they started plotting against each other secretly.

Xara on the other hand thought that Dylan had captured Peter deliberately just to ruin the Fenderson family.

But she denied having such thoughts later on.

Although the master of the Crawford family—Dylan was rather cunning, he loved his younger brother—Peter tremendously. He would never launch such vicious attacks on the Fenderson family without first facing opposition from Peter.

Something must've happened to Peter then.

“A great ruckus was caused during those years. The Fenderson family did not pale in comparison to the Crawford family when it came to influence and power. Despite suffering such great losses, they were still far better off than your typical upper-class family. There would even be times when the two seemed to be on equal footing when they clashed.”

“It was amid their clashes that my brother and his wife passed away due to an accident.”

“Gerald, you're the descendant of the Crawford family. I'm sure that you're aware that the descendants of the Fenderson family aren't allowed to leave their house, and every person from every generation is grounded within the confines of their property. On the other hand, the descendants of the Crawford family lack the fame most families

enjoy, and every person from every generation is raised poor. You're aware of these things, aren't you?

“It's related to the feud between the Crawford family and the Fenderson family that has been going on for ages, but the disputes worsened because of the affair between Peter and me.”

Gerald nodded.

It was only till this point that he started to understand what was going on around him.

No wonder his father kept telling him to be humble and keep a low profile. If not, he would be brought home to the Crawford family immediately.

Turns out the Crawford family had their enemies too.

However, Gerald did not know how the feud between the Crawford family and the Fenderson family came about in the first place.

It became clear that Xara wasn't going to dwell on it as well.

She started describing the events that followed her expulsion from the family. She asked Xenia to find a place to stay. After that, she brought Queta to an orphanage in Mayberry and put her there in order to spare her a life full of misery and homelessness that she herself was going to experience.

She then returned to Salford Province alone.

“Gerald, could you please let me meet Queta? I’m begging you!”

It appears that Xara still cared deeply for Queta.

Of course, Gerald wanted to grant her wish. He nodded. “Sure, Auntie Fenderson. Come with me!”

Chapter 753

“Wait a moment!”

Suddenly, Xara said.

“Gerald, I’m so repulsive now. Do you think that I’ll frighten Queta if I go there unannounced to meet her? Besides, I’ve never been by her side after so many years. I’ve even abandoned her. Will she hate me? Will she hate seeing such an extremely ugly mother?”

Xara’s fear was evident in her voice.

“She’ll definitely refuse to recognize me as her mother since I’m such a cruel and ugly woman!

“Besides, it’s way too sudden. Will Queta be able to accept it?”

Xara touched her face as she spoke.

Gerald scratched his head. “If I tell Queta that you’re her mother, she’ll definitely be very excited. I guess you just don’t know her that well but, she’s a very kind young lady!”

“That won’t do. Gerald, how about this? Just make some arrangements for me to go and be a nanny for Queta. I know that there’s a chance that she’ll despise me as her nanny, but I just want to do something for Queta! I’m willing to do anything for her! Anything!”

Xara said.

“Alright, I’ll make the necessary arrangements then. We’ll only tell Queta the truth if the chance presents itself in the future.”

This was the most he could do, for now at least.

Jasmine had already left with Mindy. Marven and the others were waiting with the car outside for Gerald to return.

Gerald did not ask them to stay behind in the house, so they did not dare to do so.

It would indeed be inconvenient if Xara tagged along with them. Hence, he asked Stella to leave with Marven and the rest of the group first.

After that, Gerald got another car and brought Xara to the villa where he was currently staying.

“Let’s go, Auntie Fenderson. It’s right here!”

When they reached the door of the villa, Gerald smiled bitterly when he saw Xara standing there, completely frozen.

“Oh, right!”

The door was opened.

“Queta! Queta?”

Gerald shouted twice.

There was no one at home.

He assumed that Queta must have gone out to buy things.

“She’s not around. Auntie Fenderson, please wait for a moment.”

Xara nodded slightly. “Gerald, I want to go to Queta’s room and take a look. Would that be an inconvenience?” she asked.

“No! Not at all! Let me bring you there!”

Gerald then opened the door of Queta’s room.

However, he did not enter the room.

It was Xara who entered the room with red, tear-filled eyes.

The room was tidied with not a single thing out of place. There was not even a speck of dust in her room, not even in the corners, and it was as clean as a new pin.

In the closet, Queta’s clothes which she usually wore were arranged in a tidy manner.

She then walked toward Queta’s desk.

There was a photo frame on the desk, and it contained a photo of Queta.

Xara could no longer hold her tears back upon seeing the photo of her baby girl.

In the photograph, Queta almost looked exactly like her when she was young.

‘Daughter! She’s really my daughter!

'She looks exactly like me!'

Nothing made her happier than being reunited with her own daughter.

She realized that God still loved her.

She pressed the photo frame against her chest and continued sobbing for a while.

Suddenly, she glanced at the desk and saw that there was a notebook on it.

She opened it and took a look.

It was filled with Queta's neat and beautiful handwriting.

Chapter 754

That was Queta's diary.

All these years, she had always had the habit of keeping a diary.

Xara flipped over the first page, and it was from the time before Queta met Gerald.

"I became a kindergarten teacher today. I'm quite satisfied since I get to see the children being happy and cheerful every day. I've never had a mother since I was

young after all. Maybe I won't feel so lonely by being with this group of overjoyed, bubbly kids."

"Today, I overheard a colleague talking about me behind my back. That teacher said that I grew up in an orphanage and that I was abandoned by my parents when I was young. I pretended as if I didn't hear it, but I was so sad and upset. I hope I can meet my parents one day, so I can ask them why they abandoned me. Why couldn't they give me a beautiful and happy childhood? Why?"

"..."

"I work in a restaurant now. I made some mistakes, so I was scolded by my superior. A rich young man helped me. For some reason, I knew that he had a kind soul the moment I saw him."

"I met him again, and he helped me, again. But I get nervous every time I see him. It's because he's rich, and I'm just a poor girl. However, he told me that he had the same experience as me. I don't know why but I still have the feeling that he's a kind and friendly guy. I feel a sense of security every time I'm by his side!"

"I miss seeing him so much. I want to meet him again. Today, I met him again. I want to stay with him and take care of him. I want to take care of him in every way possible. But I know that he has a girl he loves. That girl is very beautiful and generous. Gerald probably won't fall in love with me. But I'm still willing to do anything for him."

"If I have my own family, I would tell Gerald that I like him. But I have nothing now. I'm an orphan. I don't even have a family, so I doubt that I even deserve love."

...

Xara flipped through the diary her poor little daughter had been keeping. Unknown to her, every page of the diary became soaked with Xara's tears.

"It's been more than twenty years. I don't even know what kind of grievances and bitterness my daughter has been through. She's too young to be facing such misery."

Xara held the diary and cried.

"Gerald, you're back! I went out to buy some vegetables. I'll go whip up something tasty now!"

Suddenly, Xara heard the clear voice of a girl.

Xara was stunned when she heard that female voice.

She ran out of the room hastily.

It was Queta who stood before her.

"You... are?"

Queta asked the question the moment she saw a stranger walk out of her bedroom.

“I’m...”

Both of Xara’s hands were shaking.

“Queta, she’s Auntie Fenderson. She’ll cook for us in our home from now on. You can go to buy vegetables and cook with her in the kitchen from now on!”

Gerald replied immediately.

Xara nodded slightly.

Suddenly, Queta wore a compassionate expression when she saw Xara’s face which was filled with scars.

She also started having a peculiar feeling the moment she saw Xara. It was a sense of familiarity which she had not felt for a long time.

Queta smiled and nodded. “Nice to meet you, Auntie Fenderson. I’m Queta Smith! We’ll be in charge of Gerald’s meals and daily life from now on!”

Actually, Gerald would never let Queta serve him.

But Queta was a person who refused to have a life without toil. After a long period of trying to persuade her, Gerald decided it was futile to stop her from working for him.

Xara was his actual aunt, meaning it would be impudent to make her serve him.

But at that moment, Gerald did not say much.

After that, Xara and Queta went into the kitchen to start prepping the next meal.

Gerald was delighted.

But at the climax of emotions, Marven decided to call him.

“Gerald, something’s wrong!” he said.

“Yeah, something’s wrong with you that’s for sure! What happened?” Gerald asked.

“F*ck! You really shouldn't have let a girl drive! My goodness! We just had a near-death experience!”

Marven was so scared that he began sobbing.

‘Hmm...’

Gerald was quite helpless. It was true that Stella was the only one from the group who had a driving license. Besides, it would have been inconvenient for him to explain to

them why Xara was coming along. That was why he asked Stella to take the wheel and go back by themselves.

“Are you alright?”

“Yes, we’re alright. But we had a rear-end collision with a car. Now, that crazy woman’s freaking out. She won’t let us leave no matter what we tell her. Apparently, she wants the owner of the car to come over!”

Chapter 755

“Let me tell you. My car is a Mercedes-Benz too. It’s much, much more expensive than your stupid MPV! I won’t let this incident slide unless you cough up forty-five grand for me to fix my goddamn car!”

“Also, forty-five thousand dollars are just the fees for repairing my car. You still need to provide compensation for the mental anguish you have caused me! I was rushing to attend a function today. Now that I’ve missed it, have you any idea how much I’ve truly lost? It’s far greater than thirty thousand dollars that’s for sure. Hmph!”

That woman looked young, as young as Marven and the rest of his group.

She was overreacting probably because of how rich she was.

Marven and the others said nothing to refute her claims.

“It was just a simple accident. Do you really have to ask for such a great amount for compensation? How are we even going to cough up that sum?”

Stella asked anxiously.

Seventy-five thousand dollars was no small change.

Stella was rather paranoid when it came to driving. She accidentally bumped into the woman's car when she was trying to dodge a larger vehicle.

"Hmph! I didn't ask you for the money. Didn't you say that you're driving someone else's car? You don't have money but the owner of the car should have it! I'll wait for him to come. Until then, you're prohibited to leave!"

That woman warned.

At that moment, that woman's friend, who was also a young lady, emerged from the car. "Let's forget about it. We came out to have fun today. Maybe you can just let it slide after they pay a bit of compensation?"

"Forget about it? No way! I've been down on my luck for the past two days. Like hell, I'm gonna let this slide! Finally, I bumped into a stupid Mister Moneybags and you think I'm gonna let him go? I need to ask for great compensation before that happens!"

The woman whispered to her friend.

After that, she stood at the side of the road and called someone on her phone.

“Marven, did you call Gerald?”

Stella asked Marven.

“Yes, I did. We’re pretty close to his house. He said that he’ll come right away. Damn woman! You’re pretty pesky, aren’t you? We’re almost at his house so quit the anxious yappin’ alright?”

Marven scolded Stella.

“I told you that I didn’t do it on purpose. How could you yell at me for that?”

Stella said with teary eyes.

“A good-for-nothing trash bag you are!”

Marven stopped talking after he was satisfied with venting out his anger on Stella.

He squatted by the road and waited patiently for Gerald’s arrival.

Suddenly, a sizable crowd had formed around the collision site.

“Hey! Looks like a pretty serious collision! What a beauty of a car too! Tsk tsksk! What a pity, young lady!”

The male observers noticed how beautiful the driver of the car who got rear-ended was. She had a naturally seductive face, which men tended to gravitate towards.

They knew from just a glance that she was the kind of rich lady who enjoyed her life vehemently.

Lightbulbs started appearing above their heads. They then approached the woman, perhaps in an attempt to butter her up.

And that woman hung up her call. “That’s right. I just bought this car a while ago. I’m gonna need forty-five grand to fix up the car, and a further thirty thousand for the mental stress they’ve put me through! It’s a small sum anyway. Can’t you see how new my car is!? By the way, is the car owner even here yet? Didn’t you say that he lives nearby? Shouldn’t he be here by now!?”

“He’ll be here soon!”

Marven replied.

“Miss, could it be that they’re lying to you?”

At that moment, the passer-by said.

“Ah? What do you mean?”

The woman was baffled.

“We’re in the most affluent neighborhood in Salford Province, where most of the billionaires live! How do I put this properly? Well, the people who live here are worth at least a hundred and fifty million dollars. If not for how beautiful the scenery is at the local park here, we wouldn’t be hanging around here at all! The math just doesn’t add up! Ain’t no way someone from this neighborhood owns such a crappy car like theirs! That car looks like it costs only sixty or seventy grand, tops!”

The passer-by said.

“That’s true. Maybe they really are fooling me? Hmph! Let me ask you! Is your boss really from around here?”

The woman asked.

“Yeah, he’s staying at Glorious Moment Villa in County Salford.”

Marven replied.

Chapter 756

“Hahaha! D*mn! Get a load of this guy! Glorious Moment Villa is the most expensive property throughout Salford County. A place like that costs around twelve million dollars. Like hell the owner of that place would even consider owning a stupid little Merc!”

“Ah, I see it now. Miss, I’m guessing these guys are just trying to frighten you! After all, someone who lives in Glorious Moment Villa is not to be trifled with!”

The few passersby broke into laughter.

The woman, of course, heard them mention Glorious Moment Villa as well. She lashed out at them angrily, “Are you out of your mind? Let me tell you. The more you waste my time, the more compensation you’re going to have to pay me for my emotional distress. How dare you even think about frightening me! My boyfriend knows some of the people who stay in Glorious Moment Villa. Who is your boss? I guess we’ll find out after I make some phone calls to ask about it!”

Marven was deeply angered by her statement.

However, in the next moment, he stood up excitedly. He then pointed in a seemingly random direction as he said, “He’s here.”

The woman and the nosy passersby peered in the direction he was pointing towards.

“Are you lying? Which one is your boss?”

The woman asked provocatively.

“The one with the cap, on the electric tricycle!”

Marven said with his face all twisted up.

He cursed out loud in his own mind. 'Why did Gerald have to ride on an electrical tricycle here?'

"D*mn! Is that your boss? You've got to be kidding me right?"

The woman flew into a fit of rage.

The surrounding people burst into laughter.

Gerald, on his silly little electric tricycle, approached the commotion. He saw the people standing there, laughing with their hands on their bellies. It seemed rather lively to him.

It wasn't like he could help it either.

He did not drive his own car there. He always had cars waiting for him whenever he wanted to venture out of his property.

However, what happened was way too sudden. What's more, the scene of the supposed "accident" was just a stone's throw away from his house.

He thought that it would be impudent of him to call his driver to come and take him on such a short trip, one which he could easily complete himself.

Thankfully, there was an old couple staying in the villa next to his.

They were quite close with Gerald too.

The old man moved out of his hometown to help look after his son's villa. However, being from the rural countryside, he had long grown used to riding electric tricycles. Thus, his son bought him a new one, even though they were living in the middle of an upscale neighborhood.

Gerald had to deal with something nearby, so he went and borrowed the vehicle from that old man.

Besides, the electrical tricycle was pretty powerful anyway.

Gerald rolled to a stop at the scene of the car accident.

He then took off the cap which he was wearing.

The woman, whose car was rear-ended by Gerald's friends, thought that she had finally stumbled upon easy meat. She suddenly felt the urge to bully the man on the tricycle.

But she recognized Gerald's face seconds later.

She was stunned all of a sudden. "D*mn! Gerald? It's you!"

"Gerald?"

Her other friend, who advised her to back down just now yelled out in surprise as well.

"Vincy, Xyla. It's you again."

Gerald was stunned too.

It did not occur to him that Stella had crashed into Xyla's car. What a small world!

Xyla was excited to see Gerald.

She thought that the chance had finally arrived for her to approach Gerald. The fact that he was riding an electric tricycle confirmed the suspicion she had the other day.

"Hmph! Gerald! Although we're acquaintances, this luxury car belongs to my boyfriend! It's pretty expensive, as you can see. I might not make a big deal out of this if this was my car, but that is not the case! I'm sorry, but according to my calculations, I'm gonna need seventy-five grand to make up for this accident! No more, and certainly no less!"

“Hey, Xyla, what are you doing? Did you forget that Gerald was our classmate!?” Vincy was quick to dissuade her friend from making such outrageous claims.

“I don’t care. He’s gotta cough it up since it’s his car that bumped into mine! Hmph! Besides, who Gerald is? Even Chairman Gordon had to give him a toast back during that party. Did you forget that his childhood friend’s working in the automobile industry? How awesome is that? I doubt that he’ll even hesitate to pay us the money! Now, aren’t I right, Gerald?”

Xyla mocked and said, “Besides, his friend did say that Gerald lives in Glorious Moment Villa. Do you even understand what that implies?”

Xyla talked like a broken chatterbox. Gerald was rather helpless when he saw her acting in that manner. Suddenly, his phone rang...

Chapter 757

“Hello, Mr. Crawford. I’m Xavion!”

Xavion was Chairman Gordon. Gerald met him at the extravagant marketing party for the Mountain Top Villa in Howard County the other day. They had exchanged numbers during their brief interaction there.

“Nice to hear from you again, Chairman Gordon. Is there anything I can help you with?”

Gerald smiled and said.

“Yes, there’s something I’d like to discuss. We’re organizing a banquet, and we’ve invited rich businessmen from various places to attend the event. At first, we didn't dare to invite you since we’re just mere businessmen, and it might be more of an inconvenience for you to attend our banquet. But the response we’ve received is astounding. Rich businessmen and distinguished members of Mayberry’s society have agreed to come. Those presidents said that they’re your subordinates. So, I was calling to ask if you’re free to attend our humble little feast.”

Xavion said.

Doing actual business and earning money were only side-quests when one reached the level of Xavion in the business world. For people like him, connections were equal to business.

It was much wiser to maintain and develop connections than compared to developing a project.

That was why affluent businessmen loved to hold functions where they could mingle together.

It was because they might get acquainted with the presidents of other companies. There, they would then make new connections, and new connections meant new opportunities.

Gerald was no exception to having this habit of attending functions regularly.

Gerald found it hard to refuse Xavion’s hospitality.

But now, he really had no time given the current circumstances he found himself in.

He reluctantly turned down the invitation that Mr. Xavion had extended to him.

He hung up the phone afterward.

It seemed that Xyla was actively eavesdropping on the conversation Gerald had over the phone.

“Hmph! Who’s going to treat you to a meal this time? Which Chairman Gordon is it? Could it be Chairman Gordon from back then?”

Xyla asked curiously.

After all, Xyla hated the idea of Gerald becoming close to Chairman Gordon.

“It’s nobody!”

Gerald smiled bitterly. “I saw the damage to the rear of your car just now. Xyla, isn’t it too much to ask for seventy-five thousand dollars?”

Gerald was rich, but he was no fool.

“Isn’t it too much? F*ck! The men from the garage will come and assess the damage soon! You’ll see it then. Maybe it’ll cost even more than my estimated amount! You’re just making up excuses since you can’t even pay for what I’m asking!”

Xyla said.

After that, she crossed her arms across her chest and waited for the vehicle damage assessors to arrive.

Just yesterday, she was worried that Gerald would strike gold after becoming acquainted with Chairman Gordon during the party.

That explained why she was in such a foul mood today.

But Xyla’s worries faded away the moment she saw Gerald arriving on his silly little electric tricycle. To think that he’s so broke that he even needs to bargain over seventy-five grand!

After a short while, the vehicle damage assessors from the garage arrived to check the damage on Xyla’s car.

After checking around the car, they whispered to each other. Then, they grabbed their tools and stood up.

“How is it? How much do we need for the repairs? I’m sure it’s at least seventy-five grand.”

Xyla said with her arms crossed.

“Yes. If we’re going to repair all the damage, our estimate is that everything will probably cost around seventy thousand dollars.”

One of the assessors replied.

“D*mn! Seventy thousand dollars?”

“That’s too cruel!”

The crowd shouted in surprise.

Xyla was plenty surprised herself, as she stuck her tongue out at Gerald. She asked for forty-five thousand dollars entirely based on her own experience. To think that the cost would be nearly twice that amount!

She was still that young girl. The influence and power she possessed came entirely from her boyfriend’s hard work. She herself did not have much experience with luxury cars.

Initially, she even thought that it would only cost around thirty thousand dollars.

She then smiled smugly and said, “Haha! Gerald, did you hear that? The car repair fee is around seventy thousand dollars. Besides that, there’s still compensation for my emotional distress since you’ve wasted my time. Just do the calculation yourself and see. Let me tell you. It definitely won’t be resolved even with seventy-five thousand dollars!”

‘I asked for seventy-five thousand dollars just now. Now, it definitely won’t do with only seventy-five thousand dollars.’

‘I don’t want to make you look too bad, but you’re the one who refused my kindness. Hmph! Go and cry in the corner then!’

Gerald could only shrug his shoulders wordlessly in resignation.

“That’s fine. Thank you for your hard work. Write me a quotation for the car repair fee. You can leave after that. Here, a tip as well!”

As Xyla was saying that, she took a few ten-dollar bills from her purse and shoved them towards the vehicle damage assessors.

But they shook their heads, refusing to take the money.

“Madam, please listen to me first. Just put aside the money for the car repair fee. What we want to say is that this car isn’t ours.”

Chapter 758

The assessors said.

“Nonsense! This is an imported car. My boyfriend’s father asked his friends to buy it for them. Of course it’s not yours!”

“I think you’ve misunderstood what we’re trying to say here. What I meant is that this vehicle isn’t the model that can be found in our inventory. It’s not even supposed to be sold here in Weston. Only one batch of it was ever produced, which was discontinued a long time ago. But, recently, there have been counterfeits of this model circulating around the domestic market. I’m sure you know through what method this vehicle was procured without me having to say much,” the assessor explained.

“D*mn! So you’re trying to say that we smuggled this vehicle? What a load of horse crap!”

Xyla sounded audibly panicked.

The assessors were helpless. He could only show her the official statement they received from headquarters about these cars. In addition to that, all known counterfeited vehicles had their own reports and related files.

“Get lost! What kind of nonsense is this? I just wanted you to assess the damage. Why did you create so much unnecessary trouble? You know what, I don’t think I want you to assess the damage now, will that be okay?”

Xyla was slightly concerned after taking a good look at the official statement.

After all, that was her boyfriend’s car, not her’s.

She felt a sense of guilt for creating such a mess.

“Miss, I told you just now. This car is included in our records. Our team will come and tow it away in a moment. I hope that you’ll give us your full cooperation in the following investigation. If you’re not the owner of this vehicle, could you ask the owner to come over instead?”

One of the assessors had already hung up his call.

“D*mn! What are you doing?”

Xyla became anxious.

She was no longer in the mood to demand payment from Gerald.

She was so scared that she called her boyfriend—Leon immediately.

As for Gerald, it did not occur to him that things would turn out like that.

Observing the whole process unfold before him, he could only shake his head and laugh bitterly.

Karma’s a b*tch.

It was at this moment that Xyla saw Gerald laughing at her predicament.

Since she was on the phone, she took off one of her high heels and threw it at Gerald.

But Gerald managed to dodge the incoming projectile.

“B*stard! How dare you take pleasure in my misfortune? You’re gonna compensate me no matter what. No more, no less than the amount I specified! It’s your fault. I want a hundred thousand dollars! You won’t be able to escape!”

Xyla said crazily.

“You’re crazy!”

Gerald shook his head in resignation.

The young lady was already in plenty of trouble. How could Gerald kick someone who was already down, like her?

“Sir, I’ve checked and your car is from our store. I’ve arranged for two tow trucks to come here. These two vehicles will be towed away together!”

The vehicle damage assessor said.

“Alright!”

Gerald nodded and agreed.

After that, the man went ahead and continued pestering Xyla with an unending amount of questions.

Seeing that there was nothing else for them to do here, Gerald was about to ask Stella and the others to leave first.

He could deal with the issue here himself.

Xyla probably had been given an earful from her boyfriend over the phone. With tears flowing down her cheeks, she hid from Gerald’s view while sobbing into the phone.

Vincy glanced at Gerald, and he did the same thing at the same time.

Both of them laughed awkwardly at each other.

“Vincy, where were you two headed originally? I’m really sorry for delaying your journey. Or, perhaps I could take you to your destination!”

Gerald offered.

“Fine. We were supposed to attend a gathering. Xyla asked me to keep her company, so that was the reason I came!”

Vincy said.

“Hmph! If you have anything else to ask about, go and meet my boyfriend tomorrow. He’ll contact you tomorrow!”

“Alright, miss.”

At that moment, it appeared that Xyla had concluded her negotiations with the assessors.

After that, she walked over and said, “Vincy, we’re running out of time! Let’s go there first. D*mn it! I really wanted to attend that gathering in this car!”

Xyla said angrily before issuing yet another warning to Gerald.

“Xyla, it’s better if we go there first. You won’t be able to handle this issue by yourself either. Besides, Gerald just offered to drop us off at the venue.”

Vincy said.

“What? Do you want him to give us a ride on that pathetic little electric tricycle? Vincy, are you out of your mind?”

Chapter 759

“Don’t say that Xyla! Not in front of him at least!”

Vincy said.

Although she too, felt that it would be rather embarrassing to arrive on nothing but an electric tricycle, her fear was whittled away by the sight of Gerald riding the vehicle unapologetically. If he himself didn’t feel embarrassed, why should she?

Xyla on the other hand felt the complete opposite. “Maybe you’ve gone drunk! If you want to ride on that thing, go ahead and knock yourself out! Like hell, I’m gonna go in with you though. I’ll be waiting for you outside the venue. And you! Don’t you forget what happened today, Gerald!”

After that, Xyla hailed a taxi and left for the venue in a hurry. After all, she needed to be where her boyfriend was as soon as possible.

“I think it’s better if you don’t go. Listen, my little sister’s whipping up a real good meal. Why don’t you come over to my place and have a meal together? It’s on my tab!” Gerald offered.

After all, Gerald and Vincy still had the kind of friendship ex-classmates shared.

“No, I don’t think I’ll do that. I have to keep her company, Gerald. I fear that if I let her go there herself, she’d suffer from a tremendous loss!”

Despite how vile her friend is, Vincy remains a kind-hearted girl.

But Vincy felt secretly embarrassed when she imagined the scene where she arrived at the venue on Gerald’s little tricycle.

Even though Vincy had a very good disposition and manners, it was an undeniable fact that every girl loved flashy things.

If she refused Gerald now, she might hurt Gerald’s pride and dignity.

She was stuck between a rock and a hard place.

However, there was no way out. Hence, she said, “Alright, Gerald. You can just drop me off at the entrance!”

“Sure! This electrical tricycle is plenty powerful! We’ll arrive there soon!”

As he said that, he got on the electrical tricycle.

Beep! Beep!

He even honked twice to prompt Vincy to get on the tricycle.

Vincy tidied up her hair with her fingers. There were a lot of people looking at them, which made her blush deeply.

But at last, she still got onto Gerald's electrical tricycle.

"Go faster! Xyla might have reached that place now!"

Vincy said softly. She lowered her head, perhaps in an effort to shield her face from people who might know her, as they zoomed past the tricycle on the freeway.

On the other hand, Gerald said nothing when he saw Vincy, whose face had now turned beet red from all the blushing.

After all, Gerald never felt that a person who drove a four-wheel vehicle was much more respectable than those people who rode on two, or three wheels.

He stepped on the gas pedal and zoomed towards their destination.

The chosen venue was a large hotel in County Salford.

The interior of the grand hotel was hung with red and long draperies, and it was lined with a seemingly unending row of expensive-looking confetti tubes.

There was also a red carpet from the lobby of the hotel which led up to the entrance at the outer courtyard of the hotel.

There were a lot of distinguished people and rich businessmen to be found in the hall.

On the other hand, the organizers of the event were waiting outside to greet and welcome the guests. Some of them were also snapping away with their cameras.

It seems like they were going to hold a small ceremony outside of the hotel first.

There was a crowd that had formed outside.

“Vincy, is it here?”

Gerald said.

In front of them was a couple of rich young men smoking their cigarettes.

They did not even feel obliged to give way to Gerald’s vehicle.

Beep! Beep!

Gerald honked twice to get their attention.

It made that group of rich young men turn and look at them. When they looked over, they saw Gerald, who was riding on an electric tricycle. Behind him was a young lady. The men started whispering to each other before they burst out laughing.

“That’s enough, Gerald. Just put me down here!”

Vincy was deeply embarrassed.

She regretted her decision of agreeing to let Gerald send her here.

It embarrassed her so much as these young men were in the same age group as herself, and they were now giving her weird looks. Truly the nightmare of a young maiden!

“Sure!”

Gerald stepped on the brakes and the tricycle rolled to a stop right before the entrance of the hotel.

And coincidentally, Xyla came out to fetch Vincy.

Her eyes bulged when she saw that Vincy really did arrive at the hotel on Gerald’s stupid little tricycle.

“D*mn! Vincy, are you out of your mind? How could you ask him to send you here on his electric tricycle?”

Xyla’s face turned as red as a tomato as soon as she saw Gerald’s vehicle.

“Xyla, stop talking about that now. Gerald, why don’t you go home first? I’ll treat you to a meal next time!”

Vincy quickly shoo-ed Gerald away when she noticed how much attention they were garnering.

“Sure thing!”

Gerald nodded.

“Chairman Larson and his convoy have arrived!”

Chapter 760

The security guards, who were standing at the entrance shouted out to the businessmen who were standing out in the courtyard.

The rich folks then hastily, but excitedly rushed forwards to welcome the newly-arrived guest.

“D*mn! Why is there an electric tricycle parked at the entrance? What are you doing? Get lost kid!”

The security guard came over and shoved Gerald aside forcefully.

“Oh God, how embarrassing!”

Feeling humiliated, Xyla covered her eyes.

“If there’s anything you’d like to say, say it nicely. Why did you push me around? I’ll leave now, alright!?”

Gerald stepped on the gas pedal and left.

After the convoy rolled to a stop, a couple of middle-aged businessmen got out of the vehicles. There were their rich daughters and sons too. It quickly became clear that these were their most distinguished guests today.

The other presidents lined up to welcome them. Pleasantries and greetings were exchanged.

“Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for giving me the honor to attend the party this time around. But it’s a slight misfortune that we failed to invite a very distinguished guest today. We cannot express how regretful we are in relation to this situation!”

All of them stood along the side of the red carpet and listened to the president who appeared to be the organizer as he spoke.

There was a lot of discussion going on among the crowd. “Who is that?”

“Who’s that big shot? Chairman Gordon!”

The others asked.

Vincy had already been led into the hall of the hotel by Xyla.

At that moment, they looked at Chairman Gordon, who was standing on the stage.

Subconsciously, fear had started taking hold of her heart.

She was slightly anxious as she tugged at her boyfriend—Leon’s arm, who was standing next to her. “Leon, who is the guy that he said he wanted to invite?”

“How would I know? Didn’t you see how clueless we all were?”

Leon was not being nice. After all, his father had already been informed of the mess which Xyla had stirred up.

Xyla felt bad for it, so she shut her mouth up immediately.

Prior to that accident, she was excited to be able to attend such a grand occasion. She thought that she'd get to know lots of rich people.

But deep down, she was feeling slightly insecure about herself.

It was because Gerald seemed to have answered a call just now, and the one who called him was also a person named "Chairman Gordon".

She wondered if it was the same person.

But the more she thought about it, the less plausible it became.

Who was Gerald? At most, the only explanation she could come up with was that his childhood friend had introduced him to Chairman Gordon. Without that friend, he was just another nobody!

Xyla felt secure and relieved when she thought of that.

"Heh heh! There are a whole lotta things we can talk about when it comes to this 'big shot'. Our distinguished guest—Chairman Larson, who came here all the way from Mayberry, and his daughter happen to be close friends of his!"

Chairman Gordon said with a smile.

Chairman Larson responded with a proud smile of his own.

The facial expression of his daughter changed too. She started smiling but with hints of excitement and anxiousness.

“Ah! Chairman Gordon, don’t keep us guessing. Hurry up and tell us who that big shot is!”

Some of the more curious ones have noticed how mysterious Chairman Gordon was acting.

“How about this? Let me give you a hint, maybe then, you’ll figure out who he is! He’s the owner of the most luxurious villa in Mayberry—Mountain Top Villa. Besides that, he’s also a millionaire in Sunnydale Province and the president of the most powerful group in Mayberry!”

Chairman Gordon said enthusiastically.

“Ah!”

Everyone below the stage was shocked when they heard what Chairman Gordon said.

“Oh gosh! I know who he’s talking about now! Is it Mr. Crawford from Mayberry?”

“How is that even possible? Has Mr. Crawford of Mayberry finally come to Salford Province?”

“As powerful and capable as Chairman Gordon is, it’s preposterous to think that he’s able to invite Mr. Crawford all the way from Mayberry to attend this event.”

Their discussion was ceaseless.

The majority of the businessmen gathered here today thought that Chairman Gordon was just tooting his horn.

They thought that Chairman Gordon didn’t even have Mr. Crawford’s contact number, never mind being able to invite him.

“Aren’t you just trying to use the name of Mr. Crawford to your advantage, and did you rely on the Larson family from Mayberry to get to know the man himself?”

At that moment, Fabian, who was under the stage, put forth his brainy deduction.

“But I heard that Chairman Gordon has undertaken a few projects of Mr. Crawford’s in Mayberry. Could it be that he’s actually well-acquainted with Mr. Crawford?”

A few rich heirs had come to Leon’s side and started discussing.

“Xyla, Vincy, aren’t the two of you from Mayberry? You should know about Mr. Crawford of Mayberry well, right?”

Out in public, Fabian treated Xyla decently.

Both Xyla and Vincy shook their heads and said, “We only heard of him from our classmates. He’s very powerful and influential. Everyone in Mayberry knows about him. But we don’t know any more than that!”

“Vincy, why don’t you ask our ex-classmates? I was so anxious just now that I almost smashed my phone!”

Since the rich heirs had started talking about Mr. Crawford, it would be inappropriate of her and mighty awkward if she didn’t participate in the discussion, since she was from Mayberry as well.

Vincy nodded.

She reached down to fumble for her phone in her bag but she froze up seconds later. “Oh no, I think I might have left my bag on Gerald’s tricycle...”

Chapter 761

Since there were so many people present earlier and she was already feeling so uncomfortable back then, Vincy had gotten off the electric tricycle in a hurry. She must’ve forgotten to take her bag along with her at that moment!

“Oh no, how careless of you! Did you have a lot of cash in it?” asked Xyla.

“Having my money stolen is the last thing I’m worried about! I just hope that Gerald eventually notices it! If it gets left behind, my cell phone, identity card, and bank cards will all be gone!” replied Vincy.

“Hey! Why are you doing back here? Does this look like a car park to you?”

At that moment, a commotion could be heard from the entrance. Upon closer inspection, a few security guards seemed to be trying to prevent a young man from entering the area.

“My friend’s forgotten her bag! I just want to pass it to her!”

The young man in question was none other than Gerald!

“Have a good look at what kind of place this is! Do you think that anyone can just enter this place all willy-nilly? Scram!” shouted the security personnel as they began pushing Gerald away.

Since Xyla and Vincy had both been so close to the entrance when that scene happened, they were able to witness the entire thing.

“Good god! Just look at how embarrassing that guy is! Hurry up and take your bag so that we can make him leave already!” replied Xyla anxiously.

Her anxiety stemmed from the fact that a few rich-looking young men were also looking at Gerald. All of them seemed to be ridiculing him as though he was nothing but a joke.

It was natural for people to want to be prideful before their peers. If her peers ever found out that she was acquainted with such a worthless person as Gerald, then she'd definitely be made fun of as well!

Hearing Xyla's words, Vincy immediately ran toward Gerald before saying, "I'm here, Gerald! You can hand my bag over to me now!"

While she also wanted to thank Gerald, somehow, the words just never came.

The situation was similar to her high school days. After all, Vincy had slight feelings for Gerald back then. However, she never ended up telling him about it since she wanted to keep her face.

It was at that moment when Vincy realized that not much had changed since then.

Instead of stating her appreciation, she simply said that she needed to go back inside before turning around again.

"Gerald!" shouted a high-pitched female voice out of the blue. It seemed to have come from the stage area.

Finding the voice familiar, Gerald scanned through the crowd and saw that it had come from the young lady of the Larson family, Elena! She and her father had come from Mayberry city, and both of them were standing among what seemed to be a few chairmen who worked under her father's group.

"Is that really you, Gerald? On our way here, I saw someone riding an electric tricycle who's back looked similar to yours! I told my father about it but he said it was simply preposterous to think that you'd ride an electric tricycle! To think that my initial guess was right!" said Elena rather excitedly.

Everyone was utterly shocked when they heard that. The young lady of the Larson family actually had a friend who rode on electric tricycles?

"Who is that guy? Isn't Miss Larson treating him quite well?"

"Indeed! Maybe he's one of her classmates?"

As the guests discussed among themselves in surprise, Xyla herself was breathing quite heavily at that moment.

'Elena actually knew Gerald? How on earth did Gerald know so many people?'

"Oh? Elena and Mr. Larson! You're both here too?" replied Gerald as his gaze momentarily wandered to the front of the stage.

Who he saw, however, surprised him. Standing before the stage, was Xavion!

It was at that moment when Gerald remembered that Xavion had earlier given him a call, inviting him to a party. However, since he was confronting Xyla when Xavion had called, Gerald had turned down the invitation.

Little did he know that the party Xyla and Vincy were attending was the one he was invited to!

“‘You’re both here too’? This kid is really something else! Doesn’t he know how to speak respectfully at all?”

“I know right? Referring to Mr. Larson and his daughter as ‘all of you’... How preposterous!”

“Agreed!”

“Say, Xyla? Vincy? Isn’t he your classmate?” asked Leon out of the blue as he shook his head with a wry smile on his face.

“We don’t know him at all!” replied Xyla instantly.

Chapter 762

Vincy herself simply lowered her head without saying a word.

Meanwhile, Xavion finally realized that Gerald was present and when he did, he became so excited that his lips began trembling.

“M-Mr. Crawford! You’re here!”

Assuming that Gerald hadn’t wanted to attend the party since he looked down on all the ordinary rich people who were attending, Xavion didn’t continue pestering him after that call. Yet here he was, standing before him right now!

“Greetings, Mr. Crawford!” said Mr. Larson and his group, replying to Gerald’s earlier greeting as they took a step forward before bowing slightly before him.

At that moment, silence enveloped the entire area. Many of the guests were so surprised that their jaws were now hanging wide.

Why were all these wealthy and powerful figures bowing down to this young man who had arrived on an electric tricycle?

What more, Chairman Gordon appeared to be trembling earlier as he spoke!

Xyla’s breathing was growing heavier by the minute. Her mind was completely blank and her mouth was so wide open that one could stuff an entire hard boiled egg into it.

“M-Mr. Crawford?! Did... Did they actually just refer to Gerald as Mr. Crawford?! How could that be possible?!”

Vincy was too shocked to even think of a reply. She had no idea what was going on anymore.

“Is... Is he really Mr. Crawford of Mayberry?!”

It was a brief moment later when the crowd of people began getting noisy again as they exchanged gazes with each other in shock.

“Chairman Gordon and Chairman Larson! You’re being way too polite. I honestly hadn’t expected you to be organizing this event!” replied Gerald, feeling slightly embarrassed.

His embarrassment was warranted since he could now feel people staring at him both left and right. Everyone seemed to be experiencing complicated emotions as they continued looking at Gerald.

Though he felt awkward, Gerald simply walked into the hotel in a naturally poised manner.

Xyla could only stare in astonishment as Gerald walked past her and headed straight for the stage.

Realizing that Gerald was coming closer, Chairman Gordon immediately stood up from the middle seat and gestured for Gerald to take it as he said, “Please, have this seat, Mr. Crawford!”

After saying then, he then looked at the rest of the guests before saying, “Everyone, we have a very distinguished guest today! This is Mr. Crawford from Mayberry, an extremely wealthy and powerful figure who also owns Mountain Top Villa!”

As the audience went wild from the confirmation that Gerald truly was the one and only, Mr. Crawford, sudden laughter akin to a madwoman's pierced through all the noise.

Everyone then turned to stare at the girl who had made such a crazed laugh.

"What are you laughing at, Xyla?" asked Leon who had also been taken aback by her maniacal laughter.

"Haha! What do you mean what am I laughing at? I'm laughing at Gerald, of course! How incredible of him to have deceived so many people! But what's even more unbelievable is the fact that everyone here actually believes that he's Mr. Crawford! Don't any of you find that to be a rather ridiculous claim?" replied Xyla as she walked forward, continuing to laugh.

Upon hearing what she had to say, several of the wealthy businessmen on stage began frowning. This was especially so for Chairman Gordon as he glared at Xyla.

"What do you even think you're saying? Men! Toss her out of this place immediately!" shouted Xavion angrily.

"Don't get me wrong, Chairman Gordon. I have no intention of offending you at all! I just hope that you won't continue being fooled by that guy. After all, I was his high school classmate! I know all about his past and his living conditions very well! Vincy is aware of it too! He's nothing more than a pauper who can't even afford to pay for his own meals!"

Once the audience heard that, everyone simultaneously heaved secret sighs of relief. Could this be a fake Mr. Crawford after all?

Seeing how everyone seemed to believe her now, Xyla grew even cockier than before. If everything continued going well, then she would be able to successfully show off in front of all these influential business people!

Claiming that Gerald was actually Mr. Crawford? What a joke! It was simply impossible!

Xyla then turned to look at Gerald, a look of contempt on her face as she laughed before saying, “I bet you didn’t expect this, right, Gerald? I’m here today so that you won’t be able to continue fooling Chairman Gordon and the others!”

Under no circumstances would she ever willingly believe that he was actually Mr. Crawford!

In response, Gerald simply shook his head with a wry smile on his face.

Xavion expressed a similarly wry smile as he said, “Hahaha! Really now... It seems that this young lady has had a huge misunderstanding about Mr. Crawford...”

“He really is Mr. Crawford! The one and only owner of the Dream Investment Group!”

Hearing Chairman Gordon's stern voice, Xyla could no longer bring herself to laugh out loud anymore.

...Was... Was it really true?

Even from back then, Xyla had always hated it whenever she saw Gerald's desperate face. She just couldn't ever take him seriously.

It had just been a few years since they had last met... Had Gerald really changed that much?

Why were so many wealthy and influential figures being so respectful and courteous to him?

How could any of this truly be?

As all these questions echoed in Xavia's mind, Gerald simply ignored her, opting instead to continue talking with Chairman Gordon and the others.

The event then resumed for about half an hour before Gerald bid farewell to Chairman Gordon and the rest. He had honestly wanted to leave for quite a while now.

As he left the hotel, a large group of people followed to see him off.

Before he was able to leave, Elena whispered something into her father's ear before sticking her tongue out. She wanted to leave together with Gerald and her father naturally agreed.

Xyla herself was feeling extremely anxious as she exited the hotel together with Vincy to see Gerald off.

When they finally caught sight of him again, Gerald had just gotten on his electric tricycle. This time, however, Elena was sitting behind him.

While Vincy had earlier felt embarrassed about Gerald riding an electric tricycle, she found it strange that she no longer felt the same.

After all, even though Elena was such a beautiful young lady, she actually seemed happy sitting behind an electric tricycle. Vincy wouldn't mind sitting there herself now!

She deduced that these complex emotions had stemmed from the moment she realized who Gerald really was. Vincy was honestly also feeling quite shocked and frightened by the wild turn of events.

It was almost as though she was in a dream.

Xyla, on the other hand, was so anxious that she eventually burst into tears as she continued looking at Gerald.

He was still dressed the same way, still bore the same appearance, and still had the same demeanor.

That combination had made him look extremely pathetic earlier.

Yet why did she feel that he was now much more awe-inspiring and intimidating at the same time? It just didn't make any sense!

Gerald himself began pedaling his electric tricycle—with Elena seated behind him—as he headed straight back to his place for dinner.

He was currently in a pretty good mood since his trip this time hadn't been in vain. After all, not only had he successfully completed his task, but he had also helped Queta find and get acknowledged by her biological mother and cousin sister.

A lot had really been achieved this time around.

However, whenever there were happy people, there would always be depressed people as well.

At that moment, the sound of a teacup shattering echoed across a villa.

“Garbage! Every single one of you! How could you actually lose a person whom you had already gotten a hold of?!” yelled Yael at several of his foreign subordinates. They were all inside his villa now.

Yunus himself was present, an ugly expression plastered on his face. After all, he had sung high praises about this group of men before. Yet here they were, unable to even capture a few students!

As Yael continued yelling at the group, Yunus knew for a fact that he was indirectly cursing at him as well. Knowing this made Yunus extremely angry.

“Mr. Schuyler, Mr. Long, we were completely surrounded that time! We may have accidentally alarmed the local armed forces back then! Please give us another chance! Give us Jasmine’s location and we’ll definitely bring her back this time!” said the leader of the group.

“Too late! It’s far too late for that! Do you honestly think that it’s that easy to make a move on the Fendersons? There was only a chance to kidnap Jasmine this time since the family is currently undergoing a sensitive period! Because of that, my father and I didn’t actively need to know what all the Fendersons were planning! Yet to think that your group would actually act so rashly and alert the enemy! I can only pray that the Fendersons won’t suspect that I’m involved! I’ll already be thankful as long as they don’t end up doubting me!” growled Yael, his anxiety apparent in his voice.

He was honestly extremely afraid that the failed kidnapping would instantly lead to bad consequences. If this ended up affecting his family’s major event, then the losses would definitely outweigh the gains.

Yunus then turned to look at his dispirited subordinates before asking, “I’m curious about something, however. There was no reason for the helicopters to have arrived so quickly and quite frankly, there was no way the local armed forces would’ve been alerted that easily. Explain what happened in detail.”

Hearing that, the subordinates then began detailing everything that had happened to them.

“...Hmm? Could it really be him...?” replied Yunus as he frowned after listening to their explanation.

“Him?” asked Yael.

Chapter 764

Ignoring Yael’s question for the moment, Yunus then asked, “Didn’t you secretly take several photos? Let me see who else was there!”

After being handed the photos, Yunus individually scanned through them before slamming his hands on the table in anger. He had found the perpetrator!

“D*mn it all! It really is Gerald! It’s that god d*mned Mr. Crawford again!”

Not only had Yunus been repeatedly humiliated by Gerald on his birthday, he had also been grounded the moment he returned that day! All the prestige he had accumulated over the years was gone. Just like that.

Yunus hated that person to the core.

“He’s Mr. Crawford from Mayberry?” asked Yael who had obviously heard about Gerald before.

Hearing Yael's question, Yunus took the opportunity to detail all his grudges and grievances against Gerald to him.

"Hahaha! No wonder everything seemed to be running so smoothly for Jasmine despite not even utilizing any of the men from the Fenderson family! She had such a powerful person helping her all this time! It's no wonder why Jasmine doesn't take you seriously at all even after you've treated her so well, Mr. Schuyler!" deducted Yunus.

Upon hearing all that, Yael took in a deep breath.

"...Regardless of who it is, as long as he goes against me, I won't let him off that easily! Especially since he's in Salford County! Come along, men!" yelled Yael angrily as he began instructing his men to start taking the next course of action.

"Please, refrain from continuing to act impulsively, Mr. Schuyler!" replied Yunus as he held on to Yael's shoulder.

"I've dealt with him before and he's much more powerful than what you and I could ever imagine. Acting impulsively will only get us into more trouble! Just so you know, his sister was the one who had chased the Long family out of Mayberry city!" persuaded Yunus.

What more, if they directly targeted Gerald, that action could tantamount to turning a simple matter into an extremely complicated one.

It wasn't as though Yael couldn't understand where Yunus was coming from. However, he simply couldn't help but feel slightly jealous now that he knew she had Gerald on her side. After all, that could very well have been the reason why Jasmine was ignoring him and why she had slapped him as well!

Eventually, he managed to calm himself down and once that happened, he felt much better.

“Then do you have a better idea, Yunus? Should I simply allow him to continue showing off and using his power to intimidate others in Salford County then?”

In response, Yunus sneered coldly before saying, “Of course not! In fact, I'd love for him to remain here forever so that I can personally continue having my revenge on him after all I've suffered through! Speaking of which, could you lend me some of your men, Mr. Schuyler? I need to do an investigation on which of Gerald's men he brought along with him here.”

“Not a problem!”

Both of them then continue talking late into the night.

Fast-forward to three days later...

“I'm going out with Aunt Fenderson now, brother! Do you have anything you'd like to eat? We'll be sure to get those ingredients for you!”

“Anything’s fine! After all, I’ll love anything prepared by you and Aunt Fenderson!” replied Gerald as he looked at both of them with a smile.

It had only been three days yet Queta was already quite close to Aunt Fenderson. Just like Gerald had said, Queta didn’t despise Xara for her scarred face at all.

Xara herself seemed to be both happy and satisfied looking at her sensible and obedient daughter who spent lots of time together with her every day.

As for Quetta, she felt naturally secure and intimate whenever she was around Aunt Fenderson. Aunt Fenderson simply felt like a close relative to her.

After hearing Gerald’s reply, both of them then headed to the shopping center, hand in hand.

Earlier while they were walking past the side of the shopping center, Xara had noticed that Queta kept peeking at a small store selling candied haws.

Seeing Queta like that made her feel slightly anguished. After all, according to Queta, if she hadn’t met Gerald, she would probably still be living in poverty now. She had also mentioned that during her childhood, being able to eat candied haws was considered to be a luxury.

With that in mind, just as they were about to leave the mall, Xara stopped walking before saying, “Oh, I forgot to get something! Give me a moment, Queta! I’ll be right back!”

After saying that, she hurriedly headed to the store, leaving Queta slightly confused as to why she was being so secretive. Since Queta had been told to wait, she simply remained at the spot.

It was at that moment when Queta suddenly heard the sound of a revving motor engine.

By the time she turned to look at the source of the increasingly loud sound, she saw a van heading directly for her!

A second later, the few present people at the scene began screaming.

Chapter 765

Upon screeching to a halt right beside Queta, a few people slid the van door open and immediately tried dragging her in!

“Queta!” shouted Aunt Fenderson who was already returning from the shop by the time she saw the suspicious van driving toward her daughter.

She then began running toward the poor girl who was desperately struggling to escape from her captors. The captors themselves were still trying to drag her into the van.

In her anxiety, she bit down hard on one of the masked men’s arms!

Shouting in pain, the already strong man then roughly pushed Queta aside, sending her falling straight for the ground! As a result, the back of Queta’s head hit a bump on the side of the road and she immediately fainted from the hard impact.

By the time Xara got to the group of men, they were already carrying the now unconscious Queta into the van.

In her attempt to prevent them from taking her away, Xara immediately began wildly hitting the men. However, no matter how desperately she fought, she was no match for them. After all, how could she possibly win against a group of large men all on her own?

Just as Xara felt like all hope had been lost, the corner of her eye caught a glimpse of somebody making a dash for the scene! Seconds later, a man was now standing right in front of her.

When the leader of the group realized who the daring person was, he immediately froze in place.

Without saying another word, the man then began attacking the masked kidnappers with an extremely cold expression on his face!

Though a few of the men tried fighting back, they were no match against their new opponent.

“Withdraw! Withdraw immediately!” yelled one of the men.

Hearing that, Xara anxiously ran for the front passenger seat and began trying to unmask the person sitting there. While she was able to yank his mask off, the man, in his state of panic, immediately covered his face with his hands.

Not long after, an angry yell could be heard as the van sped away.

While the man who had helped them seemed to have wanted to chase after the van, when he saw how injured Queta was, he immediately understood what the priority was.

“Thank you! Thank you so much!” said Xara as she hugged Queta tightly in her arms.

“There’s no need to thank me, I’m only doing my job. After all, Mr. Crawford had specifically instructed me to protect Miss Smith in secret. It was beyond my expectations, however, that people would actually have the audacity to take action against her in broad daylight!” said the young man as he couldn’t help but blame himself.

As it turned out, the person who had helped them was actually Tyson!

Queta was still unconscious at the moment, and her face was pale. Not long after, an ambulance could be heard in the distance.

While both Drake and Tyson were usually responsible for ensuring Gerald’s safety, when he left for Salford County, Gerald had said that Drake alone was sufficient to protect him.

Therefore, he entrusted Tyson with the task of secretly protecting Queta instead, and Tyson had been doing as he had been ordered to for quite a while now.

Gerald had issued the order since he was well aware that many people around him had been victims of kidnapping attempts in the past, which was why he was so wary about Queta's safety.

To Tyson, however, he wondered what could possibly happen to her. It was the reason why he was usually quite idle as he underwent this particular task.

Never had he expected to see people actually trying to lay their fingers on her today through his observatory equipment.

Even though he had rushed to the scene as fast as he could, he was a little too late to prevent Queta from getting injured.

As soon as Gerald was notified about the incident, he immediately headed to the hospital where Queta was.

She was still unconscious when he arrived, and Gerald could feel his entire body shaking uncontrollably in anger.

Xara herself had been crying this entire time.

"I've contacted Mr. Zartyr and told him to investigate the matter. Since the group of men weren't locals, we currently have no clues on who they are yet. Well, all but one. I believe you'll be very interested to find out who that person is, Mr. Crawford," said Drake as he walked over to Gerald.

He then tapped on his phone before showing Gerald a picture of the person Xara had unmasked earlier.

Upon recognizing the person behind the mask, Gerald was shocked.

“Yunus? Why is he here?” asked Gerald, his surprise apparent in his voice.

Chapter 766

Though the picture itself was quite blurry, Gerald was certain that the person in it was Yunus Long.

After all, how couldn't he recognize the person he had nearly fallen victim to?

“That's him alright. After a little investigating, we found that he first arrived at the Salford Province a few days ago. While I understand that he has his reasons to take his revenge on you, I don't quite get why he'd follow you all the way here just to do that!” replied Drake as he frowned.

Gerald's immediate response, however, was to punch the wall beside him. Hard.

“I don't care about him or even his motives. All I know is that Queta was innocent in this incident yet she nearly lost her life because of me! Drake, Tyson, I believe that Yunus hasn't left the Salford Province yet. I need both of you to track him down and capture him for me! Regardless of the methods you use, make sure he doesn't leave the Salford Province scot-free!” said Gerald angrily as looked at the unconscious Queta through the ward door's window.

“Right away, Mr. Crawford!” said both of them simultaneously as they immediately got to work.

Meanwhile, in a rather well-hidden villa, Yunus was frantically packing his things up.

“Hurry up with the packing! We’ll be leaving using two separate routes!”

“Huh? Do we really need to leave in such a hurry? Shouldn’t we notify Mr. Schuyler first?” asked one of Yunus’s personal drivers.

“What else is there to say? If we wait here any longer we probably won’t be able to leave even if we wanted to! Now hurry up and arrange for that group of men to leave first!” replied Yunus anxiously.

He had already planned the kidnapping incident together with Yael from three days ago.

Since Queta was the only person around whom Gerald was close to, Yunus had planned to use her as bait to lead Gerald into a trap. If everything had gone according to plan, Yunus would’ve finally been able to kill him!

He was even prepared to sacrifice his subordinates just to ensure that Gerald died!

Since he always acted behind the scenes, he was fairly certain that there was nothing he had to be afraid of.

However, things were different now. Yunus believed that Gerald would be able to uncover the truth extremely quickly as long as he wanted to.

Gerald would definitely send his men to track him down and go after him once he found out that Yunus was involved in the operation!

His initial plan to take advantage of Yael by placing the blame on him once Gerald was killed had only been wishful thinking. Yunus realized now that he had once again underestimated Gerald's true capabilities.

It wasn't long before everyone involved with the escape plan was packed and ready to go.

"Everything's been prepared and arranged according to your instructions, Mr. Long. I've managed to get my hands on a cross-country vehicle and by rough calculations, it should already be dark by the time we make it out of the Salford Province!"

"Alright, then let's head out already! Also, arrange for someone to pick us up in Merry City!" said Yunus as he put his sunglasses on and carried his suitcase to the vehicle.

As this was happening, something seemed to be amiss in the Salford Province city.

Several brands of luxury cars were driving up and down the streets, and there seemed to be at least five hundred of the expensive cars in the entire fleet.

The sea of luxury cars making their way all over the city made for a truly spectacular scene.

“Oh my god! What on earth is happening?”

“What an amazing scene, right?!”

“I wonder what the commotion is about...”

“Beats me. There’s no news regarding what’s currently happening at all! I do wonder what kind of person would have this much power and money to own so many luxurious cars!”

While this was shocking to all those within the Salford Province, those walking around the province’s outskirts were in for an even bigger surprise.

Loud droning could be heard in the sky at that moment, prompting the people in the outskirts to look up.

“Holy cr*p! Look at all those helicopters!”

“My god! What on earth is happening here?”

While most of the people were shocked to the point where their jaws hung wide open, many others immediately began taking pictures of the scene.

With well over a hundred helicopters encircling the province's skies, the event looked simply magnificent.

The plan was to thoroughly search both land and sky throughout the day till they were able to lock on to their target.

As the search continued, night soon came.

The target in question had already arrived at the main road connecting the Salford Province to Merry City by then.

As the car drove on, the late-night wind howled eerily as it blew across Yunus's side window.

Chapter 767

"Where are we now?" asked Yunus, his face pale as a sheet.

"I'm not too sure either... While we've been able to escape from Gerald's men when we bumped into them on the main road, we strayed too far off and it's only barren land around us now!" replied the driver, his legs quivering in fear.

While they had earlier assumed that they were going to escape just fine, they hadn't expected Gerald's men to intercept them out of the blue on the main road leading to Merry City!

Thankfully, night was already approaching by then and since the driver was an expert, he managed to eventually shake them off.

Though they had successfully evaded Gerald's men for the moment, they were now also lost.

“Why do I even pay you then?! B*stard!” shouted Yunus.

They were already far from the city and the gloominess of the surrounding area only served to make Yunus even more depressed.

It was around then when the sound of motor engines could be heard in the distance, the cold night breeze further sending chills down their spine.

Moments later, flickering lights could also be seen from the rear-view mirror.

They had no idea how many cars were currently behind them, but once Yunus saw a car rapidly catching up, he immediately shouted, “Step on it!”

Yunus then took his cell phone out and began calling his mother.

“Are you on your way back now? It's my birthday tomorrow so remember to be back on time!”

“Mom! Please come save me! Someone’s trying to prevent me from entering Merry City!”

“What was that, son? Do you have a bad signal there? I can’t hear you at all!” replied Yunus’s mother.

“Mom! Can you hear me now? Save me! Hello? Hello?!” yelled Yunus frantically before finally realizing that there wasn’t any phone signal anymore!

“Mr. Long, why don’t we stop the car for now? It’s pitch black out there and we aren’t familiar with the road’s condition either!” said the driver who had been terrified this entire time.

He knew that no matter how much they tried to escape, they would still eventually be caught. Escape was simply no longer an option.

“You definitely aren’t allowed to stop! If Gerald gets his hands on me this time, I’ll surely be done for! Keep moving forward! We need to get off this blasted road and reunite with our own men as soon as possible!”

Hearing that, the driver stepped on the accelerator but all of a sudden, the body of the car began shaking violently!

By the time Yunus managed to regain his composure from the shock, he realized that the entire car seemed to be descending rapidly.

Now finally understanding what was happening, both Yunus and the driver screamed in horror! Slowly but surely, their screams became muffled as they descended further and further until...

A sickening crash was heard, followed by the sound of an explosion as flames burst out from the depths! Shortly after, however, silence resumed with only the occasional muffled roar from the fires below.

It wasn't long before the convoy chasing after them arrived at the scene. Now lit by the bright headlights of all the cars, it was apparent that Yunus and his driver had accelerated straight down a cliff!

Sometime after, it was late at night in the Long family's mansion in Yanken, when a beautiful woman said, "I can't help but feel a little anxious, master. Yunus sounded extremely nervous and afraid when he called me earlier. Do you think he's doing alright in the Salford Province?"

"Humph! Why wouldn't he be fine? After all, the Schuylers are living there too! You can rest assured that he's definitely doing fine!" replied a middle-aged man with a cold expression on his face.

"But I can't even contact him anymore! I'm sure you're aware of how many people Yunus has offended in the past two years!" said the woman, her worry reflected in her tone.

"Alright, alright, I'll give the Schuylers a call later and ask them about the matter! Even if Yunus really has offended a lot of people, it's always been members of the Long family who have ever dared to take action against everyone else! Who would even

dare to lay a finger on us! Humph! While the Crawford siblings are both very arrogant now, they can be sure that I'll make them pay for all that they've done to us!"

The man then snorted before picking his phone up to call the Schuylers.

Chapter 768

After talking on the phone for a while, the middle-aged man's face suddenly turned deathly pale.

"I-is that so...? I've deeply troubled you, Mr. Schuyler! I'll send someone over immediately!"

All the color seemed to have drained from his face as he hurriedly said, "According to the Schuyler family, Yunus has gone missing in the Salford Province!"

"...Huh? W-what should we do then?!"

"For now, I'm sending someone over there. Tell Second to immediately send someone there as well!" replied the man in an anxious voice.

"Second? But he..."

"First and I can't leave. Our only option is to have a family member personally deal with the matter. For that reason, it should be fine for Second to represent the family there. I'll tell Mr. Hobson to follow him as well!"

Hearing that, the woman simply nodded.

Meanwhile, Gerald finally arrived at the cliff on his helicopter.

The cliff was deep and according to the report from his subordinates, they could hardly find complete pieces of the car, let alone its two passengers.

Hearing that, Gerald could only smile wryly.

This was a textbook example of the phrase, 'even when the heavens send calamities upon us, there is still hope to weather through them; yet when a man brings calamity upon himself, there is no escaping it'.

Yunus had truly brought his own demise upon himself!

At that moment, Gerald's phone began ringing. It was Tyson.

Knowing that taking extra precautions wouldn't hurt, Gerald had ordered him to personally guard over Queta ever since he came to the Salford Province.

Picking the call up, Gerald then asked, "What is it?"

"Miss Smith has already awoken, Mr. Crawford. While she's only suffering from a mild concussion, she's mostly fine. However..."

As Tyson continued speaking, his voice grew softer and softer.

“...What happened?”

“...I’m truly sorry, Mr. Crawford! While I was standing guard over Miss Smith, four doctors who behaved rather suspiciously arrived at the hospital and tried to get close to her. Suspicious about their true intentions, I didn’t allow them to proceed anywhere near her. As a result, all four of them immediately attacked me! I wasn’t able to defeat them and now Miss Smith has been taken away!” explained Tyson.

“What? Even you got hurt?!” replied Gerald, beads of sweat rolling down his forehead now.

“We’ll discuss further into the matter once I arrive at the hospital. For now, send some men to immediately start looking for her!”

If something really did happen to Queta, then Gerald knew that he would definitely be filled with guilt and unease.

At the same time, Gerald was also thinking that his father’s initial task of tracking down Aunt Fenderson was no longer as simple a task as he had first anticipated.

With that, Gerald immediately rushed to the hospital.

“It was lucky that Ms. Xara had stepped out to get some congee earlier. Due to that, she was able to avoid the four people entirely. Speaking of the four... Each of them

looked equally strange and they all wielded short blades. Based on their techniques, I can confidently say that all four of them are top masters who have received stringent training before!” explained Tyson, his voice filled with remorse.

Since Tyson’s body was wrapped up in bandages, even Drake had a tense expression on his face.

“I see. And what about the hospital’s surveillance cameras?” asked Gerald as he paced back and forth.

“I’ve retrieved the records and after looking through them alongside the footage from several other streets, their group seemed to have disappeared on a mountain!” replied Tyson.

Hearing that, Gerald then patted Tyson on the shoulder before saying, “My sister’s told me before that it was rare for both of you to have worthy or even equal opponents. I can only assume that the four men who have managed to even hurt you are working for a very large and powerful family. Did you recognize any of the four assailants? Even if you have the slightest idea, it could be our next lead to find out which family they’re working for!”

“You don’t have to look any further into the matter, Gerald. I think I know who the four men are... And I think I also know who kidnapped Queta!” said Xara with tears in her eyes as she stood up.

Sensing how sure she sounded, Gerald himself came to a sudden realization. Of course.

This was the Salford Province... Only the Fendersons could have done it.

It hadn't crossed his mind earlier since Gerald hadn't exposed himself, nor had he gone against the family yet. The fact that the Fendersons always kept such a low profile made it even harder to think about, and subsequently, consider them to be the culprit during such situations!

However, the more he looked at it, the more he was sure that the Fendersons were definitely the ones behind all this!

"If my guess is correct, then the four of them should be my father's personal bodyguards! My father must have already found me!" said Xara.

Chapter 769

Xara was Lord Fenderson's most promising daughter and also the second most prominent figure within the Fenderson family. In fact, her position was even more important compared to Jasmine's father.

Knowing that alone painted a clear picture of how witty and intelligent Xara was as a person.

Adding that to her superior intuition, Xara was certain that her father had been the one who had kidnapped Queta, even though she had no idea how he had found her in the first place.

"I know the Fendersons very well, Gerald. While several complicated internal matters happen within the family, if my father was the one who had kidnapped Queta, then I

can rest assured that he won't make things difficult for her. The problem is, I can't say the same about the rest of the Fenderson family members..."

"Hahaha! Still... To think that all this stemmed from a fit I threw at him so many years ago! Though I'm sure he regrets it, his temper clearly hasn't changed at all! Is he honestly still expecting me to step forward and apologize to him?" explained Xara, a bitter smile on her face.

"What should we do now, Aunt Fenderson? I simply can't help but feel worried now that I know that Queta is with them!" replied Gerald as he shook his head.

After all, Queta was his biological cousin. She was a Crawford as much as he was.

What more, he was the one who had brought Queta along with him here. Now that she was experiencing so many misfortunes because of him, how could he just leave her alone?

"We think we should break into their mansion to rescue the second young lady, Mr. Crawford!" said Drake and Tyson in unison.

"Negative. I know both of you are powerful, but with all due respect, both of you won't be able to take down my father's four subordinates. To make matters clear, the Fenderson family's background was once comparable to that of the Crawfords. There's simply no way that the few of us can break in as we please!" replied Xara.

Hearing that, both men lowered their heads in shame.

“...Then, should we just leave the second young lady alone? Do we not rescue her?” asked Tyson.

“Of course not! While now isn’t the right time, there definitely exists chances for us to save her. For one, it’ll be my father’s birthday in three days. In accordance with the Fenderson family’s tradition, a big birthday banquet will be held then. On that day, wealthy and influential businessmen, as well as close family friends, will be invited to participate! That will be the best moment to save Queta!” proposed Xara.

“So what you’re proposing is that we sneak in during the Fenderson family’s birthday banquet and create some chaos to allow us to rescue Queta unnoticed?”

“Exactly. The family will be needing a lot of manpower to perform the many tasks required to keep the birthday banquet running smoothly. Of course, in order to remain secretive, they’ll usually opt to hire chefs and personnel from either the Northern Region or even from abroad. The opportunity couldn’t be any more perfect for us to save her!”

Registering all that perfectly, Gerald then nodded in agreement.

When the time came, he would bring Drake, Tyson, and a few other masters into the mansion with him. He definitely needed to arrange for some people to wait outside as well as a contingency plan. Though he certainly couldn’t ever hope to overpower the Fendersons within their own mansion, creating chaos was going to be much easier. Once that happened, they’d be able to rescue Queta and leave the mansion, hopefully unnoticed.

“How are we to enter alongside the hired personnel?” asked Drake.

“Well, since the process of screening through foreigners is extremely strict, they’ll most likely focus on gathering personnel from Merry City first. We need to head there as soon as possible and once we’re there, I have my own ways of helping you get in. Speaking of which, I also have a few confidants whom I trust among the Fendersons. I’ll just need to ask them about Queta’s specific whereabouts!” replied Xara.

Xara was honestly feeling extremely anxious. She couldn’t help but feel worried about Queta. After all, once anyone fell into the Fenderson family’s bottomless pit, it would be no easy feat to get them out again.

Understanding that only made her feel increasingly worried.

However, Xara was still able to have a clear head since she had many years of experience dealing with them.

Meanwhile, several doctors exited from a secret hallway in the Fenderson family’s mansion.

“Lord Fenderson, Miss Smith simply refuses to take any medical treatment! Not only that, she’s not eating anything as well! We’ve tried persuading her all we could but she simply refuses to listen!” said one of the doctors respectfully.

Upon hearing that, Bryson’s wrinkled face reflected his anxiety. He was already turning eighty this year...

Chapter 770

“This girl... She’s as stubborn as her mother! Hmm... Hasn’t Jasmine already located Xenia? That personal maid of Xara’s? Try getting her to persuade Queta. Also, nobody should be allowed to know about Queta being here, not even Jasmine! If word gets out, I’ll be sure to make each of you suffer a slow death! Now leave!”

Hearing that, the doctors trembled in fear before leaving quickly.

Once they were gone, Bryson slowly stood up with his walking cane in hand before staring blankly at the wall.

While lots of things were on his mind, the memory that stood out the most was the time when he had publicly severed relationships with his beloved daughter, Xara.

He had chased her out of the Fendersons family, and though he had been extremely stringent when it came to enforcing family rules, he regretted his actions immediately the moment she left.

He had tried every possible way to locate Xara. It wasn’t a requirement of his for her to return to his side, but he simply wanted to know whether his precious daughter was still alive, and if she was, he wanted to also know how well she was living on her own.

That alone would be enough to satisfy him.

However, even after so many years had passed, he had heard no news regarding Xara at all.

As a man who constantly took good care of his body, Bryson—who was going to be eighty in three days—should have theoretically retained a more youthful look. Instead of that, however, he looked even older than an ordinary person of the same age who still had to work hard daily!

Bryson had simply acknowledged that this was his punishment.

While he had initially thought that he would never be able to see her again, not even on his deathbed, it seemed that divine justice existed after all. It all began when Noah gave him a call out of the blue, reporting that he had found a person who looked exactly like Xara.

Since the Fenderson family was quite capable, upon receiving the news, Xara and even her granddaughter's whereabouts were soon pinpointed.

“...I know you hate me, Xara... But it'll be my birthday in three days... I really hope that you'll return to see me...” muttered Bryson to himself as he felt tears welling up in his eyes.

While this was happening, a maid entered a room holding a box in her hands.

Inside, a girl was sitting on a bed, crying.

The moment the maid saw her, her body began trembling and eventually, the box she was holding on to fell to the ground.

“H-how could both of you look so similar?!” shouted the maid excitedly.

“You look exactly like the eldest lady back then!” added the maid as she reminisced the times when she was still by the eldest lady’s side many years ago.

Of course, the crying girl in question was none other than Queta.

Upon seeing that the maid herself was now crying, Queta asked in a soft and gentle voice, “...Um... You are...?”

“Miss Queta, my name is Xenia! I used to be the eldest lady’s, Miss Xara’s, personal maid!” replied Xenia as she cried.

“...H-huh? Xara Fenderson... She’s my mother?” replied Queta as she got increasingly excited after hearing Xenia’s words.

Xenia then nodded as she said between tears, “Miss Queta, you look exactly like her! And yes, she is!”

“W-where is she now, Aunt Xenia?” asked Queta, now crying harder than before.

“Not to worry, Miss Queta! While there is a lot to cover and it’ll take a good while for me to explain all the complicated things that have been happening, you can rest assured that your mother has constantly been thinking of you. The short of it is that your grandfather still doesn’t know where she is... Once an opportunity arises, I’ll help

you leave this place so that you can be reunited with your mother!” replied Xenia as she stroked Queta’s hair affectionately, a distressed expression on her face.

“Why aren’t you letting me in? Get out of the way right this instant!” shouted a voice from behind the door at that moment.

Chapter 771

“Third young lady, you really aren’t allowed to enter! The order had specifically been issued by the old master!” said a bodyguard, desperately trying to prevent a girl—who looked to be around twenty—from entering.

“Well that’s just great then! Are you telling me that there’s now a place within the Fenderson mansion where I, Quincy Fenderson, can’t enter? Both my elder sister and second sister already dislike me. Are you saying that grandpa doesn’t like me either now? The more you prevent me from entering, the more I want to enter and have a look for myself! Now get out of the way!” shouted Quincy as she pushed the bodyguard aside and rushed inside.

The inside of the room looked extremely luxurious, and antique furniture—seemingly in the style of 1960’s European aristocrats—was placed in every corner. Apart from her grandfather’s room, this was the only other room that was this luxurious in the entire mansion.

Whenever she had nothing better to do, Quincy would often come to this room to have a look around. Like most of the other Fendersons, Quincy had often dreamed of moving into this particular room.

After all, she heard that this room was where her aunt used to stay in.

Since Quincy had already been feeling quite lonely within the family, her bad mood was immediately triggered once she found out that someone else was now living there.

She wanted to see for herself who had gotten access to living in the room, yet her permission to enter had been denied. All that led to the current scene.

Seeing her burst in without warning, both Queta and Xenia looked rather alarmed. Xenia hadn't anticipated for someone to barge in on them like that.

"You... Who are you? You look quite familiar..." said Quincy, feeling slightly startled herself when she saw Queta.

"My... My name is Queta Smith!"

"Queta? I've never seen you before among the other Fendersons, have I?" asked Quincy as she scanned the girl from head to toe.

Finally recovering from her shock, Xenia then asked, "You're the third young lady, correct? The old master was the one who had ordered Miss Queta to stay here for the moment to rest and recuperate from her injuries..."

"Humph! I'm well aware of that! Though I'm not sure why he wanted you to stay in this particular room, I'm sure he has his reasons. Regardless, I'll need you to leave for a moment. I'd like to tell Miss Queta something in private!" ordered Quincy.

Hearing that, Xenia then looked at Queta. In return, Queta simply nodded slightly, prompting Xenia to leave the room.

Once Xenia was outside, Quincy immediately closed the door behind her.

She then turned to look at Queta again before happily saying, "I need your help with something. Could you lend this room to me for a night? You can stay in my room in the meantime! How about it? Deal?"

The reason she wanted to sleep in this room was obvious.

However, Queta was caught completely off guard by the question. She didn't even know how to reply. In all honesty, she was simply looking forward to Gerald coming over to rescue both her and Xenia so that she could finally be reunited with her family.

Since she really didn't have the time or energy to waste on the people here alongside any of their matters, she simply remained silent.

"...What's that silence supposed to mean? Can't we even switch rooms for a night?" asked Quincy again, her hands now on her waist.

Before she could ask a third time, the bodyguard from earlier suddenly entered the room before saying in a cold voice, "Third young lady, Lord Fenderson would like to have a word with you."

"You!" replied Quincy as she turned to look at the bodyguard angrily.

Moments later, Quincy stood before the bodyguard and slapped him hard across the face!

“How dare you rat me out! Just you wait and see how I’m going to deal with you!” said Quincy as she glared at Queta one final time before hastily leaving, enraged.

“What’s wrong with you this time, Quincy?” asked both Jasmine and Mindy who happened to cross paths with her.

Quincy, however, simply ignored them, huffing as she walked past them.

Once Jasmine realized that Quincy had come from the direction where her aunt’s room was, Jasmine headed over to the bodyguard from earlier and casually asked, “Is there someone in aunt’s room?”

“Indeed there is, eldest young lady!”

“Who is it?”

“I apologize, but lord Fenderson has forbidden me from telling anyone about the matter. I hope that you won’t ask me any more questions about the person staying inside!” replied the bodyguard.

Taking in a deep breath, Jasmine then frowned as she peeked at the room where her aunt used to stay in.

She had noticed that her grandfather had been trying to hide something from her in the past few days. What more, her investigation efforts on her aunt had only reached its halfway point when her grandfather ordered her to cease investigating.

Chapter 772

Even from when she was still a child, Jasmine had always hated having superficial knowledge, regardless of the topic.

Because of that, she had initially planned to enter her aunt's room to try looking for new leads together with Mindy. Her bumping into Quincy there was no mere coincidence.

Now knowing that someone had moved into that room, her curiosity was piqued. Who could have been entitled enough to be permitted to stay there?

“Why don't we sneak in and have a look inside the room, Jasmine?” suggested Mindy, now getting increasingly curious as well.

“Don't be rash. For now, we should leave first. It's grandpa's birthday banquet soon and I don't want to anger him at a time like this!” replied Jasmine as she started walking away. Though she said that, she was honestly even more curious than Mindy was.

Around two days later...

“Did you get all the materials I told you to? Please double check again later. We can't afford to have any of the materials absent since we'll be using them to decorate and

set up the venue later tonight. If the event tomorrow is delayed because of us, we'll have to pay dearly!" said a lady in her thirties to a rather young man.

"Will do, Miss Little!" replied the young man immediately.

"Speaking of which, the group of chefs from Northbay will be cooking supper later. It's really hard serving that group of celebrities. They're still playing cards to pass the time even at this hour! Deliver supper to them one by one later!"

"Not an issue!"

The young man in question, was none other than Gerald.

Aunt Fenderson really lived up to her old title. She truly had connections everywhere,

It was around two days ago when he, Drake, Tyson, and a few others got into this team with barely any trouble.

As per usual in the annual Fenderson birthday banquet, the Fendersons would invite famous local chefs as well as female celebrities from all over the country to partake in the banquet. Naturally, there also needed to be a courtesy team.

Being such a rich family, the event allowed the Fendersons to display their nearly unparalleled wealth and splendor. The immense number of people in Gerald's team alone was another way of showing that.

It wasn't long before Miss Little was informed that supper was done. In turn, Gerald was ordered to serve the meals to a group of celebrities.

There were eight female celebrities within the group who sat separately on two tables as they played cards. Gerald had seen many of them on television before.

"Supper is served!" announced Gerald.

"Well, hello there pretty boy! Come over here and let me touch you!"

"Hahaha! You must be too overjoyed to think straight after winning that much! Try not to scare the young man away!" joked another celebrity.

"Now why would that ever happen? It's not like I'm going to take advantage of him or anything! Hahaha!"

When it came to playing cards, those who were winning would naturally feel happier whereas those on the losing end would of course, tend to be more impatient and frustrated.

Ignoring their harassment, Gerald simply served supper to one of the singers there. However, it was evident that she wasn't really paying attention to him since she ended up accidentally pushing her own supper to the floor. As a result, a small portion of the greasy food splattered on her calf!

“What the- How the hell do you even do your job?!” yelled the singer as she glared at Gerald.

Hearing that, Gerald tried really hard to hold himself back from slapping her. It was a reasonable reaction given how terrible the singer’s behavior was.

Still, he refrained from doing so. After all, this was all part of a bigger plan.

Gerald could only hold on to his anger in silence as he served the remaining supper before heading to the next room.

“Alright, just put it over there for us! Thank you!” said one of the two young girls in the room.

Both of them—who looked to be around the same age as Gerald—were courtesy staff for the group of celebrities in another room and they seemed to be busy trying to remove their makeup.

While Gerald was being told to leave their supper there, he ended up staring at one of the girls for quite some time before finally realizing who she was.

‘D*mn it! What are the odds of meeting you here?’ Gerald thought to himself, surprised.

Chapter 773

The person in question was Alice!

He hadn't met her in such a long time.

After all that had happened, Gerald had heard that Alice had gone to Northbay. Since she was from the Department of Broadcasting and Hosting, it was only natural for her to get her internship there.

However, he truly hadn't expected to bump into her here!

"Speaking of which, could you clean up the things on the floor while you're at it? Thank you!" said the other girl without even bothering to turn back to look at him.

"Will do!"

Xara had made all the arrangements yet for some reason, both Drake and Tyson were left idle whereas Gerald was designated the role of a handyman who had to do all sorts of odd chores! Was it simply his fate to run errands?

Regardless, it didn't really matter too much to Gerald since he was already used to it.

"Consider this to be a little vacation from all your troubles and frustrations, Alice. After all, you've finally managed to leave Mayberry, the place where you had experienced so many upsetting memories, and started anew in Northbay! Still, who could've ever expected for something like that to happen? Everything should've honestly belonged to you! If things had simply gone that way, then we would've been able to enjoy the benefits as well!" said the other girl as she continued removing their makeup.

Peeking at them, Gerald felt that the common trait among most girls was the fact that they would apply their makeup during the day and remove them at night.

“Don’t even talk about it anymore, Hillary. While I may look fine on the surface, I’m still filled with regrets deep down in my heart. It’s hard not to feel remorse since at the very beginning, I had a pretty good impression of him. Not only did he treat others well, he also looked pretty decent, to say the least. However, he was really too poor! I’m not too sure when it was or even why, but eventually, I just started hating him!”

By then, Alice had stopped removing her makeup. Her head lay on the makeup table as she scribbled on her hand using her eyebrow pencil.

“Do you sometimes feel that girls’ feelings are really weird, Hillary? It’s not like I only began changing and liking him once he got rich. How do I even explain this... Well, for starters, it all began when he started doing a little better. By no means was he someone wealthy yet during that period of time. However, he certainly wasn’t that poor anymore and I was aware of it since he didn’t have to starve like he used to. It was around then when I slowly began trying to accept him again! I even wanted to become friends with him!”

“You know, he was standing in front of the corridor door with a bouquet of flowers in hand on that day. My roommates and I were just returning after class at that moment and you couldn’t imagine how moved I was back then! It was the reason why I had agreed to be together with him. I thought I could finally be in a proper relationship!”

“Little did I know that it was all just a trick... Hahaha! I really can’t help but wonder why it’s so difficult for me to start a proper relationship... I was really furious that time you know? I even thought about killing him for playing with my feelings like that!” said Alice as her tears began to fall.

Seeing that, the other girl stopped removing her makeup, choosing instead to pat Alice gently on the shoulder.

“Well, we girls are always destined to be deceived by guys like him. We simply can’t help it, especially if the ones we fall for are as wealthy as him! Though I guess he simply did that to take revenge on you...”

“Take revenge? Why would he need to do that? Was it because I looked down on him before? Was it because I refused to go out with someone like him? Let me ask you something, Hillary. Which girl on the planet wouldn’t want her partner to have at least some money? And I’m not saying that the partner needs to be wealthy either. I’m saying he just needs to have enough money to provide her with food and basic comfort. After all, it’s only natural that a girl would feel more secure knowing that their partner has a stable income! I’m not all that materialistic, but money is a necessity in life and I just can’t ignore the reality of that!”

“I’ve never regretted despising and looking down on him at the start. He truly looked extremely unpromising back then!” said Alice between sobs.

“Sorry to burst your bubble, Alice, but your hope of getting back together with him is simply too slim. After all, he seems to be very devoted to that Mila Smith girl! You really missed out on this opportunity to get into the Crawford family, and I can get why you’re so upset because of that...” replied the girl as she tried to calm her down.

“I still want to work hard and try my best... If I don’t try at all, then there really will be zero chance of it happening... Ah... The more I talk about it the more anxious and frustrated I get... I feel like drinking, Hillary... Care to join me for a drink?”

“What a coincidence, I feel like drinking too! Let’s use this as our opportunity to celebrate our early departure from our d*mned youth! Could you bring us a few bottles of red wine, brother? Thank you!” said Hillary as she looked at Gerald.

“Mm!” mumbled Gerald as he nodded in agreement before heading out of the room. He didn’t even dare to speak.

In the beginning, Gerald had found Alice’s story to be quite interesting, thinking that she had already started a new relationship.

To his surprise, the further her story went, the more he realized that she was talking about him. Hearing things from her point of view, Gerald couldn’t help but feel slightly guilty now.

After all, she was only experiencing all of this now because he hadn’t immediately clarified the situation to her back then. It was, in a way, his fault for causing Alice to misunderstand that she was the one he was trying to pursue back then.

As a result, she had been deeply hurt once he told her the truth only after both of them had become a couple.

Chapter 774

To a girl with such a massive ego as Alice, that had undoubtedly been a huge blow to her.

Gerald simply couldn’t ignore the fact that he was truly the one at fault that time.

Shaking his head, he then headed out to get the two bottles of red wine they had requested.

To his surprise, once both of them got their drinks and started downing the wine, Hillary told Gerald to help them pack their suitcases as well.

It was as though he personally worked for them or something. Fortunately, Alice had other things on her mind so her eyes never really focused on him.

By the time he was done packing everything for them, both bottles of red wine were now empty.

Though Alice was clearly tipsy at this point, she still insisted on having more wine. Gerald had no choice but to heed her orders.

Just as Gerald was finally prepared to leave, however, Alice started retching before flopping to the floor!

She had obviously drunk far too much, far too quickly. Hillary herself had already retired for the night by the end of the second bottle, and was now lying on her bed, unconscious.

“Drink! I still want to drink!” said Alice between sobs.

Though he really wanted to just leave already, Gerald simply couldn't bear seeing Alice in such a state. As he walked over to her, he assured himself that he was only lending her a helping hand out of guilt, and not out of affection.

"After all, Alice would've been living a happy life now if it wasn't for me..."

As he lifted her in his arms, Gerald then said, "Alright, that's enough drinking for tonight... There's still work to be done tomorrow, so rest early!"

Once she was on her bed, he was about to blanket her when Alice suddenly grabbed onto his wrist.

"G-Gerald...? Is that really you...?" asked Alice, her eyes hazy and filled with tears as she looked at him.

"...I'm afraid you've got the wrong person!" replied Gerald as he immediately tried to pry her fingers off.

"Y-you're finally willing to see me again...! I have so many things to tell you... Don't leave yet! Please, listen to me!" added Alice, her grip surprisingly tight for a drunk person.

Gerald didn't even know if she was simply speaking nonsense at this point.

"I... I know that it's impossible for both of us to ever get together again... Trust me that I've tried everything I could think of to forget about you... I've even tried starting a new

relationship just to finally be able to let go... But no matter what I do, all I ever think about is still you! It's improbable, but I... I just hope that you'll one day change your mind..."

"I'm really not the casual kind of girl you see me as... You know, I've kept myself a virgin just so that both of us could still have a chance one day! Just... Please... Please give me another chance, Gerald!" said Alice, refusing to let go of him.

Upon hearing her reasoning behind why she remained a virgin, Gerald couldn't help but feel slightly moved by her conviction. However, he remained adamant that he didn't like her anymore.

Chapter 775

It was early the next morning when Alice finally woke up.

Though she had drunk a lot of red wine the night before, her heart was throbbing instead of her head.

Shaking it off, she took in a deep breath as she attempted to sit up. Before she could do so, however, she immediately sensed that something was wrong. Pulling her blanket to the side, she instantly shouted, startled by what she was seeing!

"Hillary! Hillary!"

"What's wrong, Alice...?" replied Hillary rather groggily, awoken by Alice's shouting.

“I was wearing my other set of clothes when we were drinking last night, right? Look! Why am I in my pajamas now? Were you the one who slipped them on me?” asked Alice.

“...No, I don't think so... I was out cold after drinking so much last night... Are you still half-awake...? Who else could've slipped you into your pajam- ...Hold on, if someone else really did help you change, then they'd have to remove all your previous clothes first, right?” said Hillary, now starting to feel nervous as she hurriedly told Alice to check if she felt if anything was weird or wrong with her body.

“Alright, think carefully now. Are you absolutely sure that you didn't change into your pajamas on your own last night?”

Alice simply knitted her brows in response. None of this made any sense at all!

“I can't remember... Though I did have a weird dream last night... In it, Gerald was the one who had carried me over to bed and tucked me in... I can't remember anything else! Ahh! I'm feeling so anxious now! How could something like this have happened...?”

Though she was still feeling shocked, after carefully inspecting herself, Alice was relieved to find that she didn't feel anything weird with her body.

A barrage of questions were still bombarding her mind as she got out of bed to start packing. Regardless of what happened, rushing to the birthday banquet was more important now.

Meanwhile, Gerald, Drake, and Tyson were all ready to head to the event, alongside their team.

Gerald still remembered the events of last night clearly. Before Alice could even finish speaking, she had vomited not only on herself, but also all over Gerald!

To make matters worse, she began taking her own clothes off after that!

Frustrated and at a loss for what to even do, Gerald eventually settled on tipping a hotel attendant three thousand dollars to help Alice get changed and have her room cleaned.

However, he shook the thoughts off as they continued waiting there. He needed to focus on the secret mission.

A short while later, a special looking car arrived and everyone there was blindfolded. Everyone who entered had to switch their cell phones off as well.

After all, the Fenderson family didn't want anyone to know where the mansion was located.

As all this was happening, many wealthy and powerful figures had already arrived in their luxury cars at the Fenderson Family mansion.

"I hope that you'll later bring up the matter that we talked about earlier, father!" said Yael as he looked at Noah. Both of them were still seated in their car.

“Hahaha! Worry not, I’ll definitely try to settle things peacefully before resorting to violence! It’d be great if the Fendersons agreed to it, though if they refuse, they can’t really blame the Schuyler family for being impolite this time!” replied Noah as he smiled coldly.

After saying that, the driver was ordered to drive into the mansion. Upon entering, the first thing Noah did was meet up with the Fenderson family’s old master.

“You wanted to meet me, Noah?” said Bryson as he looked at him. They were now in the old master’s study room where Bryson had been sitting in before Noah asked for him.

“Ah, it’s nothing much, Lord Fenderson. I just wanted to talk to you about the matter regarding Yael and Jasmine. I’m sure you’re well aware that both of them have had a good relationship, even from their childhood days. I do wonder if Yael could end up becoming the son-in-law of the Fenderson family! Now that would definitely be a blessing to the Schuylers!” said Noah in a respectful tone.

Noah knew that though Yael had been interested in Jasmine for the longest time, the same couldn’t be said for the haughty and arrogant Jasmine. She seemed to have no interest in his son at all!

While Noah had already done a great deal for the Fendersons over the years, which members of that family actually appreciated what he had done for them?

Chapter 776

Naturally, Noah never had the audacity or courage to ask the Fendersons about things regarding his son's marriage. After all, the Fendersons were still the Schuyler's main affiliate family.

However, since such a massive event was taking place today, Noah took the initiative to finally ask about it, just to see how the old master would reply.

In response, Bryson frowned. With a wry smile on his face, he then said, "Are you proposing a marriage between Jasmine and Yael?"

"Well, I'm afraid that it all boils down to what Jasmine has to say about the matter. After all, marriage is the personal affair of young people! You should allow the younger generation to deal with this matter on their own!"

Hearing this made Noah slightly upset, as he knew that his proposal had just been indirectly denied. After all, Bryson's granddaughter clearly didn't have any interest in Yael at all.

"As parents, we're naturally our children's matchmakers. Lord Fenderson, I truly believe that as long as you suggest it, Jasmine will have no other choice but to obey! After all, to children, our commands are as good as the law. Unless you feel that Yael isn't worthy enough to be together with Jasmine...? Do you fear that he'll end up embarrassing the Fenderson family?" asked Noah, adamant on pressing on.

"Hahaha! That's not the case at all!" replied Bryson as he laughed.

At that moment, the study room door creaked open and Jasmine walked in.

“Here’s the list of guests and the schedule of events for today. Do have a look at it, grandpa.”

Jasmine’s main responsibility of the day was to be in charge of the event.

“You can just leave it on my table. I can rest assured with you in charge.”

“Speaking of which, Jasmine, you came at the right time! Lord Fenderson and I were just talking about you!” said Noah as he looked at her.

“Oh? You were talking about me, Uncle Schuyler? What a great honor!” replied Jasmine, a cold smile on her face.

“Indeed! See, I was just discussing with Lord Fenderson about your marriage with Yael... You aren’t young anymore, Jasmine, and it’s about time you thought about your future and marriage! Since both you and Yael have known each other since childhood, both of you will definitely be the perfect couple!” said Noah with a smile.

“Apologies, Uncle Schuyler, but I’m not interested in marriage at the moment! In the meantime, your son should look for someone else!” replied Jasmine in a cold voice.

Since Jasmine wasn’t giving him any face at all, Noah’s face immediately turned red in anger.

Bryson simply laughed as he said, “Calm yourself, Noah. Since we’re already talking about this, I’ll just make things clear now. Even if Jasmine and Yael do end up in a relationship, they will never get married in the end. After all, Jasmine’s already been destined to be with someone else from the day she was born.”

The moment they heard Bryson’s words, both Jasmine and Noah were startled speechless.

“What do you mean by that, Lord Fenderson?”

Even Jasmine was looking at her grandfather in surprise as Noah asked that question.

“It’s a long story. Before that, I’m sure that both of you know about the bad blood between our family and the Crawfords, right?” asked Bryson.

With a cold expression on his face, Noah then frowned before nodding.

“Well, both families were already hostile with each other even from the previous generation. While we were constantly fighting in secret back then, there was also a period of peace between the families. At the time, Daryl Crawford was the head of the Crawford family. His son, Dylan, is the current Crawford family head. When we were much younger, Daryl and I were both close friends, up to the point where I could even call him my brother. Once both of us inherited the positions of family heads, we were able to momentarily end the dispute between the Crawfords and the Fendersons! To ensure that the peace continued, we formed an alliance. However, there was one condition to said alliance...”

“...It... Couldn't be... Was it a contractual marriage?” asked Jasmine in surprise.

“It was indeed. By coincidence, both you and Daryl's grandson were born on the same day, month, and even year! Because of that, both of us came up with the idea of a marriage contract and I agreed to let you get married to Daryl's grandson!”

“However, things went south when Daryl had a fierce argument with his son. Because of that, he decided to let go of the matter, forgetting everything else. Once that happened, he no longer spoke about anything regarding the Crawfords. Dylan himself was an extremely arrogant and domineering person. He preferred relying on his own efforts and abilities over forming alliances. His goal was to get the Fenderson family to surrender to the Crawfords! That was the reason why the disputes between the two families began again. It was around then when the matter regarding your aunt happened... After that, the Crawfords and the Fendersons completely ended all their relations.”

Chapter 777

“While Daryl hasn't shown up for quite a while, that doesn't mean that the marriage contract ceases to be valid. In fact, even though Dylan had been extremely hostile toward the Fendersons, he hasn't sent anyone over to formally end the contract. As long as the marriage contract isn't called off, then it's rules still apply till the day the Crawford family chooses to acknowledge it!” explained Bryson before looking at Noah.

“Do you understand what I mean now, Noah?”

“...To think that the Crawfords and the Fendersons had such a history... However, since both families are still disputing against each other, then the marriage contract should, by right, be automatically called off, should it not, Lord Fenderson?” replied Noah rather reluctantly.

“While it’s true that both Dylan and Daryl had a huge conflict back then, I don’t think his son would actually have the courage or audacity to privately amend or go against the rules set by his father!”

“...Very well, Lord Fenderson. I’ll just pretend that I never brought the matter up. However, do remember that we’ve been at war with the Crawfords for all these years. We’ll never stop holding our grudges against the Crawford family, especially after that incident involving Xara that brought such colossal losses to our families!” said Noah before finally leaving the study room.

“He’s getting more and more presumptuous by the day!” said Jasmine coldly.

She then ran over to her grandfather’s side and began massaging his shoulders before saying, “Still, regardless of how much Noah enjoys scheming, he’s no match against you, grandpa! To think that you could come up with something so incredible in such a short amount of time just to deceive him! Hahaha!”

Laughing back in response, Bryson then gently patted the back of Jasmine’s hand before saying, “But I didn’t deceive him, Jasmine... You truly are betrothed to the young master of the Crawford family!”

“...H-huh?!”

Jasmine was momentarily stunned speechless because of that.

“...How... How could that be possible, grandpa? You can’t be serious, right...?”

She could never have imagined that something as absurd as this would actually happen to her.

“Of course I’m being serious!”

“...But... There’s still something I don’t quite understand... Since such a marriage contract existed, why was aunt and Peter’s—the second master of the Crawford family—relationship opposed and criticized so much back then?” asked Jasmine rather doubtfully.

“You aren’t the same as your aunt. When you were born, Daryl was still the head of the family. Dylan only became the head when you reached the age of one. At the time, Dylan had sent Peter over to the Fenderson family to steal something from us, and not just anything. He was sent to steal our most treasured family heirloom! If he had succeeded, the Fenderson family would have already fallen apart right there and then! Dylan had lied to us, and I didn’t want to lose both my daughter and the rest of my family!”

“...What exactly is that item?” asked Jasmine in surprise.

“I can’t share the details about it yet. You’ll find out about it once you’re at the stage where your aunt was back then!” replied Bryson with a laugh.

“...Still, can that marriage contract truly still be counted now, grandpa?” asked Jasmine again. This was honestly what worried her the most.

“To be completely honest, even I can’t say for sure... I feel helpless about the situation at times as well!”

“Then why hasn’t there been any news about the young master of the Crawford family, even after all these years, grandpa?”

“Well, Dylan made sure that the young master of the Crawford family was raised in poverty. That allowed the young master to blend in rather well among other ordinary men. While Dylan’s also been actively trying to hide his whereabouts and identity, I’ve managed to uncover a few clues over my many years investigating. My guess is that the famous Mr. Crawford from Mayberry is closely related to the Crawford family’s young master!”

“Mr. Crawford?”

“Indeed! However, whenever I try sending someone over to investigate the matter, Dylan always responds immediately! Because of his constant interfering, I haven’t been able to look into the matter any further!”

Jasmine had come to learn about many things from this conversation alone.

The biggest shock to her yet, however, was the fact that she was contractually bound to have a marriage with Mr. Crawford!

It was simply too surreal.

After all, she hated the Crawfords. Each and every one of them.

They were the reason why her parents were dead.

Yet here she was, learning about all this now. It was almost as though the heavens were playing a prank on her.

“Then... What happened to Daryl Crawford?”

“He’s gone into hiding. I haven’t seen him in a good twenty years! The Crawford family’s matters are equally as complicated as what the Fendersons have to deal with!” explained Bryson.

After that, the grandfather and his granddaughter continued talking for quite a bit in his study room.

Chapter 778

In the blink of an eye, many people had already gathered at the event.

The two Fenderson brothers were in charge of greeting and entertaining the guests outside.

“You’re here early, Mr. Schuyler!” said most of the guests who immediately went over to greet Noah as soon as they saw him.

It was evident that to the guests, the two Fenderson brothers were nothing compared to Noah. Seeing that, the second son of the Fenderson family could only wave his hand in indignation.

It was at that moment when someone suddenly yelled, “The Long family from Yanken has sent a white jade statue here!”

“...Huh? The Longs from Yanken?”

Everyone was astonished to hear that. Why would the Long family come all the way here just to attend such an event?

While the two families had been on good terms, with the Longs even helping the Fenderson family before, both families hadn’t interacted much with each other for quite a long time.

The Fenderson’s old master himself had mostly only invited direct members and descendants of the Fenderson family to his banquet. The Longs were considered to be a foreign connection.

Everyone knew this, which was why everyone was currently discussing the matter among themselves.

Even both the Fenderson brothers were surprised by the Longs’ arrival.

“Haha! Ah, Second master and third master, the Longs have come together with the Schuylers today! The moment I heard that Lord Fenderson was hosting a banquet, I immediately notified the Long family! They’ve sent a special representative here today to pay their respects to Lord Fenderson!” explained Noah in a cold tone.

“How very bold of you, Noah Schuyler! Who was it exactly who gave you the right to invite guests over to the Fenderson family mansion? Just who do you think you are?”

Their reactions were understandable. After all, the Longs giving face to Noah and them giving face to Lord Fenderson were two completely different matters.

“Second uncle and third uncle, please don’t be angry. Since the Longs are already here anyway, we should naturally treat them as our guests. After all, the Schuylers are still affiliated under us. It shouldn’t matter whether the Schuylers or the Fendersons invited the Longs. After all, we’re all one big family. Aren’t I right, Uncle Schuyler?” said Jasmine as she walked out with a smile on her face.

“Hahaha! My niece, Jasmine, is truly the most sensible person here! I think the longer people live, the more backward their thinking becomes!”

“You!”

Second and Third were both feeling extremely dissatisfied now.

Before they could say another word, the Long family representative finally showed herself.

“...Huh? A woman?”

Everyone was equally surprised to see the woman—who looked to be around twenty-two— leading about a dozen people from the Long family into the banquet.

“She’s... The Long family’s second young master’s fiancée, right?”

“I think she is! I saw her when I attended the Long family’s second young master’s engagement banquet!”

After discussing among themselves, the guests suddenly came to a simultaneous realization. Of course the Long family’s second young master wouldn’t personally attend such an event!

“Welcome, Miss Xavia!” greeted Yael respectfully as he walked forward together with a few others.

“Hello, Yael and Uncle Schuyler. I’ve come to pay my respects to you.”

As it turned out, the representative the Longs had sent was Xavia!

At that moment, the sound of a wine glass shattering could be heard.

Throughout the day, Gerald had been running up and down, doing odd jobs. The moment he caught a glimpse of Xavia, he was so shocked that he couldn't even hold on to his tray properly.

Why on earth was Xavia here too?

Chapter 779

Gerald was now frustrated beyond words. The initial plan to make use of the Fenderson birthday banquet to rescue Queta was now at stake.

To think that he would meet both Alice and Xavia back to back! There were simply too many unexpected issues popping up at the same time.

If either of the girls recognized him, then the situation would definitely take a turn for the worst.

What more, Gerald had just broken a wine glass and many people were already looking in his direction! D*mn it all! Gerald was so frightened that he immediately lowered his head and began picking the broken glass shards off the ground.

“...Eh?”

While Gerald managed to quickly clean up the mess and make his hasty escape, he seemed to have also attracted another girl's attention.

The girl in question was standing right next to Jasmine. It was Mindy!

'...Why did that young man look so similar to Gerald? This doesn't make any sense at all! Why would that silly boy even be here at the Fenderson birthday banquet?' Mindy thought to herself.

Curiosity piqued, Mindy then began following him sneakily.

"That was a really risky situation!" said Gerald as he heaved a huge sigh of relief the moment he arrived at the backyard.

"Gerald!" called out a female voice at that moment.

Turning to look at who had mentioned his name, Gerald's eyes opened wide in bewilderment when he saw who it was.

'F*ck! It's Mindy!'

"Oh my god! And here I was, thinking I was seeing things earlier! I really didn't expect to see you here! You... Why did you come all the way here to the Fenderson family mansion? Actually hold on, how did you even get in?" asked Mindy in surprise.

While her grandfather had held similar banquets here in the past and Mindy wasn't exactly known to be the most attentive girl, she did know that the Fenderson family had always been extremely secretive.

Gerald was nothing more than an ordinary rich heir. How could he possibly have the right to attend her grandfather's birthday banquet?

“O-oh! I’m here to attend Lord Fenderson’s birthday banquet on behalf of my family. I was just looking for the washroom! In fact, I was just about to send a message to both of you!” lied Gerald casually.

“Oh? Is your family subservient to the Fenderson family as well? But I don’t remember our family having any sort of influence in Mayberry City nor Serene County!”

Hearing that, Gerald became increasingly nervous. After suddenly recalling that Xavia was also here, he quickly explained, “I’m not exactly subservient to the Fendersons. It was the Schuylers who had invited me to the banquet today!”

“...I see! Well that makes much more sense!” replied Mindy.

However, her expression soon changed as she came to a sudden realization. Before Gerald could ask what was wrong, she hit him angrily on the back of his head!

“What was that for!”

“Humph! You should know that the Schuyler family hasn’t been on good terms with ours! I really hadn’t expected your family to be subservient to theirs. You know, the Schuyler family is getting more and more atrocious by the year!” said Mindy rather indignantly.

“Even if you say that, it’s not like I have any say in my family’s matters! I’m not really involved in any of their decisions!” replied Gerald.

“...Hey, look over there! Isn't that the kid who scalded you last night, Loraine?”

Looking at the direction where the voice had come from, several gorgeous women—who seemed to be the celebrities from the previous night—could be seen walking toward the venue.

As the women in the group looked at the direction their celebrity friend was pointing at, one of them immediately started rushing toward Gerald in an imposing manner!

She seemed to be the leader of their group, and Gerald instantly recognized her as the celebrity from last night who had knocked over her own supper!

“So here you are! Do you have any idea how hard it was to find you? Listen here, I can't wear a dress today because of you! Do you have any idea how many points will get taken away during my performance later because of that?!” growled the celebrity as she began smacking the back of his head resentfully.

“Hold it! Who do you think you are? What right do you have to treat him that way?”

Since she had a much higher status than Gerald, it was fine for Mindy to hit him. However, this was just a regular celebrity. How dare she treat him that way!

Mindy had only reprimanded her since she felt that she would lose face if she continued allowing the celebrity to do as she pleased in front of her.

Seeing how well-dressed Mindy was, the celebrity instantly knew that she was a member of the Fenderson family.

Thus, instead of continuing to act presumptuously, she smiled brightly before saying, “Beautiful young lady, please don’t get me wrong, but this young man here is just a handyman who does odd jobs for us!”

“A handyman? Are you even that worthy? What exactly is going on here, Gerald?” asked Mindy in a puzzled tone.

She knew for a fact that he was a dignified, rich heir so why would he even need to serve and do odd jobs for these minor celebrities?

“I’ll... Explain everything to you in the future! For now, I really need to use the bathroom so I’ll be taking my leave first!”

Gerald could feel like his head was going to explode! If he kept dallying here then Xara’s plan was definitely going to fail because of him!

“Stop right there!” shouted both Mindy and the celebrity in unison.

Mindy could tell that Gerald was hiding something from her and she wasn’t the kind of person who liked being kept in the dark. The more he wanted to leave, the more she refused to let him go.

The celebrity herself wanted to personally deal with Gerald. However, now that she knew that Mindy was a Fenderson, she was simultaneously trying to please her so that there could possibly be a chance for her to get into Mindy's good books.

Realizing that Mindy also seemed to have some sort of misunderstanding with Gerald, the celebrity knew she didn't need to worry about shouting for him not to leave.

The celebrity's friends seemed to have caught on as well, and all of them hurriedly ran over to block Gerald's path.

"This is the Fenderson family mansion, Gerald. Where do you even think you'll be able to escape? Now hurry up and tell me the truth! What exactly is going on here? How are you both a rich heir and a handyman at the same time? If you refuse to tell me what's going on then I'll call Jasmine over!" said Mindy strictly as she grabbed him by the collar. It was clear that she had no intention of hearing any more of his excuses.

While Gerald could easily get rid of these girls if he truly wanted to, he knew that fighting back now would only make matters worse. The only thing he could do now was try to delay things so that he could buy more time.

"Indeed! I feel that he's being very dishonest! Something's definitely up with him and we can't just let him leave!" said Loraine, the leader of the celebrities.

Though Mindy didn't exactly like any of the celebrities, what they said made sense. Gerald had clearly been sneaking around so something suspicious must be going on.

Feeling a sudden strong sense to bring honor and justice toward her family, Mindy knew she needed to investigate the matter no matter what.

Mindy then twisted Gerald's ears before saying, "Humph! I know how well you fight, but remember, this is the Fenderson family mansion! If you even dare to try anything funny, I'll call our guards over to beat you to death! Don't say I didn't warn you! Since you're being so dishonest, you can just stay by my side! Once Jasmine's done with her work, I'll tell her to question you then! Now come along!"

After ending her sentence, Mindy then began dragging Gerald along as she walked toward the front hall.

At that moment, Gerald noticed two men with cold expressions on their faces swiftly making their way toward the group. In their hands, were fine, silver needles and both of them looked ready to strike the moment they could.

The two men in question were Drake and Tyson who had been searching all over for Gerald for most of the day. To their surprise, Gerald was already in trouble! Since Gerald's safety was their priority, they were ready to risk everything just to rescue him.

However, Gerald immediately shook his head the moment he saw them, a clear signal that they should stick to the original plan. He wanted them to leave the matter to him!

Both of them could only look at each other after receiving his silent order, feeling both confused and baffled.

“Still moving around? Just behave already and come with me!” said Mindy as she continued walking forward while grabbing on to Gerald’s ear.

The celebrities themselves followed behind them. Some of them were even holding on to Gerald’s arms!

They had definitely made a huge contribution to the Fenderson family this time around, right?

As for Mindy, true to her word, she really intended to look for Jasmine so that she could question Gerald.

However, when their group finally arrived at the front hall, they saw that most of the guests there were standing up.

The atmosphere in the hall was rather tense, and Jasmine could be seen standing in front, seemingly confronting some of the guests.

“What on earth is happening?” asked Mindy in shock.

Chapter 781

Gerald himself was wondering the same thing. It looked as though some sort of conflict was going on. Everything seemed to be going fine before this. How did things end up this way?

As Gerald stared at the scene in bewilderment, he could see a middle-aged woman kneeling within the crowd.

The members of the families affiliated with the Fendersons seemed to be filled with rage and even Lord Fenderson himself had an ugly expression on his face.

“It’s her! It’s that sinner’s maid from back then! Hurry up and tell us where Xara is now! If you speak the truth, we’ll consider sparing you!”

“Remember! The Crawfords and the Fendersons only got into a huge fight back then because of her! We, the affiliated families, were the ones who had suffered the most losses because of that battle! How pitiful my son was for having to grow up in such turmoil because of her! Lord Fenderson, if you’re hiding Xara anywhere, we demand that you hand her over to us!”

“That’s right! Hand her over so that you can give an account to our families!”

Many of the affiliated family members were now gathered around Lord Fenderson, demanding for Xara.

Noah himself was sneering at the side.

The conflict had started when Bryson reprimanded Noah in public for inviting the Longs without asking for his permission first. In retaliation, Noah then revealed the fact that the Fendersons had already located Xara’s old personal maid.

He was done having to play nice with Bryson.

Noah's actions had stemmed from the fact that he had regarded himself as the head of several big families for years by now. One could even say he was almost as influential as the Fendersons.

Aside from that, Bryson had also placed him in an awkward situation when Noah went looking for him to ask for some assets while also discussing his son's marriage with Jasmine.

His grievances that he had piled-up up till this point were by no means a small amount.

Since he couldn't achieve his goal peacefully, he was going to use the event to his advantage and go all out today.

He was glad that he had previously sent several of his men over to monitor every move the Fendersons made. In addition to having quite a number of informers from within the family, he was able to gain information about everything they did.

It was why he managed to find out about the existence of Xara's maid being there in the first place.

Noah even had a trump card in hand, and he had personally given it to Bryson a few days prior. Now that all the pieces were in place, he would simply allow the internal conflicts to erupt in all its splendor!

Bryson himself could only glare in rage at the crowd before him.

This conflict was nothing new to him. After all, they had secretly been fighting for many years by now.

While the Fenderson family was still colossal in size, it was now akin to a high-rise building that had lost its main supporting pillar. Though the outside looked majestic, its insides were already crumbling in a state of jeopardy.

It wasn't as though Bryson hadn't taken precautions against Noel and Yael either.

However, he had simply assumed that he would still be able to control both the father and son, even in his old age.

To think that both of them would make a move on him during his birthday banquet!

The accumulated grievances between both parties had already made things very stressful for him. Yet here Noah and Yoel were, deliberately trying to heighten the conflicts between them!

It was just like last time... Had he not wanted to calm and appease the affiliated families back then, he would never have been willing to sever his relationship with his very own daughter!

"It's my grandfather's eightieth birthday today! Are all of you here to celebrate it or did you come here just to criticize and question him?" said Jasmine rather coldly.

“Jasmine, while we’re naturally happy that it’s Lord Fenderson’s birthday today, our families have already lost too many of our relatives back then. It’s been more than twenty years since Lord Fenderson told us that he would compensate for our losses and also provide a reasonable explanation to all our families. Yet even after all this time, he won’t even let us catch a glimpse of Xara! The woman who was the cause of all that chaos back then!”

“The only ‘compensations’ we received were a few trivial assets and properties. What about the reasonable explanation we were promised? And to think after we’ve waited patiently all this time, Lord Fenderson was actually housing the maid who once used for Xara! If Mr. Schuyler hadn’t brought the matter to light, we would’ve never found out about this!”

“Our families have already been affiliated with the Fendersons for generations! How could Lord Fenderson do this to us? How can you even expect us to be appeased now?” said a middle-aged man indignantly.

“That’s right! Rather than continue debating the matter, I say we should just capture her maid and torture her till she tells us where Xara is!”

“Men! Drag her out immediately!”

As soon as those words were said, a few bodyguards working for the affiliated families rushed forward and grabbed Xenia by her arms.

“Presumptuous! All of you! I’m well aware that all of you are just pretending to look for her! Your main goal has always been to get your hands on the assets she owned back then!” said Jasmine, her tone frigid.

Hearing that, several of the more capable individuals within the crowd went silent.

“You can’t just put it that way, Jasmine. However, since you’ve already said it, it wouldn’t be right if the Schuylers didn’t use this chance to set a proper example! That’s right! While we had been delegated a small portion of the assets Xara owned in the beginning, the consequences that we had to pay for clearly outweighs what we should have received! It’s only right for us to demand for an equal distribution of assets!” replied Noah.

What he said wasn’t wrong either, since Xara and the eldest master of the Fenderson family were the ones who had held and controlled most of the assets and properties belonging to their family back then.

Chapter 782

It was obvious that Xara clearly had more power compared to Jasmine’s father back then.

Even if Xara’s assets were to be equally distributed among the affiliated families now, it wouldn’t be as simple as the families being able to gain equal footing with the Fendersons anymore.

This was probably what Noah and Yael had intended for to happen this entire time.

“You can all continue to dream on...” replied Jasmine angrily.

“Step aside for the moment, Jasmine. You don’t need to get involved in this!” said Bryson, a gloomy expression on his face.

Not daring to go against her grandfather's words, she immediately stood aside.

Bryson then personally began negotiating with Noah.

While this was happening, Mindy suddenly began shouting, "Jasmine! Over here!"

Frowning, Jasmine then walked over to Mindy before realizing who else was with her. To her surprise, Gerald was present!

"Why are you here?"

"Let's not bother about him for the moment. More importantly, what on earth is going on here? Are the affiliate families trying to rebel against us?" asked Mindy as she hurriedly held on to Jasmine's hand.

Jasmine simply nodded before saying, "Grandpa's already told me to keep an eye on the Schuyler family once the birthday banquet is over. After all, the Schuylers have been conspiring against us for many years now..."

After pausing for a moment to look at Gerald, she then continued, "They're getting bolder by the year... To think that he would actually cause a scene during grandpa's birthday banquet! No wonder he dared to make demands when he came looking for grandpa this morning!"

“Huh? What kind of demands? Oh wait, it must’ve been a proposal for you and Yael to get married, right?” asked Mindy.

In response, Jasmine gave a simple nod.

“Pfft! Is he really aspiring for something that he’s clearly not even worthy of? Grandpa must’ve immediately rejected his proposal, right? How did grandpa turn him down anyway for him to get so much courage? He seems really desperate!”

“I... Well... He accepted the rejection once he found out that I was bound to a marriage contract which had been made from when I was still a child!” replied Jasmine in a soft voice as her face began blushing slightly.

“...Huh? What? With whom? Why haven’t I heard of this before?”

“Just! Forget it for now! I don’t want to talk about this anymore!” replied Jasmine as she shook her head.

To take her mind off things, she focused on the scene unfolding between Noah and her grandfather.

“I’ll be honest with you, Lord Fenderson. I’ve already been very lenient and merciful toward you. As long as you’re willing to give us the compensation we rightfully deserve, we’ll definitely continue following the Fendersons with all our hearts in future. After all, it isn’t really necessary for me to expose everything here, am I not right?” said Noah as he sneered.

Bryson immediately knit his brows tightly together when he heard that.

Bryson finally understood why Noah had a sudden change in character back when Noah had told him that he had managed to locate Xara's daughter. To think that Bryson had initially thought that Noah had finally turned over a new leaf!

It was all just part of his grand scheme!

Bryson was now in this mess because he had fallen for Bryson's trickery. He had been careless due to his love for his daughter.

However, at the end of the day, the older a person was, the wiser he tended to be. Bryson had no doubt taken extra precautionary and security measures in case he ever had to deal with such a situation.

"Hahaha! I have no idea what you're hinting at, Noah! While it is true that I've found Xenia, I only brought her back to interrogate her about Xara's whereabouts. Sadly, Xenia doesn't know anything at all! I simply took her in since I couldn't bear the thought of leaving her to wander outside alone. Now that I've made myself clear, what else do you wish to talk about?" replied Bryson calmly.

"Is that so? Hahaha! I really admire you, Lord Fenderson! However, that doesn't explain the beautiful girl in the car who was trying to leave the villa this morning! It was such a coincidence too that my subordinates had managed to catch a glimpse of her, subsequently preventing her from leaving! Mr. Lambert and Mr. Wellington, do you wish to know how beautiful that girl truly is? Why, she's so beautiful that she looks exactly like Xara! If you don't believe me, I can order my subordinates to bring her over right now!" said Noah as he laughed.

“...You... you took Queta away?” asked Bryson, finally losing his cool as his body began trembling uncontrollably.

“So her name is Queta! She refused to say a word to me when I asked her for it! Regardless, everyone else will now have their chance to question her! Being her in, men!” yelled Noah.

Chapter 783

Upon hearing Noah’s command, a few men stepped forward, dragging a girl along.

Her head was lowered and her mouth was shut tight. However, her appearance alone was enough to shock everyone present.

“She... She looks exactly like her!”

“That’s right! I almost thought that she was a much younger version of Xara!”

“We’ve all been deceived! Lord Fenderson must have already known about Xara’s whereabouts a long time ago! Yet he left all us affiliated families in the dark on purpose!”

While the audience began discussing aloud, Queta herself bore an extremely ugly expression on her face. After all, she had been physically hurt and her body was currently feeling very weak.

“It... It really is my aunt’s daughter! So it turns out that grandpa’s already found aunt’s daughter!” said Jasmine.

“Queta!” shouted Bryson, a stern expression on his face.

He had initially arranged for someone to secretly send Queta away that morning. Little did he know that there would be a snitch working for the Schuyler family! The current scene was a result of that.

“So, lord Fenderson. We now have all the necessary witnesses and evidence! What else do you have to say for yourself? We demand that Xara be handed over to us as soon as possible!”

All the guests were now gathering around Bryson, glaring at him angrily.

Bryson was at a complete loss of words, a tense expression on his face.

While he truly wanted to save Queta, after facing all the provocations from the Schuyler family, he had no real choice but to give an explanation to all the other affiliated families

As he was wondering how to deal with the dilemma, a voice suddenly called out from behind everyone.

“Hey now, why are all of you bothering the Fendersons? I’m here, you know!”

Turning around to see who had shouted, everyone saw a woman walking toward them from the outside.

“...Huh? Who on earth is that? How did she even get in?”

“Oh god, just look at her face! How absolutely ugly!”

“I can’t continue looking at her anymore... I can already feel goosebumps on my skin!”

As the commotion grew louder and louder, Xavia finally lay eyes on the woman in question.

Her eyes had earlier been fixed on Queta. After all, the girl looked extremely familiar to her. Xavia simply couldn’t put her finger on where she had met her before.

Regardless, Xavia couldn’t help but purse her lips in disgust when she saw the woman walking up to Bryson.

Bryson himself was trembling uncontrollably at this point. He knew who this person was just by listening to her voice. It was a voice he had been waiting to hear for almost two decades now.

He could only stare in disbelief when she finally stood before him. Was this really her? His daughter who used to be the most alluring woman in the country?

“Is... Is that really you, Xara?” asked Bryson, his hands trembling.

Hearing his statement, both Second and Third stared at Xara in surprise. However, they quickly shook off their shock for the moment as they hurried over to support Bryson.

“It’s been a good twenty years, father. I’m finally back!” said Xara as tears started streaming down her cheeks.

“...Sister?” asked Second and Third simultaneously as they exchanged looks with one another, feeling utterly dumbfounded.

At the same time, Noah and the others were all breathing heavily.

“...So she really is Xara! The eldest lady of the Fenderson family! No wonder they couldn’t find her even after so many years had passed! To think that the once extremely gorgeous and beautiful Xara who had earned the admiration of so many back then would be reduced to such an ugly state!”

“Exactly! Even if we bumped into her on the street, we wouldn’t have been able to recognize her at all!”

As everyone continued to comment on the situation, Xenia ran toward Xara before saying, “Why did you show yourself, miss?”

“I needed to in order to save Queta! Aunt Xenia, I’ve caused you so much harm and grief for so many years now! I hope you’ll forgive me!” said Xara as she held on to Queta’s hands.

After hearing all that, Queta finally understood everything.

Chapter 784

So that’s why Aunt Fenderson had treated her so dearly before this! Was she truly the mother she had been looking for this entire time?

A cocktail of complicated emotions was now brewing in Queta’s heart. She didn’t even know whether she should refer to her as her aunt or mother anymore!

“It all makes sense now! No wonder we couldn’t find any clues about my aunt, even after investigating for so long!” said Jasmine.

“Hey now, this isn’t exactly a family reunion, you know? Since you’ve finally decided to show yourself, shouldn’t you give us a proper explanation for everything that happened back then, Xara? After all, we’ve been searching for you for a good twenty years now and we’ve already wasted enough time and resources just to find you!” replied Noah coldly.

“I’m well aware of what you’re up to, Noah Schuyler. There’s no need for you to continue blackmailing the Fenderson family. I’ll say it loud and clear now. The assets and properties I’ve been holding on to will never go to you or any of the other affiliated families! And since you’ve been trying so hard to find me, here I am now! I can leave with the rest of you and you can do whatever you want to me then! I’m completely at your disposal!” said Xara aloud.

Hearing this, Noah was so enraged that he looked like he was ready to explode at any moment.

To think that even after pursuing her for so long and setting everything up to be in his favor, her sudden reappearance after twenty years had completely ruined all of his plans! Things would've gone perfectly if only she hadn't made her appearance today!

Now, even if they killed her, they would never be able to get their hands on any of the assets. What even was the point of him doing all that hard work and planning before this?

There was even a time when he had planned to put her under house arrest once he found her! However, he simply couldn't locate her no matter how much he searched!

Thinking about it, she behaved just like a ticking time bomb. To think that the bomb would explode during such a critical moment!

Noah and the others were at a complete loss of what to even do next.

"...If you think you're getting away scot-free after all you've done, you can dream on! Men! Take her away with us, right this instant!" yelled one of the many heads of the other affiliated families in both rage and humiliation.

Just as Bryson was about to stop them, a butler with a very anxious expression on his face came running toward him. In between pants, the butler then said, "L-Lord

Fenderson, someone's sent you a birthday gift outside! The gift itself looks to be near priceless!"

"What? Who sent it?" said Bryson as he looked at the terrified butler.

Everyone whom Bryson had invited should have already arrived by now.

Bryson knew how powerful each of the families under him were. As far as he knew, none of them could afford to give him such an invaluable gift, or at least that was what he assumed from the way his butler had described it.

However, he had reason to be curious since his butler wouldn't have been this shocked if it was just an ordinary gift.

Gulping, the butler then said, "The person in question said that he was a friend of yours from the Crawford family from Northbay!"

"...What? The Crawfords from Northbay you said?"

Bryson was now quivering so much that his walking cane soon fell to the floor.

Everyone else present was equally as shocked.

Both the Fendersons and all their affiliated families knew the Crawfords from Northbay well. After all, not only were the Crawfords living there extremely influential and

powerful, they were also the ones who had struck fear among the Fendersons for decades.

To put simply, they were a terrifying family.

Everyone there was naturally aware of the grievances between the Crawfords and the Fendersons.

Jasmine herself quickly walked over to her grandfather's side.

The Crawfords had been the ones who had caused her parents' death. Was she finally going to be able to see who the mysterious enemy was?

Noah, on the other hand, had gone deathly pale. He was now sure that he had definitely tried to stir trouble at the wrong time. Now that even the Crawfords were here, nothing he had said would matter anymore.

After all, while all of them would usually declare that the Crawfords were their enemy, most of them only said it for the sake of it. Who among them would actually have the audacity or even courage to go up against the Crawfords?

Even if it was true that the Crawfords were the ones who had caused them to lose so many of their relatives and family members back then, Noah and the other affiliate heads would never dare to even say a single word before such a powerful family.

Meanwhile, Gerald himself was feeling dumbfounded as he continued watching the scene unfold from the side-lines.

Someone from his family was coming?

While it was true that he had informed his subordinates about the location of the Fenderson family's mansion, he hadn't really expected for any of them to make their appearance here, especially not under the guise of the Crawfords from Northbay.

If it wasn't them, who could it be?

As Gerald's curiosity continued to grow, the butler then said, "Indeed! The person in question is the young master of the Crawfords from Northbay, Mr. Crawford himself!"

Chapter 785

"...What? The young master, Mr. Crawford?"

Everyone was now exchanging glances with each other in astonishment.

"I've never even known that the Crawford family had a young master!"

"Have you forgotten that the Crawford family's young master was raised among ordinary people? That made it near impossible for anyone to get any information about him! Not even the Fendersons know much about him, even after investigating so much into the matter back then!"

“To think that the Crawford’s young master has already returned to his family! Why, he’s even come all the way here just to look for the Fendersons! How powerful and impressive! It wouldn’t be farfetched to say that he’s probably comparable to Dylan back in the day!”

As the people in the crowd continued discussing among themselves, Jasmine herself was breathing rather frantically. She was currently facing all sorts of inexplicable emotions.

After Mr. Crawford’s arrival was announced, none of the affiliate families dared to continue causing a scene, and the same went for the Long family’s representative.

“Yael... What’s the background of Northbay’s Mr. Crawford like?” asked Xavia, sounding rather frightened.

She had attended the birthday banquet as the second young mistress of the Long family and after seeing Lord Fenderson’s terrified face after being notified of Mr. Crawford’s arrival, she was now feeling equally scared.

After all, the mere mention of the name, ‘Mr. Crawford’, reminded Xavia of a certain someone.

“Well, the Crawford family from Northbay is very powerful and secretive. I’ve heard that even their weakest affiliate family is almost as strong as the Fendersons! We minor affiliate families could never even dream to compare to them!” replied Yael, a fearful expression on his face.

“Does... Does such a powerful family even exist on this planet?”

While Xavia had been married into a wealthy and influential family, and she had already gained a lot of knowledge and seen much of the world by now, hearing Yael’s explanation still shocked her.

“Of course! I’m sure you know that the Fendersons have been at war with the Crawfords for many years now. However, they simply had no way of defeating the Crawfords at all! That’s the reason why the Fendersons have been living in secrecy! They’ve been trying to remain hidden from the Crawford family’s eyes so that they could eventually launch a counterattack against them!”

“Hilariously enough, it’s also precisely because of that, that there have been so many internal divisions between the Fenderson family till this very day. Now that the Crawfords are at the Fenderson’s doorstep, it’s natural for Lord Fenderson to be terrified!” said Yael before taking in a deep breath.

“Then... How many assets does the Crawford family even own?” asked Xavia, now even more shocked than before.

“I’m not too sure about that either. However, I’ve heard rumors that the Crawford family already owns half of the world’s wealth and resources!”

Upon hearing that, Xavia’s eyes widened so much that her eyes looked like they would pop out at any moment.

Half of the world’s wealth and resources? What kind of concept even was that?

With that much power and influence, what kind of person was Mr. Crawford from Northbay even going to be like?

While the guest continued hypothesizing in their confusion, a few girls began tugging Alice to the scene while saying, “Alice! Come listen to this! It seems that a powerful young master is about to make his appearance!”

“Huh? How powerful are we talking about here?” asked Alice in surprise.

“Alice, haven’t you seen how pale the powerful figures here have gone upon hearing about Mr. Crawford’s arrival? I heard that he owns half of the world’s wealth and resources! What an incredible family the Crawfords from Northbay is!” said the girls excitedly.

Their reaction was to be expected since girls usually felt excited talking about rich and handsome guys. What more, being able to meet such an incredible young master was a pleasant surprise for them!

While they were giddy with excitement, Alice herself immediately covered her mouth, feeling suddenly anxious and nervous.

“T-the young master... You said the young master’s name was Mr. Crawford...?”

Alice was now feeling an overwhelming discomfort in her heart. After all, she had seen Gerald’s true capabilities before this.

She was also aware that his sister had immense financial resources and capabilities as well. Not only that, his sister's home was in Northbay too!

The Crawfords from Northbay... Could it really be...?

Alice could feel her breathing grow heavier by the second.

If what her friends had said was true, then Alice honestly just wanted to die on the spot, right there and then! After all, since she was the one who had rejected him, if Gerald had only been an ordinary rich heir, Alice would've just forced herself to move on and continue living her life without him.

However, how was she going to just accept that if Gerald truly was such an extraordinarily rich heir...?

"They're here!" yelled someone, causing the chaotic atmosphere from before to immediately fall silent. Everyone was now waiting anxiously, their eyes peeled on the entrance.

Not too long after, about a hundred men dressed in black began approaching the entrance in a neat and orderly manner.

The person leading the group seemed to be an old man who looked to be around sixty.

Beside him, was a young, formally-dressed man who looked to be around the age of twenty-two. His eyes were rather beady and he was also a little on the chubbier side.

“Is that Mr. Crawford?”

Chapter 786

“Yes, that must be him!”

As the crowd of people gulped, not even daring to speak loudly, the new group of people continued walking forward till they were right in front of Bryson. Each person in that group exuded an equally strong aura.

“Is that you, Fynn?” asked Bryson as he smiled at the old man.

“Indeed it is, Lord Fenderson. It’s been a long time since we’ve last met! I trust you’ve been well since then!” replied Fynn with a slight smile.

“I have. Still, all those years... Gone just like that! To think that the young boy who used to always stick around Daryl is now an old man... If it wasn’t because of your unchanging, sharp as ever eyes, I wouldn’t have been able to recognize you at all! It really has been too long!” said Bryson, his tone tinged with regrets as he reminisced.

After all, back in the day, Bryson and Daryl were so close that they even considered each other to be brothers. The old man that now stood before him went by the name of Fynn, and he used to be Daryl’s subordinate then. Time, however, waits for no one and things were completely different now.

“A long time indeed...”

A calm smile was on Fynn’s face as he said that. While at their roots, grievances still existed between the Crawfords and the Fendersons, regardless of whether they were still competing against each other in secret or not, they still had to treat each other politely.

As for the ‘Mr. Crawford’ standing beside Fynn, he looked rather carefree as he scanned through the area. However, his demeanor changed the moment his gaze fell upon somebody standing within the crowd.

“...Huh? It’s you?”

“So you’re the one who came?”

The woman who had spoken in unison with ‘Mr. Crawford’ was none other than Xavia.

While he was clearly surprised to see Xavia there, Xavia was even more astonished. After all, she had met and dealt with this person before.

He wasn’t Mr. Crawford! The young man with beady eyes was Gerald’s godbrother, Yoel! The son of the richest man in County State!

Why was he here? Though it wasn’t Gerald, Xavia still began feeling inexplicably nervous at that moment.

“Aren’t you the Holden family’s young master? Why were you given the title of Mr. Crawford from Northbay?” asked Xavia, her face slightly pale.

Hearing that, Jasmine was surprised. After all, when she had first heard that he was Mr. Crawford, she had been wondering if this was the one whom she was contractually bound to marry.

As it turned out, he wasn’t, or at least from what Xavia had said.

Feeling slightly embarrassed after she said that, Yoel then replied, “Now who said that I was Mr. Crawford? I’m just here to join in the fun and excitement!”

“Wait, so if he’s not Mr. Crawford... Then where’s the real one?”

Everyone was surprised by the turn of events.

“Hahaha! It seems that we’ve made a real fool of ourselves this time! Let me explain. There are two reasons why we’re here today. Our first is to represent Mr. Crawford and the Crawford family to present your birthday gift to you. After all, after all these years, even our family has regretted some of the things that have happened in the past. We’ve been meaning to have a talk with the Fendersons for a long time now, but we simply haven’t heard any news about your family throughout all these years!” said Fynn as he smiled faintly.

“Not to worry, however, Lord Fenderson. As long as the Crawford family is around, I believe that nobody will even dare to cause any trouble for you on your birthday!”

As soon as Noah and the others heard that, they felt themselves gulping before each taking a step back.

“As for the second matter, the Crawfords would like to take Miss Queta and Madam Xara back with us. After all, the madam is the sister-in-law of the Crawford family’s head. Miss Queta herself is a member of the Crawford family. I believe that this is both an understandable and reasonable request, Lord Fenderson!”

Bryson took in a deep breath upon hearing that. So things had already advanced to this stage.

Since the Crawford family had actually come all the way here, they must have already been fully prepared for the visit.

Even though Bryson tried thinking and considering the overall situation, in the end, he didn’t even know what to say. After all, the Crawfords now knew where the Fendersons lived, which meant that they were now officially susceptible to danger at all times.

However, the Fendersons themselves were holding on to a trump card which was very important to Dylan. It was because of that, that Bryson believed that Dylan wouldn’t try to go overboard any time soon.

The current best choice of action would be for both parties to negotiate and talk things through.

“Well of course it is!” replied Bryson with a nod.

“However, do remember that the Fenderson family used to be on par with the Crawfords, Fynn. While you said that the young master of the Crawford family wanted to wish me a happy birthday and celebrate my eightieth birthday together, it seems that he isn’t present. While he did send someone here in his stead, I don’t think that it justifies me handing over both my daughter and granddaughter over to the Crawfords,” said Bryson as he fixed his gaze on Fynn.

“Hahaha! Now who said that our young master wasn’t here? In fact, he’s already arrived at the Fenderson family mansion a day in advance to make all your birthday preparations, Lord Fenderson!” replied Fynn as he laughed.

“...What? What do you mean Mr. Crawford’s already arrived?” replied Bryson in surprise.

“Mr. Crawford’s already here? Where is he?”

Everyone was equally astonished.

Chapter 787

Fynn himself began scanning through the crowd at that moment.

According to what Mr. Zartyr had said, Mr. Crawford had indeed already arrived.

By then, everyone was exchanging glances with one another.

“Oh gosh! I really hadn’t expected Mr. Crawford to come here! Why wasn’t I aware of any of this at all?” said Mindy in a surprised tone.

It was no surprise why she wanted to see Mr. Crawford for herself. After all, he was the reason why she and Jasmine couldn’t even leave their house when they were children.

Even the celebrities who were still holding on to Gerald were looking around excitedly. While they were quite sure that actually being able to get acquainted with someone with such a high status as Mr. Crawford was completely out of the question, a chance to see what a truly dignified rich heir like him looked like would be the second best thing.

Being able to do that would make the entire trip feel worthwhile.

Watching the scene unfold before him, Gerald could only shake his head with a wry smile on his face. Since things had turned out this way, it was impossible for him to continue maintaining a low profile anymore.

In his initial plan, Gerald had simply told Barry to create a distraction outside.

Little did he know that his father had found out about the mission. As a result, his father had sent some of the people from the Crawford family from Northbay over. To be honest, Gerald himself didn’t really fully comprehend everything that was currently happening.

However, it was indeed a good move for his family to send some men over. Since things had already turned out this way, in a way, his task was already complete. Understanding that, Gerald then stood up.

“What are you doing, Gerald?” asked Mindy.

Even the female celebrities seemed surprised.

“They’re calling for Mr. Crawford. Why are you the one standing up?”

“Hahaha! For those who didn’t know any better, they must be thinking that he’s the actual Mr. Crawford!” mocked the celebrities as they laughed among themselves.

Everyone else who turned to look at him was startled by his actions.

“G-Gerald!” shouted Alice who had been standing quietly at the sidelines this entire time.

It only took a single glance for her to recognize him, and she was now breathing heavily. To think that Gerald really was here! Moreover, based on the current situation, it seems that he had arrived together with her team!

So the person who had carried her to her bed and helped her change into her pajamas... Was it really all him?!

Regret and embarrassment flooded her as she recalled the hazy memory of seeing him last night. All sorts of emotions were swirling in Alice's heart at that moment. Was he really the one responsible for putting her in bed last night? To think that she had rejected such a person before...

Xavia herself was staring at Gerald wide-eyed and in disbelief, looking utterly terrified.

It was almost as though Gerald was always lingering around her. She had come all the way to the Salford Province to participate in this event, just to finally be able to shine and show off a little. She really hadn't expected to bump into Gerald here once again!

In the end, Xavia was the person who was most afraid of seeing him here. After all, based on what Fynn had earlier said, did that mean that he truly was the Mr. Crawford from Northbay?

If that was the case, then the Long family would definitely be unable to even come close to comparing themselves to him anymore.

Aside from fear, Xavia was also feeling very uncomfortable by Gerald's sudden spike in both maturity and stability in such a short period of time.

"Gerald... You!" said Jasmine as she watched Gerald walk toward her grandfather. She was so surprised by the sudden revelation that her entire face was now a bright red.

Was he the Mr. Crawford she was supposed to get married to?

Even Xara was shocked speechless. She had initially assumed that Gerald was simply one of the descendants of the Crawford family. Never would she have guessed that Gerald's father was actually Dylan Crawford!

"Greetings, Mr. Crawford!" said Fynn with a smile as he looked at the young master while reminiscing the time when he had first carried a much younger Gerald in his arms.

Not only had Fynn been working as Dylan's personal driver, he had also been the one in charge of Gerald's poverty education and upbringing.

So even though Fynn very rarely directly contacted Gerald, he knew Gerald's attitude and behavior well. Gerald was both a steady and mature young man who was also rather introverted, just like the mistress.

"Mr. Crawford!"

Chapter 788

The simultaneous shout had come from the people standing behind Fynn.

Gerald then nodded before saying, "I really hadn't expected you to come here, Uncle Fynn..."

"Master was simply worried about your situation. Since he was afraid that you wouldn't be able to handle the matter alone, he sent me here to help you!" replied Fynn.

“Heh! I’m just here because I really missed you, brother!” said Yoel with a smile.

By this point, everyone’s mouths were hanging wide open, especially the celebrities from before.

“I-Impossible... This is absolutely impossible!” muttered Xavia as she continued shaking her head in her shock.

To think that for a period of time, she had finally managed to recover from her shock of finding out that Gerald’s true identity was Mr. Crawford of Mayberry... Her joining the Long family had allowed her initial sadness and hurt feelings to slowly fade since she knew that she was at least on par with Gerald at that point in time.

Knowing that allowed her to keep a more stable mental state.

However, now that she realized that he was actually Mr. Crawford from Northbay in the flesh, she knew that being in the Long family was completely useless. After all, he was a world-class heir! There was no way she was ever going to be able to compare to him!

Xavia had truly suffered a massive blow to her ego this time.

“Grandpa Fenderson, on behalf of the Crawfords from Northbay, I’d like to present our gift to you now. Will that be acceptable?” asked Gerald as he smiled.

Taking in a deep breath, Bryson then nodded slightly.

Mindy herself ran toward Jasmine's side before saying, "J-Jasmine! I really hadn't expected Gerald to be..."

Jasmine could only nod in response as she blushed.

Neither of them could have ever anticipated that Gerald was the actual young master of the Crawford family.

Following that, things went rather smoothly.

All Bryson could do was try to negotiate with the Crawfords since their home had finally been exposed. Naturally, Gerald gained the right to take Xara and Queta away from him.

Once the birthday banquet ended, Gerald began leaving with his team.

Alice herself was still experiencing complicated emotions so she stayed behind, not knowing how to even process everything that had just happened.

Xavia on the other hand, seemed extremely unwilling to just leave it at that. Chasing angrily after him, she then called out, "Gerald!"

Before she was even able to reach him, a bodyguard stepped in front of her.

“What is it?” asked Gerald, a wry smile on his face.

“What... What the hell is going on here? You... You were the young master of the Crawfords from Northbay this entire time...? How is that even possible...?”

While she was the only one who had chased after Gerald, she still managed to maintain a calm façade. After all, she had done things behind the Long family’s back before.

She was also well aware that if she allowed Gerald to leave just like that today, she would never come to terms with it for the rest of her life.

Xavia recalled the days when she used to date Gerald, the university’s well-known pauper. Yet after just a short while, he had suddenly become rich. It almost seemed like he was the boss of the Mayberry Organization.

Though she was already extremely surprised back then, Gerald had refused to answer any of her questions.

To think that she even had the audacity to assume that she was finally on par with Gerald after getting into the Long family...

The Longs were nothing. After all, Gerald was one of the richest heirs on the entire planet! A top rich heir! She couldn’t even comprehend what kind of power and influence he had!

Gerald himself knew for a fact that Xavia wouldn't leave him until he gave her a definite answer this time.

He then smiled bitterly as he began explaining.

“To tell you the truth, even I was shocked in the beginning. I remember feeling very sad that night yet the moment I arrived home, my sister suddenly transferred a million and five hundred thousand dollars in USD to me as pocket money! How utterly shocked I was back then... It was on that night when my sister revealed to me that I had been raised in poverty on purpose...”

The more Gerald explained to her, the more her eyes widened in shock.

Everything made sense now.

“Well, that's about it. Now that you finally know the entire story, it's high time I left!” said Gerald with a slight nod before turning around.

“No! Gerald, wait!” shouted Xavia extremely anxiously.

Chapter 789

“Why don't we make up now, Gerald? I'm even willing to be your concubine!”

“I beg your pardon?” replied Gerald as he stared at Xavia in disbelief.

“...U-um... What... was I even saying...”

Due to how anxious she was, in her panic, she had accidentally blurted out what she truly felt. It was now beyond awkward and embarrassing for her.

“I-It was just gibberish... S-say Gerald, we’re still friends, right?”

“... If there’s nothing else, I’ll be taking my leave,” said Gerald as he turned around to leave for good, a bitter smile on his face.

His relationship with Xavia was nothing but a thing in the past now. Since he no longer had any feelings for her, he knew it was best for him not to get involved with Xavia anymore.

A little while after he had gotten into his car, he received a phone call. It was from Mila.

Though Mila hadn’t contacted him for almost half a month now, Gerald had sent her a message every now and then.

“What is it, Mila?” asked Gerald as he smiled.

“Are... you done with whatever you’ve been doing?” asked Mila in return.

Throughout Mila’s period of silence, Gerald had constantly updated her on news regarding himself. Because of that, Mila always knew what Gerald was up to.

“That I am. I’ll be returning to Northbay today, but before that, I’ll head to Hong Kong to look for you first,” replied Gerald, still smiling.

“Alright! Ah, if you’re coming over, could we meet before tomorrow morning? I’m leading an overseas expedition team for an interview tomorrow, but I still want to meet you! I... I really, really want to meet you!”

Since she had remained silent for so long, not once had she told him about any of the grievances that she had gone through.

After all, what Jessica had meant was crystal clear. Back then, she had said that Mila wasn’t cut to be part of the Crawford family. That her relationship with Gerald wasn’t going to last long.

Even if Jessica had said so, as long as an opportunity existed, Mila was willing to work hard to make it happen.

She had been putting in extra effort in her work throughout her period of silence. Mila wanted to prove that she wasn’t just some trophy wife, but also someone who would be able to support and actually help Gerald in the future.

It was honestly because of her hard work that Mila was being given the opportunity to lead her own team to conduct an interview tomorrow.

Still, the more effort she placed in bettering herself, the more Mila ended up missing Gerald.

“I can do that. I’ll be meeting you tomorrow then!”

After exchanging a few more words, both of them hung up.

“How’s the situation, Mila? Will Gerald be coming over?” asked Molly and her other roommates as they continued packing the things they needed for the interview.

Most of her roommates had only caught a glimpse of Gerald back when they had gone looking for him with Mila half a month earlier. Back then, they only knew that he was a rich person from Mayberry City.

For Mila, however, it wasn’t until quite recently when she came to know that his wealth was actually world-class! The difference in power and wealth that he had at his disposal was so great compared to what she had initially thought of him, that he may as well be a completely different person!

Molly and the others hadn’t gotten the chance to get to know Gerald back then, and all of them were quite eager to meet him again.

As the main reporter for the overseas interview this time around, Mila was given the right to bring two assistants along with her. The two she had chosen were Molly and Wanda.

Though Wanda had been both angry and jealous of Mila on multiple occasions, ever since the incident at the television station festival, she and Mila had grown to have a pretty good relationship.

“He said that he’s coming!” replied Mila as she smiled sweetly.

“Wow! That’s great to hear! Since he’s personally coming over, I can only imagine the scene that will play out! Our boyfriends will also be coming to see us off then! Think you could use that opportunity to introduce him to them, Mila?” asked Molly with a smile.

“Of course!”

As the three girls continued chatting happily among themselves, a sudden knock was heard on the door.

The moment the dormitory room door was opened, the girls saw that it was Narissa.

“I saw a few express delivery packages for you downstairs, so I’ve brought them up!” said Narissa as she handed the three small packages over to them.

“Humph. Thanks, I guess!” replied Wanda with a cold sneer.

After all, everyone was pretty much still angry with her for siding with Hallie to set Mila up back then.

Naturally, after hearing her part of the story, Mila herself didn’t hold anything against her.

Chapter 790

“Thank you, Narissa! You can hand them over to me!” replied Mila as she took the parcels from her.

“And thank you for giving me the opportunity to appear on television for a show! Thank you so much!”

“You’re welcome. We’re all good friends after all! Either way, I think we should open the packages now and see what we got!” replied Mila with a smile.

Since Narissa wanted to get closer to Mila again, she stayed to watch them open their packages. Including her, there were now four people in their dormitory.

“...Huh? There’s a parcel for each of us! Could it be that all three of our boyfriends sent us gifts at the same time? Hahaha! Though that’s most likely improbable!” joked Molly.

“My guess is that they’re from the overseas expedition team. The three of us are, after all, entourages for the expedition team!”

“Yeah, it’s probably from them!”

With that, the three of them then began opening their respective parcels...

“...Huh? A... Pendant? It looks a little strange, don’t you think?” said Molly as she held the pendant in her hand.

A symbol resembling the sun was etched on it, and from an angle, it looked somewhat like a burning fireball.

“How queer of the expedition team. Why would they even send us such pendants?” asked Wanda, a puzzled expression on her face.

“Also... Don’t the pendants make you feel slightly uncomfortable?” added Wanda.

“I don’t know about uncomfortable but it truly does look strange!” replied Mila who also seemed surprised.

“Well, let’s just ignore the pendants for now. Instead, I propose that we go out and enjoy a good meal tonight! We’ll be showing off our talents tomorrow, after all! My treat!” said Molly with a laugh.

“Sounds good to me! Oh, why don’t you join us, Narissa? Let’s go together!” invited Mila.

As Narissa nodded in response, a plane from the Salford Province began landing in Hong Kong.

It was already late at night and once the group got off the plane, a special car was already waiting for them. Not long after the group was dropped off at a seaside hotel...

“Get lost, b*tch!” shouted a young man as he slapped a girl on her cheek.

He had used so much force in his slap that the girl immediately fell to the ground.

“D*mn it! So you suddenly start thinking about me after all this time? And think you can just follow me all the way here to look for me? Go to hell!” growled the man, kicking the girl’s abdomen hard as she lay at the hotel’s entrance.

In utter pain, the only thing the girl could do was curl up on the ground.

As he continued hurting her, his actions had garnered attention from the many people preparing to board the ship closeby.

“If my new girlfriend misunderstands me, then I’ll toss you into the ocean and let the fish feast on you!”

Just as he was about to hit the girl again, the young man suddenly froze when he felt someone holding tightly onto his wrist.

“You... Who are you?” asked the man angrily.

Instead of answering, the other person simply tightened his grip on the young man’s wrist. It wasn’t long before the young man could take the pain no longer and began begging for mercy!

“Scram!” shouted the other person as he then kicked the young man a good distance away.

Seeing the group of men standing behind the person who had hurt his wrist, he didn't dare to stay any longer and immediately ran into the hotel.

Once he was gone, the person who had saved the girl squatted down and helped her up. When he saw her face, however, he was instantly startled!

"It really is you!" said the man in surprise.

He had felt that the girl looked a bit too familiar when he first saw her at the port's entrance earlier.

While he hadn't planned to interfere with the situation, when he saw how cruelly the man was treating her, he just couldn't bear watching her continue getting beaten up anymore.

Though the girl had been severely hurt to the point where she had trouble even standing on her own, the moment she saw her savior, she instantly felt both surprised and grateful.

"It... It's you, Gerald?!" cried out the girl.

Chapter 791

"It is! I really hadn't expected to bump into you again!" replied Gerald with a nod.

The woman in question, was none other than Alice.

He had initially thought that he wouldn't ever see her again after the incident in the Fenderson family mansion. To think that he would bump into her again so soon!

Gerald still remembered what Alice had said to him that night, and he was honestly still feeling bad about it. Had she not met him, she could've been living a much better life now.

As if her suffering wasn't already enough, she would've definitely been beaten up much more terribly by that man had he stepped any later! Seeing the state she was in made Gerald truly saddened.

After all, he no longer held on to any resentment toward her.

"Are you alright?" asked Gerald.

"I... I'm fine! I'm just a loser now, Gerald... Do you want to beat me up too? After all, I'm just some vain girl who loves money and is willing to do anything for it! I'm beyond shameless! Just leave me be!" replied Alice between sobs as she began crawling away.

"Why do you have to be this way, Alice..." said Gerald as he shook his head in resignation. He simply couldn't bear looking at her like this.

"Just ignore me, Gerald... I don't deserve your concern after treating you like that back then!" replied Alice as she sat on the ground and wept.

Gerald was well aware that there was simply no way that he would be able to sleep well tonight if he abandoned her in her current state.

“...I’ll get you a room for the night. It’s pretty late already and you definitely look like you need the rest. Come on now,” said Gerald as he supported Alice up and began leading her into the closest hotel.

Before entering the hotel, he turned to look around and gestured at his subordinates. Understanding his non-verbal order clearly, they immediately arranged for the ship from earlier to wait for his return.

After booking a room and making sure that she got there safely, Gerald was about to leave when Alice suddenly wrapped her arms around him tightly!

“Just get some well-deserved rest, I really need to go now!” said Gerald.

“Please don’t go, Gerald! I’m begging you... I... I have a lot of things I want to tell you... I was wrong before! Even after all this time, the one who’s always been nicest to me is still you! I... I know I don’t deserve you... but could you please... Take pity and accompany me...? Just for a short while!” replied Alice, refusing to release her hug.

Gerald could only sigh in his mind as he nodded in agreement. However, he made sure to maintain at least some distance away from Alice.

While it was true that Alice had the allure of a goddess that could make any man yearn for her, her sad condition outweighed any of his earthly desires.

Since there was red wine in the room, Alice grabbed a bottle and poured two glasses of wine for Gerald and herself.

“Have a drink with me, Gerald. Once we’re done, I won’t pester you anymore in the future! I’m now well aware of how foolish I was in the past, but that’s because I didn’t know about your true identity! Regardless, please indulge me for a little while and just drink with me! You don’t have to be afraid, I’ll keep my word that I won’t pester you after this!” said Alice.

“You’re already this hurt. I suggest you just hit the hay early,” replied Gerald as he shook his head.

“My heart hurts even more. And you know what they say, wine is the remedy for a broken heart.”

“...Fine. But I won’t be drinking much. I’ll leave after one drink since my subordinates are still waiting for me!” said Gerald as he took a wine glass from her hand.

Alice then started talking about her life. The main reason she was currently in such a pitiful state was because she was living alone and away from home.

Being Alice’s ex-classmate, Gerald knew he would definitely feel bad about it later if he didn’t spend at least some time advising her. What more, she was also Naomi’s best friend.

By the time both of them were done, Gerald had already drunk three consecutive glasses of wine. Seeing how tipsy Alice was already getting, Gerald immediately stopped her from getting more wine.

“That’s quite enough. We’ll stop drinking now. It’s about time you get some rest, Alice. Everything will be fine the next day... Now if you excuse me, I have something to do and it’s about time I left!” said Gerald as he stood up.

However, Gerald’s legs were already giving in, even after just a few steps forward. He was getting increasingly dizzy as well.

‘Isn’t this wine... a little too strong...?’ Gerald thought to himself as he felt Alice’s arms wrap around him again.

Though he wanted to push her away, his arms barely had any strength left in them.

It wasn’t long before Gerald finally blacked out on the bed.

Chapter 792

Holding on to her stomach as she wiped her tears away, Alice took her cell phone out and began sending a text message.

It wasn’t long after when a knock was heard at her room’s door. Upon opening it, the person who stood outside turned out to be the same man who had beaten Alice up earlier!

“Is it done, miss? And here I thought that the young master would’ve already picked you up and left with you by now!” said the man with a chuckle.

“Here’s the money, now get out of my sight! Also, while I did tell you to put on a great show, don’t you think you were being a little too harsh?” replied Alice angrily.

“Hey, it’s all because of my intense acting skills that the young master ended up buying it! Haha! I can see that he’s fainted... Since you’ll be free for the rest of the night, why don’t we... ”

“Get lost!” shouted Alice as she glared contemptuously at the man before slamming the door shut.

It was true that Alice had earlier set Gerald up. After all, the only way she would be able to gain his trust and compassion was by ‘getting hurt’ in front of him.

Though it was a gamble, Alice was willing to try anything at this point.

Her fantasies of being together with him had been shattered the moment she learned of Gerald’s true identity. What more, he seemed to be leaving Salford County soon.

Once he left, she knew it would be near impossible for her to meet him again.

Alice simply couldn’t reconcile with the fact that she had once only been steps away from being able to be part of an unimaginably distinguished and rich family.

This was her final attempt to grab hold of her dreams.

After the birthday banquet ended, Alice had not scrupled to leave the service team before rushing back to Hong Kong. She was in such a hurry since she had heard some things during the Fenderson Mansion event.

According to the rumors, Gerald was bringing some of his people there. While she didn't specifically know where his family stayed in Northbay, Alice knew where Gerald's sister was.

Though she had initially been rather skeptical about the rumors, her gamble paid off in the end, since Gerald truly did come.

By then, she had already planned for the show between her and that man from earlier to happen. Her plan had worked flawlessly too since she knew Gerald like the back of her hand.

His greatest downfall was the fact that he was a soft-hearted person, especially with women. It was why Alice had managed to successfully trick him, and all that led to the current situation.

"You really can't blame me for doing this, Gerald... I really just want you to be mine!" said Alice as she slowly began undressing.

The next morning at Northbay's main port in Hong Kong, a large ocean liner could be seen waiting to depart. The ship had been exclusively reserved for those in the investigation team.

One after another, the many members of the investigation team began boarding the ship.

“I’ll see you in three days, Molly! I’ll miss you!”

“That’s not a lie, is it?”

“Of course it isn’t!”

As Molly continued openly flirting with her boyfriend, Wanda did the same with hers. Both their boyfriends had come to see them off.

Mila herself, however, seemed to be waiting anxiously alone there. Her cell phone was ready in her hand and she had already tried calling him up to twenty times that morning.

The reply she got, however, was always the same.

“Sorry, the phone you have dialed, is currently off. Please try again later.”

“Why hasn’t Mr. Crawford arrived, Mila?” asked Molly as she walked over, her arm locked with her boyfriend’s.

“Humph! Do you honestly think that being a rich man’s partner is going to be that easy? He probably doesn’t even care for her! Why, it wouldn’t be a stretch to assume that he’s currently sleeping in another beauty’s arms!” said a girl who smiled coldly as she approached the group.

“Like you’d know anything about that, Hallie! Remember, you’re only here because you made use of your connections! In the end, you’re just a b*tch deep down, and you’ll never be anything more than that! So shut up already!” retorted Wanda with a huff.

Hearing that, Hallie’s face immediately went red with rage.

“Hey, look over there! A luxury car is coming this way!” said a man who pointed at it as a few other men—who were standing close by—turned to look.

Chapter 793

“A luxury car?” said Mila as she quickly turned to look as well.

Mila could feel her heartbeats quicken as she watched the sports car swiftly make its way into the port.

‘Has Gerald finally come?’

As the car came to a screeching halt, Mila found herself slowly walking forward.

Out stepped a young man with a bouquet of fresh flowers in hand. Seeing how romantic he was being, almost everyone present—especially the girls—began feeling jealous.

“Sorry I’m late, Hallie!” said the young man as he removed his glasses while smiling.

“You’re not late at all, darling! I’m delighted to know that you rushed all the way here just to see me off!” replied Hallie as she skipped rather excitedly toward the young man.

When she moved past Mila, however, she made sure that Mila saw her smirking at her before saying, “Why did you walk so far ahead? Did you honestly think that it was going to be your rich boyfriend? Too bad! This one’s mine!”

Hallie felt extremely satisfied after saying that. After all, she had initially feared that Mila would end up becoming the highlight of the day since her boyfriend was so powerful.

Thankfully, he hadn’t turned up. This meant that her other assumption was right. After all, why would a rich heir like Mr. Crawford ever want to be with a girl like Mila?

‘In the end, he doesn’t even bother about you. Did you honestly think that he’d come all the way over just to meet you? Dream on!’

While Hallie was aware that she had already lost to her when it came to work, she was happy to know that she could still win against Mila when it came to her love life.

“Rich boyfriend?” asked the young man as he held on to Hallie’s hands.

“Indeed! Someone here has an extremely wealthy boyfriend! Though she had claimed that he would clear his busy schedule just to come over and meet her, in the end, it was all just a bunch of baloney! Where is he now?” shouted Hallie out loud.

Hearing her words, Mila became so anxious that she felt like crying right there and then!

In all honesty, her anxiety firing up had less to do with what Hallie had said. Rather, it had stemmed from the fact that Gerald hadn’t answered any of her calls that morning. He had even forgotten about his promise with her last night!

‘Does he truly not love me anymore?’ Mila thought to herself, her mind swimming with many other depressing thoughts.

“Alright, hand over your phones! All personnel are required to verify your identity before you’re allowed to board the ship!” said one of the investigation team’s staff aloud at that moment.

With that, Mila and the others slowly began boarding the ship. Even after everyone had gotten aboard, Mila was honestly still hoping that a miracle could happen.

‘Gerald will definitely appear at the last moment... After all, he promised me that he would come, and he never lies to me.’

However, as she watched the port slowly fade in the distance, Mila couldn't help but burst into tears.

As the ship continued sailing on, the screeching of car tires could be heard at the now almost deserted port.

The few people who remained at the port found themselves looking at a young, rich heir and an old man as they stepped out of an immensely expensive-looking car.

The ocean liner was nowhere in sight.

Gerald could only slam his fist against the car's bonnet, realizing that he had been too late.

While he had tried calling Mila on his way there, he found that she had switched her phone off. If only he had been a little earlier, he would've definitely still been able to meet with her.

The main issue wasn't about failing to meet her, however. It was failing to keep his promise.

He remembered seeing Alice lying atop of him the moment he opened his eyes. That was all he needed to see to realize that he had been tricked into his current situation the night before.

After giving Alice a harsh scolding, he immediately rushed out of the hotel.

Fynn and his men had been waiting for him the entire night at the port, and knowing this only served to add to Gerald's guilt.

If only he hadn't taken pity on Alice, none of this would've happened...

In his mind, Gerald was able to picture how eager and disappointed Mila must have felt throughout her wait for him. The more he thought about it, the more his grief piled up.

Chapter 794

Gerald found himself sitting crossed-legged on the port in his resentment.

Nothing else could be done. All he could do was wait for Mila's return and explain to her what had happened the night before when she finally came back.

The rest of the day passed by quickly and before Mila knew it, it was already night. With the sea being so peaceful as the ocean liner sailed on, even the faintest of sea breezes could be heard.

"That's enough dwelling on it, don't you think, Mila? Since we're all probably tired by now, let's go get a bite!" said Molly as she prepared to go get some food for her.

"Alright...!" replied Mila with a slight nod.

“Now that’s more like it! Still, why did the investigation team have to take our phones away? How boring!” said Molly who just wasn’t used to not having her phone around her.

“But of course! Private information about the investigation could easily be leaked if we had our phones with us! While being strict isn’t necessarily a bad thing, I never thought that they’d even take my watch away! Humph!” replied Wanda.

“Regardless, while we had been told that we were coming all the way out here to investigate the quality of the sea, I really doubt that that’s the case, or at least I feel that that’s not our sole mission. After all, I saw a few fierce-looking people boarding the ship with us earlier who looked like they could very well be soldiers. Why would such people be needed in an investigation mission?” said Molly, evidently trying to distract Mila from her negative thoughts.

“...Huh? What are you getting at?” asked Wanda, slightly astonished.

“Call it a sixth sense which comes with having an elder brother who’s also a soldier. They really didn’t need to put on such a grand show if their motive was simply to investigate the ocean’s quality. What more, while I was helping to move some things into the conference room earlier, guess what I saw?” replied Molly as she suddenly lowered her voice.

“Go on...” said Mila and Wanda simultaneously as they looked at her. After all, even they had sensed that the investigation team was somewhat mysterious. The team seemed to have been studying something throughout most of the day.

“I saw a drawing which they must have used during their meeting! It looked like some kind of building... Haha! Wouldn't it be wild if the investigation team was actually on a mission to locate some underwater palace?” said Molly as she laughed out loud.

Instead of laughing along, however, Mila and Wanda could only look at each other in dismay. The way Molly had said it had made their entire expedition sound and feel much more mysterious than it should have been.

“...You're not pulling our leg, right?”

“Of course I'm not! There's no reason for me to lie to both of you! Besides, they noticed that I saw the picture and they sternly warned me not to say a word about it! I was so terrified that I immediately ran off!” replied Molly as she stuck her tongue out.

“...Well, the larger picture doesn't concern us... Let's just stick to doing the things we were assigned to!” said Mila with a bitter laugh.

In response, both Wanda and Molly nodded in agreement.

It was at that moment when all three of them heard footsteps coming closer to their room, followed by a few knocks on the door. Upon opening it, they saw Hallie standing outside with her arms crossed.

“What do you want?” asked Molly.

“Professor Shevall wants to hold a meeting, so I’m here to inform you about it!” said Hallie in a rather reluctant tone.

“Fine, tell him that we’ll be on our way immediately!” replied Molly, a smug smile on her face.

Rolling her eyes, Hallie then left their room.

Professor Winston Shevall was the leader of the operation. He looked to be around seventy and while he seemed rather strict, he was also extremely knowledgeable. That made Mila respect him a lot. From what the girls had heard, he had been in charge of finding a sponsor and forming the investigation team as well.

After a while, the trio arrived at the conference room for the meeting. Including the three of them, there were about thirty members in the investigation team. The meeting itself wasn’t anything special. Professor Shevall simply wanted to emphasize the things that they needed to look out for during the expedition.

Halfway through their meeting, however, Professor Shevall suddenly began coughing terribly. From that point on, he started scratching his neck from time to time.

Since Mila was sitting right beside the professor, her gaze inadvertently fell upon the back of his neck. What Mila saw made her instantly stunned...

Chapter 795

“...P-professor Shevall? Professor Shevall...?” called out Mila in a soft tone.

“Hmm? What’s wrong, Mila?” asked the professor as he looked at her with a gentle gaze and smile.

“A... symbol of some sort seems to have appeared on your neck...”

Under different circumstances, Mila would’ve just assumed that the symbol was just rash from all the professor’s scratching. However, the symbol looked far too familiar for it to simply be rash.

“...A symbol? What could you possibly be talking about, Mila?” asked Professor Shevall as a bitter smile formed on his face.

It was at that moment when Mila became certain that it wasn’t just mere rashes on the professor’s neck. Rather, the symbol on his neck was one that she recognized.

It looked exactly like the sun symbol on her pendant!

“It... It looks exactly like the symbol on the pendants we received!” said Mila, now getting increasingly frightened.

Hearing that, the others present began looking at each other before each fishing out their own pendants from their pockets. All of the pendants looked exactly alike.

“So it turns out that everyone received it!” said Molly.

Upon realizing that everyone was familiar with the symbol, Professor Shevall's expression immediately changed. Snatching the pendant from Mila's hand, he gave it a good look before scanning through the other pendants held by the rest of the investigation team members.

Not long after, his face went white as a sheet.

"...Mila, is the symbol on my neck truly similar to the one on the pendants?" asked the professor who looked like he had just experienced the worst day of his life.

Not knowing what was happening, Mila could only nod slightly.

"D*mn it! And here I thought that the symbol was only reserved for the most important of members! I didn't expect everyone here to have it!"

"What exactly does the symbol represent, professor? I received it yesterday through mail!"

Seeing how unpleasant Professor Shevall's expression had become, the others were now equally as scared as Mila. After all, though there were many of them in the room, they were still out at sea in the dead of night. The spooky atmosphere was simply inevitable.

"It's finally appeared again... It seems that we're its targets this time!" exclaimed the professor as his hands trembled.

“...What do you mean by that, Professor Shevall? What’s appeared?” asked Mila.

“It... It’s all my fault... I’ve put all of you in danger! I’m so sorry!” replied the professor as he removed his glasses, unable to control his emotions any longer.

“That’s... the symbol of the Sun League... The symbol itself is called the Death Pact... It’s appeared only twice before, the first time being forty years ago while the second, twenty years ago. Well, I should say thrice now since it’s finally reappeared today! Alas, everyone ever recorded to have received the symbol has mysteriously gone missing within three days! It’s been decades since I’ve researched the incident yet I’ve never gotten even close to uncovering the mystery!” explained Professor Shevall, his expression extremely terrible.

Hearing what he had to say, everyone soon found themselves quivering in fear. After all, the professor was extremely knowledgeable and he didn’t seem like the kind of person who would make jokes like that in the first place.

It didn’t help that his expression remained dead serious throughout his strange explanation.

“Cease the investigation! We’re turning back immediately!” ordered the professor as he immediately stood up.

Not long after someone ran off to relay his order, the same person burst into the room again before shouting, “P-professor Shevall! Something... Something’s gone terribly wrong...!”

“Elaborate!”

“Just... Please come outside and have a look for yourself! It’s right in front of the liner...” replied the person, now completely out of breath.

Professor Shevall then quickly led the investigation team members out of the conference room, bringing all of them to the ship’s deck.

Naturally, Mila and Molly followed the group, huddled closely together to keep each other calm.

Upon arriving at the deck, everyone was immediately stunned. Molly even found herself screaming once she realized what was brewing outside.

A massive maelstrom had formed in the sea, and the ship was heading straight for it! Close up, it looked exactly like a large mouth, devouring everything that crossed its path.

Though the captain was clearly trying to steer the ship away from the menacing whirlpool, the liner simply couldn’t win against the strong forces of the maelstrom.

“Return to the cabins immediately!” shouted the professor just as a loud crash could be heard.

Chapter 796

Violent waves had just crashed onto the side of the ship, and by the looks of it, many more were soon to come. The thunderous waves were so high that they easily scaled the entire ship. Every passing wave was now drenching the deck.

Everyone aboard began screaming as the ocean liner slowly began sinking into the maelstrom. However, no matter how much they screamed, the chaotic waves seemed to drown all their voices.

The night was dark, but the ocean was even darker...

By the time the sea finally calmed itself again, a giant object could be seen descending into the depths. While it was faint, the symbol on the pendant made a brief appearance before disappearing, just like the ocean liner had.

“Is Mr. Crawford awake?” asked Fynn as he hurriedly headed for Gerald’s room with a few documents in hand.

It was already the next day and Gerald was currently in a house on an island that Jessica had rented.

“Mr. Crawford’s up and he seems to be in a rather good mood today. He’s even asked for a ship to be arranged so that he’ll be able to go out to sea and have some fun!” said a maid respectfully.

Just as the maid’s reply ended, the door to Gerald’s room opened.

“Ah, good morning, Fynn! I plan to go out to sea today and enjoy myself! Of course, I’m also planning to meet up with Mila if we’re able to locate her! We’ll return to Northbay tomorrow. If you’re free, why not join me?”

Since Gerald had failed to meet Mila the day before, he had made up his mind that he would catch up with her and give her the proper explanation that she needed. He figured that though they were part of an exclusive expedition, they shouldn’t be too hard to find.

“You absolutely cannot go looking for her, Mr. Crawford!” replied Fynn, a worried expression on his face.

“And why is that?”

“Something happened to Ocean Liner No. 2 last night! The area’s currently been blockaded as the search for any traces of the ship continues!”

“Ocean Liner No. 2?” repeated Gerald, stunned.

“It was the ship Miss Smith was on... It seems that the ship was hit by what we can only assume to be a tsunami last night! Since it has yet to be located, the current assumption is that it sank into the ocean!” explained Fynn in a rather helpless tone.

“How... How could this be...? What became of its crew...?” asked Gerald, filled with grief and anxiety.

“As I’ve said, we’ve been looking for the ship for ages, but so far, we haven’t even found any signs of a sunken ship!”

“This simply won’t do! I’m heading over to look for her in person!” declared Gerald as he immediately headed for the exit.

Seeing that, Fynn could only shake his head as he took his cell phone out.

“Deploy the family’s exclusive marine support! I’ve already told all of you to be ready from dawn, haven’t I? Action is to be taken immediately!” ordered Fynn before ending the call and catching up with Gerald.

Fynn had been watching Gerald grow even from when Gerald was still a child. He knew his personality well.

Gerald was an extremely loyal person who treated every person he had been in a relationship with, with utmost importance. Fynn had seen this play out with both Xavia, his ex-girlfriend, and Mila, his current one.

Since Mila was now technically missing, the fact that Gerald hadn’t had a mental breakdown was already a good sign for Fynn.

He had feared that something would happen to Gerald should he behave recklessly upon hearing the news. To prevent that, the moment Fynn was notified about the incident, he immediately issued a search for the liner using the family’s manpower.

Moving back to the present, Gerald stayed aboard the ship throughout the entire day, making sure that no spot in the Northbay Sea remained unchecked. However, even when evening came, not a trace of the ship could be scavenged no matter how hard they searched.

Gerald could only sit on the port in a daze, filled with deep grief as he watched the faint outlines of the many ships still out at sea trying to locate Ocean Liner no. 2.

“...It’s all my fault... If only I hadn’t allowed you to return to Hong Kong back then... If you hadn’t come here, nothing would’ve happened! If I hadn’t broken my promise yesterday, I wouldn’t have missed the chance to meet you for the final time!” said Gerald aloud, every word filled with self-reproach.

By then, both Queta and Xara had arrived, and both of them silently stood by Gerald’s side. In Queta’s hands was Gerald’s meal which had remained untouched till now.

Queta herself was understandably saddened since Gerald hadn’t eaten anything the entire day. Just as Queta was about to persuade Gerald to at least have a little food, a shout came from behind them.

“What do you think you’re doing here? Get lost!”

It wasn’t long after before a black-suited bodyguard ran toward Gerald and said, “Mr. Crawford, there’s a girl who wishes to meet you no matter what. She claims that she’s Miss Smith’s classmate...”

Chapter 797

“Bring her over!” said Gerald as he stood up.

Getting the approval he needed, the bodyguard then left to get her. A brief moment later, the girl was escorted over by a few other bodyguards.

The girl herself appeared to be shy, though it was a reasonable reaction. After all, who wouldn't be terrified standing in a port filled with hundreds of luxury cars? As if that wasn't enough, at least a thousand black-suited bodyguards were standing all over the place!

No ordinary person would ever approach the scene without proper reason.

"A-are you... Mr. Crawford? Mila's boyfriend...?" asked the girl meekly.

"I am," replied Gerald with a nod.

"I-I go by the name of Narissa Martin... I'm a good friend of Mila's... I heard that you were investigating the liner's disappearance... While I do have some information about it, I'm not really sure if it'll help with the search..."

"Go on then. It may lead to the next clue!" replied Gerald immediately.

"Well... The night before, Mila, Molly, and Wanda received a package each... All three packages contained identical pendants... Though the pendants themselves felt somewhat unnerving to look at, the three girls and I simply assumed that it was a souvenir distributed to all the members of the investigation team... Regardless, it was rather surprising at the time that they'd get pendants—of all things—as souvenirs."

“While the last I saw Mila was after sharing a meal with her and her other two friends, I somehow managed to gain more insight into the pendants after I was done hosting a show yesterday. By coincidence, one of the guests who had partaken in the show was a student of Professor Shevall, the head of the investigation team. After the show ended, we had a slight chat. However, when I asked about the odd pendants, the student claimed that the investigation team never distributed such a thing! I was quite baffled by that. After all, the packages the three girls received had no delivery addresses on them. Who could have sent them then? Feeling weirded out, I then described the pendant to the student.”

“Upon hearing my description, he showed me a group chat which a few of the participants of the investigation were in. After reading through it, it seemed that many of them were discussing receiving the same pendant! I truly feel that something’s off about the pendants... What reason did the anonymous sender have to send them?” explained Narissa.

“If I may, what does the pendant look like, miss? Do you have a picture of it?” asked Fynn as he began walking toward the group.

“As a matter of fact, I do!” replied Narissa as she nodded before fishing her cell phone out.

Once she found the picture, she handed her phone over to Fynn. Gerald took a look at it as well, and though Gerald didn’t recognize it, Fynn himself was already trembling all over.

“It’s... It’s this d*mned thing again!” said Fynn, his fear apparent in his voice.

“What exactly is it, Fynn?” asked Gerald in astonishment.

“It... Well, let’s just say that it’s... Nothing short of terrifying. Since it appeared once twenty years ago, Mrs. Xara should still remember it...” replied Fynn with a nod before looking at Xara.

Hearing that, she walked over to have a look before saying, “...Indeed I do. Peter’s shown it to me before... Receiving it at the time felt especially weird... I honestly thought that my plan to elope with Peter had been exposed, and that the pendant was a warning of sorts. In the end, however, we didn’t think too much about it... To my shock, it was the very next day when Peter went missing!”

“Yes... The second young master’s disappearance truly caused an immense uproar within the Crawford family... Since we assumed that the Fendersons had been the ones who had kidnapped the second master, the master was extremely furious. It was then when the Crawford family began resenting the Fendersons again... While that was the master’s reaction at the time, in truth, he’s been investigating that incident for well over a decade now. After all, given the circumstances at the time, the master knew for a fact that the Fendersons wouldn’t have had the means to secretly kill the second master. But who else would’ve targeted the second young master if not the Fendersons?”

“In the end, after investigating for so long, there was a point where the master was even close to declaring that the Fendersons weren’t the actual culprits in that case. However, he knew that he couldn’t just say that without any solid proof. It was then when he remembered about the pendant with the strange symbol on it that Peter had received before his disappearance. While he wanted to look for Mrs. Xara in person to question her about it, he couldn’t just do something like that, given that he already

had such a massive misunderstanding with the Fenderson family. That was why he told you to look for her instead!” explained Fynn as he frowned.

“To think that the pendant that had created such a huge mess would reappear again after twenty years!”

“Who exactly is responsible for all this...? They’ve already taken Peter and now they’ve taken Mila as well! What on earth do they even want?” said Xara, her eyes beginning to water.

“...I suggest that we just wait for the master’s final decision. In the meantime, don’t you think it’s about time we returned to Northbay, Mr. Crawford?” added Fynn.

“You can leave first. Inform me if there’s any news regarding the case. I’m staying here!” said Gerald. After all, if he left with them now, he knew that he’d never be able to forgive himself.

Hearing that, both Fynn and Xara then left.

Gerald himself remained there, joining the search party every day in hopes to find traces of the sunken ship.

Chapter 798

While Gerald worked tirelessly day in and day out, his efforts proved to be fruitless, even as the tenth day passed by. He had exhausted every tactic he could think of, yet not even a hint of the ocean liner’s whereabouts could be found.

“Where exactly are you, Mila... I... I refuse to believe that you’ve left me just like that!” said Gerald as he pulled his hair in desperation.

By this point, he was constantly having flashbacks of the moments he had spent with Mila. He now knew more than ever that Mila had made great efforts just to be with him.

On the eleventh morning, Gerald sat on the beach in a daze, unsure of what else he could even do to look for the ship.

As he continued racking his brains, his phone began to ring. It was a call from Jessica.

“Good morning, brother!”

Hearing her voice, Gerald couldn’t help but smile faintly as he replied, “Good morning, sister. Have you returned to Northbay safely? How are things going?”

Two days ago, Jessica had returned to Hong Kong to accompany Gerald after learning of Mila’s disappearance. During that time, Jessica had taken the opportunity to tell Gerald about the things which had happened to Mila when she was in Hong Kong.

However, since something was happening within the family, Jessica had to return to Northbay in a hurry.

“I’m fine, though let’s not talk about me for the moment. I’m sure that you’re aware that our family is hosting a family assembly tomorrow... Since you haven’t returned in

twenty-two years, dad's asking for you to attend the assembly this time around. Aside from that, he also wants to talk to you about something!" replied Jessica.

Hearing that, Gerald tossed a stone toward the ocean before nodding.

"...Very well. I'll be returning tomorrow then!"

The very next day, Gerald arrived on a large island in Northbay belonging to the Crawfords. On it, was a building so magnificent and massive that it looked almost like a castle.

It was the day of the Crawford family's family assembly, and the day where Crawfords from all walks of life would return to the island to attend the meeting.

Being a large family with several branches, at least a few thousand people were expected to attend the meeting. Not that that was a problem since the island could easily house tens of thousands of guests.

As Fynn led Gerald around, Gerald couldn't help but feel slightly anxious. After all, this was Gerald's first time returning 'home'. What more, this new place was much grander and larger, even when compared to his sister's island!

Since this was the first time the Crawford family's young master had returned, Fynn wanted to report Gerald's arrival to his parents immediately. However, they seemed to be busy exchanging pleasantries with the other family members.

It wasn't surprising for Gerald to see his father that busy since he was, after all, the master. What more, there were already a lot of people there at that time.

Because of that, Gerald replied, "There's no real rush to report about my arrival. I'll just wait till my parents are done greeting the guests. You go on ahead and deal with what you have to, Fynn. I'll just go look for my sister in the meantime!"

Hearing that, Fynn nodded before running off to deal with other things.

After giving his sister a call, she told him to wait for her there, stating that she would rush over as soon as she could.

Now momentarily bored, Gerald simply sat at the side and looked out at the sea as he slowly entered a daze again.

"Say Bethany, didn't you say you were looking for a person to help pick up tennis balls? There's a silly looking man over there who's been sitting idly for a while! Why don't we ask him to do it?" said a girl who looked to be around eighteen of age.

The girl was part of a group with other similarly aged girls and also some older ones. All of them sported tennis-wear, and a few of them were still playing in pairs as the girl asked her question.

Since it was usually only the family elders who would step up during such occasions, juniors like them would take the opportunity to have fun and eat to their hearts' content.

“Sure, why not? Call him over!” replied Bethany as she swung her racket over her shoulder before pointing at Gerald who hadn’t broken from his daze.

Chapter 799

“Hey, you!” called out Bethany in a commanding voice.

Breaking from his daze, Gerald then looked at the girl who had shouted at him before asking, “What do you want?”

The girl who was pointing at him looked to be in her late teens, and while she looked rather bizarre, she was also somewhat beautiful.

“Are you all alone?” asked another girl as she placed a hand on her waist. It was the girl who had told Bethany about Gerald earlier.

“I suppose you could say that!” replied Gerald as he nodded.

“That’s rather pitiful to hear! How about this, Bethany wants to invite you over to pick tennis balls for us! At least you won’t be alone if you do that for us!” added the girl.

Gerald remembered his sister telling him that since the Crawford family was so immensely huge with so many complicated branches, it was normal for those within the family to not know who was who among the younger generation.

“If something’s weighing your mind, it’ll only get worse if you continue dwelling on it alone! By picking our tennis balls, you’ll be able to forget all your worries!” shouted another girl.

While Gerald's first response was to smile bitterly, he couldn't deny that what they had said made some sense. After all, as long as he could distract himself enough, he wouldn't need to dwell on the incident.

"Fine, I'll do it!" replied Gerald.

"Haha! He's actually going to do it! Here he comes!" said the girls smugly.

"Great to hear. Now let's continue our game, sisters! We can go all out now that someone is willing to pick our tennis balls for us!" said Bethany rather excitedly.

However, before they could even resume playing, a woman walked up to them. Seeing the woman, all the girls immediately turned to look at her.

The beautiful and graceful woman looked to be around twenty-six years old, and she seemed to have a rather good disposition.

While the girls playing tennis earlier were all beautiful, none of them were even close in terms of beauty when compared with the new woman. In fact, the woman's beauty rivaled even that of many celebrities.

Anyone who saw her felt somewhat obligated to lower their heads in respect.

"You're here, Lyra!" greeted Bethany and a few others upon seeing her.

“I am indeed. Still, what time is it now I wonder... Why are all of you still playing here? The assembly is going to commence soon! Why don’t you bring Niki and the others along with you?” said Lyra in a gentle tone.

“Alright!” replied Bethany. She then hit one final tennis ball to the side before leaving with the rest.

Almost by reflex, Gerald began walking over to pick the tennis ball up. In his daze, he failed to realize that the ball had landed in an area surrounded by prickly grass. By the time he finally noticed, he was staggering so much to leave the area then he ended up falling.

His clothes, arms, and even his face was filled with tiny scratch marks from the grass.

“Look there! That guy from earlier fell down!” said Nikki as she pointed at Gerald.

“Just leave him be. After all, he was slow to react when we called him over to pick the tennis balls for us! He deserves it! Now let’s go!” said Bethany as she smiled at Lyra before heading on.

Gerald himself sat on the grass, holding the tennis ball in his hand as he smiled bitterly. When he touched his face, it stung slightly.

He simply couldn’t catch a break. Gerald truly was down on his luck ever since Mila’s disappearance.

As people walked by, many of them mocked Gerald for being in such a pathetic state. Gerald, however, didn't mind it. As long as he could feel slightly better after being mocked, so be it.

"Your cheeks are all scratched up... It's best if you wipe the grass off quickly," said a feminine voice as a tissue was handed over to him.

Looking to his side, Gerald saw Lyra squatting right next to him as she prompted him to take the tissue.

"...Thank you!" replied Gerald as he immediately lowered his gaze in embarrassment after their eyes met. After all, she looked truly beautiful.

"My word, even your arm is bleeding!" said Lyra as she took another tissue out and began gently wiping the blood off his arm.

"Aren't you the careless one... Which family do you belong to? You seem to be all alone here. Don't you have any siblings...?"

Chapter 800

Lyra asked that question as she gently helped Gerald wipe the prickly grass off his face.

"I... I'm, um... Not sure which family I belong to!" replied Gerald.

Hearing that, Lyra simply laughed before saying, "I'll call some doctors over later and tell them to treat your wounds... Wouldn't want you to get an infection now, would we?"

"No, it's fine..."

For some unknown reason, Lyra simply felt the urge to pamper and take good care of Gerald from the moment she had met him. It was truly an odd feeling.

"The assembly will begin soon, young lady... It's best that you head there immediately," said a person who seemed to be Lyra's maid as she walked over.

"Very well," said Lyra as she nodded to Gerald before leaving with her maid.

"Young lady? So she's someone who's been married into the Crawford family!" muttered Gerald to himself as he finished wiping his face clean.

In his mind, he was thinking what a blessing it must be for the person who had married such a gentle and attractive wife.

At that moment, Gerald's phone began ringing.

"Brother? Where are you? I can't find you anywhere!"

“Sorry, sorry! I was picking up tennis balls for others just now!” replied Gerald with a bitter laugh.

“D*mn it, why are you still helping others do things like this? Anyway, the assembly is going to begin soon and dad’s even asked me whether you’ve arrived. We’re in the main hall now! You should’ve just told the servants to lead you here immediately when you arrived!” said his sister as she shook her head.

“Got it! I’m heading there now!” said Gerald as he got up.

His parents and sister were the main cast of the day and he was aware of how busy they were. Because of that, he didn’t want to create unnecessary trouble for them if he could help it.

As he walked toward the venue, he saw that Niki and the other girls weren’t too far off. Soon enough, he caught up with them and simply followed behind.

“Hey, Bethany. That silly guy is following us!” said Niki as she turned to look around.

“Has he lost his way? Maybe it’s the first time he’s attending a family assembly!” replied Bethany as she stopped walking and turned around.

“Could you perhaps be lost?” asked Bethany.

In response, Gerald simply nodded.

“See? I was right! You can come along with us if you want, but you’ll only get to ride in the last car with my servants! How about it?” suggested Bethany.

Bethany was a distinguished young lady who was used to meeting handsome and extremely capable, rich heirs, both in the country and also abroad.

Since she could tell that Gerald was the sort of honest and well-behaved man who didn’t have much experience in life, she didn’t really care for his wellbeing.

“No problem!” replied Gerald as he nodded, not really minding it himself.

He then got into a car which was rather stuffy since there were quite a few servants inside.

Once they arrived, Gerald made his way into the Crawford family’s main hall, which was a spacious outdoor hall.

In such an assembly, the participants sat in groups though where they had to sit wasn’t predetermined. Only the main members of the family had designated seats atop a high platform in the middle of the hall.

As Bethany and the others found seats in a corner, Gerald himself casually took a seat close to them before fishing his phone out of his pocket.

Meanwhile, a middle-aged couple began walking toward the main dining table reserved for the master. A loud round of applause could be heard as the couple made their way to the table.

Naturally, the couple was none other than Gerald's parents! Behind them, two women followed, with one of them being Jessica.

When the other woman saw Lyra, she immediately held on to her hands before saying, "Lyra! Come sit beside me!"

"Alright, mom!" replied Lyra with a nod

"You've truly been receiving the short end of the stick throughout your time being in the Crawford family... Not only did you have to learn everything on your own, you even had to handle all his financial issues! If we could, we would've definitely let you meet each other much earlier... But I'm sure you're aware that we couldn't reveal his identity before this! Still, to think that he isn't even here yet!" said the woman in an apologetic tone.

"Please don't say that, mom... It's already been a blessing for me to have been able to grow up in the Crawford family from a young age."

Hearing that, the woman smiled before nodding. She then turned to look at Jessica before saying, "Go find where your brother is, Jessica!"