

The Understated Dragon Lord

Chapter 1

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 The Wedding Cancelled

“Are you the fiancé my grandfather arranged for me?” In a farm somewhere in Texas, Daniel Perkins eyed the gorgeous woman in front of him. She was donned in a figure-hugging dress with curves in all the right places, sporting a well-defined waist and a pair of striking features. “And you are?” “Your fiancée, president of Zen Byte, Jennifer Hawkins!” My fiancée? Daniel remembered that the old man had indeed mentioned he arranged a marriage for him.

“Are you here to marry me?” “Me? Marry you? You country bumpkin! You’re broke, and let’s face it, not a looker. What makes you think you can afford me? My shoes alone cost three grand! A dress goes for five! I splurge more than a hundred thousand a month on makeup and beauty treatments. Can you handle that?” “Nope, can’t afford it. And I never had any plans of footing your insane bills.” “Oh, not prepared, are you? Can’t handle it? Listen, I’m here to call this travesty off. Gimme the contract so we can be done with each other for good.” Daniel retrieved a box the old man had left for him, unlocking with a growing sense of dread. The old man had mentioned a marriage contract alright, but he hadn’t mentioned there were this many... Inside the box were a total of nine marriage contracts. Daniel went through them one by one, indeed finding one that belonged to Jennifer. He pulled it out and handed it over to her. Jennifer cursed under her breath upon seeing the stack in Daniel’s hands. She then snatched her contract and shredded it mercilessly, tossing the pieces to the wind. “Done. Our agreement is void. We have nothing to do with each other now!” With that, Jennifer stomped away in her high heels, her anger echoing with each step. No sooner had she left did Daniel feel a surge of heat in his throat, spitting out blood. “Ugh...” It wasn’t the broken engagement that made him bleed but a failing dragon seal within him. If he couldn’t find the legendary Dragon Seal Grass within a year, the seal would break and he’d be dead. He had to move, and fast. Time was ticking and Daniel needed to find the Dragon Seal Grass, hopefully to cancel the other unexpected contracts along the way. ... The iron beast roared down the runway as a sweet voice chimed in from the airplane’s speaker system. “We’re about to land in Leo Bark. Please prepare for disembarkation...”

Daniel had been meditating throughout the flight to suppress the seal. As the plane slowed to a stop, he stretched and got ready to disembark. Suddenly, his Seven Dragons Ring slipped off his neck and rolled away under a seat. Bending down to retrieve it, a

piercing shriek startled him. In front of Daniel were a pair of long, shapely legs. Dazzled by an unexpected flash of light, he looked up. Click! Click! Jennifer was snapping photos with her phone, snapping away at what she called a 'pervert' below. After saving the incriminating shots, she realized the man at her feet was Daniel. "Is it you? What are you doing?" "Nothing, just picking up my ring," Daniel replied. "Do you expect me to believe that? You, a filthy rogue! Are you stalking me because I called off the engagement? Let me tell you, this is harassment!" "You? Not interested! Harass you? Even less interested!" "Not interested? You deliberately dropped that stupid ring near my feet. Don't pretend I don't know what you're up to!" Daniel pocketed the Seven Dragons Ring without a word and walked away.

"Stop right there!" "What now?" "This is the last time I'm saying this—never let anyone know we were engaged. I can't stand the shame! And don't you dare show your face around me again. If you harass me, I'll call the cops. With those photos, they'll have all they need to put you behind bars." "Boring." Outside the airport, Daniel walked past Jennifer, carrying her trendy LV bag. "Why are you following me?" Turning around, he replied with slight frustration, "I'm ahead; you're behind. It's the other way around." Then, a sleek two-tone Rolls-Royce pulled up, and a distinguished elderly gentleman stepped out. Jennifer's heart skipped a beat.

David? She recognized the car plate—it was one of The Matthews' cars, and the man was their butler, David Wagner! Zen Byte had worked so hard to be noticed by The Matthews Organization, now on their shortlist for partnership. The final selection was due next week. David approached Jennifer, completely ignoring her fawning introduction, and she was left talking to thin air. But soon, David was bowing deeply to Daniel, a man she had written off as a loser. Confused, Jennifer lingered close by to eavesdrop. "Are you the venerable Mr. Daniel Perkins?" "Well, 'venerable' is a stretch, but yes, I'm Daniel. Who are you?" "I'm David, The Matthews' butler. Miss Jessica sent me. She's your fiancée, waiting at home." With an invitation from The Matthews, Daniel was swept away, leaving Jennifer standing alone, dumbfounded.

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Chapter 2

Chapter 2 I'm the Fool

Jennifer stood frozen, her face sprayed with exhaust fumes and her expensive attire covered in the dust kicked up by the car's wheels. Her thirty thousand dollar heels and

fifty thousand dollar dress were now no better than second-hand bargains. The pricey makeup on her face had been touched by the dust, and she looked no better than a homeless wanderer. But above all, she was utterly stunned by the conversation she had overheard.

Jessica was Daniel's fiancée? Jessica had sent David to pick him up? And she referred to him as the honorable Mr. Daniel Perkins? He was just a country bumpkin, a loathsome toad—honorable Mr. Daniel Perkins my foot! He was nothing but a con artist, a greedy, lecherous loser! There's no way Jessica was going to marry him. She must be planning to cancel the wedding, just like Jennifer wanted to. This mess was all that loser's fault. She had to make him pay! Meanwhile, half an hour later, the Rolls-Royce pulled into the lavish estate belonging to The Matthews, a villa complex spanning thousands of square meters, with pavilions, murmuring streams, lush greenery, and birds chirping amongst the flowers. Every step revealed a scene more breathtaking than the last—it was a Wonderland in the heart of New York City, exclusively for the prominent Matthews family. Daniel was ushered into the living room where David served him a cup of top-notch coffee before leaving. Click-clack, click-clack! The elegant rhythm of high heels on the floor announced the arrival of a stunning beauty. Words could only defile her enchanting presence. This was Jessica Matthews, the eldest daughter of The Matthews family, president of The Matthews Organization (TMO), and New York's number one beauty! At just one glance, Daniel was spellbound. "Are you Daniel, my fiancé?" "Err... yes." Daniel snapped back to reality. Daniel, having already been dumped once, eagerly fetched the marriage contract and handed it to Jessica. "You've come to call off the marriage, right?"

Here's the contract. From now on, w

e're strangers. Don't worry, I won't appear before you again, nor will I tell anyone you were once my fiancée." "When did I say I wanted to cancel it?" "You're not canceling?" "This contract was drawn up by my grandfather, and I honor his decision. I will marry you. We'll register our marriage tomorrow, but before that, I have some conditions." "What conditions?" "I'm marrying you solely because of this contract, not out of love, so no wedding ceremony. You can't tell anyone we're married. Publicly, you are my assistant, not my husband. Plus, I'm giving you a year as a trial period. If you can make me fall in love with you, we'll have a real ceremony and be true husband and wife. If I still feel nothing after a year, we'll divorce. One more thing, if we do become a true couple, I have a gift for you. It's an unsightly, wilted herb called the Dragon Seal Grass." The Dragon Seal Grass? Daniel's heart leaped with excitement. "Uh, if after a year you still don't fancy me, can I keep the Dragon Seal Grass as a memento? You said it was ugly and wilted, so it's probably not worth much. Just as a keepsake." "No way! That's a gift for the man who truly wins my heart!" Daniel: ... Just then, Jessica's phone rang. "What? I'm on my way!" Hanging up, she turned to Daniel, "My grandfather's critically ill. We need to go to the hospital now." "Okay!" Clutching his dusty plastic bag as if it were a treasure, Daniel hurried after her. "Why are you carrying that? No one's going to steal it." "It might come in handy." Speechless but too preoccupied to care, Jessica left it at that. At the hospital's emergency room, Jessica's secretary, Brittany Cunningham,

paced anxiously. As Jessica and Daniel arrived, the emergency room doors burst open, and the doctors emerged. “Michael, how is my grandfather?” “We’ve tried everything, but he’s beyond our help. However, there’s still a breath of life in him. If you can get The Great Stephens here, perhaps there’s hope.” “The Great Stephens?” “He’s the one who can snatch lives from the hands of death, The Great Stephens—Christopher Stephens! He’s New York’s number one mystical doctor, but he’s been resting for a long time. It’s going to be very difficult to persuade him to act.” As Michael finished speaking... “Mr. Christopher is here.”

Andrew Armstrong walked in with an elderly gentleman—the renowned Christopher. An Easterner whose arrival date in New York was unknown, people were only aware of his miraculous healing techniques. Christopher’s methods had never failed. He approached the bed, lifted Joseph’s eyelids, and checked his pulse. “Master Christopher, how is my grandfather?” “The situation is grave. Only my ancestral Nine Dry Needling technique stands a chance. Not even gods could save him otherwise.” “Please, Master Christopher, save my grandfather, and The Matthews will repay you generously.”

“Miss Jessica, I’m here at Mr. Andrew’s request, so saving your grandfather is up to him.” Andrew stepped forward, arrogantly bargaining, “Jessica, you know what I want. Agree to marry me, and Master Christopher will save your grandfather. If you refuse, he won’t lift a finger, and your grandfather will meet his end. Remember, he is The Matthews’ world, and if anything were to happen to him, The Matthews would be finished.”

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Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Joseph Died

“Andrew, do you have to be so despicably shameless?” Jessica retorted with disdain. “I’ve tried to woo you fairly and squarely! I’ve sent you roses, bags, and whatnot! But you wouldn’t even give me the chance to take you out for dinner or see a movie. Now, your grandfather’s life hangs in my hands. It’s your choice whether he lives or dies.” Daniel stepped forward, assuredly telling Jessica, “I can save your grandfather’s life.” “You can save him? Who let this idiot in here? Didn’t you know that this area is off-limits to outsiders? Get out of here, now!”

Brittany, who had not noticed Daniel before and was unaware he was brought by Jessica, mistakenly thought he was trouble. “He’s my newly hired assistant, Daniel,” Jessica clarified. A new assistant? It clicked in Brittany’s mind, and she scolded Daniel, “Are you trying to impress Ma’am Jessica by saying such nonsensical things? Even if you want to show off, you should at least know what you’re doing! If Michael has no solution, what can you do? You’re not even a doctor! Only Master Christopher can save the chairman now.” Daniel ignored Brittany and seriously said to Jessica, “I’m absolutely confident that I can bring your grandfather back.” “Shut up!” yelled Jessica, who clearly didn’t believe Daniel. If even Michael said it was hopeless, how could this young man possibly save him? Her grandfather couldn’t die! Gritting her teeth, Jessica told Andrew, “If Master Christopher can save my grandfather, I will agree to marry you!” “Great! That’s more like it!” A triumphantly smug smile spread across Andrew’s face. “Master Christopher, I’m counting on you. Save him, and whatever I promised you before, I’ll double it.” “I seldom intervene, but when I do, I can snatch life from the jaws of death! I will save Mr. Joseph for Mr. Andrew!” Christopher proclaimed. His assistant brought a sandalwood box, which sprang open with a loud bang, emitting a golden glow. Inside were nine radiant needles, each with a meticulously carved kirin—a creature of great mystical power in Eastern legends—on the tip. Christopher’s hands, more delicate than a woman’s and as pure as white jade, passed slowly over the needles, causing them to stand erect and buzz softly in the box. This magical display astonished everyone present. “Wow! He didn’t even touch the needles and they stood up. Master Christopher is incredible!”

“That’s called ‘energy needle control’, a divine skill. Master Yin was a famous healer 30 years ago, and now he’s a deity!” “Of course, he’s a god; otherwise, how could he save people from death itself?” Amid the praise, Christopher waved his hand, and the nine needles zoomed into the air above Joseph, circling like eagles. “With the first needle, Ascending, rest the soul and steady the body!” He uttered a chant as a needle whizzed down, striking precisely into Joseph’s Ascending acupoint. As soon as the needle pierced the skin, Joseph’s pallid visage regained some color. Brittany turned to Jessica, excitement in her voice. “Ma’am Jessica, look! The chairman can be saved. With just one needle, Master Christopher has restored your father’s complexion.” “Quiet.” From the first needle, it seemed Christopher genuinely had skills that warranted the title of a divine healer. However, Daniel was unimpressed because he had already diagnosed the true cause of Joseph’s ailment, knowing that Christopher’s diagnosis was incorrect. The first needle targeted the Ascending, and Daniel knew the second would inevitably be the Spirit Ruins, followed by Noble Palace, then God’s Place. These are critical points in Eastern medicine that, with the right techniques, can save or harm a person. Once the needle hits God’s Place, Joseph would certainly face death—a false death, to be precise, from which there would be only fifteen minutes to recover. Any longer, and it would be too late; even Daniel wouldn’t be able to do anything. “The second is Spirit Ruins, to replenish blood and essence,” declared Christopher as Joseph’s cracked lips regained moisture. “The third is Noble Palace, to revitalize the body.” Joseph’s fingertips twitched ever so slightly. “The fourth is God’s Place, to reignite the spirit and continue life!” Upon the fourth needle’s entry, Joseph suddenly sat upright on his bed. His body seemed stiff, and his eyes lifeless, but the medical equipment showed his vitals rapidly

returning to normal. Christopher froze, bewildered by the unexpected turn of events. He had revived Joseph with just four needles, something even he found unbelievable. However, the result was what mattered, and he just assumed his medical skills had improved. “With four needles to save, five will beckon the return!”

The remaining five needles suspended in the air shot back into their sandalwood box. Joseph laid back down, the medical monitors steadying but still slowly improving—proof his condition was stabilizing. Christopher put away the needles and congratulated Jessica, “Miss Jessica, I’ve brought your grandfather back. I’ve facilitated your good fortune with Mr. Andrew. You two better invite me as your matchmaker to toast at your wedding!”

“You haven’t saved him; you’ve killed him. This is just a glaring sign before death. In less than half a minute, Mr. Joseph will be gone,” Daniel stated, incensing the newly relieved Jessica. Her grandfather had barely been saved, and this scoundrel claimed he was mortally doomed! “Y-you’re the one dying!” Jessica cursed. The monitors beeped rapidly, and suddenly, all the readings dropped to zero. Joseph was dead?

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Chapter 4

Chapter 4 He Caused Your Grandfather’s Death

Christopher was in shock, hurriedly lifting Joseph’s eyelids, checking his pulse, and testing for breaths. Finally, he collapsed into a companion chair. It was true—Joseph was dead. Jessica couldn’t and wouldn’t accept it. “Master Christopher, you saved my grandfather, didn’t you?” she stammered. At a loss for words and quickly gathering his composure, Christopher, renowned as New York’s foremost mysterious healer, couldn’t let his reputation crumble. So, he pointed an accusatory finger at Daniel. “It is he! This country fool with his words has killed your grandfather.” “Master Christopher, that’s a foolish lie, isn’t it? Do you think Ma’am Jessica is naive enough to believe such nonsense?” “I am New York’s leading doctor. How could I lie?”

When I say your words killed Mr. Joseph, I am not speaking without reason.” “Oh, and what’s your theory then?” “Mr. Joseph had indeed been brought back by me, only needing to rest peacefully on the bed before waking up. Just as he was about to awake, you cursed him to death, making his subconscious believe he had indeed died. So, you

are to blame for Mr. Joseph's death!" "Are you certain Mr. Joseph is truly dead?" "Pulse ceased, no breath, he is dead!"

"He is not dead; he's alive." Jessica's eyes, clouded with despair, flickered with a glimmer of hope at Daniel's assertion. "You claim my granddad isn't dead?" Brittany couldn't stand it any longer, and she launched into a fiery rebuke at Daniel: "You fool, shut your mouth! When the chairman was alive, you claimed he was dead. Now that he is dead, you say he's alive? Do you think acting like a clown, deceiving people here, will show how unique you are or impress Ma'am Jessica?" Christopher, while not hoping for Joseph's death, knew his own theory sounded a stretch. After another round of examination and use of various medical instruments, he and Michael drew the same conclusion: Joseph was dead. Daniel pulled from his plastic bag a rust-stained iron box, no bigger than a matchbox, containing seven dull needles—the Dragon Needles bequeathed to him by the old man. Seeing Daniel wield those lackluster needles as if ready to jab them into Joseph, Brittany was shocked! Recovering, she raised her voice to stop him, "What are you doing?" "I'm saving a life!" "Saving? Master Christopher couldn't revive him even with The Kirin Needle. You think you can save lives with those needles, you picked up from the trash? They are dirty and grimy; how dare you use them on the chairman?" Andrew chimed in with a mocking sneer, "What's he saving? He just became an assistant and wants to shine! Since Mr. Joseph is already dead, it doesn't matter if he pokes around with needles. There's no blame if it doesn't work. And if he somehow revives Mr. Joseph, that would be a great feat!" "There are no ifs! Mr. Joseph is dead, and nobody can save him! If just anybody could poke him awake with random needles, what would be the need for doctors?" Christopher stated with supreme confidence. "Master Christopher is right,

Mr. Joseph is dead, and he can't be saved. I've had doctors check his body with the hospital's most advanced equipment. He's not just without heartbeat or breath—every organ has ceased functioning—he's completely dead," Michael made his final verdict! Christopher and Michael's pronouncements solidified Brittany's belief that Daniel was creating a scene. She pointed at the door and bellowed at him, "Get out of here, now!" Of course, Daniel wouldn't budge; he turned to Jessica and spoke earnestly, "Your grandfather has five more minutes! If I don't administer the first needle within that time, he truly is dead. Not even gods can save him."

"Master Christopher couldn't save him, and you could?" Jessica was skeptical. "Absolutely!" "Absolute nonsense! He's a bluffer, trying to earn brownie points by bragging here. Don't you believe him, Ma'am Jessica, he's trying to hurt the chairman!" Brittany passionately warned Jessica not to be foolish while pushing Daniel toward the door. Daniel stood firm, unaffected by Brittany's shoving. He turned to Jessica, offering her one last chance to choose, "Ma'am Jessica, you gave me a one-year probation period. If I can't save your grandfather, you can fire me on the spot!"

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Chapter 5

Chapter 5 The Poor Relative

A one-year probation period? Don't they usually last only three months? Brittany pondered inwardly. At last, it dawned on her: this guy must be one of Ma'am Jessica's poor relatives. Jessica didn't actually like the fellow, but to not to turn down a relative's request, she set a one-year probation—she didn't intend to keep him around! Jessica, however, was considering the marital contract set by her grandfather. If he couldn't be saved, was she expected to continue this trial marriage with this man for a year? It felt like a loss. Michael and Master Christopher had both declared her grandfather beyond saving. So, letting this guy have a try wouldn't hurt—after all, he himself said if he couldn't save her grandfather, he would leave immediately.

"Go ahead," Jessica consented with a nod. Brittany wouldn't dare go against Jessica's wishes, but she still suspected Daniel's motives. Pointing a finger right at his nose, she said, "If there's no reaction after your first needle, you stop immediately and get out!" "Okay." Daniel agreed and proceeded to insert the first needle, leaving everyone dumbstruck. That black and unimpressive needle was placed on the tip of Joseph's nose. "There's no acupoint on the nose tip!

"You're just poking randomly! You are disrespecting the body!" criticized Christopher disdainfully. Beep! Beep, beep! The monitor came back to life, the previously zeroed numbers now changing, albeit faintly. Hope reignited in the hearts of all present, especially in Jessica's. "Is granddad alive?" she asked Daniel expectantly. "Yeah." "Yeah right! He's just poking around. Maybe he's hit a nerve by pure luck, causing some reflex. He hasn't truly brought anyone back to life," Brittany blurted out, refusing to believe that a mere poke on the nose could save Joseph. Amid the disbelief, the monitor showed greater fluctuations. Joseph's face color started returning, and his fingertips twitched slightly.

Jessica, ready to scold Daniel, swallowed back her words at the sight. Christopher was stupefied. Despite studying extraordinary acupuncture skills in the East, he had never heard of a technique involving a needle in the eye—that would just burst the eyeball! Yet, not only did Joseph seem fine, but his vitals were also improving. Were the signs from the monitors and Joseph's body telling them he was really being revived? "Has granddad come back to life?" "Yeah," Daniel affirmed once again. Brittany was speechless. Though she did not believe Daniel had revived Joseph, the undeniable evidence was right before her eyes. Both the remarkable changes in Joseph's body and the data on the monitors could attest that Daniel had indeed brought him back to life. "It's just a momentary recovery before death," Christopher insisted, adamantly

disbelieving even the iron-clad evidence before him. How could a man he failed to save be revived by this unknown individual? Should word of this get out, his reputation would be utterly destroyed.

Joseph could not be revived; he had to die! Daniel quickened his pace. After seven needles, Joseph's face color had almost fully returned, and the monitor showed his vitals nearly back to normal. But still, Joseph remained unconscious, not yet awakened. Seeing Daniel remove all seven needles and return them to the little iron box, Jessica asked urgently, "Is granddad really alive?" "Of course!" "Of course, nothing! This is just the final flickers of life; soon, those numbers will return to zero," Andrew scoffed, disbelieving Joseph's revival. "If he's truly alive, why hasn't Mr. Joseph woken up? Why hasn't he opened his eyes? When Master Christopher was treating him, Mr. Joseph at least sat up. All your fiddling has done is make his fingers twitch; he can't even sit up." Andrew's words stirred Jessica's anxiety once more. She had already been through a tumultuous rollercoaster of emotions and wasn't prepared to endure it a second time.

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Chapter 6

Chapter 6 He's Been Cursed

"The old man hasn't woken up because he's been cursed by the Tame Head. The creature inside his body needs to be dealt with, or the problem can't be fully resolved," Daniel explained, which drew nothing more than scorn from Christopher. "What nonsense? Cursed by the Tame Head? Why don't you say he's possessed by demons? I thought you were a healer.

Turns out you're just a charlatan? Is there even such a thing as Tame Head in this world?" "Just because you haven't seen it doesn't mean it doesn't exist. Tame Head is a type of dark Eastern magic, using creatures like centipedes to curse and bless people." "Ignorant? Michael used the most advanced equipment for an exhaustive checkup of Mr. Joseph's body. If there were bugs inside, wouldn't he have found them? You should pick someone else to trick. Your act might fool villagers in the countryside, but do you think Ma'am Jessica is one of them?" Provoked by Christopher's comments, Michael, being cautious himself, asked, "You say Mr. Joseph has bugs inside him, what kind of bugs? Where exactly?" "In his chest cavity, it's a large centipede as long as a knife and as thick as a thumb." The chest cavity? Michael hurriedly checked the chest CT but found no anomalies. "Look closely. This is an X-ray of Mr. Joseph taken by our

hospital's brand new, world-class CT machine. Not even the tiniest ant could escape its detection, let alone a knife-sized centipede, and there is nothing there!" "Tame Head may be a dark art, but it's also a miracle of Eastern wisdom, passed down for thousands of years. Your CT machine, no matter how advanced, has only been around for how many years? It might inevitably fail to capture such mystical phenomena." "Heh," chuckled Andrew with a cold laugh, sensing an opportunity. He decided to set a trap for Daniel, "You claim Mr. Joseph has a large centipede in his chest? Prove it! If you can produce it, I'll eat it in one bite.

But if you fail, you're a swindler! Even if Mr. Joseph wakes up later, the credit belongs to Master Christopher!" As he spoke, Andrew looked at Jessica, reminding her, "Don't forget your promise—if Master Christopher revives Mr. Joseph, you have to marry me!" "My grandfather was saved by Daniel, not Master Christopher!" "This nobody claims Mr. Joseph has been cursed by the Tame Head, that there's a centipede as long as a knife inside him. Yet the chest CT Michael provided shows nothing. This is enough to prove that this fool is a cunning fraud!

He just stuck a few needles arbitrarily and now wants to steal Master Christopher's credit!" "Mr. Andrew is right unless the charlatan can present the centipede, I'm the one who saved Mr. Joseph! It was The Nine Dry Needling that revived him!" added Christopher, backing Andrew up. Daniel opened his plastic bag and pulled out a clay jar containing various dried insects. Upon opening the lid, a peculiar but tantalizing fragrance wafted out, almost mouth-watering. He placed the jar beside Joseph's pillow and with a firm press over Joseph's chest, a shrill chirping noise echoed. Out peeked a blackened head.

A centipede? Indeed, it was a dark, giant centipede, as long as a knife and thick as a thumb. With swift reflexes, Daniel grabbed the creature, "Mr. Andrew, the centipede is caught. You said you would eat it in one go, open wide!" "When did I say that?" Andrew's face flushed with anger. Too embarrassed to stay, he stormed off in a huff. Feeling equally humiliated, Christopher quickly trailed after Andrew, and Michael escorted his medical team out as well. Daniel casually picked up a water bottle from the trash and dropped the giant centipede inside, screwing the cap back on tightly before placing it in the plastic bag. "You're pretty skilled at this. I guess your plastic bag is your garbage collecting equipment, right? From now on, all of our company's water bottles are yours," jested Brittany, though she couldn't deny the satisfaction of seeing Joseph revived. However, the fact that the chairman was saved by Daniel, the new assistant, she couldn't accept it. The better Daniel performed, the more replaceable she felt. "I'm going to wash my hands." Once Daniel stepped out, Jessica instructed Brittany, "Watch the door. Don't let anyone in without my order." "Yes, Jessica!" Brittany replied and stepped outside. As soon as she left, Joseph opened his eyes. His body might have taken a trip to hell and back, but his mind never wavered. He was well aware of the recent events.

"The Daniel who saved me, is he the one you're engaged to?" "Yes." "That marriage contract was made eighteen years ago after I got drunk with his master. I somewhat

foolishly agreed to that engagement.” “What? You made an engagement because you were drunk? You just decided to marry me off to someone so casually?” “When he comes back, I’ll speak to him properly. Even if it ruins my reputation, I cannot let you marry him simply because of a joke made eighteen years ago.”

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Chapter 7

Chapter 7 Is Canceling the Marriage Appropriate?

“Canceling the marriage right after he saved you, isn’t that a bit inappropriate?” “I owed him eighteen years ago when his master saved me. Now, he’s saved me again. The debt is mine alone and has nothing to do with my beloved granddaughter.” “Grandpa, are you playing at brinkmanship here?” “Do you really dislike him?” “Who would like him? He’s dirty and smelly, carrying a plastic bag around, looking like a scrap collector!” “Then you should have canceled the marriage contract immediately when he came to you. Why bring him here and put me in his debt again? If it weren’t for this debt, my life is gone, and the tab I have with his master would disappear as well.” “I can’t let you be seen as ungrateful, Grandpa! I’ve already told him I would give him a year.

If I don’t fall in love with him within that time, I’ll divorce him.” “A year? Fine, but Jess, if you’re going to attempt a marriage with Daniel, you should play your role sincerely. As a wife, while you can’t initiate things, don’t outright refuse him either.” “Grandpa, if you keep spouting nonsense, I’ll divorce him tomorrow and kick him out!” “Alright, alright! I’ll say no more. Young people’s affairs should be settled by the young. I’ll just focus on keeping myself alive and won’t meddle. As long as he’s here, I can’t lose my life. Remember, he’s an even better doctor than Christopher!” “Hmph! I’m not talking to you anymore!” ... Having washed his hands, Daniel noticed Christopher stealthily pulling Andrew into a room. Curious, he stealthily hid in an adjacent empty room and eavesdropped with his ear against the wall. “Aren’t you the top doctor in New York? How could you be outdone by that nobody? You’ve messed up my big plan!” “Who knew Joseph was cursed by the Tame Head! I’m a doctor, not an exorcist; how would I know how to remove a Tame Head curse?

Joseph’s Tame Head curse means someone is targeting The Matthews. Jessica brought in an assistant skilled in Tame Head, probably to guard against this.” “That nobody is just an ant and not worth mentioning. I’ll kill him sooner or later! I want Jessica, I want her to be my wife! If I get her, all of The Matthews’ assets will be ours!”

“Mr. Andrew, don’t worry. I have a plan that can bankrupt TMO overnight! To save TMO, Jessica will have no choice but to marry you.” “Speak!” “TMO is already in crisis and desperately seeking partners. It seems they’re making one last stand to fight back. They’ve achieved a preliminary strategic partnership with Healthy Land, a pharmaceutical company, but nothing’s been signed yet. Healthy Land belongs to The Grants of Washington, one of the eight great families! Joshua Grant, the head of The Grants, is the president of the USA Medical Association and the nation’s top doctor, also serving as the chief physician to the President. He’s a top-tier power broker. My elder brother, Anthony Stephens, has been working at Healthy Land since he was eighteen, and after decades of hard work, he’s now Joshua’s leading disciple, responsible for all Healthy Land’s business in New York. My brother revealed that the Healthy Land deal is just the beginning. If The Matthews performs well, The Grants will invest more.

The Grants’ wealth is immense! Their influence can turn the tides and shake the heavens! If The Matthews clings to The Grants, they’ll soar! But then, your chances with Jessica will become slim to none. However, with one word from my brother, the collaboration between TMO and Healthy Land will fall through. Likewise, you could replace The Matthews as Healthy Land’s partner and it’ll be your time to rise!” ... Back in the hospital room, the revived Joseph, having chatted with his granddaughter for a while, drifted off to sleep. Not wanting to disturb his rest, Jessica stepped out of the room. Seeing Brittany standing guard she asked, “Hasn’t Daniel come back yet?” “No.” “As soon as the partnership is signed next week, we’ll need to finalize the strategic cooperation with Healthy Land and prepare for two consecutive press releases and a celebration banquet. I need to head back to the office to prepare. When Daniel comes out, take him to buy some clothes. He looks like a ragpicker right now; I don’t want him to embarrass me and damage the company’s image at the press conference. Also, arrange a decent dormitory for him.”

“Ma’am Jessica, you’d take him to the press release?” “He’s my new assistant. Why shouldn’t I?” With that, Jessica walked away, her high heels echoing. Brittany clenched her fists, infuriated by Daniel. A mere new assistant, not even past probation, how could he attend such an important event? When Daniel returned, Brittany was the only one there. “Where’s Jessica?” “She’s gone back to the office and has left you in my care. From now on, you answer to me!” “Okay.” “Let’s go! Ma’am Jessica told me to take you to buy some clothes. The way you’re dressed is ruining the company’s image!” “Okay.” Daniel’s apparent compliance and obedience were delightful to Brittany. Easy targets were the best to bully!

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Chapter 8

Chapter 8 Bullying the Honest Man

Brittany privately vowed not to let Daniel show up at the press conference. She intended to make sure this nobody was out within three days. As Jessica's secretary, she was no mere pretty face; she was a seasoned corporate predator. Daniel, the workplace newcomer, would be eaten alive by her. They entered a store where Brittany carelessly picked a few cheap items and directed Daniel to the fitting room. That's when Jennifer appeared. She and Brittany were college mates, and Zen Byte's entry to the shortlist was thanks to Brittany's influence.

"Hi, Brittany!" "Hey, Jennifer, long time no see!" "Who's that guy just now?" "He's Jessica's new assistant, a nobody!" Assistant? Jennifer immediately realized that Jessica planned to cancel the engagement with Daniel and had cunningly rewarded him with a minor assistant role. A nobody from the countryside was lucky to assist at TMO, a fortune not meant for someone like Daniel. Remembering her embarrassing encounter on the train, Jennifer's fury reignited. She resolved to ensure Daniel wouldn't even last as an assistant. "Brittany, I met a nasty guy on the high-speed train the other day. He looked a lot like that guy; I wonder if they're the same person?" She pulled up a photo on her phone. Brittany lit up upon seeing it. "It's him! I thought he was just a nobody, but turns out he's a pervert! Send me the photo; I'll make sure HR fires him." After sending the photo, Jennifer then handed over a VIP card to a spa. It wasn't the first time Brittany had taken such favors. She expertly accepted the card and tucked it away. "Rest assured, Jennifer. Although many companies are on the shortlist, nearly half will be cut in the end. But with your sincerity, Zen Byte will surely make the final selection!" Noticing Daniel coming out of the fitting room, Brittany quickly excused herself, "I must go now, let's have dinner together some time!" Jennifer left, and Brittany dismissed Daniel with a nonchalant "This will do."

After purchasing the clothes, Brittany led Daniel to the employee dormitory. Jessica had asked her to arrange something decent, but Brittany deliberately brought him to a dank, dim basement room near the trash, where rats and roaches roamed freely. "This is your room." "Jessica arranged this?" "Got a problem?" "No." "Rest in the dorm today, you're off work. Report to the company at 4:30 tomorrow afternoon." It was a trap to get Daniel fired. Once Brittany had left, Daniel looked around the dismal room, frustrated. Every excuse for a fiancée Old man had picked for him seemed to be like this—a complete mess. Did she really arrange this, hoping he'd crack and request the marriage to be dissolved? He was determined not to leave until he secured the Dragon Seal Grass. Back at the company, Brittany went straight to the president's office. "Where's Daniel?" "That nobody doesn't understand the rules! I told him to report to the company right after dropping off his things at the dormitory. Guess what? He's just gone to sleep instead!"

“He must be tired; leave him be.” “Ma’am Jessica, I thought the same, so I kindly told him he could come in tomorrow morning at nine. But you know what he said? That he usually sleeps in till noon, so he’d only come in the afternoon if he felt like it.” Brittany expected her report would infuriate Jessica into firing Daniel on the spot. But to her surprise, Jessica smiled and said, “He’ll be under my direct management from now on! Tell HR not to worry about his attendance. And no need for assessments; I’ll handle it myself.” Brittany was dumbfounded—managed directly by the CEO? What did this puny assistant do to deserve such a privilege? Not even she, after years of loyal service, had received such treatment! Now desperate, she was ready to play her trump card to ensure Daniel never became a full employee. She took out her phone, presented the incriminating photo to Jessica, and waited for the fallout.

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Chapter 9

Chapter 9 He’s a Pervert

Upon seeing the photo, Jessica’s expression turned serious, and her smile faded. “Where did this come from?” “I stumbled upon it in a group chat.” Brittany presented the chat log for Jessica’s review, a concoction she fabricated using a burner account. She had portrayed Daniel as a pervert, warning the whole city to be on guard. The post stirred up outrage among the group members, all swearing to expose the reprehensible rogue. Jessica’s face darkened while reading the chat log. Daniel was a pervert?! “I’ll take care of it; you may go now.

” Brittany, having succeeded in her plan, left the CEO’s office singing like a gleeful mockingbird. How could such a nobody think to contend with her? Daniel needed to find some herbs to suppress the restive seal inside him, as obtaining The Grass of Sealed Dragon might take time. He decided to visit the herbal market, and as he approached the market entrance, he noticed a store—Healthy Land. Was this the place Christopher mentioned? Crowds had gathered inside the hall; it seemed a spectacle was unfolding. A burly middle-aged man lay on a stretcher, his face darkened, seemingly a martial artist who suffered an accident while training. Daniel was right; the man was Ryan Rose, the chairman of the Delvin Hub Martial Club United. An older man in traditional attire approached Ryan with a bowl of medicinal soup. Daniel, recognizing the scent and color of the brew, knew it was meant to treat training mishaps. What he didn’t know was that the old man was Joshua himself! As Joshua moved to feed Ryan, Daniel

urgently warned, “Don’t—if you give him that, he’ll vomit blood and die!” Joshua, taken aback, looked at Daniel with disdain, “Who the F are you?”

The recipe came from The Grants’ secret formulas—how could there be an issue? A woman in a leather outfit, with short ear-length hair, sharp features, and an air of gallantry, darkened her face. She glared at Daniel, scolding fiercely. “Master Joshua is Estella’s best doctor; his medicine never fails. You understand what he’s giving? Interrupt again, and I’ll break your mouth!” She was Ryan’s only daughter, Heather Rose. She had exerted considerable effort and pulled strings to bring Joshua in after her father’s injury during practice. Now, she wouldn’t let Daniel’s doubts stop Joshua from treating her father and threatened to beat Daniel to a pulp if his interference continued. Master Joshua? Estella’s best doctor? Could this old man indeed be Joshua? Daniel fell silent, opting to watch the unfolding scene. Satisfied with Daniel’s retreat, Joshua and Heather turned their attention away from him. Joshua fed Ryan the medicine personally due to the precise dosage needed. Even the slightest error by another’s hand could affect its potency. As Ryan ingested The Cure, the blackness on his face began to fade. “Master Joshua isn’t just a doctor; he’s a miracle worker! Ryan’s improving immediately after taking the medicine!” “Of course, Master Joshua is the best doctor in Estella.” “The mysterious and ancient medical techniques passed down through 48 generations in Master Joshua’s family are incredibly powerful!” ... Praise filled the air, and the reason Joshua chose the lobby for Ryan’s treatment with an audience was deliberate. Delvin Hub’s Healthy Land had just launched, and they needed a promotion. Ryan woke up, looking well and sitting up from the stretcher. Joshua checked his pulse and saw no issues. Ryan seemed in the clear. “How are you feeling, Ryan?”

“Great! Not only did Master Joshua’s medicine heal my internal injuries from practicing martial arts, but it also cured my old injuries. Master Joshua, you’ve saved my life, and I don’t know how to thank you enough. Healthy Land truly is the best medical facility. From now on, any disciple from Delvin Hub Martial Club United who gets injured or falls ill—I’ll have them treated at Healthy Land!” Joshua then turned his attention to Daniel. “Have you studied medicine?” “I’ve learned a bit from village healers and have some understanding.” “Recognizing The Cure at a glance shows your teacher must have been competent. But your youthful arrogance and eagerness to show off are off-putting. Such traits hinder greatness. However, I can offer you an opportunity. Healthy Land at Delvin Hub is newly opened and needs staff. I can take you on as an apprentice. Healthy Land values talent, and if you truly have potential, it will not go to waste.” “Take me as an apprentice? Are you even worthy?”

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Chapter 10

Chapter 10 Accepting You as a Disciple

Daniel's words left everyone within earshot shocked, staring at him with disbelief. The chance to be taken under Master Joshua's wing at Healthy Land was a dream many harbored, some even willing to incur massive debt for such an opportunity. And yet, this young man had just rejected it? Not only that, he had the audacity to speak so arrogantly. Was he a fool, or simply unaware of what Healthy Land represented? Suddenly... Ryan spat out a mouthful of blood and collapsed to the floor, unconscious. "What happened?" Joshua had Ryan moved back onto the stretcher for emergency care but despite his best efforts, Ryan remained unresponsive.

"Master Joshua, how's my father?" "I'm sorry. Your father's extensive internal injuries from martial arts practice were too great. Although The Cure helped a bit, it wasn't enough to solve all the issues. I failed to bring him back." Joshua apologized sincerely to Heather with a bow. "Please accept my deepest condolences." Even though Joshua wasn't responsible for Ryan's condition and had done his best, the fact remained that Ryan was not revived. "The man's not dead yet, what's with the rush to apologize?" Daniel walked over to the medicine cabinet, gathered a few common herbs, tossed them into a paper cup, and poured some hot water from the dispenser to steep them. He handed the resulting brew to Heather. "Give this to your dad, and he will wake up." "You think you can succeed where Master Joshua failed?" "Saving your father's life." Heather remained skeptical. "If Ryan regains his health, I'll accept you as my teacher!" "Accept me as your teacher? I'm not interested in taking on a fool like you as a disciple! If only you weren't so stubborn and had heeded my warning." Though doubtful, Heather had run out of options. With skepticism, she poured the herbal infusion into Ryan. After drinking Daniel's concoction... Ryan spewed a mouthful of black blood and then woke up. He was alive? Could it be that Ryan had truly been rescued from death's clutches? Joshua couldn't believe it and immediately checked Ryan's pulse. There could be no mistake this time—Ryan had indeed been saved. "Thank you, Master Joshua, for saving my life again!"

"Ryan, it was him, not me. My medical skills are inadequate, and I almost cost you your life. I'm sorry." Joshua invited Daniel upstairs and personally made him a cup of coffee. "Sir, I wanted to ask, you mentioned there was a problem with The Cure I administered—what exactly was the issue?" ... The two talked in the room until midnight, with Joshua asking questions and Daniel answering. The Grants' thousands-year-old secret formulas had grown incomplete over time, and Joshua presented them to Daniel, who filled in the missing parts. Although the complete formulas had not yet been verified, Joshua deduced and analyzed based on his extensive knowledge in pharmacology that Daniel's amendments were a million times better than his own attempts. In the end, Joshua was completely convinced by Daniel's medical prowess. For the first time in his life, Joshua was prepared to acknowledge someone as his

superior. Holding a cup of tea, Joshua knelt before Daniel with a thud. “Master, please accept my disciple’s bow.” “Master Joshua, you’re old enough to be my grandfather. It doesn’t seem right for me to be your teacher.” “Master, your medical skills are superior to mine. If you refuse to accept me as your disciple, I shall kneel forever!” “Alright, alright, get up,” Daniel conceded, then helped Joshua to his feet. “I can teach you medicine, but don’t call me ‘Master’. An old man like you calling me ‘Master’ makes me feel ancient.” “What shall I call you then?” “Just ‘Dan’ will do.” “That’s too disrespectful! How about ‘Daniel’ instead?” “Whatever you prefer!” ...

The following morning, Daniel was sound asleep when a persistent knocking started. He opened the door to find none other than Brittany, standing in her business attire. Seeing Daniel yawning and evidently just waking up, Brittany, already irked, became furious. “Are you still sleeping?” “Weren’t you the one who said to report to the office at 4:30 p.m.?” “Yesterday was yesterday, today is today! Master Joshua is leaving for Washington this afternoon, and the press release is now today. Get ready and come with me immediately.”

Daniel got dressed and followed Brittany to the International Conference Center. Once there, Brittany busied herself with tasks. Hungry from having skipped breakfast, Daniel bought two burgers and took them to Jessica, who was just taking a break after finishing her tasks. “Jessica, haven’t you had breakfast yet? Here’s a burger.” “Thank you!” Jessica gratefully accepted and started eating. She had been working since the wee hours due to the sudden change in schedule and was famished. Then Jennifer arrived. Seeing Daniel with a good-looking woman eating burgers and laughing together made her upset. Deciding to vent her frustration, she approached him. “Daniel, who’s this bitch you’ve picked up?”

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