

Chapter 1201

It was akin to Gerald wearing a bulletproof vest. While having it on allowed Gerald to remain unharmed, other parties wouldn't be able to get close to him, resulting in them feeling hurt. Though the other party's problem could be solved should that vest be penetrated, once that happened, Gerald would surely be the one getting hurt next.

It was the reason why he had always hidden his emotions deep inside his heart. He believed that time was the best medicine to cure rancor, and after a long period, everything would simply fade away.

Shaking the thoughts off, Gerald then changed the topic by asking, "I see... What about my buddy, Xeno? How's he doing?"

"Back when I returned to have my revenge against Jett, I remember that the Moldells had snatched up most of Mayberry's economic lifeline. While I do know that Yoel ended up getting tortured to the point where he became a beggar, I only heard news about Xeno's automobile trade not doing too well back then. Sadly, I didn't have the time or energy to be concerned with too many things at the time!" added Gerald.

"Ah, yes. I wanted to talk about that too. Back then, Jett had been extremely hostile toward any capital or connections involved with you. Of course, Xeno was no exception. Not only was his company ruined by Jett, but that b*stard had even hired people to assassinate him! Thankfully, Xeno is quite smart, so he managed to bring his fiancée along and escape before Jett could murder him. Regardless, once Jett was dealt with, I returned to Mayberry and began getting things right again. Alas, when it came to Xeno, even after asking around everywhere, I found no traces of where he could have possibly gone to, even till this day!" replied Zack with a sigh.

"...I see. It seems that many problems still remain from that incident back then..." replied Gerald as he found himself speechless.

Soon after, the helicopter arrived at Mayberry. As soon as Gerald was within the city's borders, the jade

charm—that he had been holding onto—began vibrating, making a tiny ‘buzzing’ sound.

As it turned out, Master Ghost’s prediction had once more been extremely accurate. The Zirkobsite stone truly was in Mayberry!

In order to find the specific location of the stone, however, he still needed to look for another girl with a strong yin physique. According to what Mr. Ghost had said, the other person could be found in Mayberry.

Gerald was well aware that time was ticking as well. It wasn’t going to be long before the middle of the month arrived, and should he fail to accomplish his task before then, he knew he wouldn’t be able to hide his scent from her for much longer, even with the blood.

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Should that scenario happen, Queena would surely hunt him down immediately, causing all the work he had done in the previous days to be rendered useless. With that in mind, Gerald didn’t dare delay it anymore.

“Speaking of which, I’ll be laying low once I return to Mayberry due to certain reasons. Regardless, you and the others should just behave like you normally would!” said Gerald as he looked at Zack.

Just like how he had located Cundrie, Gerald would need to look everywhere in order to find the other person with a strong yin physique. He was also well aware that he wouldn’t be able to find said person just by relying on others.

“Also, which area within Mayberry is usually most crowded by women?” inquired Gerald.

“Well, if it’s a place filled with girls, the university is definitely your best bet. Actually, now that you’ve asked me that, there may be an even better option. You see, there’s currently a function at Wayfair Mountain Entertainment. Felicity and many other celebrities are shooting a film there. As a result, many women—from all over the world—constantly flock around that area to watch them shoot their scenes! If it’s a place with lots of women you want, then Wayfair Mountain Entertainment is the perfect place to go!”

“Excellent!”

With that, the helicopter then sped up and flew directly toward Wayfair Mountain Entertainment. To attract even more women there, Gerald was well aware that getting more celebrities would definitely do the trick. With that in mind, he then told Zack to begin contacting handsome and effeminate men to come over to Wayfair Mountain Entertainment.

To make sure that the celebrities would drop whatever they were doing and come over immediately, Gerald also promised that they would be paid ten times more than they usually would.

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Naturally, that did the trick and soon after, the entire city began getting crowded with fans from all over the world.

Once there were enough women around, Gerald began slowly strolling up and down Wayfair Mountain Entertainment, making sure to scan through the women carefully to see if any of them had particularly strong yin physiques. However, to his disappointment, even when noon came, he still couldn’t sense anyone suitable at all!

At long last, Gerald found himself walking over to the area behind the mountain, where a few of the cast and crew currently were. By the looks of it, they had just completed their shooting and were ready to get off work.

It wasn't long before an extremely beautiful woman caught Gerald's attention, and when he saw her, he couldn't help but break into a smile.

The woman in question was none other than Felicity.

From what Gerald had heard, after Felicity had become famous enough, she ended up starring in two relatively successful dramas. Not only that, but she was also active on screen.

Regardless, now that she had gotten off work, Gerald noticed that she was wearing headphones as others instantly began serving her...

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The ones serving Felicity continued following her as they began heading over to a private room within Wayfair Mountain Entertainment.

"Felicity!" shouted Gerald, though only a few extras seemed to have heard his shout.

Turning to look at him, one of the extras then shouted back, "Hey, now! Lots of people come to see Felicity every day you know! Who do you even think you are? Go line up properly like the rest of them!"

Hearing that, Gerald couldn't help but shake his head with a bitter smile. He had only tried to catch up to her since he was feeling slightly touched to be able to meet up again with such an old acquaintance of his.

Meanwhile, Felicity's manager was carrying a stack of what seemed to be scripts as she said, "This here is a script written by an internet writer who goes by the name of 'Two Ears is Bodhi', Miss Nelson! It's about a loser who rises up to fame the moment he becomes a rich heir! I've already contacted him

through Line, and I wonder if you'd be interested to have a look at it."

Taking a peek at the scripts, Felicity simply pouted before replying, "Just forget it for now and toss it aside! I really don't have the time or energy to pay attention to it at the moment! I just want to get a good rest for a while!"

Following that, Felicity entered her room, and the manager—who couldn't really say much after hearing that—simply left.

Upon closing the door behind her, Felicity found herself heaving a long sigh. While development that year had gone by rapidly and she had finally managed to achieve her life-long wish, Felicity still felt like there was something lacking in her life...

No matter how much she gained, she simply couldn't feel happy for some reason...

Regardless, she was just about to remove her makeup and take a bath when suddenly, she caught a whiff of cigarette smoke in her room. Felicity, for one, never smoked, which was why the scent was so evident to her.

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At that moment, the doors of the closet in her room burst open, and out stepped a big-bellied, bald, middle-aged man who was wearing a suit and a pair of leather shoes.

Laughing lasciviously, the nicotine stains on his teeth were clear as day.

"You... Chairman Zabka!" shouted Felicity as she instantly began taking a few steps back.

The one who was currently standing before her went by the name of Chairman Zabka. While he was her sponsor, he had constantly given her strange looks before this. Now that he was daring enough to hide in her room, Felicity could easily tell what exactly it was that he wanted from her.

Now already close to the door, Felicity immediately ran over to it to make her escape. Alas, Chairman Zabka was faster than her!

Grabbing onto her arm, Chairman Zabka barely gave any time for Felicity to scream as he quickly stuffed Felicity's mouth with a white cloth!

Though she did attempt to struggle free, Felicity soon felt her body growing weaker and weaker.

"I'm sure you've long known about my feelings for you, Felicity... Yet why did you keep avoiding me? I've yearned for you for nights on end, you know? I really can't take it anymore!" said Chairman Zabka as he tossed Felicity onto the bed.

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"N-no...!" replied the enfeebled Felicity as she continued trying to struggle to no avail.

"Worry not, I'll video what we're about to do next in extreme detail... As long as you listen obediently to me and serve me well, I won't post the video on the net! If you don't... Well, let's just say you're going to be getting even more famous! Hahaha!" warned Chairman Zabka before laughing lasciviously.

Everything had been perfectly planned. Not only had he waited in Felicity's closet for a long time just to do this, but he had also ordered someone to set up shooting equipment in her room!

Knowing that nothing could stop him now, Chairman Zabka then began undressing rather menacingly.

He had just taken his pants off when he heard someone shout, “Make a pose, Chairman Zabka!”

“Of course!” replied Zabka out of habit as he instantly turned around to pose.

Soon enough, however, his eyes began widening as his body quivered in place.

“...Who... Who the hell are you? How did you even get in here?”

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At the sight of the person who was currently standing at the door alongside two black-suited bodyguards behind him—who were both holding video cameras—Desmond Zabka immediately slid on his clothes again.

From what Desmond could tell, the two bodyguards seemed even more professional than the d*mned photographers in his crew. After all, he hadn’t heard any footsteps. Hell, he didn’t even hear the door being opened!

‘I’m done for! They’ve definitely captured everything I’ve done earlier on tape! If that footage gets spread around then Felicity’s behind-the-scenes boss will definitely break all my limbs off!’

Zabka hadn’t been afraid of doing his own recording since he knew he could always manipulate it enough to make the assailant seem like it wasn’t him. If things had gone according to plan, he could’ve even used it to threaten Felicity!

“How long do you plan on filming, you b*stard?! You got a death wish or something?! Who do you work for?!” scowled Desmond as he immediately tried pouncing on them to snatch the cameras away.

However, all it took was a single kick from one of the bodyguards to send the man—who weighed over a hundred kilograms—flying back into the room and smashing against the dressing table!

After watching the mirror get shattered to pieces upon Zabka’s impact, Gerald then asked, “Are you two done shooting the video?”

“Yes, Mr. Crawford!” replied both the guards in unison.

“Then go make the preparations!”

After nodding and bowing slightly toward Gerald, both of them then hurriedly left the room.

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As for Felicity, the second she realized that it was Gerald who had saved her, she was so excited that she almost burst into tears. Even though she couldn’t move, her mind was finally at ease now.

“You... You b*stard! Are you planning to threaten me?! Just tell me how much you want already! Actually, before you say anything, I’ll tell you now that I have several powerful connections in Mayberry! Since I’m feeling generous, I’ll pay you fifteen thousand dollars to delete that video! If you accept, I’ll consider today’s incident to never have happened! If you chose not to accept, however... Well, don’t blame me for what’s going to happen to you next!” warned Desmond as he somewhat calmly began

lighting a cigarette.

Being involved with society for so long, Desmond had already seen much and gained quite a bit of insight into how the world operated. From his previous experiences, he knew that he could just bribe paparazzi like these to pacify them. Once they deleted the photos or footage, Zabka would simply send someone over to secretly assassinate them! Nobody would know what happened, and he would just continue living his life as he usually did.

At that moment, Desmond heard the familiar muffled sounds of a walkie-talkie saying, "We're downstairs, Mr. Crawford! Everything's been well-prepared!"

Bringing the walkie-talkie to his mouth, Gerald then replied, "Alright, make it quick then! Be sure not to create an uproar!"

Watching as Gerald tossed the walkie-talkie aside, the puzzled Desmond then said, "...What do you mean, 'make it quick'? Were you even listening to what I said earlier? Is fifteen thousand dollars still too little for you? Who the hell do you even work for? Give me your name!"

After looking at Gerald's demeanor for a while, Desmond could feel his confidence slowly sinking, his gut telling him that Gerald was bad news.

"...You know, there's a steep cliff right outside the window, you know?" said Gerald frigidly.

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"...W-what do you intend to do..." replied Desmond as he glared at Gerald while trembling all over.

"You see, you messed with the wrong girl... She's my classmate and friend, you know? And I once swore

that I'd make anyone who dared to harm those close to me pay a heavy price... With that said, I'll make sure you'll regret ever being born!" growled Gerald as he stared at Dylan, his murderous intent reflected clearly in his eyes.

Gerald's murderous intent was so immense that Desmond felt like he had just been thrown into a freezing dungeon. Trembling even more now as chill after chill ran down his spine, Desmond then shouted, "H-how dare you! It'd do you good to research more about how influential I am in this city! I have the most powerful connections in Mayberry and I own endless power here, you know?!"

Now knowing that Gerald wasn't doing all this merely because of money or to collect evidence for juicy gossip, Desmond was so terrified that he almost lost control of his bladder

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Even so, knowing about all this now was a little too late for Desmond.

Grabbing him by the neck, Gerald then lifted Desmond—till his feet couldn't touch the ground—before tossing him out the room! Naturally, the bodyguards from before quickly took care of him from that point onward.

With that done, Gerald slid an incense stick out of his sleeve, lit it, and began letting Felicity breathe in its scent.

As Gerald did so, he recalled how all this had begun in the first place. Just as he was about to knock on Felicity's door earlier, he had heard odd noises coming from inside.

It didn't take long for him to realize what was happening inside, and though his murderous intent immediately fired up at that moment, Gerald quickly calmed himself down. After all, he was well aware that he couldn't act too recklessly now that he had returned to Mayberry.

It was the reason why he had quickly formulated the events that had just taken place.

Regardless, Felicity soon found herself feeling much better after smelling Gerald's incense. The moment the febleness was gone, she immediately sat up excitedly and embraced Gerald before saying, "T-thank god you were here, Gerald! I... I was so scared just now..."

Quite honestly, Felicity was terrified with the thought that this was all just a dream. That when she eventually woke up, the person she had yearned for, for so long would disappear...

"Everything's fine now... Also, you're already a great celebrity, aren't you? How could you be so careless and not have a few bodyguards with you at all times?" replied Gerald with a slightly bitter smile.

"Well, since Chairman Lyle and many others have always taken care of me, I had the assumption that nobody would actually try to frame me... I admit, I was way too naïve! But enough about me! When... When did you come back, Gerald? Naomi and I went looking for you the second we heard that you had disappeared, you know? And that eventually led to..."

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Felicity's sentence slowly trailed off, seemingly remembering something frightening...

"...There's no need to go into detail about that. It's all in the past now. What matters is that we're safe and sound now. Isn't that nice!" replied Gerald as he looked at her with a subtle smile.

"...Yeah... Speaking of which, Gerald... Did you return to Mayberry just to see me...?" asked Felicity in a softened tone.

Even though she knew that the answer was still probably going to be no, the touched girl still felt the

urge to ask that question. After all, who knows, there could be a chance that it truly was the case.

“...Somewhat,” replied Gerald, which was the truth.

While he had wanted to meet up with her sooner or later, he hadn't returned to Mayberry just to see her. His main objective was still to find another girl with a strong yin physique, after all. Besides, he was also planning to visit his other old acquaintances.

Regardless, he of all people knew better than to use ambiguous words to coax her.

Hearing that, a hint of disappointment could be seen on Felicity's face as she said, “...I see! Regardless, I'm glad to see that you're safe and sound!”

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“...Speaking of which, how's Naomi been, recently? I know you've been busy shooting a film here in Mayberry, but have you contacted her at all while you were here?” asked Gerald.

“Naomi? Oh, we've been in touch quite recently, actually. We had to use the school she was teaching in to shoot a few scenes, you see. The director even allowed a few students in her class to act with us! Still, though I did consider asking Naomi to stay by my side, I refrained after hearing how much she was enjoying her job now. Speaking of which, I'm sure you've already guessed it by now, but she's already a teacher, you know? She's even bought a house for her and her mother near the school!” explained Felicity.

“I'm aware of that much,” replied Gerald with a nod.

“That's good to know! Still, I wonder if you're aware of the troubles she's currently facing... Though it's

only been two days, she's refused to go out to have lunch with me, saying that she was busy. While that may not sound like much, she had previously always agreed to my lunch invitations! When I asked her what the problem was, she simply remained silent and sulky!" said Felicity as she smoothed her hair before pouring a glass of water for Gerald.

"...Oh? Is that so? I'll go meet up with her first then. Meanwhile, you should get the rest you deserve. You know, I plan to return to Mayberry University tomorrow. If you're interested, we could head there together!"

"O-of course!" replied Felicity, overjoyed.

After hearing how sulky Naomi had recently been, Gerald immediately thought of paying her a visit as well. The fact that she was staying close to a school also made it possible for him to kill two birds with one stone. He still needed to look for another woman with a strong yin physique, after all, and where better to find a crowd of women than a school. What a perfect coincidence!

With that in mind, Gerald then left Wayfair Mountain Entertainment in his Lamborghini to meet up with Naomi...

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Mayberry First High School was the name of the school Naomi was currently teaching in. It was also where she was living close to.

After getting the directions from Felicity, Gerald found himself arriving at the front gates of a small neighborhood that looked like it was still pretty new.

By sheer coincidence, he also saw Naomi—who had a few groceries in her arms—there! However, a woman and a man seemed to be talking to her as the trio walked further into the neighborhood. The man himself had a notebook and pen in hand, seemingly recording details whenever Naomi spoke.

From that alone, Gerald could deduce that the two of them were police officers dressed in regular clothing.

'What on earth could have happened...?' Gerald thought to himself as he continued watching them inquire Naomi about something.

As he kept a safe distance from the trio in his car, Gerald made sure to constantly be on the lookout for any women with particularly strong yin physiques.

Before long, Gerald watched as the two police officers shook hands with Naomi—seemingly done questioning her—before driving off in the direction of Mayberry First High School which wasn't located too far away.

Naomi herself seemed to look quite disappointed as she continued carrying the ingredients back to her home.

Looking at her now, Gerald thought about how it had been almost over a year since he had last bumped into her. Though she still retained her long hair and fair skin, Naomi was now a teacher and Gerald could sense an intellectual charm—as well as greater maturity—from her that hadn't been present the last time they met.

Now that she was alone again, Gerald drove close to her before pressing his horn slightly.

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Hearing that, Naomi turned to look at the luxurious-looking car that was currently slowly tailing her.

As a hint of impatience flashed across her eyes, Naomi simply began quickening her pace. She utterly

hated these kinds of playboy rich heirs who assumed that they were greater than others simply because they had more wealth.

'How disgusting!'

Seeing her reaction, Gerald couldn't help but laugh as he continued following her. At some point, Gerald overtook the girl before stopping his car in front of her.

Hearing him honk his car again, Naomi faced her back against the car before scowling, "Are you mad? Get lost already!"

Since such a luxurious-looking car was present, it was natural for those around the neighborhood to get drawn to the scene. In fact, several women were already walking closer to snap pictures of the car.

Though the rest were in awe, Naomi wasn't the least impressed with the individual driving the car. Quite frankly, the only thing the driver was doing right, was raising her temper!

Rolling down the car window, Gerald looked at Naomi with a smile before asking, "Now, now, is there a need for such a bad temper?"

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Upon hearing that familiar voice, Naomi suddenly began trembling all over. That voice... It made her doubt for a second whether she was truly awake or just dreaming all this. Feeling her heart clench, Naomi thought to herself, 'Could... Could I have just heard wrongly...?'

Slowly turning around to see for herself, Naomi found herself loosening her grip and dropping all the groceries she had in hand! Though the girl hadn't cried in the longest time, she was now ready to bawl

her heart out.

She had missed Gerald dearly every single day from the moment he had left her a year and a half ago... Constantly yearning to hear his familiar voice again, she oftentimes found herself recalling the times when she had first met Gerald back in university. Due to him being a nice person with a kind heart, she had already developed a crush on him, all the way back then. What more, there was just a special charm to him.

Though the others in the university had never been able to stand Gerald back then, Naomi had always found him to be quite brilliant. She was able to see all his good points within him without being biased about how poor he was back then.

Quite honestly, she still regretted not making a move on him back then. If the two of them had become a couple from the very beginning, maybe she wouldn't have to be filled with the pain of missing him now.

Shaking the thoughts off, the now red-eyed Naomi said, "...G-Gerald...? Is that... really you...?"

Stepping out of the car, he then smiled while looking at her before replying, "Who else could I be?"

Hearing that, Naomi wasn't able to hold herself back any longer. Rushing over to him, she immediately wrapped her arms around him...

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Since Gerald had mentioned before that his fate was still largely undecided, she had often found herself thinking about the worst-case scenarios. It was the reason why she was so glad to see him in one piece now.

By then, those living in the neighborhood were already crowding around the duo as they watched in jealousy.

“It must be nice being so rich! I’m sure he can do whatever he pleases!” said one of the men in the crowd rather enviously.

His voice was so loud that a woman—who was returning from a stroll in a nearby park—heard it. Finding his comment strange, she then realized that a huge crowd had formed right in front of her house!

Feeling that something was amiss, she quickly made her way through the crowd and was shocked to see that her daughter—alongside some man whose back was facing her—was the center of all the attention!

“Still, that rich heir truly is capable... All he did was say a few things to that beauty to gain her affection!” said another person from within the crowd.

Hearing that, the woman growled, “...What?”

Under the impression that her daughter was getting bullied, she then rushed over and pulled Naomi away from the stranger’s embrace while before, “You b*stard! Unhand my daughter!”

She couldn’t care less whether the person was a rich heir or not. As long as he was trying to take advantage of her daughter, she was going to make sure that that playboy would get a piece of her mind.

“Now listen here, you-”

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Momentarily stunned when she saw who the person her daughter had been hugging was, her angered face slowly turned into surprise before eventually ending in delight.

“...Gerald...? Are... Are you really Gerald...?” asked the woman, her shock evident in her voice.

“Indeed I am, madam. It’s truly been a long time since we’ve last met each other!” replied Gerald with a smile.

“And here I thought that someone was bullying Naomi! Well, now that I know who you are, do come in!” replied Naomi’s mother happily.

Since Gerald had cured her illness back then, her sudden change in mood was really no surprise. Regardless, all three of them then entered Naomi’s house.

Upon entering, Naomi’s mother took good care of Gerald and immediately headed off to cook the ingredients that Naomi had brought home with her. According to her mother, Gerald had to stay for a home-cooked meal with them no matter what.

Gerald himself wasn’t about to say no to that, and he simply sat on a sofa, chatting with Naomi as her mother cooked in the kitchen.

While chatting, Gerald eventually asked about the two people that Naomi had talked with back at the entrance of the neighborhood.

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Scratching the back of her head, Naomi then explained, “If you hadn’t reminded me about it, I would’ve surely forgotten about it by now... I even promised the two that I’d head over to the school to help them

get to the bottom of the incident once I brought the groceries back home!”

“An incident? What happened?” asked Gerald, realizing now that the ‘incident’ had something to do with Naomi.

At that moment, Naomi’s mother walked out and said, “It’s all because of that thirty thousand dollar scholarship... You see, not only does Naomi have the position of a class teacher, but she also manages the scholarships of the senior students! The thing is, all that money suddenly went missing the night before the scholarship money was to be distributed! As if that wasn’t already troubling enough, a woman by the name of Yazmin Yallop keeps asserting that Naomi was the one who had taken the money! Her argument was that Naomi was suddenly able to buy a house not long after the money was stolen!”

“While even the school had initially wanted to deal with the situation in a low-key manner, that madwoman reported the case to the police and insisted that Naomi was the perpetrator! That’s the reason why the officers were looking for her in the first place!” grumbled Naomi’s mother angrily.

Following, she then added, “I’m sure you’re well aware that Naomi isn’t such a person, right Gerald? After all, even though your subordinates keep trying to hand her money, Naomi never accepts any of it! With that in mind, why would she even covet the thirty thousand dollar scholarship?”

“But of course I believe her!” replied Gerald with a nod.

“I’m glad you agree! But my daughter here... You know, she said she was willing to just admit to stealing the money and let bygones be bygones! Just giving away thirty thousand dollars for something she didn’t do? Not on my watch! There’s no way I’m allowing that Yazmin to take advantage of her like this!” growled the angered mother.

“First things first... Who exactly is this Yazmin person?” asked Gerald.

“Ah... She’s the class teacher of the class right next to mine... She’s been jealous of me ever since I took

over her position in the grade she's teaching in. I didn't even have a say in it when I got recommended to get the role during the conferring of academic titles... However, she fully doubts that and believes that I made schemes to snatch everything away from her! With that in mind, she's been hostile toward me ever since!" replied Naomi with a sigh.

"She's bullying you because her husband is both powerful and capable! Aside from that, you're also slightly at fault for being so gentle all the time! Some people are just like this, you know? The more you respect her, the more she'll think how easily bullied you are. I've already told you to tell Chairman Lyle about this, but you simply refused... We have Gerald's support on our side, you know? What are you even afraid of?"

"...It'd be better if you said less about this mom. Regardless, I need to head over to the school since the officers are still waiting for me... Do you mind waiting here for the moment, Gerald?" asked Naomi.

"Actually, I was planning to head to your school to have a look around anyway. Let's just head over together!" replied Gerald as he stood up.

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Gerald knew Naomi's personality well. As long as she thought that she was able to solve an issue, she simply wouldn't rely on others to help her. In fact, she would still refuse to beg others for help, even if she couldn't solve the issue in the end!

He also knew that she was probably feeling guilty about asking for his—and in turn, Zack's—help after receiving so much of his money during their last meeting.

'For a teacher, she still behaves like a silly girl...' Gerald thought to himself as he drove Naomi to Mayberry First High School.

Upon parking his car at the entrance, both of them had just taken a few steps into the school when a female student—carrying a backpack—saw Naomi and called out, "Miss Milton! Hello!"

From her greeting, it was evident that she was one of Naomi's students. Though her clothes were well kept and her face was considerably beautiful, Gerald could tell that the girl barely had any confidence in her. After all, she hardly even dared to raise her head while talking to others. While observing her, Gerald also noticed that her backpack was slightly torn.

"You haven't gone home yet, Sherry?" asked Naomi in a slightly concerned tone.

After lowering her head even more, Sherry then replied, "I-I was told to stay back at school, miss... I've already written about how you remained at school throughout the entire day the day before yesterday... They told me that it could be used as evidence! I'm really sorry I can't help with much, Miss Milton! But I truly believe that you weren't the one who had taken the money!"

Sherry's voice slowly got softer and softer, and by the end of her sentence, the now teary-eyed girl's voice was barely audible.

Smiling subtly, Naomi then said, "It's fine, Sherry. You said the truth and that's all that matters to me... Regardless, your results have been wavering slightly of late... It's almost time for the final high school exam you know? Focus more on that and give it your all, alright? Now, it's getting pretty late. Hurry along home, now!"

After getting patted on the head, Sherry then nodded before leaving the school.

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As Naomi watched her run off, Gerald averted his gaze from Sherry, disallowing Naomi from noticing the sudden seriousness in his eyes.

"...She's the most obedient student in the class, you know? She's extremely diligent when it comes to

her studies as well. Seeing her that hardworking, I was always willing to stay back at school to teach her... However, it was about a month ago when her mood suddenly turned slightly bad... I'm not sure what happened, but it influenced her results slightly negatively as well!" said Naomi, concern in her voice.

"Studies aren't the only thing you should be concerned about, you know? If you think the student deserves it, then as a teacher, you should be concerned about her life as well. You should take note of whether there are any sore spots that she refuses to talk about, or whether something's happened to her family... Things like that, you know?" replied Gerald as he smiled at Naomi.

"You almost sound like you've previously worked as a teacher yourself," said Naomi as she returned the smile.

"I have, but nowhere near your level of dedication, of course! I was a Biology teacher for a short period, but then again, I only taught by reading out of the textbook!"

Amused, Naomi simply chuckled at his reply, and soon enough, both of them arrived at the principal's office.

Before they even entered, however, both of them could already hear the frantic yells of a woman from inside the principal's office.

"I'm telling you, officers, she's the culprit! You really don't have to investigate any further! I swear to god that there's nobody else capable of doing the deed! Besides, not only do we have a testimony now, but we also have material evidence! I mean, just look at the house she's just bought for herself! I've been wondering for a while how she was so willing to suddenly fork out so much to buy that house! At long last, I finally realized that she had her eyes on the cash this entire time! It's been her plan this entire time, I tell you! So again, there's no need to investigate anymore! Just capture and take her away already! Imprison or shoot her in the head, I don't care! Just do whatever you need to do!"

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“Miss Yallop, please be quiet... Solid evidence is needed before we do anything...” replied the male officer as both of the police looked helplessly at Yasmine.

It was at that moment when Gerald and Naomi decided to step into the principal’s office.

Staring at the teacher who looked to be around the age of twenty-four, Gerald remembered how Naomi had said that Yazmin’s husband was quite capable.

While Naomi had only been able to join the school after passing the official teacher examination, Yazmin was simply given an important position in the school the moment she was recruited.

As time passed, the difference between Yazmin and Naomi’s capabilities became more and more discernible. With Naomi clearly being more adept at her job, it was no wonder why the principal had handed the more important tasks for Naomi to deal with.

Knowing that only caused Yazmin’s jealousy to skyrocket...

Chapter 1208

Yazmin wasn’t just jealous of Naomi’s capabilities either. In fact, she was even more irked by the fact that Naomi had been chosen to be the top beauty in the school!

The moment she found out about that, Yazmin nearly went mad with rage. As long as Naomi existed, Yazmin felt that she would always remain in her shadow.

“...Humph! Don’t you know how late you are? You almost had me wondering whether you were too frightened to come for fear you’d get tossed into jail immediately! You even brought some guy with you! Are you planning to scare me with him or something? Just look at how shabby he looks!” said Yazmin right off the bat.

Simply choosing to ignore her, Naomi then began explaining her point of view to the officers and the principal.

In the end, they weren't able to arrive at an immediate conclusion. With that said, the officers then told them that they would probably return again the day after. They also told Naomi to be prepared at all times, stating that as long as they could contact her at all times, she should be fine.

The moment the officers left after saying that, Yazmin immediately turned to look at Naomi before shouting coldly, "Humph! Even if there isn't an immediate conclusion, I assure you that the incident won't end until the culprit is caught! And here I was thinking that you were a woman with good temperament before this... To think that you'd actually steal the scholarship money! Don't you have a guilty conscience at all? It's truly a wonder how you were chosen to be the most exceptional teacher in the first place!"

"Honestly, you of all people should know what exactly took place... Best be careful now... Don't get into too much trouble or you'll end up hurting yourself instead!" sneered Gerald as he glared icily at Yazmin.

Suddenly being stared at like that, Yazmin felt herself go pale as she gulped slightly.

Naomi herself turned to look at Gerald in bewilderment.

'...Why would he say such a thing...? Is he assuming that Yazmin stole the money and placed the blame on me instead...? But that's impossible! Yazmin was out on a business trip when the incident happened... Besides, she wasn't even aware that I had taken the scholarship out at that point in time... Heck, not even my mom knew back then! With that in mind, I'm the only possible person to know about this... It's the reason why Yazmin immediately placed the blame on me...' Naomi thought to herself.

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“...What... What do you mean by that? Don’t get into too much trouble or I’ll end up hurting myself? Listen, you’d better tell me what you mean by that, or I’m not letting you leave the school alive!” replied Yazmin, her anxiety evident in her voice.

“Oh, I’m sure you know exactly what I mean... Either way, let’s just wait till tomorrow. I’ll share the truth behind all this and I hope someone won’t end up crying then!” said Gerald as he led Naomi out of the office.

Once they had left, Yazmin’s eyes grew fierce as she left the office and instantly began making a phone call.

“...Hubby? I’m facing some issues... Naomi called over some guy and he seems to be targeting me! What should I do...?” asked Yazmin.

“Worry not. I’ll investigate his background right this instant!”

“That’s great to hear! Hah! I’ll definitely ruin Naomi this time... As for the student, think of a way to keep her quiet and obedient! I’m glad that everything is still under control!” replied Yazmin in a vicious voice before hanging up.

Meanwhile, Gerald and Naomi were already in his car. However, it wasn’t long before Naomi realized that they weren’t heading back to her home.

“...Gerald...? Where are we headed to?” asked Naomi.

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“Well, about that student of yours... Sherry, was it? Could you tell me where she lives?” asked Gerald in return.

“...Huh? You want to meet Sherry? For what reason...? She’s an obedient child and she’s already given her part of the testimony... I assure you that she’s only told them the truth, and I truly hope that she did so rather than choose to lie just to defend me... That way, she won’t have too much to weigh on her mind!” replied Naomi.

“Oh, I could tell that she’s obedient. However, I could also tell that she was facing another issue, a very troubling one at that. If we don’t act fast she could end up falling into an endless abyss... So again, where does she live?”

Chapter 1209

Gerald was no stranger to mind reading. As long as a person’s training was less than his, he was able to see what that person was thinking from just a simple glance.

That said, when he had earlier bumped into Sherry, he came to learn about the truth about the incident.

Yazmin truly was a vicious woman with the wickedest of hearts. After all, from what Gerald found out, death wasn’t off the table when that woman became jealous. Fearing that something would happen to Sherry, Gerald wanted Naomi to bring him to her.

From what Gerald had read from Sherry’s mind, it was about a week ago when Yazmin made her appearance before Sherry’s house, even though Yazmin should’ve rightfully been on some kind of business trip at that time.

After calling Sherry out, she ordered her to secretly stalk Naomi and attempt to steal the scholarship money. Yazmin even explicitly said that by doing so, she would be able to frame Naomi! Adding that her husband’s subordinates would lend her a hand in secret while Sherry did the deed, Yazmin also promised that once Sherry acquired the money, she could use it to pay for the medical expenses needed

to treat her mother's illness.

Upon digging a bit deeper into her memories, Gerald found that her mother had fallen seriously ill about half a month ago, and her fatherless family was simply too poor to do anything about it.

Even so, Sherry simply couldn't bring herself to steal!

It was then when Yazmin began threatening her. According to Sherry's memories, Yazmin had told her that if she refused to help her, then Yazmin would actively try to cut off her grant to the point where Sherry wouldn't be able to sit for her college entrance exams!

In fact, she wouldn't even be able to acquire her high school graduation certificate! Hearing that, Sherry was instantly terrified. After all, her biggest dream was to get admitted into university.

After a few restless nights of battling between her dreams and her morals, Sherry's determination finally shattered the moment Yazmin told her that she was going to use her connections to make Sherry drop out if she continued being hesitant.

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With a threat like that, Sherry had no choice but to obey.

Following that, Sherry began stalking Naomi until she eventually took the money out. The night after Naomi did that, Sherry snuck into the financial room with the key that she had previously duplicated.

As for the surveillance system, Yazmin's husband had made sure to send some of his men to deal with it first. Due to all that happened behind the scenes, Naomi was eventually labeled as a thief.

Of course, Gerald wasn't blaming Sherry for doing all this. After all, it was evident that the girl had a simple heart. Otherwise, he wouldn't have been able to gather so much off her mind so easily. Being a filial and obedient girl, Gerald didn't doubt the fact that Sherry was pretty much a victim in all this as well.

Regardless, Gerald currently had two things on his mind as he continued driving to Sherry's house. Firstly, he told Naomi all that he had found out to get her clarification on all this.

As for the other thing, he wanted to save Sherry too.

After all, if she did indeed use all thirty thousand dollars to pay for her mother's medical fees, then Sherry would still end up losing her chance to sit for her college entrance exams. What more, there was also a very real chance that she would end up getting imprisoned! Not only would her life be ruined, but her mother would also be filled with grief! It could truly result in a broken family!

Thinking about it made Gerald remember how vicious and cruel a woman Yazmin was. Quite honestly, he had to actively hold himself back from beating that woman to death when they had earlier met in the principal's office.

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Regardless, after hearing what Gerald had to say about the situation, Naomi ended up covering her mouth in fear. While she absolutely bought what Gerald had just told her, she simply couldn't believe that Yazmin would dare to do such a thing, even though Naomi knew for a fact that she was being targeted by her.

She trembled as she thought how terrifying a jealous person's heart could get.

"...Then... If what you're saying is true, then Sherry's life will surely be ruined! That poor diligent girl!" said Naomi, her worry apparent in her voice.

“It’s not too late yet. However, judging from that woman’s actions, I’m sure that she’ll be sending some people over to keep an eye on Sherry soon. Hang on tight, we’re going to be rushing over to her place!” replied Gerald as he instantly began accelerating.

Soon after, they arrived at a shantytown in the suburbs of Mayberry. It wasn’t long before both of them could see Sherry from afar, holding onto a thermos in her backyard. From the looks of it, she had just cooked a meal for her mother and was now heading back into her house.

Just as she was opening her front door, however, two black cars suddenly came to a screeching halt before her house, and out stepped six sturdy-looking men. All of them had crew cuts and they were also wearing gold chains around their necks. With bags under their armpits and cigarettes in their mouths, the men were quick to block Sherry from closing the door behind her.

“What’s the hurry, little girl? I’m sure that serving the meal can wait!” said what seemed to be the leader with a cold smile.

“...It’s you people again! I already did the thing you told me to! Why are you still pestering me?” replied Sherry as she hugged onto her thermos tightly while taking a step back in fear.

“Haha! There’s no need to be afraid... Honestly, we’re just here to warn you not to reveal the incident to others no matter what... Well, that was the initial plan, that is. We decided to take an extra measure by having you record yourself admit to doing the deeds. Fret not, for as long as you don’t reveal the incident to the public, then the video will be safe in our hands forever. However, should news about the deed spill out, then you’ll soon find yourself getting famous all over the country once we post the video on every major social media site!” added the leader as he laughed aloud, prompting a few of his men to show Sherry the video cameras they were holding onto.

CHAPTER LIST

Chapter 1210

“Again, worry not, little girl! We’ll be quick as long as you’re obedient. In fact, I’d even be willing to pay you some cash... if you make me feel good, that is! You’ll be using the money to save a life anyway, so

what I'm about to do to you next is going to be a fair trade!" shouted the leader as he dragged Sherry by the arm, causing the thermos she was holding onto to fall to the ground!

As the carefully-prepared food that Sherry had earlier cooked for her mother got spilled all over the ground, the leader quickly covered her mouth and began carrying her into one of their cars!

Seeing that, the other five men stood at the side as they laughed in excitement.

However, one of the men's laughter was short-lived as he suddenly felt someone grabbing his right ear! Before he could even react, the sickening sound of flesh being torn off could be heard. By the time he screamed in agony, half of his face was already bloodied!

Gerald himself casually tossed the torn-off ear to the ground before revealing that he was holding onto a large iron stick that he had picked up from the streets.

With a single smash to the man's head, he immediately fell to the ground, convulsing as foam exited his mouth!

The second they saw how terribly their comrade was suffering, the remaining men immediately grew terrified. As for their leader, he quickly jumped out from the car, a hideous expression on his face.

"You f*cking bastard! How dare you ruin our affairs! You're just begging for death, aren't you?!" roared the fierce-looking man as he unsheathed a dagger that had been attached to his waist.

Before the leader could strike, another one of his men had already unsheathed his own dagger, and was

currently rushing toward Gerald to stab him!

However, Gerald was much, much faster.

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Grabbing onto the assailant's ear, Gerald twisted it with great force, causing yet another tearing sound to be heard as a new scream filled the air.

Repeating the process, Gerald tossed the ear aside before smashing the stick into the side of his head. Naturally, this man reacted exactly the same as the first.

"You... You b*stard! Gang up on him!" ordered the leader as his eyelids twitched rapidly.

Though the leader weighed over a hundred kilograms, his movements weren't clumsy at all. In fact, he was the fastest and also the smartest among his men.

Charging at Gerald, he leaped into the air, aiming a flying kick right at Gerald's head!

Even so, Gerald remained calm as he struck the iron stick right into the man's leg before he was even able to get close to Gerald.

Following the sickening sounds of bones cracking, the leader screamed in pain as he toppled to the ground. With how hard Gerald had hit his leg, his leg was now angled in a way that his calf was folded against his thigh. After being twisted in such a frightening way, the man could even feel his thigh with his toes!

As he continued screaming on the ground while convulsing erratically before Gerald, Gerald himself coldly declared, "I won't even bother using my fists to beat all of you up! You're all nothing but b*stards!"

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After saying that, he then ripped the leader's ear off as well before throwing it aside! Now bleeding profusely, the leader of the men almost found himself fainting from the sheer pain alone.

Seeing that, the remaining men instantly threw their daggers aside as they began running away! After seeing their boss being beaten up so easily, they knew they could never dream of defeating Gerald. Not only was Gerald powerful, but he was also a savage for pulling off the ears of whoever he beat up!

Of course, it was impossible for them to escape in the first place.

Running after the escaping men, Gerald whacked his iron stick onto all of them, making sure to rip an ear off each of the men.

Once he was done, he fed the ears he had collected to a few stray dogs...

CHAPTER LIST

Chapter 1211

With all the assailants now lying on the ground, Gerald threw the stick away. Naomi herself immediately ran toward the car to help Sherry up.

Being both soft and weak, the scene from earlier had almost shocked Sherry to death.

Had those men had the chance to touch her inappropriately, Sherry wouldn't have had the will to live on with that memory in mind!

The fact that she had been constantly forced to do things against her will for a while now didn't help her mental state. If they had truly had their way with her, then Sherry feared that taking her own life wasn't going to be out of the question anymore.

Regardless, her teacher was now here and the teary-eyed Sherry immediately embraced Naomi while whimpering, "M-Miss Milton...! Y-you've been so good to me and yet I... I... I'm such a jerk! A total inhumane, jerk...!"

Comforting the crying girl, Naomi simply replied, "It's alright, I understand... I don't blame you... After all, you only did all this because your mother had fallen sick, right? Why didn't you tell me that you had been going through such a rough time...?"

Naomi truly felt bad for what Sherry had to go through this entire time. She couldn't imagine how hellish it would be for the girl had Gerald decided not to come back to look for her...

It'd be a complete waste for such a talented girl's future to be destroyed, just like that... Not wanting to think about it anymore, Naomi simply reminded herself that in the end, the most important thing was that her student was still safe.

"I-I was the one who stole the money, miss...!" wailed Sherry, unable—and unwilling—to hide the truth anymore.

“B-but I didn’t dare use any of the money! No matter how broke I am, I’d never use such unclean cash! I’ve been earning all that I needed by working part-time as a tutor!” added Sherry in between tears.

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“I’m proud of you for not using any of it... And again, I understand!” replied Naomi as she continued comforting the sobbing girl.

A little while later, Gerald walked toward the side of her house’s door and lifted a loose tile. Just as Sherry had said, the money was there, all thirty thousand dollars of it. Seeing that, Gerald couldn’t help but feel slightly touched by Sherry’s sincere personality.

“Hey now, your mother still hasn’t eaten, you know...? Now stop crying and let’s go cook her a new meal! I’d like to meet her at the hospital as well!” said Naomi as she wiped the tears off Sherry’s face.

Nodding slowly in agreement, the two of them then quickly cooked up a new meal. After getting it into the thermos, Gerald sent both Naomi and Sherry to the hospital.

As for the bloodied bodyguards left there, Gerald easily settled the messy scene with a single phone call.

Once they arrived at the hospital, Gerald joined the duo as they visited Sherry’s mother. From just a single look at her, Gerald was able to tell that the illness was nothing too serious, at least for his standards. While it wasn’t incurable, the problem was that treating her mother’s sickness required a lot of money.

Sherry truly had it rough. With that in mind, Gerald paid for all the medical fees needed and even promised Sherry that all her university living expenses and fees would be sponsored by the Mayberry Commercial Group.

Gerald also told her that he would get a person named Zack to arrange a job for her once she made a full recovery. Comforting her, Gerald added that everything was going to get better soon.

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It was about nine at night when everything was settled. Knowing that Sherry had been through a lot today, Naomi decided to accompany and have a little talk with her.

Since Gerald didn't really know how to comfort such a young lady, he headed off with the same flask from before to get some water.

It was at that moment when...

Chapter 1212

All of a sudden, the jade charm that Gerald had been carrying around seemed to sense something!

Feeling his body tremble in excitement, Gerald knew that a woman with a strong yin physique was around!

With that, he immediately began searching around the area.

However, the jade's reaction quickly vanished and Gerald found himself disappointed. He couldn't just have imagined that, right?

"What on earth happened...? Why did it stop reacting so quickly?" muttered the confused Gerald to himself, his disappointment evident.

Since the charm had reacted so strongly just moments ago, Gerald assured himself that the reaction

must have diminished since the woman with the strong yin physique had left the area. With that in mind, Gerald dashed down the hospital, actively looking around while hoping for another reaction from the jade. However, no further reactions were triggered.

By the time he gave up and returned to the hospital room, Naomi had just closed the door behind her.

“I think we should leave for now, Gerald... Sherry’s clearly exhausted herself from all the pressure she’s been facing lately, and I say this because she’s now fast asleep on an extra bed in the room! Still, I can’t help but worry about their safety if we leave just like that...” said Naomi.

“Not to worry. I’ve already ordered for a few bodyguards to stand guard over them without them knowing. My guards are quite capable so you needn’t worry any further!”

“That’s a relief... Also, Sherry told me that she would be heading to the police station to make her statement tomorrow. She’s far too pitiful after having to face all that so I really hope that you’ll take good care of her... She doesn’t deserve to get hurt a second time!”

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“I’ll be there for everything!”

Hearing that, Naomi nodded slowly, a cocktail of emotions reflected in her eyes.

As long as Gerald was here, Naomi wouldn’t be afraid even if the sky began falling.

To be entirely honest, she sometimes still wondered what life would’ve been like if she had gotten together with Gerald at the very beginning. Perhaps they would’ve gotten married by now, living life happily with each other... She didn’t even care for Gerald’s money... All she truly wanted was to be with

him...

Even so, Naomi knew that Gerald was still yearning for Mila who had apparently gone missing. With that in mind, there was no way that she was going to act that selfishly...

However, the more Gerald cared for her, the harder her heart throbbed.

Following that, Gerald sent Naomi home and Naomi's mother cooked a nice supper for both of them. Gerald only left after having his second home-cooked meal from Naomi's mother.

Sometime later, Yazmin asked her husband, "...Hubby? Is something the matter...?"

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"It's just strange, you know? I can't seem to contact Thiago and the others at all! Also, earlier when I called the hospital, Sherry's mother was apparently in the midst of transferring? By the time I got there to have a look for myself, she wasn't even in the same ward anymore! What the hell is even going on...?" grumbled Yazmin's husband with a frown.

"Well, maybe Thiago and the others are out having some fun! They probably muted their phones or something... As for Sherry, it wouldn't surprise me if the hospital has finally kicked her out since she doesn't have the cash to pay for all those medical expenses! I'll call Thiago later as well to ask him about it... Though again, if you've already been trying to call him for some time, I truly believe that he's just having too much fun to notice!" replied Yazmin.

"...That's true. Fine then... Regardless, I've already gotten all my connections to check for that man's background. It's weird that they haven't replied to me though... Whatever the case is, I'm still going to find the chance to show him how great I am tomorrow!" sneered her husband.

It was exactly at that moment when his phone began ringing many, many times. Several messages were—almost simultaneously—being sent to him, and Yazmin’s husband quickly picked up his still-vibrating phone.

Upon reading the text messages, a frown slowly formed on his face as he muttered, “...The hell is all this supposed to mean...?”

“What is it hubby...?” asked Yazmin in a gentle tone. As long as her husband could help get rid of Naomi for her, she didn’t have much else she wished for.

“...All these messages... They’re all saying the same thing...” replied Yazmin’s husband as he shook his head.

“...What is it?”

“Well, they all say, ‘good luck!’”

CHAPTER LIST

Chapter 1213

The very next day, Yazmin headed to school along with her husband.

Since Naomi had gotten a man to back her up the day before, Yazmin was definitely getting hers to help her as well. Yazmin was sure that the sight of her husband’s car alone would be enough to scare the life out of Naomi’s man! Humph!

Still, Yazmin would be lying if she said that those weird messages and Thiago's disappearance the day before didn't have her worried. Even after calling him and his men, none of them picked up, and none of them were at Sherry's place either. Where could they be...?

Though Thiago and his men could get a bit wild while enjoying themselves, she also knew them to be very responsible men. It was near-impossible for them not to return her messages after completing their job.

Feeling odd about the entire situation, that was the second reason she was bringing her husband along. Whatever the case was, she knew Sherry's background well so she probably wouldn't be a problem for her.

It wasn't long before they arrived in front of the school building. Since Yazmin's husband was driving the newest BMW 7-series, a group of male students was instantly drawn to it.

"Holy cow! Is that Mrs. Yallop's husband? Not only is he driving a BMW 7-series, but he's also charming?!"

"D*mn! So her husband's a rich heir! By the looks of it, his family must be super powerful too! Though with how luxuriously Mrs. Yallop always dresses, it isn't too surprising that her husband isn't an ordinary man!"

Still, in their high school days, it was common enough for male students to favor talking about games and cars.

Locking her arms around her husband's, Yazmin then stood in front of the car for a brief moment,

enjoying every second of how envious and adoring the students were of her and her husband.

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After pretending to retrieve some things from the car, Yazmin saw a few of her colleagues coming to work and called out, "Well hello there, Mrs. Shaq! You're early today! And the same goes for you as well, Mrs. Xanders!"

Seeing the smiling woman calling out to them, Mrs. Shaq then replied, "Good day to you too, Mrs. Shaq! Is that your husband! The car he's driving looks pretty new! It must've been expensive!"

Though everyone looked enthusiastic to reply to Yazmin's greeting, deep inside, they were all equally upset.

'Why's she even being all proud about that? So what if she has a rich husband and a nice car! Big deal! Still... Why is it that other people always have better lives... There's no way we could ever compete with her!' Thought several of her colleagues who were cursing her in their minds with utter jealousy.

As the female teachers continued putting on a cheery façade while talking with Yazmin, a few male colleagues of Yazmin's showed up.

The moment they all saw the car, they were instantly impressed. One of them was so excited that he immediately said, "Holy! That's a BMW 7-series! It's the newest model in 2020 and it's barely been a few days since it was released into the market! How cool!"

After they continued talking with Yazmin and her husband for a while, one of the female teachers finally found herself unable to hold back anymore as she asked, "When would you be free to take us out on a ride in the car, Mrs. Yallop?"

“Why, anytime, of course! Where would you like to go? My husband can be our driver!” replied Yazmin with a smile.

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“Oh, how kind you are, Mrs. Yallop! I’ll be thanking you in advance then!”

“I’m just glad you finally realize how nice a person I am! While I know I can be hard to deal with sometimes, but I’m generally a very kind person to those close to me! It’s just the way my straightforward personality is! Unlike a very fake teacher of course! You know, the house she bought near our school spans a good hundred and fifty square feet! It’s quite obvious where she got the money to buy that house from, given her current financial status!” replied Yazmin.

“I don’t know... Maybe she just found a rich husband...?” said one of the male teachers.

“Hah! Her? Tell you what, I’ve checked the bursary record before and I’ve already seen what her husband looks like!” replied Yazmin.

“What? How does he look?”

CHAPTER LIST

Chapter 1214

“Saying that he looks below-average is an overstatement for him! With that in mind, how could he possibly be rich? He’s probably just some regular worker somewhere!”

Knowing that, Yazmin was beyond sure that such a person wouldn’t ever be able to compare with her husband.

Before any of her colleagues could even react, a group of students began screaming out of the blue! Some were even screaming so hard that they seemed close to fainting!

“...The hell?” muttered Yazmin as she and her other colleagues turned to look at the front gate to see what all the commotion was about.

The second they saw what the students were screaming about, however, the group of teachers immediately widened their eyes before cursing out loud in shock. Yazmin, in particular, seemed more flabbergasted than the rest, covering her mouth in astonishment.

“W-what a cool car!” shouted everyone in both shock and awe.

The ‘cool car’ they were referring to, was one that cost millions of dollars. In fact, it was arguably a hundred times cooler than a Lamborghini sports car! The car itself was now slowly driving from the school compound toward the main school building.

Not even caring about the school rules—which stated that students weren’t allowed to bring their phones to school—anymore, all of them immediately began snapping pictures of the expensive-looking car.

“I-It’s a Lambo! A million-dollar Lambo!” stuttered Yazmin’s husband as his jaw dropped.

“Whose car is that? Is it the husband of one of the teachers? Or perhaps one of the students’ fathers?” added one of the male teachers who was still shocked by the sight.

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“If I’m correct, then that car right there is limited edition! There are less than a hundred cars for this model in our country, you know?” shouted a car expert from within the crowd.

With all this happening, Yazmin’s expression quickly turned sour. Naturally, this was because the spotlight on her husband’s BMW 7-series had now been stolen by that other car!

“...Since you know so many people, can’t you guess who the driver of that car is, hubby?” asked Yazmin.

Hearing that, the other female teachers instantly grew jealous again. After all, they knew better than to doubt how powerful Yazmin’s husband was.

“...Well, while I do know several wealthy businessmen in Mayberry, some regions are still beyond my reach... Regardless, once I see the driver’s face, I may know who he is! Bring me my name card, Yazmin!” replied her husband as he straightened his suit.

“Right away, hubby!” said Yazmin as she happily returned to his car to retrieve his name card.

Before she opened his car’s door, however, she made sure to look at her female colleagues before saying, “Businessmen are always like this, you know? It’s natural for them to want to exchange name cards with others, especially when the other party is an experienced director! After all, it could very well bring business to them, though I don’t expect any of you to understand!”

Naturally, this made the other female teachers upset.

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Regardless, the car finally stopped moving when it parked right next to the BMW 7-series.

Everyone's attention was now on the car, and both teachers and students alike held their breaths, eager to find out who the owner of the car was.

Shortly after, the car's door was opened, and out stepped a young man with his right hand in his pocket. Simultaneously, the door opposite of the driver's seat was also opened, and an extremely beautiful yet familiar-looking woman stepped out.

The moment Yazmin saw the duo who had just exited the car, the name card in her hand instantly fluttered to the ground. Her entire body now trembling, Yazmin felt as though her soul had just been crushed by an immense strike of lightning.

Her mind now completely blank, the current situation felt almost dream-like.

While Yazmin felt like she was about to faint, many of the other students and teachers were now screaming!

"Miss Naomi! It's you!"

CHAPTER LIST

Chapter 1215

True to their words, the duo that had just descended the car truly were Gerald and Naomi.

Knowing that, Yazmin felt as though her entire world had just been flipped.

After all, she had assumed that since Naomi probably didn't have anyone capable backing her up, her husband could easily get rid of her. While it was true that she had met Gerald yesterday, Yazmin simply thought he was some ordinary man who would suffer terribly by her hand today!

Never could she have imagined that he would be this filthy rich!

Now sweating profusely and genuinely unsure of what to even do next, her heart skipped a beat the moment she saw a police car driving into the school.

Though there had only been two police officers the day before, four of them stepped out of the car today.

Scanning the crowd, one of the officers glared at Yazmin before saying, "Good day, Miss Milton, and I see that Miss Yallop is here too! There's been some progress on the case... Why don't we discuss this in the principal's office...?"

"F-fine by me...!" replied Yazmin, her gut telling her that something was insanely wrong.

Once they were in the office, the pressuring atmosphere there caused great discomfort to Yazmin. After all, everyone was now looking at her differently.

"...We've received new evidence about the theft, and after some digging, we found a new lead! Apparently, someone had been forcing a student to act on their behalf, and in extremely cruel ways too!" explained one of the officers to the principal.

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"Thanks for your hard work, officers!"

Hearing that, Yazmin's face turned even paler as her heart skipped a beat. Gulping, she turned to look at her husband, a clear sign that she was asking for his help.

However, the moment he took a step back, Yazmin finally realized where her feelings of insecurity were stemming from.

Yazmin's husband knew for a fact that he couldn't get involved any further into the matter. The young man who was currently standing before him... His background was definitely not a simple one, and with that in mind, her husband knew better than to challenge such a person.

He also knew that if he continued helping Yazmin, he wouldn't be able to get away easily. Though he honestly wanted to just run out of the office at that moment, he was well aware that a few security guards were currently patrolling right outside the office's door.

As he continued thinking about what he should do next, one of the officers took a warrant out and showed it to Yazmin.

"Miss Yallop, we suspect that you and your husband are involved in a crime! With that in mind, please follow us back to the station for further questioning!"

Utterly stunned to hear that, Yazmin's husband immediately retorted, "T-this is none of my business! That woman was in charge of the entire thing! This doesn't involve me at all!"

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Following that, he immediately swung the office door open and attempted to escape! Naturally, he was instantly caught by one of the security guards who were still patrolling outside the office.

Upon hearing that, Yazmin instantly began shrieking in a frenzy before attempting to escape as well! She knew for a fact that if they were found guilty of the deed, then they wouldn't be released for at least twenty years!

With that in mind, she managed to dash past the guards who were still busy pinning her husband down. None of them had expected her to run out as well!

By the time she arrived at the stairs, all the students who had seen her running for her life were utterly confused as to what was happening.

Before she could even take the first step down, however, she felt a jolt of electricity running down her spine!

Screaming from the impact of the thrown object, Yazmin crumbled to the floor and saw that she had been hit by an electric rod that was glowing blue!

"H-huh? Isn't that Mrs. Yallop...?"

"My god! Why are they trying to capture her?!"

As the present students instantly covered their mouths while taking steps backward, Gerald himself jogged over to where Yazmin currently lay.

Seeing that the other officers were still a distance away, Gerald bent down and shocked her with the electric rod one more time before they arrived, sending the woman unconscious.

"If it wasn't for our current location, I hope you know that I'd have torn you into a thousand pieces by now...!" growled Gerald as he tossed the rod to the side.

With his current temper, he wouldn't truly be Gerald if he didn't treat a cruel woman like Yazmin the same way he did to that woman in Lugaw City...

Chapter 1216

With the current matter resolved, Gerald and Naomi soon found themselves returning to the hospital to visit Sherry and her mother.

Though Gerald stayed for quite a long time in the hospital, he eventually found himself disappointed. It didn't seem like the person who had triggered the jade charm before was going to make an appearance again any time soon.

While he had initially thought that the person in question could be one of the doctors, nurses, or even patients in the hospital, after walking through the entire hospital for most of the morning, Gerald was now doubtful that that was the case.

With the middle of the month now dangerously close, he would be lying if he said that he wasn't anxious.

Eventually concluding that the woman with the strong yin physique would've shown herself by now if she truly was related to the hospital, Gerald simply sent Naomi back to the school before considering heading to other nearby schools or universities to begin searching again.

Honestly, he felt that none of this made any sense. After all, according to what Master Ghost had said, due to fate's role, even if Gerald were to miss meeting the other person the first time, they would certainly meet again!

Knowing that thinking about it wouldn't really do him any good, Gerald simply spent the rest of the morning driving around several high schools and universities. In the end, he still couldn't find the person he was looking for.

With only one final university left unchecked, Gerald simply sighed before muttering to himself, "...Mayberry University it is!"

If she wasn't there either, then he really didn't know where else to look for her.

Upon arriving at the university, Gerald immediately felt slightly embarrassed when he saw so many students pointing at his car. He really shouldn't have been this high-profile...

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With that in mind, he quickly turned his car around and headed for the small forest where he used to park his car in the past. Upon arriving there, he saw that a few cars had already been parked in his usual spot.

Momentarily stopping his own car, Gerald saw that there were many beautiful girls there dressed to impress as well, as several rich young men who each seemed to own different kinds of sports cars, Ferraris, and many other expensive-looking cars.

Gerald also noticed that there seemed to be a conflict between two of the men, and all the others present at the scene were currently gathered around them.

Listening in, Gerald heard one of the men say, "How dare you even park your cheap car here? Aren't you ashamed of yourself at all? My car is worth at least three hundred thousand dollars you know?"

"Mr. Yackee is so handsome and cool! His car looks absolutely marvelous as well!"

“Yeah! What a wonderful car!”

Squealed a few of the girls while looking rather enviously at the one who had spoken.

From what Gerald could tell, the other man’s car probably cost around a hundred and twenty thousand dollars. As a result, all the girls there were naturally supporting Mr. Yackee.

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Nobody was standing up for the other guy at all, and after being made to feel so inferior, the other man simply drove away angrily.

While Gerald had once used this secluded spot to hide how rich he was, things had apparently changed now. From what he could tell, those who now knew about this small forest were mostly owners of luxury cars. To show off their wealth, only the most expensive and dazzling luxury cars were permitted to park here.

As for the others who knew of this place, they mostly consisted of both male and female students who wanted to enjoy the show.

Regardless, the moment Mr. Yackee saw that he had successfully driven the other guy away, an extremely proud-looking expression was formed on his face. Just as he was about to park his car properly, however, the loud revving of engines could suddenly be heard.

Turning to look at the source of the sound, everyone’s eyes widened as an even cooler-looking Lamborghini made its appearance! The atmosphere climaxed as soon as it stopped close enough and a young man—wearing a pair of sunglasses as well as cropped pants—stepped out of the car.

Turning to look at Mr. Yackee, the man—who was chewing some gum—then declared, “About time you get lost, don’t you think? Do you really think that you deserve to park here? My car is worth at least

seven hundred and sixty million dollars, you know?”

“I-it’s Mr. Lockworth!”

“Oh my god, he’s so handsome!”

Gerald could simply watch as the girls began squealing in excitement again.

While he wasn’t aware of this, everyone from within that crowd knew of the legend surrounding that small forest. Essentially, the legend stated that a mysterious and rich young man once made his appearance in this very forest in a top-notch luxury car. Following that, the owner of the car managed to pursue and get the university’s top goddess to fall for him! Though it was simple, the tale was popular enough to make the small forest west of the university a famous parking spot for those with luxury cars.

“What are you still looking at, Mr. Yackee? Move your car already so that Yalter can park his car!”

“Indeed! It’s more suitable for Mt. Lockworth to park there and you know it!”

After hearing the girls’ shouts of contempt, Mr. Yackee could only purse his lips as his inferiority complex kicked in. By the time he drove off angrily, the scene had already attracted the attention of at least a hundred onlookers.

Shaking his head with a wry smile on his face, Gerald simply thought, ‘These kids think they’re so young and rich... You should be making use of your youth and wealth to do more meaningful things!’

Following that, he stepped on his accelerator, driving his Lamborghini directly toward the crowd of people...

As the students heard the revving of yet another car's engine, they turned to look at the Lamborghini as it swerved right before them before halting, sending the fallen leaves on the ground scattering all over the place with the force of an autumn gale.

The abrupt appearance of the car left everyone at the scene momentarily frozen in shock.

"...Is... is that a Lamborghini Reventon...?"

The situation was so dream-like that everyone could barely hide the shock on their faces. None of them even dared to blink for a while, for fear that the sight of the luxurious car would simply disappear the second they did.

Not only was the limited-edition Lamborghini Reventon a car that was worth at least two million and six hundred thousand dollars, but according to the local legend, the mysterious rich and young man had initially owned a similar car!

Now that that specific car had arrived at this specific location, those present felt like they were living out the legend that everyone kept talking about. None of them had truly expected to be able to witness the car for themselves, which was why they were all so stupefied by the sight of it.

Mr. Lockworth himself was left utterly dumbfounded. However, he quickly regained his senses and knew that he had to admit defeat this time.

'That car... It... It's simply too luxurious!' Yalter thought to himself before immediately driving his car away from the parking space so that Gerald could park his car there.

After parking his car in his old spot, the girls instantly began screaming hysterically—with many of them placing their hands over their mouths and the rest cupping their cheeks—as Gerald stepped out of his car.

All this was simply too amazing for them to remain calm!

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“Hey there, brother! What’s your phone number?”

“Do you have a girlfriend, brother?”

As the girls there instantly began huddling around Gerald, the other rich men quickly began heading over to their own cars—with the intention of driving them away from the area—while shouting, “We’ll be taking our leave now, brother!”

“Hold it!” shouted Gerald in a cold voice as he turned to look at them.

Hearing how frigid and commanding his voice was, everyone was instantly paralyzed in place.

Following that, Gerald then retained his cold voice as he asked, “Tell me, was there a point of comparing how wealthy each of you were?”

Hearing that, the boys quickly lowered their heads, each of them at a loss for words.

“While you may be rich, I hope that each of you realize that there’ll always be wealthier people out there! With that in mind, since there’s always going to be someone richer than you, why even bother comparing in the first place? If you have that much time and energy, you should be spending all that on your family and those you care for instead! Why even come all the way out here just to show off?” added Gerald in a casual tone as the boys turned red in embarrassment while nodding slowly.

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“He’s right, you know? How could people like Mr. Lockworth or Mr. Yackee ever dream to be able to compare to him?”

“Now that I’ve met you, I finally understand what it means to be mature and stable, sir! You truly are charming and everything you say is completely true!”

By that point, several of the girls—with love-struck expressions on their faces—were backing Gerald up with affectionate voices.

As one of the girls began rubbing her arm against Gerald’s he simply pushed her aside before saying, “You girls aren’t any better!”

Turning to face them next, he then said, “Have a good look at what you’re all wearing now! T-shirts without any pants or even shorts underneath? Is this how girls should be acting? Don’t you think you’re all being a little too shameless?! As for you in particular! Your top is nothing more than a thin rope at this point! What’s the point of exposing so much of your body to others? Be a bit more ladylike for heaven’s sake!”

After seeing this money-worshipping group of youngsters, it was no real wonder why Gerald was so furious at them.

Knowing that they would definitely come to regret it—in the future—if they didn’t use this time to cherish and appreciate their family members and loved ones, Gerald could only reprimand them in hopes that it would return them to their senses.

However, several of the girls simply began crying as soon as they heard Gerald scolding them!

“...Just... Leave already! Leave! All of you!”

CHAPTER LISTChapter 1218

After waving his hand to drive everyone away, Gerald made sure he parked his car properly while wondering to himself what was wrong with today's society.

So what if one was rich? If everything could be resolved with money, then Gerald wouldn't have to continue searching like this.

Shaking the thought off, Gerald then looked at the campus building before heading in its direction to continue his search for a woman with a strong yin physique.

What happened earlier was simply a small episode, and Gerald's thoughts were soon replaced with a slight nostalgia as he stepped into the campus again after graduating for over two years.

As the saying went, life was a circle that went round and round. Regardless of whether a person was rich or poor, they would always end up returning to where they came from.

True to that saying's words, all of this had started in this very university. After all, Gerald had first been told that he was the heir of the Crawford family while he was studying here. What more, Gerald had also met the love of his life on this very campus.

Even the milk tea shop at the entrance of the campus was still there, and the owner of that shop was still the same person.

Looking at the shop, he recalled how Mila had forgotten to bring her wallet out with her when she was buying some milk tea back then... Him helping her pay for it was their very first encounter...

Back then, his relationship with Mila had been both pure and innocent... There weren't any earth-shattering or bitter moments in their relationship at all. Just a simple, 'I love you and you love me' relationship... Of course, good things never tended to last.

From the moment he had met her, Gerald had never wanted to be the heir of the Crawford family. If he could choose, he would've very much preferred to remain poor. After all, Mila didn't despise him regardless of his wealth.

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After graduating university, both of them could have continued living together happily. After getting jobs and collecting enough money, they could've even opened a milk tea shop together. By that point, they would've surely earned enough to get married and start a beautiful family together... All could've gone so perfectly...

Thinking about it, Gerald couldn't help but smile slightly bitterly. Then again, there was no way that the past him would've been able to predict that all this would happen...

As he continued being deep in thought, he suddenly heard a voice call out, "Hey there, handsome! You've been standing all dazed there for a good five minutes, you know? Are you alright?"

Turning to look at who had called him, Gerald was greeted by the sight of a smiling girl with a ponytail hairstyle who was currently waving at him.

Caught off guard by her sudden question, Gerald only managed to say, "...Uh... Yeah. You... need

something from me?"

Hearing that, the girl simply laughed aloud. How silly of him to be standing there in a daze in broad daylight... She wondered what he could possibly be thinking of...

"...Well, my roommates and I were planning to take pictures together by the lake, you see... I was looking for someone who could help photograph us! Since you're the first person I've bumped into while searching around, I wonder if you'd be willing to take our pictures for us, handsome?" asked the girl—who had already been interested in Gerald when she first saw him from a distance—as she held out her camera to him. It was undeniable, after all, that Gerald had a charming appearance.

"...Oh. I... Sure I guess..." replied Gerald as he took the camera from her. Seeing that it wasn't a particularly difficult request to begin with, Gerald found it hard to turn her down.

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"Alright! Also, please be careful with that. It's a very expensive camera! Think you know how to operate it?" asked the girl who now realized that Gerald was dressed in rather ordinary clothing. With that in mind, she couldn't help but worry that he would accidentally get it to malfunction if he truly had no idea how to use it.

"Don't worry, I do!" replied Gerald with a simple nod.

Meanwhile, six girls could be heard chattering away at the side of the lake. Since they were all about to head into their second year of university and the weather looked good today, all of them had agreed to come out to take pictures together. They wanted to make sure that they captured sufficient memories of their first year in university.

While there were many people strolling around the lake, all of them seemed to be couples, and many were even acting rather intimately by hugging each other in public. Due to that, the girls felt that it

would be a little too awkward for them to ask them for their help.

“...Speaking of which, where the hell is Yulisa? From her message earlier, she told me that she’s already found someone to photograph us! What’s taking her so long...?”

“Speak of the devil! There they are now! Hey, look at the guy she brought along. He looks rather handsome, no?” said another girl as she giggled.

“Handsome? Him? Hah! I think he looks rather ordinary!” replied a third girl as she shook her head.

“That’s quite enough. What are you girls even thinking? Remember, he’s being kind enough to help us take our pictures so we should be courteous and polite to him!” said a long-haired girl—who was standing right in the middle of the group—with a smile.

Chapter 1219

Hearing that, the girls made sure to thank Gerald first as soon as he got close enough to them.

Even when they did so, however, Gerald was still feeling slightly absentminded. After all, he was constantly being bombarded with nostalgic memories of his own, back when he was still studying here.

Eventually, Gerald snapped out of it and got into position before saying, “Well, I’ll be taking the picture now if you girls are ready!”

“We’re all good to go!” said the girls after getting into various poses as they laughed among themselves.

Getting the confirmation he needed, Gerald slowly raised the camera. Once he was sure that everyone was within the picture, he then said, “Alright, on the count of, one! Two! Three- f*ck!”

Out of the blue, Gerald suddenly jolted in both surprise and excitement, resulting in the camera being thrown into the air! By the time everyone relevant realized what was happening, the camera had already collided onto the ground! With its lens slightly cracked and a few extra 'clunks' coming from inside the camera, everyone was fairly certain that a few components inside the device had been broken.

Regardless, Gerald's actions stemmed from the fact that at that moment, he had suddenly felt an immensely strange feeling in his heart. Not only that, but he was also sure that he had felt the jade charm react while he was still concentrating his hardest on taking the picture just seconds ago.

The only other time he had felt such a way was when he had first met Cundrie. Turning to look at the girls again, Gerald was sure that his initial shock had been triggered when he first paid closer attention to the long-haired girl's—who was standing in the middle of the group—aura while he was still counting down earlier. There was no doubt about it now.

She was definitely the second girl with the strong yin physique that he needed to locate!

As Master Ghost had previously said, yins and yangs were prone to attracting each other, especially when they were close by. Should these opposites come too close to each other, they would most definitely have an encounter with each other.

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Whatever the case was, Gerald knew that he had made the right choice by looking for the girl in his old university as well. To think that the one he was looking for was studying at Mayberry University this entire time!

Though Gerald was sighing in relief, the other girls were now all equally dumbfounded. With their jaws gaping widely, they all stared in horror at the camera that was still lying on the ground.

The camera alone cost around seven thousand and six hundred dollars! To think that this guy would just toss it into the air like that!

Naturally, Yulisa was the first person to react as she shouted, “W-what?!”

Her entire world was now spinning as her vision darkened slightly in her shock. After all, the camera wasn’t even hers to begin with! It was a rented camera, and with it now being broken, surely she’d have to be the one to pay for its repair cost!

“You... You a*s hole! What were you thinking by just throwing our camera into the air like that?!” roared Yulisa as she rushed over to Gerald before pushing him in her rage.

Of course, the other girls were equally as angry as she was. After all, this was supposed to be a happy occasion and they were all ready to have their photographs taken to commemorate the event as well! Anyone would get displeased with something as unexpected as this happening.

“While he certainly looks like he won’t ever be able to achieve anything in his life, he’s certainly a pro at ruining things! Seriously though, Yulisa! How’d you even manage to find someone like this to take our picture?!” growled one of the girls as all of them took turns glaring at Gerald.

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Whatever the case was, Yulisa looked like she was ready to burst into tears at any second.

Seeing that, the long-haired girl pushed her hair behind her ears before picking the camera up and checking for any broken parts. After a while, she said, “...I don’t really think that the camera is damaged... After a brief look at it, I remember that this kind of camera has a protective layer around each of its components... Even so, we’ll probably still need to fork out at least one to two thousand dollars since the camera lens looks slightly cracked due to the fall earlier!”

“Humph! You have no idea how angry I am right now! Of all the people I could’ve bumped into and asked for help, it had to be him! If it was anyone else, we could’ve had our pictures taken ages ago! Oh, why on earth am I so unlucky...?” grumbled Yulisa who was now beyond annoyed and angry.

“How much do I owe you? I’ll compensate!” replied Gerald immediately.

“Hah! You? Pay me seven thousand and six hundred dollars, then we’ll be even!” snorted Yulisa.

“You’re asking him for that much...? We’d be lucky if he’s even able to fess up three hundred dollars! How truly unlucky we are...!” sighed the other girls.

“I’ll pay you that exact amount!” said Gerald as he slid his hand into his pocket to retrieve his cell phone so that he could immediately transfer the money over. The second he did so, however, he instantly felt both awkward and embarrassed. After feeling around in all his pockets, he realized that his cell phone wasn’t on him!

Thinking where he could’ve misplaced it, he quickly remembered that he had left his cell phone in his car earlier since he had been a bit too eager to lecture that group of money-worshipping teenagers!

The only money he had on him now was apparently a hundred and twenty dollars! After all, he hadn’t had the need to use physical money for the longest time.

“...Hah! For a second there, you almost made me feel like you were capable enough to pay for the damage!”

1220

Yulisa’s tone was beyond contemptuous as she said that.

“...Regardless, let’s just forget about taking the pictures for now and focus more on the camera issue

first... Once we're done, we can go eat out at Dominoes or something..." said the long-haired girl as she shook her head.

"What? We can't just let him off just like that! We have to make sure he pays us for all that damage!" replied Yulisa, clearly unwilling to let Gerald off that easily.

"Just forget it already!" said the long-haired girl in a rather awkward tone as she watched as more and more people began excitedly gathering around them to see what the commotion was about.

As she continued trying to pull her friends away from him, Gerald quickly turned to look at the long-haired girl before saying, "Hold on! Could... Could you give me your contact information? I still need to transfer the money over to you later, you know?"

Hearing that, Yulisa and her friends instantly became dumbfounded. F*cking hell! To think that after dropping their camera, he still had the audacity to ask for Noelle's phone number! To think that such a person even existed!

From what everyone could now tell, Gerald had only dropped the camera for a chance to get Noelle's contact information! Was it because she was more beautiful than they were? The thought of it only served to further fuel the anger and contempt the girls had toward Gerald!

Noelle herself truly wanted to just leave already. Not only did she not want to continue getting entangled in the situation any further, the fact that so many people were currently looking at them simply made her uncomfortable.

"Hah! Brother, I hope you know that Noelle's the most beautiful girl in our department! Don't you know

how many rich and young heirs have already attempted to pursue and confess their love to her? To think that you'd actually dare to ask for her phone number!"

"Indeed! While you may have had the slimmest chance to do so if you had managed to properly take our photograph earlier, you managed to mess that up greatly as well! Hope you regret your own actions now!"

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As several of the onlookers continued putting Gerald down, Gerald simply shook his head with a wry smile on his face, ignoring their mockery for the most part.

In his mind, he was wondering if the attraction between yin and yang had interfered and affected the balance in his heart again. After all, the same thing had happened back when he had first met Cundrie in Lugaw City.

Gerald had ended up making a huge blunder upon his and Cundrie's first meeting due to him being unable to properly control his own emotions. Somewhat similar to the previous event, he had made another mistake upon coming across Noelle—who had a strong yin physique—though this time he ended up breaking the pony-tailed girl's camera instead.

What more, he had even attempted to rush things by immediately asking for Noelle's phone number even though the one who had rented the camera was the girl with the ponytail! He was clearly too impatient and anyone would find that sort of behavior annoying!

Despite the misunderstanding, however, Gerald was still quite happy with the turn of events. After all, he had finally managed to find the person with the strong yin physique. That meant that he would be able to find the Zircobsite stone soon!

Even though the middle of the month was coming soon, there was still a chance that he was going to be

able to make it! All his efforts hadn't been in vain!

Snapping out of it, Gerald turned to look at Noelle and the others—who were currently still walking away from the scene—and instantly began tailing them.

Though Noelle and her roommates were only in their freshman year, they had already encountered all sorts of boys. Noelle, in particular, had had to deal with endless guys trying to pursue her. Due to having to decline the advances of those from her very own class to seniors from her department, Noelle found herself growing easily frustrated by guys attempting to woo her.

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With that in mind, not once had she agreed to anyone's attempts to be her boyfriend, and Gerald's fate was surely going to be no different from all the others she had rejected. After all, he couldn't even get something that simple done right! It was truly annoying.

Shaking the thought off, Noelle and her friends quickly dealt with the issue on their own, with Noelle using her own money to compensate for the damages.

Following that, the group of girls headed over to Dominoes to grab a quick bite. While they were at it, they were also hoping to look for someone a little more capable to help take pictures of them near the mountainous area right outside their campus.

At that moment, Gerald revealed that he had been following them for a while now. After all, he truly wished to sincerely express his apologies. While doing so, he also hoped that he would be able to clear the serious misunderstanding he had with them. He really wasn't the kind of person they were probably imagining him to be, after all.

Upon seeing him, the girls were utterly flabbergasted as they said, "It's him again! How annoying can he get?!"

After all that had happened, it was completely reasonable for the girls not to have a good impression of

Gerald in the least. Just as he was about to bite the bullet and attempt to explain himself, an explosive sound could suddenly be heard!

All of a sudden, pink flower petals began falling from the restaurant's ceiling, the sudden romantic atmosphere shocking everyone who was eating there! Seconds later, a handsome-looking boy dressed in a suit began walking into the restaurant, a bouquet of roses in hand.

Walking past Gerald, he then stood before Noelle before kneeling on one knee and holding out the bouquet of flowers for her to take.

"Do you like it, Noelle? It's a surprise I prepared for you!" said the boy.

It was a romantic confession!

CHAPTER LIST1221

"Holy! It's Preston!" squealed several of the girls eating there, clearly stunned by the sudden romantic turn of events.

Most girls could only dream to be surprised so romantically, so there was no way that they were going to be able to remain calm now that such a situation was happening right before their very eyes.

What more, the person confessing was even kneeling on one leg while holding out a bouquet of roses in his hand! No matter how frigid a girl's heart was, any girl would find themselves melting in sheer delight after being confessed to like this!

Girls just had a general tendency to prefer guys who did such pleasantly surprising things.

Regardless, with such a scene actually being played out before the other girls now, envy and slight hatred were the only emotions currently reflected in their eyes. While the same emotions ran through Yulisa and the rest of Noelle's friends, they were simultaneously excited for her, and they quickly stepped aside to give Preston and her some room. While doing so, they also fished their cell phones out to begin filming this extremely romantic scene.

Now left sitting alone at the table, Noelle could only blush with slight discomfort as she tucked her hair behind her ears. In a shy tone, she then asked, "What on earth do you think you're doing, Preston...?"

"You should very well understand what my intentions are, Noelle... Please understand that I've already liked you for the longest time, and I swear that I'll take good care of you for the rest of my life if you agree to be with me! With that said... Please be my girlfriend!" replied Preston in a serious tone.

"Holy! Go on, accept him!"

"Accept him! Accept him!"

After hearing such a serious proposal, there was no way that the audience was going to remain silent. Upon hearing the audiences' chants, a smug look instantly formed on Preston's face.

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However, Noelle clearly didn't look like she appreciated any of this. As she felt her face get hotter and hotter, she suddenly stood up before saying, "I've already told you that I have no intentions of getting into a relationship at the moment!"

Following that, she grabbed her bag before turning around to leave!

Clearly not expecting her to just leave like that, the embarrassed Preston immediately called out, “Wait! Noelle!”

Noelle, however, didn’t stop walking. Now that he had failed, the petals on the ground almost seemed like they were mocking him, and Preston ended up tossing his bouquet of roses to the ground in anger.

As he immediately began chasing after Noelle—with slight reluctance—Yulisa and the others excitedly followed after them, hoping to witness what would happen next.

When Yulisa passed by Gerald, however, she made sure to purposely push him to the side with contempt as she shouted, “Move aside!”

For some reason, all the girls simply assumed that Noelle would’ve already agreed to Preston’s proposal and become his girlfriend if Gerald hadn’t caused her to be in a bad mood earlier!

“Can’t you see how many people are trying to pursue Noelle? Despite Preston being such a rich and excellent young man, Noelle still didn’t agree to be his girlfriend! With that in mind, why is someone like you even still courageous enough to ask for her phone number? Just get lost already!” scowled another one of Noelle’s friends—rather unceremoniously—as she glared at him before immediately running off with the other girls.

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With all that had just happened, Gerald couldn’t help but let out a deep internal sigh. As if he ever had any intentions of pursuing Noelle! He just wanted to befriend her so that he would be able to get her to willingly hand him a drop of her blood! Whatever the case was, things were now definitely getting a bit too complicated than he would’ve liked.

With that in mind, he was now rather hesitant on whether now was the right time to continue catching up to and pestering her.

As Gerald pondered his dilemma, three people simply sipped on their Coke as they continued looking at him. They had been calmly spectating this entire scene for a while now.

“Hey boss, did you see that? Though that kid looked like he was interested in pursuing that Noelle girl, I guess he was just one step too slow from that Preston kid! Looks like he’s thoroughly regretting it now!” said one of the men with a chuckle.

“Hah! I just can’t help but get mad when I see such wimpy guys, you know? I really feel like beating him up now! One has to be bold and shameless when pursuing a girl, you know? If he was, then he’d definitely have been able to get any girl he wanted!” scoffed another of the three men.

“Since you’re saying that, why don’t you head over there and teach that kid a thing or two then, Zacky? I heard you were quite an experienced lover yourself back in university!” replied what seemed to be the boss of that group as he patted Zacky on the shoulder. While he did so, however, he continued staring at Gerald with a somewhat odd gaze.

“Hah! With my tricks, he’ll be able to get that girl easy! Let’s bet ten meals on whether what I said ends up becoming true or not!” said Zacky.

“I call bullsh*t! Whatever the case is, do be careful. With his heart just freshly broken, he may attempt to beat you up, you know? Of course, if he does agree to let you teach him and he ends up getting that girl, those ten meals will be on me!” added the first man who had spoken with a chuckle.

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“Hah! If he really intends to beat me up then I’d gladly allow him to make the first blow!” sneered Zacky as he got up and began walking toward Gerald.

Gerald himself had just made up his mind that whatever his next course of action was, he still needed to find Noelle first.

Before he could leave, however, he suddenly heard someone calling out, “Hey, kid! Hold on a minute!”

Sensing that a firm hand was attempting to grab onto his shoulder—before he could even turn to see who was calling him—Gerald’s body instinctively went on the defensive.

With Zacky’s hand inches away from his shoulder, Gerald tilted his shoulder slightly, causing a rebound in energy that immediately sent Zacky flying backward!

It was only after knocking over at least a dozen tables and chairs that Zacky finally came to a halt!

“F*ck!” shouted Zacky, feeling as though he had just suffered a massive defeat as he clung onto his now-numb arm.

Even the boss and the other man had already stood up by this point, both having bitter expressions on their faces as their eyelids twitched rapidly. They were both well aware of how strong Zacky was, and under regular circumstances, no normal man could ever hope to defeat him! With that in mind, that broken-hearted kid was terrifyingly powerful!

“Stop right there, kid! You can’t just walk away after hitting someone!” shouted the two men as they

instantly began approaching Gerald, intent on grabbing him.

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Seeing that, Gerald simply tossed the men out of the Dominoes with barely any trouble.

“Are you guys really that free?” said Gerald coldly as he instantly began leaving without even turning to look at the two confused men who were now lying on the street.

“...M-Mr. Crawford...?” muttered the boss in astonishment after catching a glimpse of Gerald’s face while he was being thrown out. Still frozen in shock, the boss then watched as Gerald stopped walking forward.

Upon hearing that familiar voice, Gerald’s body instantly began quivering as he turned around to see if it truly was him. Upon seeing what the boss looked like, the indifferent expression on Gerald’s face immediately turned into delight as he smiled while shouting excitedly, “Aiden? Aiden, is that really you?”

“Mr. Crawford... So it really is you!” shouted Aiden in return as he immediately got to his feet in his excitement.

The person standing before Gerald now, was none other than Aiden who had previously joined the army. Pleasantly surprised to see his old friend here, Gerald then replied, “It’s been ages since we’ve last met, Aiden!”

With that, both of them quickly ran over to each other in embrace. Since it had been a good two years since they had last met, Aiden was already crying in his excitement.

As it turned out, after Aiden had enlisted in the army to serve as a soldier back when Jett was still wreaking havoc in Mayberry, he had made great progress in the army since Aiden was already a person with a good foundation in the first place.

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Once his recruitment company ended, Aiden had joined a special company to further his training. He was now in Mayberry since he had been entrusted with certain tasks.

After completing some of the tasks, he and his men had come over to Mayberry University to grab something to eat before continuing on with their work, which eventually led to the current scene.

“I still remember the massive changes Mayberry had undergone the moment you went missing... Regardless, I only returned about two days ago. After catching up on some things, I had initially planned to contact Mr. Lyle to ask him where you were. Alas, I found out that at the time, Mr. Lyle had gone on a business trip to Lugaw City!” explained Aiden once all four of them were seated in that Dominoes again.

While listening to Aiden talk, Gerald noticed how much tanner and muscular he was now. In fact, Aiden was also much more mature and stable now, unlike the young and reckless Aiden he used to know. What more, Aiden seemed to be quite a capable boss as well now! It made Gerald happy to see his younger brother all matured and grown up.

Naturally, they had much to talk about, and after a long chat, Aiden turned to look at Gerald before saying, “Still, to think that you aren’t loyal to us at all, brother! After all, despite you doing well and all, you didn’t even bother informing us of your current situation the moment you made it back safely to Mayberry! Instead, you just went off to Mayberry University to pursue some girl!”

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“Now Aiden, you know me well enough to know that I’m not the kind of person who enjoys chasing after girls in the first place! I’m only doing what I did since I need that girl to help me with something!” replied Gerald as he shook his head, a wry smile on his face.

Gerald chose not to go into detail—about the fact that he needed invigorating blood from a female with a strong yin physique—since he didn't want Aiden to worry about him.

Since both Aiden and Yoel had already helped him a lot in the past, now that they could finally afford to have a stable life, Gerald didn't want to drag them into his own problematic situations again. Explaining things in only the most general sense was an active choice on Gerald's part.

"Hahaha! I see, I see... Well if that's the case, consider yourself lucky to have bumped into me! After all, if you didn't already know, I'm an expert at pursuing girls!" said Aiden with a laugh.

"As I've said, I'm not trying to pursue her... I'm simply trying to get her to help me do something willingly!" mumbled Gerald in a softened tone.

"I get it, I get it... Well, that sounds similar to trying to pursue her anyway!"

"...Regardless, I do agree that I'm lucky to have bumped into you today, Aiden! After all, I know that you always have all sorts of tricks ready up your sleeves! Since I'm running out of time, I really need you to help me figure this situation out! To think that she's already had such a major misunderstanding with me before I could even make a proper move... I truly have no idea how to proceed from here!" said Gerald.

Though he was strong, Gerald still had his own shortcomings. For one, he really wasn't good at picking up girls.

After all, he was both an honest and inferior student back when he was still in university. In fact, he was so inexperienced with girls that he would immediately begin blushing when he came face to face with one back then!

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As for Xavia, it was through sheer coincidence that he was even able to be together with her in the first place.

With that in mind, it was an exceptionally difficult feat for Gerald to even attempt to earn Noelle's trust without the proper foundations.

"No problem at all, brother! But before that... I'm currently busy with a problem of my own as well. You see, the only task I have left involves capturing someone who's as slippery as an eel! No matter how many times I've hunted him down, he keeps managing to escape my grasp! We're still searching for him now, but once we manage to locate him, we're planning to besiege and capture him in Mayberry City!" explained Aiden with a sigh.

Since Aiden had always been extremely sincere toward Gerald, Gerald didn't doubt his claims at all. What more, Gerald now understood that Aiden was only looking so exhausted due to him having to chase that thief around.

With that in mind, Gerald simply smiled before saying, "I thought your skills were already pretty good earlier! Is the thief truly that capable? How's he managed to keep escaping right under your noses?"

Upon hearing what Gerald said, Aiden instantly felt his face go red. Skillful? He wasn't even able to land a single hit on Gerald earlier!

"...Well, that man is honestly more of a beast than an actual man... After all, he's a rapist! He's already been involved in many cases, and we were transferred over to help since the initial people on his case

were lacking in manpower to hunt him down! While I said that we were still trying to find him, locating him isn't even the largest issue. The problem lies in successfully capturing him! Our current plan is to set up a trap for him in hopes that he'll walk right into it!"

"Very well. As long as you guys can lock onto him, you can just leave the matter to me. I'll help you capture him once and for all!" replied Gerald with a smile.

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"...What? Are you serious, brother?" asked Aiden in surprise.

"Well, capturing a criminal is also part of my duty. With that in mind, I'm more than willing to help you take down such scum!"

The second Gerald's sentence ended, Aiden's intercom suddenly began beeping. With the push of a button, a message began playing on the other end of the intercom.

"Group one! Group one! We've located Maverick Wakins! He's currently driving a stolen car on the main road of Mayberry City's Yonder Street after kidnapping two girls! From the looks of it, he's headed toward South Street this very moment! Your team has been ordered by the higher authorities to head there immediately to provide support! Reply if you've heard the message!"

"Roger that! Received!" replied Aiden as he and his men quickly stood up.

"We've found him, brother!"

"Nice! Let's go then!"

Since Gerald already knew that Noelle could be found on campus, he wasn't all that worried about locating her again. What more, he truly needed Aiden's help to seek Noelle's forgiveness in hope that

she would eventually be willing to offer him some of her invigorating blood!

Of course, even if he didn't require Aiden's help, Gerald would've still helped him in the end. After all, Gerald was the kind of person who wouldn't hesitate to do his part and offer his brother a helping hand upon realizing that he was facing difficulties.

Regardless, this was how their plan would go...1224

Their current goal was to get the thief to head to South Street. Once he was there, they would force him into the trap and capture him as soon as possible.

With that in mind, Aiden quickly drove there and within five minutes, they arrived at the street.

Upon arriving at the scene, Gerald saw that they were only five personnel waiting for the thief on South Street. Aiden truly wasn't kidding when he said that their manpower was scarce.

"How's the situation?" asked Aiden the second he came close enough to the group that was already there.

"As stated earlier, we've already locked onto Maverick and he's going to be arriving at South Street any second now. We'll be trying to stop him from advancing any further here. Speaking of which, why are there only three of you? Didn't you say that you managed to get more capable hands?" asked the leader of the other team who was a rather tall woman.

Hearing that, Gerald instantly stepped out of the car. He had remained seated inside earlier since he was busy observing the surrounding terrain. After all, if he was going to stop the rapist, then he first needed to check the area for any possible escape routes that the criminal could use.

While Gerald already had excellent skills, abilities, and confidence, he was being extra careful since Aiden had already mentioned that the criminal was an extremely cunning person.

Adding that to the fact that he was also doing this to help a close friend, Gerald wanted to be as careful and meticulous as he possibly could. Another reason he was being this careful because Gerald was well aware that he couldn't use his inner strength yet. If only he could, then he would've easily subdued the rapist without much issue, even if the criminal had managed to run a few kilometers away!

Regardless, he had finished scanning the area anyway, which was why Gerald wasn't hesitant about stepping out now.

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However, the moment he revealed himself, the woman—who was standing beside Aiden—instantly said in a surprised tone, “...Gerald? What are you doing here?”

Upon hearing that name, another young man from her team came running toward her side, a hint of jealousy in his eyes.

‘...Maia and Warren...? What are the odds?’ Gerald thought to himself, a bitter smile on his face. It truly was a small world.

From what he could remember, the last he had met both of them was about a year and a half ago when he was still pretending to be Sanderson in order to take down the Schuylers. At the time, Maia and Warren had been there to investigate all the crimes the Schuylers had done throughout the years.

While he had burned down the manor after saving them, Gerald had made sure to leave behind several pieces of evidence detailing the family's crimes for Maia. As a result, Maia took full credit for solving the

incident. He was even kind enough to leave a personal note for Maia, stating that he was simply offering a helping hand to his old classmate.

Regardless, after going their separate ways, Gerald hadn't kept tabs with how Maia was doing up till this very day. To think that she had already returned to Mayberry for some time. What more, from the looks of it, she seemed to have been promoted as well!

Of course, that naturally meant that the man with jealousy in his eyes was none other than Warren.

Both of them were well aware of who Gerald was, and Warren in particular felt like he had just received a tight slap across his face just from seeing Gerald again. In a way, for Warren, seeing Gerald simply caused him to feel like a child who was being exposed to something traumatic.

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"It's truly been a long time since I've last met you, Gerald. I only heard about what happened to you upon returning to Mayberry City. From what I was told, you broke off from your family and went missing shortly after! Color me surprised to see you in one piece now!" said Maia as she looked at him in surprise.

However, she quickly returned to her snobbish attitude. After all, she was no longer shocked about the fact that Gerald was actually rich now. With that in mind, she then asked in a tone that suggested that she was superior, "So, what are you working on now?"

"I'm not working. I simply returned since I have something to do. I'm also here to help Aiden!" replied Gerald with a wry smile on his face.

"...Help?" said Maia and Warren simultaneously, this time truly caught off guard.

With both of them simultaneously turning to look at Aiden, Maia then asked, "He... He's the help that you invited over...?"

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"That's right!" replied Aiden rather proudly.

Since the Gerald he once knew barely had any fighting capabilities, Aiden had definitely been caught by surprise by how capable and impressive Gerald now was. Regardless, after witnessing Gerald's true strength with his very own eyes, Aiden was certain that with Gerald's help, they would surely be able to capture the rapist easily.

If Aiden was going to be completely honest, even the most legendary of fighters in the military district weren't worthy enough to be Gerald's opponents at all.

"...So it really is him...?" said Maia as both she and Warren took turns shaking their heads, wry smiles on their faces.

"Is team Aiden really pulling our leg now? While it's true that Gerald has a prominent background and he was quite a formidable figure in Mayberry City back then, I hope you realize that we're currently dealing with the very cunning and capable Maverick! As a rich heir yourself, I'm sure you've had a good history with Gerald, but are you seriously expecting me to believe that the helper you invited here today is Gerald?" added Maia, sounding incredibly unconvinced.

From how excited Aiden's tone had been when he was on the call earlier, Maia had assumed that he had managed to invite one of the legendary people from the army to help them with the case! To her astonishment, the person he was actually talking about was Gerald!

“I assure you, team Maia, that as long as my Brother Gerald is here, Maverick won’t stand a chance of escaping today!” replied Aiden.

As soon as his sentence ended, the intercoms suddenly blared to life at the same time.

“The target is swiftly approaching! Intercept him, quick! Over!”

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“Roger that!”

The others had already been prepared for this, and several of them—who were carrying loaded firearms—immediately began setting up the trap!

At that moment, Maia had an extremely serious look on her face. Momentarily turning to look at Gerald, she then shook her head before saying, “I’ll have you know that the murderer this time is extremely cruel and ruthless. You’d best keep your distance from him!”

With that said, she immediately began leading her group to South Street.

Gerald himself turned to look at the highway. Maia looking down on him didn’t really make him feel anything. Her opinion on him didn’t really matter to Gerald anyway. What was important was that he was here today because he wanted to help his brother out.

Soon enough, Gerald spotted a Passat that was being driven wildly down the highway. Several other cars

seemed to be chasing after it as well.

Despite how wildly the Passat was being driven, Gerald could tell from a glance that the driver was an expert at his craft. Gerald's assumption was proven when the criminal easily got rid of the cars that were chasing after him with his excellent driving skills.

Now momentarily free from having to deal with the other cars, the Passat continued driving rapidly toward South Street.

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South Street itself was a low area with mountains on both sides of the road. It was also an area that didn't usually have much going on. As long as they were able to subdue Maverick here, then he'd definitely be captured this time.

As Maverick drove closer to the roadblocks that had been set up, both Maia and Warren couldn't help but hold their breaths in their anxiety.

Naturally, Maverick was able to see the roadblocks a mile away. However, he couldn't really reverse the car since there were soldiers chasing after him from the back.

"D*mn it all! What a bother!" cursed Maverick as he figured that the only way he was going to escape capture was by attempting to brute force his way through the roadblocks.

Upon hearing his voice, one of the two beautiful girls in the car—who was crying since both she and her friend had their arms and legs tied up—fearfully cried out, "P-please, just let us go! I beg of you!"

As she was pleading, a bump on the road caused the camera she was holding onto to fall to the car's floor.

“Shut the hell up! You’re being really annoying, you know? Say one more word and I’m killing you right this instant!” roared Maverick.

Maverick himself looked to be in his thirties, and his scare-filled face looked even more hideous and vicious whenever he spoke.

The moment they heard that, the girls immediately zipped their mouths shut.

Seeing that they were finally quiet again, Maverick returned his gaze onto the road ahead. A wry smile on his face, Maverick then laughed before saying, “It’s just a roadblock! All of you must be dreaming if you think that that’ll stop me!”

With that, Maverick began hitting on the accelerator, driving straight for the roadblock... However, at the very last second, he swerved his steering wheel to the left, causing the car to slightly drive up the mountainous slope!

With another sharp turn of his steering wheel, an ear-piercing sound from the friction—caused by the car’s wheels—caused the car to momentarily soar in the air...

Before landing again right atop the road behind the roadblocks! Hitting the accelerator once more, Maverick then continued speeding down south!

Warren and Maia were left completely dumbfounded by all this. Was the maneuver he had just pulled off even possible? A better question yet, was he actually going to be able to escape again even after being cornered like that?

As he continued looking at Maverick, Gerald couldn’t help but smile. Things were starting to get a little interesting now.

Seeing that there was a motorcycle nearby, Gerald quickly shouted, “Lend me that motorcycle for a moment, Aiden!”

Hearing that, the one holding the keys tossed it at Gerald. After expertly catching it, Gerald quickly slid the key into the motorcycle before stepping on the gas and driving after the car as swiftly as an arrow!

Watching him go after Maverick without the slightest hesitation, Maia and the others quickly snapped out of it. After making some rapid adjustments, they began their second phase of the plan by hurriedly—and rather reluctantly—chasing after both Gerald and Maverick.

Noticing Gerald—who was currently on a motorcycle that was sandwiched between Maverick’s car and the others who were trying to arrest him—slowly getting closer and closer to him through the car’s rear-view mirror, Maverick couldn’t help but curse, “D*mn it! His riding skills are pretty good!”

Even the two girls in the car widened their eyes in shock when they realized who was hot on their kidnapper’s tail.

“I-it’s him! Noelle, that’s the guy who broke our camera!” shouted one of the girls as she gulped.

If it wasn’t already evident, the two kidnapped girls were none other than the unlucky Yulisa and Noelle.

It was supposed to be a happy day! A day where they were supposed to take group photos with their classmates in commemoration of the end of their freshman year! However, everything started going wrong when the guy—who was currently riding the motorcycle outside—broke the camera they had

rented! As a result, Noelle had to fork out her own money just to fix it!

As if that wasn't already bad enough, both that guy and Preston further ruined Noelle's mood while they were eating at Dominoes that afternoon! After eventually managing to get rid of Preston, the group of girls then headed over to North Lane to take some pictures.

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To their utter dismay, they encountered Maverick there! The fugitive then captured both Noelle and Yulisa without even giving a reason why!

With his great strength, Maverick then quickly robbed a person of their car! After forcing the two girls into the back seats, Maverick then fled the location until he reached someplace far from where he had hijacked the car. It was then when he had tied both of their arms and legs up.

By that point, both Noelle and Yulisa were utterly terrified. Not only did they not know where the fugitive was taking them, but the turn of events kept reminding them of certain scenes in horror movies. In such movies, hostages like them would always end up getting murdered!

Already frightened to death by then, the two of them actively tried not to think about that outcome. Even so, both girls already felt like their despair and fear couldn't possibly go any deeper.

However, now that Gerald was actually able to catch up to them on his motorcycle, Noelle and Yulisa couldn't deny that seeing him brought back some hope into their eyes.

"You trying to play around with me, young one? I'll have you know that you're still just a rookie!" sneered Maverick as he took a glance to see how far Gerald now was.

However, he quickly found himself utterly shocked when he realized that the motorcycle—that was still rushing toward the car due to inertia—no longer had a rider!

“The f*ck?! Where the hell is he?!”

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As soon as Maverick’s sentence ended, a loud ‘thud’ could be heard on the roof of the car, causing the entire car to bobble slightly.

Was he on top of the car?

Looking up at the sunroof, Maverick was greeted by the sight of Gerald looking down at him with a smug smile on his face!

“You... You b*stard! Go to hell!” shouted Maverick as he began swerving his steering wheel from left to right, attempting to toss Gerald off the car. However, no matter how much the car swayed, Gerald barely budged from his spot. In fact, he appeared to be relaxed of all emotions!

Soon after, however, Gerald caught a glimpse of a kindergarten not too far ahead. Seeing that, Gerald knew that he couldn’t afford to continue playing around with Maverick anymore. After all, if anything dangerous happened, the losses would most certainly outweigh the gains.

With that in mind, Gerald then laid on his belly as he used one hand to break the sunroof open while simultaneously grabbing onto the driver seat’s door handle. With a single tug, Gerald tore the door right off the car before tossing it aside!

“W-what the f*cking hell?! What in blazes is going on?!” shouted Maverick in sheer horror, his eyes widened as strong and cold winds blew directly into his now worn-out face.

Before Maverick could even begin registering what the hell was happening, Gerald had already grabbed onto the handbrake,—through the now broken sunroof—causing the car’s tires to screech loudly! The car stopped just in time before a large tree, barely avoiding colliding into it!

Due to the abrupt stop, the girls were thrown forward while Maverick’s face was immediately greeted by the impact of the car’s airbag!

“Y-you! D-d*mn it all! You’re crazy!” yelled Maverick in his sheer terror.

By then, Maia and the others had arrived where the car was, and all of them had witnessed the entire scene play out. Maia could only gulp before her mouth hung open for a while as she stared at Gerald in utter disbelief.

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Without witnessing it for themselves, nobody would’ve believed that all of this had truly taken place. After all, no normal person would be able to possess the immense strength to just rip a car door open with such ease while being on an actual moving car driving at such high speeds!

While it was theoretically possible for someone with immense skill, strength, and balance to do so... It was simply too absurd to even think of such a person existing!

Maia herself would’ve never imagined that her high school classmate—who used to be so thin and frail and was constantly worrying about how he could make more money to properly feed himself every day—could actually end up being so powerful today!

Though she had already accepted that he was a rich young master for quite some time, as it turned out, he was also an extremely skillful person whose power was equivalent to a god-like top master!

Warren was also in a state of utter shock at that moment. After all, he had been sitting beside Maia in the car earlier, which meant that he saw everything she did. However, he also noticed how Maia had been staring at Gerald for a while now.

In a way, Maia was now looking like a girl who had never fallen in love before. A girl who had been longing for a hero to appear in her life for the longest time. As far as Warren knew, all young girls yearned for such a hero to steal their hearts.

Regardless, Warren could now see it clearly reflected in Maia's eyes that her hero had finally arrived.

For a time, Warren had assumed that he was the hero in her heart. After all, he had won the Taekwondo championship in the past!

As it turned out, however, that simply wasn't the case!

As immense jealousy was sparked in Warren's heart, Gerald himself was now busy lifting Maverick out of the car with only a single hand.

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Any remaining danger had been subdued and best of all, there weren't even any casualties.

Still, all this had taken place quite close to a kindergarten, and since it was almost time for the children to return home, several parents—who had been waiting to pick their children up—had witnessed Gerald's amazing feats.

Due to all the loud noises outside and the fact that classes had ended at that exact moment, more and

more people began turning up to observe the scene.

Because of that, the police present had no choice but to cordon off the entire road.

“What on earth happened here...?”

“Daddy...? What’s going on...?”

While many of the children were now asking their parents what had just happened, even more parents—who had just arrived—found themselves itching to know the details as well.

“It’s a shame you missed it! See that young man over there? He’s successfully captured and arrested the rapist who’s been involved with several crimes in Mayberry City!”

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“Oh god! You should’ve seen him in action earlier! He was like some kind of Superman!”

These comments were coming from the few parents who had earlier been present when Gerald finally caught Maverick. Still trembling in excitement, they simply felt the urge to let everyone know about the thrilling event that had just taken place before me.

A few mothers even found themselves completely ignoring their children as they ran over to record videos of Gerald instead.

“Superman! Superman!” chanted the children while looking at Gerald.

“Good job arresting him!” shouted several of the parents, completely in awe of Gerald.

Simply nodding at the parents, Gerald then tossed Maverick onto the ground, prompting Aiden to immediately step in to cuff him.

“D*mn it, d*mn it, d*mn it! How unlucky can I get today?!” growled Maverick who was equally as dumbfounded by the turn of events as he was amazed by it. Even while he was being pushed into the police car, he continued staring at Gerald in sheer disbelief before finally letting out a long sigh.

That guy... it was almost like the laws of physics didn't apply to him...!

“You did great today, brother! You have no idea how nervous I was while watching you chase after that thief earlier!” said Aiden, looking quite envious.

Warren himself could see that Maia was now acting slightly shy and embarrassed. It was quite obvious that she wanted to approach Gerald to have a talk with him.

With that in mind, how couldn't he be jealous?

After taking in a deep breath, Warren then said, “...Since we've already caught Maverick, we should retreat for now. Why don't you go back into the car first, Maia?”

Despite his question, Maia almost seemed like she was unable to even hear him speaking.

Instead, she began walking toward Gerald before saying, “...Did... Did you hurt yourself Gerald...? That... That was really dangerous just now, you know?!”

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“Not at all,” replied Gerald casually.

Though Maia wanted to say more to express her concern, she simply couldn’t bring herself to say anything at all. After all, she had earlier looked down on Gerald, even claiming that he was going to give them more trouble than help!

Well, to be more precise, she hadn’t treated him seriously at all from the moment they had first met all the way back in high school. Even when they had finally reunited in the bar years later and after Maia found out that he was extremely rich back in the Salford Province, never had she taken him seriously in the least.

Regardless, Maia couldn’t help but feel her heart race now that she was standing before this strange, new Gerald. In all honesty, she now had great admiration and respect for him deep in her heart.

Gerald himself barely felt the need to show off in front of Maia. After all, he didn’t need her admiration or respect to fulfill his vanity.

Shaking the thought off, Gerald suddenly remembered something. Turning around, he saw—from quite a distance away—that the two girls from earlier were still quivering in the car.

Back when he was on the car’s roof, he had heard one of the girls screaming. Upon hearing that familiar voice, Gerald was immediately able to guess that Maverick must have kidnapped both Yulisa and Noelle!

The fact that Gerald could earlier also feel strong yin energy coming from within the car further solidified his theory.

With that in mind, he quickly headed over to the car.

The girls themselves hadn't been wearing any seatbelts earlier, so—due to the car stopping so abruptly—they had been flung forward, colliding with the back of the front seats! Both of them were never meant to bear this amount of impact, so it was no wonder why Yulisa and Noelle were feeling like their bodies were going to fall apart any second now.

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By the time Gerald came close enough, he could see that Yulisa barely had the image of a young lady anymore as she continued bawling her eyes out.

“Everything's going to be alright... Now come on out. Both of you!” said Gerald as he couldn't help but smile wryly while looking at the two girls.

The slight bitterness in his smile, of course, had stemmed from the fact that Gerald could tell that all that had happened wasn't just mere coincidence.

Holding onto Gerald's arm, Noelle then fixed her hair with a smile before nodding at Gerald as she said, “...T-thank you...”

When it came to impressing someone, nothing could surpass saving one's life. While Noelle had previously hated Gerald, she now felt a bit more affectionate to him instead.

Regardless, both the victims were asked a few questions from the police before they were allowed to leave and get some rest.

Since Aiden and the others were still busy with quite a bit of things, Gerald didn't ask him to accompany him back.

Instead, Gerald chose to send the two girls back to campus himself. This time, Noelle didn't turn down Gerald's offer. In fact, she accepted his invitation with great pleasure.

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Since Noelle was looking a little haggard—since she had, after all, suffered quite a scare earlier—Gerald knew better than to mention the invigorating blood droplets now.

After all, it would be bad if Noelle somehow came to the assumption that he had only saved her since he wanted to get his hands on her blood. That would definitely destroy her image of him for good.

As Gerald continued thinking about it, he was slightly startled when Noelle suddenly looked at him before asking, "I... I've been pretty rude to you today... So I'd like to apologize and thank you as well for saving us!"

Upon hearing that, Gerald truly felt that Aiden was quite impressive. After all, before Aiden had left, he had told Gerald that Noelle would definitely apologize and express her gratitude to him sooner or later. According to Aiden, after Gerald replied with a few specific words—that Aiden then shared with Gerald—Gerald didn't even need to ask her for her contact number anymore.

Quickly repeating what Aiden had taught him in his mind, Gerald then said, "It's fine. There's no need for you to thank me. Still, our meeting must be fated since we keep meeting each other over and over again. Maybe it's just our destiny. Regardless, I'm glad I was able to save you today!"

Watching as Gerald then smiled, Noelle found her breath growing rapid as she instantly began blushing slightly.

The corners of her lips slowly curving upward into a beautiful smile, she remained silent for a while before nodding and saying, "...W-well, we'll be heading back first, then! Farewell!"

Though she said that, she didn't budge an inch, her eyes still affixed on Gerald's.

The Poorest Rich Man 1228 | THE INVISIBLE RICH MAN 1228 | The Secretly Rich Man 1228

CHAPTER LIST

1229

Gerald truly hadn't expected that Noelle would behave word for word like how Aiden had predicted. After all, Aiden had told Gerald that goddesses like her enjoyed playing games of cat and mouse.

In other words, they really enjoyed the process of being pursued. They particularly liked it when the ones they were after truly seemed to care for them.

With that in mind, according to Aiden's guess, even if Gerald truly had saved Noelle's life today, she still wouldn't take the initiative to hand him her contact number. The most she would do was chat briefly with him before turning to leave. Of course, she wouldn't actually leave right off the bat. Instead, she would wait around a little to wait for Gerald to ask her to stay instead.

This was the reason why it was oftentimes so difficult to pursue most goddesses. After all, what such girls truly enjoyed was the process of being pursued and sought after.

Regardless, each and every one of Noelle's actions were nearly identical to what Aiden had predicted. Seeing that, Gerald then proceeded to relay the script that Aiden had earlier shared with him.

Nodding with a nonchalant expression on his face, Gerald then replied, "Indeed. Since both of you got

injured earlier, it'd do you good to get some well-deserved rest. I'll be taking my leave as well since I still need to prepare a special gift for a friend of mine by today. Now if you'll excuse me, farewell!"

After saying that, Gerald slowly turned around and began walking away, calmly. Now then, if what Adrian had told him was correct, Noelle would definitely call out to him at the count of five...

'One... Two... Three...'

As soon as Gerald counted 'five' in his mind, Noelle suddenly shouted, "...Hold on, Gerald! Gerald, wait for a second!"

...Seriously?!

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"...Yes? What is it, Noelle?" asked Gerald.

"Well... Where exactly did you learn your skills, Gerald...? If it's possible, I'd like to learn some simple self-defense techniques for women! Would you happen to have any recommendations for me...?" asked Noelle.

Hearing that, Yulisa nodded as well before adding, "I-I'd like to learn as well!"

"...Oh? Is that so? Well, I could give you a public contact number through WhatsApp if you'd like... It belongs to my friend and he's always up to date with such skills!"

By this point, Gerald felt that he truly understood these girls' hearts now. The sentences that Aiden had

taught him truly were effective, especially the one that involved him saying that he needed to go prepare a special gift for his friend.

In a way, saying that allowed him to counter the cat and mouse game tactic. Waiting till now to say it was also particularly impactful since he had already played the role of the hero who saved the two beauties.

Aiden's account was called 'Practical Tactical', and Aiden frequently shared information about fighting and martial arts skills there. While Gerald could have just told them the name of the account for them to—rather easily—search for it, Gerald asked to be friends on their WhatsApp accounts instead in order for him to forward Aiden's contact information to them.

However, just as Adrian had anticipated, the girls simply obliged without question. Gerald could now say for certain that the two girls wanting to learn self-defense techniques was nothing but an excuse.

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All Noelle was really after was a capable guy by her side who was interested in her, just like Gerald. As long as he kept pursuing her in a considerate manner, Noelle would surely open up more to him eventually.

With that in mind, after parting ways with the girls, Gerald couldn't help but admire Aiden for having such effective tactics on hand.

At the same time, he couldn't help but wonder why he hadn't understood Mila's heart better in the beginning. In the old days, both of them would speak over the phone every night, and eventually, Mila would always be the first to say that she wanted to head to bed.

Of course, being as dense as he was back then, Gerald would always wish her good night almost immediately, telling her to sleep well before heading to bed. Why hadn't he realized back then that Mila

actually wanted him to ask her to stay a little longer?

It was now evident to him that she had constantly wanted him to think more about her. To spend more time with her. In a way, it was her way of testing how significant she was in Gerald's heart!

The Poorest Rich Man 1229 | THE INVISIBLE RICH MAN 1229 | The Secretly Rich Man 1229

CHAPTER LIST

1230

Of course, Gerald knew that he was the only one in Mila's heart and that she wouldn't ever treat other guys the same way she did to him...

Snapping out of it, Gerald reminded himself that it was only three days away till the middle of the month arrived. With that in mind, it was impossible for him not to feel slightly more anxious.

He really needed to discuss the matter with Aiden tonight.

At the very least, the good thing was that he already had a good head start now. Both of them just needed to meet up later to discuss the next steps...

"You know, I have a feeling that Gerald isn't actually interested in you, Noelle... After all, even though you told him that you wanted to learn a few self-defense techniques, to think that he'd actually forward a public contact number to you!" said Yulisa a little later.

“What’s wrong with what he did? I truly am interested in learning, you know? Still, did you see how brave and heroic he looked when he saved us earlier? The more I think about it, the more I feel that there’s an unknown side to Gerald that we don’t know of... How truly mysterious!” replied Noelle in a soft tone as she smiled.

“...Oh? Could it be that... You’ve already fallen for Gerald just because he saved us once? While I agree that he’s definitely powerful, he most probably isn’t rich at all! Even if you truly wish to be together with him with the assumption that it’s simply fate doing its job, what will your family think?” asked Yulisa, reminding Noelle to carefully consider the pros and cons of her decision.

“I distinctly remember you saying that you didn’t want to get into a relationship now since quite a bit is currently happening within your family... Honestly though, I think that getting a relationship is exactly what you need to solve your problems! By that, I mean you should get a guy who’s able to solve your family’s economic crisis! With that in mind, I think you should be going after Preston rather than Gerald!”

“After all, his family owns a public listed company of their own, you know? They’re filthy rich! As long as you agree to become his girlfriend, then he’ll definitely be able to help resolve your family’s financial issues. I remind you that getting together with Gerald won’t help you solve anything at all!” explained Yulisa as she carefully analyzed the situation while making her way back together with Noelle.

In all honesty, Noelle wasn’t in love with Gerald. She simply felt slightly affectionate toward him. After all, he had left her with a truly favorable impression of him this time around. Aside from that, she was also quite curious about him as a whole.

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Though she didn’t rule out the possibility of them getting into a relationship upon getting rescued, Noelle had now calmed down considerably, especially after hearing what Yulisa had to say.

While it was true that she still had slight affection and admiration toward Gerald, Noelle was well aware

that she had lost the right to choose her partner after what happened to her family last month. Due to that incident, it seemed that she truly had no choice but to look for a rich and powerful person to stay by her side.

As Yulisa had said, a person couldn't really do much without money or the proper connections.

Though Noelle knew that, she had rejected Preston earlier since she wanted to play cat and mouse with him for at least a few more times.

Now, however, she knew that she had to start thinking more about her family and get serious. While she knew that getting together with Preston would definitely help with her family's situation, she had no feelings for him at all.

As for Gerald, she was certainly more attracted to him than any of the previous guys she had come across. That much was certain. However, unlike Preston, being together with him wouldn't help her family at all. All this made Noelle feel extremely entangled.

"Are you seriously still thinking about the right choice, Noelle? Remember, it's your birthday tomorrow night, and you should know that even though you humiliated him today in front of so many people by rejecting his confession, Preston hasn't given up on you yet. Rather, I heard that he's putting in a lot of effort to get ready for your birthday celebration tomorrow, even though he hasn't even been invited over! With that said, I'm sure Preston will be overjoyed if you allow him to attend your birthday party!" said Yulisa.

"I know, I know... Regardless, I'm also planning on inviting someone else to attend my twentieth birthday party!" replied Noelle as she bit her lower lip.

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"You can't possibly be referring to Gerald, can you?" asked Yulisa as her eyes widened.

“Well, no matter what the case is, Gerald still ended up saving both of us today. If it wasn’t for him, then who knows what would’ve eventually become of us! With that in mind, it’s only natural for us to express our gratitude to him, don’t you think?” said Noelle as she recalled the moment when Gerald had gently supported her out of the car since she had injured her leg. The memory of that alone was enough to make her frozen heart slowly begin to melt!

Both of them then continued chatting before eventually returning to their dorms and telling their roommates that they were safe.

Since the two girls weren’t all that interested in actually learning self-defense techniques in the first place, Yulisa simply deleted the number right off the bat.

Later that night, Yulisa’s head began hurting rather badly. Assuming that it was due to an injury she suffered when the car had suddenly hit the brakes earlier, Noelle and the others quickly brought her to a nearby hospital for a check-up.

It was around then when Gerald received a birthday invitation message from Noelle.

Just as Aiden had predicted, it seemed that Gerald truly would be able to obtain the invigorating blood that he needed tomorrow. Since it was already extremely close to the middle of the month, that was very good news. As for the Zircobsite stone... Gerald could almost feel it in his hands now...

The Poorest Rich Man 1230 | THE INVISIBLE RICH MAN 1230 | The Secretly Rich Man 1230

CHAPTER LIST

Soon after, the very next day came.

Despite facing a financial crisis, Noelle's family still placed great importance in the preparation process for Noelle's twentieth birthday. After all, Noelle being able to celebrate her birthday happily was the most important thing to her family.

It explained how what was initially a tiny birthday banquet ended up becoming more of a large family gathering instead.

The venue of the celebration itself was a large private room—that could accommodate up to thirty people—in Longthorne International Hotel that Noelle's parents had booked for the day.

Among the thirty people invited to the banquet were Noelle's family members, her classmates, her cousins, and several other relatives including her eldest, and third uncle. They were adamant on making this birthday banquet as festive as possible in order to rid their family of their bad luck.

“Sister-in-law and Second brother! Both of you are truly blessed to have such a beautiful daughter as Noelle! She has such a good temperament too! I'm sure the two of you will definitely be able to continue living and enjoying a good life together with Noelle in the future!” said Noelle's third aunt with a smile as she looked at Noelle's parents.

“Enjoy life? What even is there to enjoy? You should be well aware of how messy our family's current financial state is, Third! We even have to begin thinking about how we're going to survive the second half of our lives!” replied Zavien as he shook his head bitterly.

Hearing that, Noelle's eldest and third uncle could only sigh.

“...Still, there’s no need to get too anxious... Quite honestly, our business isn’t doing as terribly as we had initially imagined. As long as we can get someone to invest a sum of money into our business, we’ll surely be able to get through this crisis! You know, I heard that Preston, the Wake family’s young master, has actively been pursuing after Noelle recently. Do any of you know anything about the Wake family’s strength or background?”

The moment Noelle’s third aunt changed the topic, everyone’s attention immediately fell on Noelle.

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In truth, Noelle’s eldest and third uncle were people who only did things that benefitted themselves. With that in mind, why were they even bothering to bring their entire families along just to attend the birthday banquet of a young girl like Noelle?

Putting it bluntly, it was because they were well aware of the benefits that Noelle could potentially bring to their family.

Even Zavien and Gracie had heard about Preston’s pursuits of Noelle, so Noelle’s third aunt’s statement wasn’t wrong at all.

From what they knew, the Wake family was extremely formidable. Not only did they own a public listed company of their own, but their family also had the background of the Mayberry Commercial Group! With that in mind, anyone who met or encountered the Wakes would surely give them face.

Regardless, if Noelle truly ended up getting together with Preston—and Preston was willing to have a word with his father about their current situation on their behalf—then the Shadwells would definitely be able to turn things around and resolve their current crisis.

With that said, it was no wonder why Noelle’s aunts and uncles had taken their time to come over today just to celebrate her birthday.

“...Speaking of Preston, I heard that Noelle invited him over to the birthday banquet, right?” added her third aunt with a smile.

Gracie simply laughed subtly before saying, “To think that you’re even more well-informed than I am, sister! How did you even find out that she invited him over?”

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Smiling awkwardly, Third aunt simply replied, “I... Just so happened to hear about it!”

“I see! For those who didn’t know any better, I’m sure they’d have assumed that you’ve been paying close attention to Preston. Sadly, though Faye is quite excellent, she hasn’t quite had the luck of bumping into someone like Preston at all. I guess she still needs to work harder to gain the attention and favor of someone like him, aren’t I right, Faye?” said Gracie as she looked at her third aunt’s daughter who was the same age as Noelle.

Gracie couldn’t help but feel slightly jealous since Third aunt was able to know quite a bit about Preston after just hearing his name a few times. It simultaneously also worried her that Noelle’s third aunt could be planning to introduce her own daughter, Faye, to Preston. Was she trying to snatch Gracie’s potential son-in-law from her? If that was the case, Gracie’s only comment was ‘dream on!’

After thinking about it a little while more, Gracie continued by saying, “Speaking of which, sister, you may not have heard about this, but Preston gave Noelle an extremely touching confession before the unfortunate incident took place yesterday! He even knelt before her, you know? I heard that many people were watching the entire thing as well! It’s just such a pity that Noelle, being the stubborn girl she is, simply refused to become his girlfriend!”

“...Is that so? My, how amazing Noelle is!” replied Third aunt as she blushed in embarrassment while praising Noelle in a slightly bitter tone.

At that moment, a waiter opened the door of the private room while saying, “Mr. Wake! Please, come

in!”

Following that, a handsome young man wearing a white suit and a necktie walked into the room with a bouquet of flowers in hand.

The Poorest Rich Man 1231 | THE INVISIBLE RICH MAN 1231 | The Secretly Rich Man 1231

CHAPTER LIST

“Hello, Uncle Shadwell and Aunt Wauter!” greeted the charming boy as he quickly headed over to them. Of course, the handsome young man in question was none other than Preston.

Preston had been extremely excited from the moment he received Noelle’s invitation to her birthday banquet.

Due to that, he had made sure to pay extra attention to how he dressed today so that he could give off the aura of a young master from a rich family.

It seemed that his efforts paid off since soon enough, the Shadwell family began praising him endlessly. Because of that, Preston couldn’t help but feel a little smug and arrogant.

Shortly after, they invited him to sit at the main table.

However, it was at that moment when Gracie suddenly realized that her daughter wasn’t even around.

Momentarily pausing her chat with Preston before turning to look at Noelle's roommates, Gracie then asked, "Speaking of which, where did Noelle and Yulisa go? I haven't seen both of them in a while!"

"From what we heard, both of them went downstairs to receive someone!" replied one of her roommates as the rest of them continued sipping on their juice.

"They what? Isn't Preston already here? Who else are they planning to receive? Say Preston, did you run into Noelle on your way up here?" asked Gracie, feelingly slightly puzzled.

After all, Preston was undoubtedly the protagonist today.

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"Unfortunately, I haven't. Since this hotel belongs to one of my uncles, I've always used the special VIP passage whenever I move around here. If I had known that she would be waiting for me downstairs, then I'd definitely have used the regular entrance!" replied Preston, hints of excitement and joy on his face.

To be completely honest, Preston had already heard about the Shadwell family's financial crisis from his father. With that in mind, it wasn't hard for him to imagine that the Shadewells were only treating him this well because of said issue. After all, they were probably well aware that the Wake family had the support of the Mayberry Commercial Group.

In relation to that, the status of companies such as his family's—that were under the Mayberry Commercial Group—within Mayberry City didn't even need to be elaborated on.

Regardless, Preston knew that it was only a matter of time now before Noelle agreed to be his girlfriend. Hell, there was even a possibility that she would accept his confession today!

“Oh? So you came up here using a special VIP passage! That’s probably the reason why Noelle hasn’t come up again yet! Hold on, I’ll call her right this instant!” said Gracie with a smile.

“Oh, there’s no need to call her, Aunt Wauter! I feel pretty bad for having Noelle wait down there for so long so I’ll just go downstairs to look for her then bring her back up!” replied Preston as he shook his head with a smile on his face.

Though Preston had to kneel before Noelle yesterday just to ask her out, now that he had found out about the predicament the Shadwells were in, Preston was feeling pretty confident about himself. With that, he then began walking downstairs without the slightest hesitation.

“Wait for me, Preston! I’m coming along!” shouted Gracie as she immediately followed after him.

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Gracie felt like she still wasn’t as close to Preston as she would like to be. After all, she was already treating him as though he was already her son-in-law.

Upon seeing Gracie and Preston leave, Yulisa’s roommates then said, “Let’s go look for Yulisa and Noelle as well!”

As the small group of people began descending the building, two girls could be seen waiting rather anxiously by the street right outside the hotel.

“Can’t we just stop waiting for him, Noelle? He must’ve been scared off the moment he read from your message that Longthorne International Hotel was the venue! I truly believe that from the venue of choice alone, he must’ve finally realized how large the difference between both of you were. From the looks of it, he’s probably never attended an event at such a grand place as Longthorne International

Hotel! With that in mind, there's a high possibility that he may be too pressured to even dare to show up here!" complained Yulisa, her arms crossed.

While Yulisa had a pretty good impression of Gerald in the beginning, after everything that had happened, her impression of him had severely dropped.

Quite frankly, if he hadn't rescued them the day before, Yulisa wouldn't ever have looked up to him again!

Then again, could she really be blamed for being realistic? After all, this was Gerald's own fault for not being outstanding enough. Humph!

The Poorest Rich Man 1232 | THE INVISIBLE RICH MAN 1231 | The Secretly Rich Man 1231

CHAPTER LIST

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The Poorest Rich Man 1231 | THE INVISIBLE RICH MAN 1231 | The Secretly Rich Man 1231

CHAPTER LIST “I refuse! After all, he’s already said that he would come today! As for all that you’ve said, I’ve already taken all that into consideration the night before! That’s the reason why I arranged to meet up with him at the entrance of the hotel!” said Noelle.

With her beauty and how meticulous she was with details, it was hard not to call Noelle a goddess.

Just as Yulisa had said, Noelle had taken into consideration that Gerald had probably never stepped foot into a five-star hotel like this before. With that in mind, she had a feeling that he would definitely be feeling slightly timid and pressured. Due to that, Noel had told him to meet up with her at the hotel’s entrance so that they could enter together!

However, though they had agreed to meet up at nine that morning, it was nearing nine forty now yet Gerald still couldn’t be seen anywhere! In fact, he hadn’t even read any of Noelle’s messages on WhatsApp!

Due to all that, Noel truly couldn't help but wonder whether Gerald really wasn't coming.

She also remembered him mentioning that he was going to prepare a special gift for a friend of his. Who was that friend? Could it be a girl who was close to him? Could Gerald already like someone else other than her?

If Gerald had just been some ordinary guy, she wouldn't have been bothered about that fact at all. However, Gerald was no ordinary person.

He had several positive points, for one, his greatest being how strong and skillful he was. He was also currently a hero in the minds of several people. In other words, he was an outstanding person.

It was because of this that Noelle couldn't help but feel a little entangled whenever she thought about whether Gerald truly liked her or not.

This wasn't anything out of the ordinary for girls to think about, especially beautiful ones. It was simply something that happened and was completely understandable.

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At that moment, Preston, Gracie, and Yulisa's roommates arrived at the hotel's entrance.

"Noelle! There you are! I'm terribly sorry for having you wait for such a long time! I entered through the special VIP passage earlier!"

Earlier when he was seconds away from arriving at the hotel's entrance, Preston had already seen how anxiously Noelle was looking at both sides of a street. Recalling how she had rejected him yesterday and comparing it to how she was today, Preston immediately felt a great sense of satisfaction.

Following that, Gracie then smiled before saying, "Did you know that Preston's brought along a birthday gift for you, Noelle? Also, while I was just planning to call you up through the phone earlier, Preston kept insisting that he go downstairs to personally look for you!

"Oh. Thanks, Preston! Regardless, you and mom can go back upstairs now," replied Noelle as she smiled briefly at Preston.

Upon hearing that, Preston's face immediately went pale! Even Gracie was slightly taken aback. Something wasn't quite right with her daughter...

Had she not been waiting for Preston this entire time?

As Preston himself began thinking the same thing Gracie was, Gracie asked in a rather impatient tone, "...Noelle? Who exactly are you waiting for?"

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"I'm just waiting for my friend... I wonder why he's not here yet!" replied Noelle without considering her words too much.

"A... friend? ...Noelle, is it a he or a she...?" asked Gracie again.

Instead of replying, however, Noelle simply walked further out toward the roadside to see why Gerald

still hadn't arrived.

Seeing that, Gracie then turned to look at Yulisa before asking, "Yulisa, who exactly are both of you waiting for?"

With that, Yulisa then began telling everything to her, starting from when she had asked Gerald for his help to take some pictures for them.

After hearing about all that had happened, Gracie finally understood that the person her daughter was waiting for was just some poor person!

Preston—who had been listening to Yurisa as she explained—found himself taking in a deep breath, his sheer jealousy evident on his face.

Noticing the change of expression on his face, Gracie instantly began gritting her teeth as well. And here she was thinking that her daughter knew better! Shouldn't she be well aware that Preston was way more important than Gerald in terms of solving their family's current dilemma?

Fuming in anger, Gracie then instantly walked over to Noelle, reprimanding her viciously.

...

Moving back to Gerald, after receiving Noelle's invitation last night, he had attached great importance to the event. Due to that, he had been well-prepared to head to the banquet from very early in the morning.

By his estimations back then, he should've arrived—in his car—before eight thirty even came.

Instead of driving a luxury or sports car, however, Gerald chose to drive an ordinary one.

This was because after resolving his misunderstanding with Noelle, he realized that he didn't need to use money or any interest to build their relationship up. The only thing he needed to do was attend her birthday banquet and present her with a gift that he had meticulously prepared. Once that was done, everything else would flow smoothly.

Quite personally, Gerald himself felt that it was rather repulsive to drive a luxury car, just to show off his wealth.

Noelle simply wasn't the same as Cundrie was.

1234

From what he found, though Cundrie didn't really care about money, Noelle still exhibited hints that she had a little interest in riches.

With that in mind, Gerald was afraid that once she found out that he was actually rich, her feelings wouldn't be sincere anymore. Should that happen, even if he were to successfully obtain invigorating blood from her, it would be completely useless to him. That was the reason why he had refrained from driving a luxury car over today.

Even Aiden had said that there was no need for him to show her his financial resources. Due to that, the car Gerald was driving today was only an ordinary one that cost around ten thousand dollars.

Alas, he truly hadn't anticipated for there to be a traffic jam this early in the morning!

While driving along slowly, the car in front of Gerald suddenly hit the brakes! Seeing that, Gerald instantly stopped his car as well.

While he managed to avoid hitting the car in front of him, the sound of something crashing soon followed from behind him as Gerald's car rocked forward slightly!

It was obvious that whoever it was behind him, they had accidentally stepped on the accelerator instead of the brakes!

Knowing that the back of his car had been hit, Gerald instantly turned around to see a rather pretty yet coquettish girl who was wearing a hat and driving a Porsche behind him. Not only was he stuck in a traffic jam, but now his car was damaged as well! How couldn't Gerald be frustrated!

As if that wasn't enough, the woman—who was also smoking a cigarette—then got out of her car, her handbag in hand, before walking to Gerald and yelling, "You b*stard! Don't you keep your eyes open when you drive? How could you just stop your car like that!"

"I beg your pardon? It's clearly your fault for banging into my car, auntie!" retorted Gerald, truly at a loss for words before this unreasonable woman.

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The second she heard him referring to her as 'auntie', the woman instantly recoiled in shock. A second later, her entire body began shuddering as her expression turned extremely ugly.

"You... How dare you call me an auntie?! Acting all arrogant before me! I've already seen many poor folk like you! Just have a good look at your own car then compare it to mine! I'm warning you now, you'd better be smart and compensate me for the damage! Otherwise, I'm calling my husband right this instant to deal with you!" roared the woman in rage.

Hearing that, Gerald could only shake his head with a wry smile.

Since the traffic was so heavy that the cars literally weren't even moving anymore, several of the people trapped there began rolling down their car windows to watch the exciting show.

As the sounds of car horns filled the air, Gerald looked at the fuming woman. Since it seemed like she really cared about her face, Gerald could tell that she wasn't going to let him off that easily before sufficiently having her revenge.

Naturally, Gerald wasn't going to pay a single cent to her, resulting in her calling her husband over!

It wasn't long before her husband drove over in a big Hummer. The second he arrived, he immediately dashed across the sidewalk over to Gerald and his wife was.

Sticking closely behind him were several big and sturdy-looking men, each of them wearing gold chains around their necks. Upon getting close enough to Gerald, they instantly slid their hands into their pockets, making sure to crack their necks with loud 'plops' as they smoked their cigarettes rather intimidatingly.

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"That's him, husband! He's the one who stopped his car out of the blue and caused me to bump into him!" explained the woman quickly.

"You've got guts to target my woman, young lad. Are you sick of living in Mayberry City already? Tell me, do you know who I am?" asked the middle-aged leader of the group in a frigid tone. In his left hand, was a bag and on his wrist, a golden watch glistened.

"Beats me!" replied Gerald, shaking his head as he took his cell phone out to check the time.

“You f*cker!” shouted the guards as soon as they heard Gerald say that.

As each of them instantly stepped forward, the middle-aged man shouted in rage, “How dare you! You truly are done for today, young man! I’ll make sure you won’t even be able to stand up once we’re done with you!”

“Oh? Who exactly is going to do the deed?” asked Gerald as he casually looked at the woman’s husband.

“Me, of course!” roared the middle-aged man in reply.

Upon hearing that, Gerald simply laughed out loud before shaking his head and glaring straight into the man’s eyes.

Realizing that Gerald was still trying to make a fool out of him, the middle-aged man felt his anger peak. The same went for his men as well who were now all fuming in anger.

“We’re ending you, you mother*cker!” roared all of his men as they tossed their cigarettes to the ground and made a dash at Gerald!

The Poorest Rich Man 1234 | THE INVISIBLE RICH MAN 1234 | The Secretly Rich Man 1234

CHAPTER LIST

As the big burly men immediately surrounded Gerald, ready to assault him, Gerald could tell that this wasn’t their first rodeo doing this.

The woman herself was waiting for the thugs to grab hold of Gerald so that she could give him two tight slaps across his face to vent out all her frustration.

To everyone's surprise, the moment one of the men rushed over, Gerald simply launched a swift kick to his stomach, sending the hundred and twenty kilogram man flying a good twenty meters away! Everyone could only stare wide-eyed as the thug collided with the middle-aged man's Hummer, causing all of the car's windows to shatter into pieces!

As the glass shards scattered across the road, the woman instantly began screaming in shock. Even her husband was flabbergasted by the turn of events. After all, everyone had simply assumed that Gerald was just a poor young man. Nobody could've anticipated him to be this powerful!

After seeing what happened to their ally, the remaining thugs didn't dare to move a muscle anymore, and for good reason too. They could all see that the injured man had now curled into a ball from the pain, and even his mouth was foaming! To think that Gerald had almost killed their ally with a single kick! Only an idiot would dare make another move so soon after witnessing such power.

Seeing that nobody was attacking, Gerald resumed looking at the time on his phone. From the moment the car accident had happened, quite a bit of time had passed. Adding that to the terrible traffic jam before this, it was now already past nine forty. In other words, it was long past the time Gerald had agreed to meet up with Noelle.

Noelle must have been waiting anxiously for him this entire time, and from what Aiden had told him yesterday, women hated it most when men didn't keep their promises.

As he thought about it, he couldn't help but imagine Mila waiting for him back then.

Unfortunately, he didn't show up in time and he wasn't even able to see her before her disappearance.

If he made Noelle wait for him too long at the hotel, then all the good impressions he had made on her the day before would've been for naught! The thought of that alone made Gerald feel extremely nervous. He truly couldn't afford to delay this any longer!

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Turning to look at the middle-aged man who was still paralyzed in fear, Gerald then fished his cell phone out to call Zack.

"Mr. Lyle, send a helicopter over to where I am, immediately! I need to attend a birthday banquet ASAP and I don't have a proper mode of transportation!"

Following that, Gerald then hung up his phone. He definitely wasn't going anywhere in his car with such a terrible traffic jam, and he couldn't just sit here waiting any longer.

With the helicopter, he would be able to reach the hotel relatively quickly. Even so, there was the obvious risk of him exposing his true identity. However, running over there would simply take too long. There truly was no other way other than heading there with a helicopter.

"A... helicopter?" muttered several of the pedestrians who had overheard Gerald's conversation earlier. Though it sounded extremely absurd, many of them didn't dare to laugh after seeing how strong Gerald was. Of course, that meant that some of them still did.

"Did he truly just ask someone to pick him up in a helicopter? He must've gone bonkers!"

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As more and more people began laughing and making fun of Gerald, the middle-aged man finally returned to his senses again. His opponent was just some kid! Why was he even this frightened by him? D*mn it!

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Since Gerald was still staring at his phone, the middle-aged took advantage of the situation by getting his remaining men to surround him again.

A split second later, the middle-aged man revealed a small but very sharp knife! After giving out another order, the other men took out similar knives as well!

With all of them prepared to launch their attack on Gerald, the enraged middle-aged man was just about to order them to attack when suddenly, a droning sound began filling the air!

The men were familiar enough with the sound to know that it was coming from a helicopter, and upon realizing this, all of them froze in place in their utter shock.

“A-A helicopter has truly arrived!” shouted several of the pedestrians as they looked up at the sky.

Hearing that, many of the stuck car drivers instantly got off their vehicles to have a look for themselves.

The helicopter—that resembled a huge falcon hovering in the sky—was now slowly descending, almost as though it was preparing to land. Due to how close it was to the ground, the strong winds it produced were so immense that they could cause a person’s lips to crack!

Soon enough, those on the helicopter pinpointed where Gerald was standing...

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The Poorest Rich Man 1235 | THE INVISIBLE RICH MAN 1235 | The Secretly Rich Man 1235

CHAPTER LIST

The helicopter blatantly landed on Gerald’s parked car.

The middle-aged man and woman were both dumbfounded. This was because there were a few big characters printed on the side of the helicopter that read ‘Mayberry Commercial Group’!

This man was actually a member of Mayberry Commercial Group, and it seemed as though his status was not low!

D*mn it! This was too ruthless!

The middle-aged man instantly broke out in cold sweat.

“Mr. Crawford!” A young man came down from the helicopter as he respectfully emptied the cockpit.

“Mm. You can drive the car back on my behalf. Also, I want you to look into the background of these few thugs beside me before punishing them accordingly!” Gerald instructed as he put his cell phone away.

“You can rest assured, Mr. Crawford!” The young man replied as he nodded.

As Gerald was about to leave, he saw one of the thugs holding a knife, and he was just about to stab the knife directly into Gerald’s waist. Gerald glanced at the man who was already frozen in place as he broke out in cold sweat because he did not dare to move.

A guilty smile appeared on his face as he said, “Mr... Mr. Crawford...”

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The man flew out directly after Gerald gave him a slap across his face.

“You are such a big man, but you are carrying such a small knife. Who are you trying to scare?!”

Gerald was speechless yet again.

He would have to leave everything else in his subordinate's hands now. Gerald then got into the cockpit before flying the helicopter away. The passersby were all wailing and trembling in shock. This scene was simply too incredible!

Gerald then guided the helicopter along, and he naturally did not encounter any more interference along the way.

Shortly after, he arrived at Longthorne International Hotel. However, Gerald did not park his helicopter downstairs in a conspicuous manner. Instead, he simply parked directly on the top of the hotel.

After that, he hurriedly trotted all the way downstairs.

After calling Noelle, Gerald realized that Noelle was still waiting for him at the entrance of the hotel.

"Gerald, why did you come out from inside the hotel?!" Noelle could not help but feel surprised when she saw Gerald running out of the hotel.

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"Oh! I came from the back door!" Gerald reluctantly explained.

Noelle immediately understood. She felt that since there would be many magnates coming in and out of the entrance of the hotel, Gerald would naturally feel embarrassed too. Perhaps that was the reason why he had chosen to come in through the back door.

"He is the one?"

When Gracie saw Gerald, she had a sullen expression on her face. She was not done reprimanding her daughter yet.

According to her wishes, regardless of whether this man had saved her daughter or not, that was secondary. What was the big deal anyway? At most, she could wait until she resolved their family crisis before giving him a sum of money for saving her daughter, then.

Gracie felt that Noelle should not owe him this kind of affection. What did she mean by inviting him here to celebrate her birthday today?!

When Preston saw Gerald, he could not help but feel even more jealous. It turned out that the person that Noelle had been waiting for was this kid.

She had not only invited him to attend her birthday celebration today, but she had also invited this kid. In any case, Preston instantly regarded Gerald as his love rival.

He could not help but feel even more uncomfortable when he thought about how Noelle had been looking forward to Gerald's arrival just now.

After all, Preston himself was so rich and outstanding, but Noelle did not seem to care about that at all.

"It is fine now that you are here! It is almost ten o'clock now! We should hurry up and go in!" Noelle said and smiled slightly as she looked at Gerald.

"Who are you asking to go in?! You are asking him to come in too?! Noelle, are you really using your brain?" Gracie could not stop herself from scolding Noelle.

Wasn't Noelle deliberately inciting Preston by doing this?! What if Preston became very angry because of this incident and decided to leave Noelle? In that case, the Shadwell family would have missed out on a great opportunity to turn things around!

However, at this time, Noelle had already led Gerald into the hotel.

Gracie hurriedly chased after them.

In the end, only Preston was left behind with a look of anger and resentment on his face.

'You brat! You actually succeeded in making Noelle treat you so well! I have been chasing and pursuing her for over half a year now, and she has never given me any proper attention before. The both of you have only known each other for two days!'

Preston felt a sense of humiliation sweeping through his entire body.

He ground his teeth angrily before he took out his cell phone to make a phone call...

The Poorest Rich Man 1236 | THE INVISIBLE RICH MAN 1236 | The Secretly Rich Man 1236

CHAPTER LISTThe atmosphere at Noelle's birthday banquet changed as soon as Gerald arrived. This was especially so for Gracie's emotions. It would not be an exaggeration to describe that all of her menopausal symptoms for the next thirty years of her life had an outbreak at this exact moment.

Anyone could tell that her daughter, Noelle, had a very unusual relationship with this young man. As a person who had already gone through all of these experiences before, Gracie could tell that her daughter seemed to be interested in this young man.

However, Noelle was very indifferent toward Preston. If Gracie allowed this to develop any further, it would certainly be very troublesome if Preston was offended.

Under this kind of situation, as Noelle's mother, Gracie could not just let this pass without coming up with a solution. She could not simply continue watching as her daughter took one step after the other

into an abyss, right?! Therefore, Gracie was in a foul mood, and she was very unfriendly toward Gerald during the banquet.

“Your wagyu steak is here!”

At this time, the dishes were finally served.

The waiter also brought the main dish, which was the highlight of the birthday banquet today, into the room.

After that, the manager also followed the waiter into the room.

The manager was a middle-aged man. In order to show his respect for Preston, he had decided to come here personally to serve the meal and explain it in detail to them.

It could even be said that he was actually giving the Shadwell family a lot of face.

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Gracie truly felt that she really had a lot of face.

Gerald had already eaten in many restaurants in Mayberry City before. In fact, he had already long heard that the wagyu steak at the Longthorne International Hotel was very famous, but Gerald had never tried it because he hadn't been here before. This was also the first time that he had ever tried this

dish.

“Sir, do you know anything about this dish?”

As Gerald was about to taste the dish, the manager exchanged glances with Preston before he suddenly interrupted Gerald with a cold expression on his face.

“Oh! I don’t really know much about it!” Gerald replied as he shook his head.

“Hmph. You look like you come from the countryside, right? Is this your first time coming to the Longthorne International Hotel?” The manager said with a hint of sarcasm in his tone.

Everyone present, including a few of the girls, could not help but put their chopsticks down at this time. It was obvious that the manager was saying these words because he was targeting Gerald.

“What do you mean by that? Even if this is my first time here, did I do anything wrong?” Gerald could also sense the hint of sarcasm in his words, and he instantly raised his head to look at the manager.

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“Our wagyu steak is usually eaten by our most prestigious and precious guests at this hotel. It would be a complete waste for someone like you, who obviously has not seen much of the world, to eat this wagyu steak! Men, come and take this dish away from him!” The manager said lightly, with his hands behind his back.

“Who gave you the rights to do so?!”

A look of anger and resentment flashed through Noelle's face at this time. This manager did not only look down on people, but he had no respect for others at all.

How could she possibly know that this was all Preston's deliberate arrangement?

As the young master of the Wake family, Preston had a very influential status in this place.

The manager knew this very well too. He knew that his career and business path would certainly go smoothly in the future if he favored Preston. Also, he would be able to build up a good relationship with Preston if he were to humiliate this young lad here today. Therefore, how could the manager possibly let go of such a wonderful opportunity?!

At this time, Preston merely smiled coldly as he stared at the scene before him.

"Wait a minute!"

Gerald put down his utensils.

After that, he looked at the manager, who had a smug look on his face, as he sneered and said, "You are opening an establishment to run a business, so you cannot go overboard. This is the foundation of the business industry. It is your duty to treat each and every customer equally and with respect. This is also the virtue and duty of every businessman. So, Mr. Manager, don't you think that you are taking things a little too far?"

"Pfft! Young lad, do I look like I need you to teach me a lesson? You look so poor! Everyone here is definitely worthy enough to eat the food in our hotel. You are the only person who is not worthy at all! In truth, the only reason why I did not kick you out of this place is simply because I am giving Mr. Wake and Miss Noelle face! You are actually trying to talk back and educate me here?! You should take a piss and look at your own reflection first!" The manager said coldly.

He said everything that he wanted to with those few words, and this was exactly what Preston wanted to see.

You brat! You want to play with me? How are you ever going to fight against me?!

“Men, come! Where are the security guards? Drive this person, who does not know his own place, out of our hotel now! I also want you guys to put a sign in front of the hotel stating that this kind of worthless trash is not allowed to step into our hotel in the future!” The manager yelled to his men outside.

Not long after that, about four to five security guards rushed into the private room, almost as though they had already been on standby.

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CHAPTER LIST

It was obvious that everything had been premeditated.

“I was initially planning on giving you some leeway, but it seems as though you do not want it at all!” Gerald said coldly as he smiled at the manager.

“Gerald, don’t attack him!” Noelle was a little frightened at this time.

At this point, she knew that Preston must have secretly planned for the manager to deliberately humiliate and make things difficult for Gerald. If Gerald were to beat the manager up, Preston would certainly have a way to deal with Gerald for his actions, then. Thus, Noelle wanted to dissuade Gerald from doing so.

“Attack him? Hahaha! I do not need to personally take any actions against a worthless person like him! In fact, at the very beginning, he was still worthy enough to receive a few slaps from me. However, now, he is not worthy at all!” Gerald sneered.

“Young lad, I think you must really be tired of living! Men, come! Throw him out of this place!” The manager sneered.

After that, he looked at Gracie and the others as he said, “Ms. Shadwell and Mrs. Shadwell, I know that I am being rude and disrespectful. However, I truly cannot accept the fact that such a vulgar person is actually sitting at the same table as you. Please forgive me for my actions!”

Gracie immediately stood up as she smiled and said, “Oh, don’t worry! Are you kidding me? You can simply act according to your own discretion. As for some irrelevant people, we do not want to be bothered with them either!” Gracie glanced coldly at Gerald.

As for Gerald, he had already taken out his cell phone and sent a text message at this time.

The security guards had already gathered around as they prepared to take Gerald away.

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Gerald said, “There is no need for you to hurry. Your superior should be coming over here in a short while!”

“Mr. Zillan? You are saying that he is going to come over here? F*ck! Do you know who Mr. Zillan is?!

Even if you really sent a text message, wouldn't you simply be reporting a matter to the management anyway? Hahaha! Let me tell you something. The information about the report will ultimately end up in my hands anyway! Young brat, you will certainly be dumbfounded at that time!" The manager said as he laughed.

The few security guards also laughed out loud.

"He is really full of himself!"

Gracie ate a mouthful of food before she rolled her eyes at Gerald. After that, she even poured a cup of water on the ground directly near Gerald's feet to vent her anger and dissatisfaction.

Just as the manager was about to ask the security guards to proceed, his cell phone suddenly started ringing.

The manager snorted slightly before he took out his cell phone. He was taken aback when he saw his caller ID.

"Mr. Zillan?!" He said in shock.

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As for Preston, he played around with his watch at this time as he shook his head with a wry smile on his face.

'Is it truly a phone call from Uncle Zillan?'

He could not help but feel that Gerald was pretty well-connected as he could actually make a report directly to Uncle Zillan.

The Longthorne International Hotel was a large family-owned enterprise with Mayberry City as the core of its business. It adopted the model of an international hotel chain. However, not anyone could simply report a matter directly to the higher management of the hotel if they wanted to. It was just as the manager had just said. If anyone wanted to report anything, they would have to go through him first. This was also the reason why he dared to act so unscrupulously. What could a poor boy possibly do to him anyway?

However, since Mr. Zillan was the manager of the headquarters, the manager did not dare to neglect his call.

After nodding at Preston, he hurriedly answered the phone call.

“Yes! Yes! Yes!”

“What?”

“I...I understand!”

The manager replied in three simple sentences. However, at this time, he was already turning pale as he started breaking out in a sweat. He was obviously feeling very nervous.

Preston said, “Uncle Zillan is also friends with my father. Could it be possible that Uncle Zillan is really going to teach you a lesson because of this kid? Should I call my father to make a phone call to Uncle Zillan, then?”

“How can it possibly be because of this stinky brat over here?! The headquarters do not know what is happening either. However, he is simply mobilizing all of the staff. Mr. Zillan said that he will be coming

over to assemble here at the Longthorne International Hotel in a short while. Even our chairman, who is currently recuperating in the hospital, will also be personally making a trip here!”

“Oh, my God! The company has never encountered this kind of situation before! I have to hurry up to make some preparations for the upper management’s sudden inspection!” The manager said excitedly.

The Poorest Rich Man 1238 | THE INVISIBLE RICH MAN 1238 | The Secretly Rich Man 1238

CHAPTER LISTAt this time in the lobby, all of the staff were all dressed up, and they were all ready, solemnly and respectfully. Even the hotel staff were not an exception. All of them had already assembled in the lobby on the first floor of the hotel.

Everyone was very excited when they heard that the chairman was personally making a trip here today. There had never been such a thing before.

The manager, Hazen, had also put on a suit at this time as he stood aside in preparation to greet and meet the chairman.

He was extremely nervous at this time.

“Aunt Wauter, Uncle Shadwell, I know a lot of uncles from the Longthorne Group. Since they are coming over here, I would like to go down and greet them. Otherwise, if they find out that I did not go down to greet them when they are here, they might actually blame me for being ignorant!”

At this time, in the private room, Preston put down the wine glass in his hand and spoke up as he looked at Gracie.

“Oh, of course! Preston, you must know of many big and powerful figures. Longthorne Group is a public

listed company. Since their upper management is here to visit, it is only natural for you to go and greet them!”

“By the way, Preston, the Shadwell family’s biggest business is a boutique fast food restaurant chain. Although it cannot be compared to the Longthorne International Hotel, it is still a catering industry after all. I wonder if you will be able to put a good word in for us in front of Mr. Zillan later? It would be great if you could simply hand our business card over to him!” Gracie asked

embarrassedly.

“That will not be an issue, Aunt Wauter. Although I do not personally know Chairman Hayes Wadder from Longthorne Group, I am quite familiar with Mr. Zillan!” Preston said as he stretched out his hand to reveal the gold watch on his hand.

After that, he grabbed his wallet and stood up immediately.

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“Yes, yes. That’s right. It would be great if we could exchange business cards with Mr. Zillan. It would also be great if we could get to briefly introduce ourselves to him. Let’s go too!” Third aunt and the others laughed at this time.

After that, they stood up and walked toward the door.

At this time, many big and small cars had already gathered outside the entrance of the hotel.

All of the senior executives and upper management personnel were all here regardless of whether it was the human resources department or the finance department. They were here as long as they were a senior officer.

Everyone was supporting an old man who was in his seventies and still trembling as he walked.

“Chairman Wadder!” Mr. Yandle said in surprise. He was already about to kneel at this time.

As for Chairman Wadder, he shuddered as he hurriedly spoke to his personal assistant at this time, “Quick! Head to Room 602!”

At this time, Mr. Zillan, who was behind the chairman, was also very pale as he helped the chairman head upstairs.

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At this time, Mr. Yandle suddenly realized that it seemed as though they were not here for an inspection. Instead, it felt as though they were here to deal with something. What was happening? Room 602? Wasn't that the young master Preston's room?!

The Shadwell family members, who were just about to get into the elevator, also happened to run into Chairman Wadder at this time.

Gracie was about to bow down to show her respect to the chairman, but the chairman did not even bother looking at her at all.

To everyone's surprise, Chairman Wadder walked directly into their private room with the help of his assistant.

Something that made everyone feel even more shocked and surprised happened in the next moment.

As soon as they arrived at the door...

Chairman Wadder had knelt on the ground with a thud. At this time, his face was also covered in tears as he trembled uncontrollably.

“Oh, my God!” Gracie swallowed in disbelief.

Preston was also dumbfounded at this time.

“I did not know that you were here, Mr. Crawford! I deserve to die! I deserve to die!”

Hayes had participated in several important and grand meetings with the chamber of commerce, and he had already witnessed Gerald’s grandeur in the past.

Just now, he had received a phone call from the Mayberry Commercial Group saying that his subordinate was trying to throw Mr. Crawford out of his hotel, and the other party had actually asked him what he was going to do about this matter?

Hayes could not believe his own ears, and he had come over here immediately from the hospital.

At first glance, he immediately saw that the person who was sitting at the furthest end of the table was none other than Mr. Crawford!

The reason why Longthorne Group could be so deeply rooted and had such a steady development in the business industry for so many years was simply because Mr. Lyle had always been taking good care of them and looking out for them.

If they were to offend Mr. Crawford today, Longthorne Group would certainly be done for!

“Chairman Wadder, is your subordinate really that impressive? I was simply trying to eat a piece of wagyu steak, and he actually asked the security guards to come over here to throw me out!” Gerald said as he smiled bitterly.

“I have already heard about it!” The chairman cried out before he slowly stood up with his assistant’s help.

“Where is Hazen Yandle?!” The chairman asked as he looked at Mr. Zillan.

Hazen was standing at the entrance of the private room, and he was watching the incredible scene that was unfolding before his very eyes with Gracie and the others.

As soon as he heard the chairman calling his name, Hazen ran over to him immediately.

The Poorest Rich Man 1239 | THE INVISIBLE RICH MAN 1239 | The Secretly Rich Man 1239

CHAPTER LIST “Chairman Wadder, your body is so frail and delicate now. How could you kneel in front of this stinky brat?! I will find someone to deal with him right now!” Hazen said viciously.

The chairman was instantly enraged as he stared at Hazen in disbelief. After that, he shouted at Mr. Zillan, “Beat him up! I want you to beat him up until his mouth is all swollen!”

Mr. Zillan hurriedly replied, “Yes, sir!”

As soon as he waved his hand, several of the chairman’s personal bodyguards hurriedly came forward directly before pressing Hazen down on the ground. There was even a bodyguard who brought a baton over.

“Chairman! What did I do wrong?!” Hazen was filled with grievance as he cried out loud.

A loud sound came, and the bodyguard had already hit Hazen on his mouth with the baton.

At this time, Hazen’s nose and mouth were filled with blood.

Hazen’s eyes were also filled with tears.

When the people on the sideline saw this, they were all terrified, especially Gracie and the other women. When had they ever witnessed this kind of scene?!

The bodyguards continued beating the manager up at this time.

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Hazen’s teeth were flying out, and he was spurting blood out of his mouth.

In the end, he got beaten up until he was almost half dead. Hazen was convulsing as he lay on the ground.

“Mr. Zillan, what is going on with this matter?! Who gave Hazen Yandle the courage to act that way?” Chairman Wadder asked as he glanced at Hazen before he looked at Mr. Zillan.

“I have already spoken to some of Hazen’s assistants just now. I found out that the reason why he dared to do all this is because someone named Preston Wake called him in advance to ask him to act in that manner!” Mr. Zillan’s voice was very cold and stern.

He naturally knew who Preston was, and he also knew Preston’s father. However, the Wake family was basically done for at this time. Therefore, Mr. Zillan naturally wanted to cut off all ties with them.

Before he could finish speaking, the bodyguards had already dragged Preston over to the scene.

“Mr. Zillan, what are you guys trying to do?! My father is...”

Before he could even finish his sentence, Preston had already received a tight slap across his face.

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“You dare to cause trouble for Longthorne International Hotel?! I cannot tolerate this at all! Continue slapping him on my behalf!” Chairman Wadder yelled out loud.

“What?!” Preston was shocked.

The bodyguards had already stepped forward to do as they were told.

At this time, Gracie and the others were all stunned and dumbfounded.

“Gerald, this... what is going on?”

Noelle was also frightened at this time. She truly did not expect such big trouble and such a huge scene to unfold just because Gerald had made a small report.

When Gracie saw everything that was happening inside the room, she swallowed wildly, afraid that she would also get beaten up.

So, she subconsciously walked toward Gerald's side because she knew that it would be safest for her to stay by Gerald's side at this time.

Very soon, Preston was beaten up until his face was all bloody. The four or five bodyguards' hands were also swollen. After that, they lifted Preston up before throwing him out of the hotel.

After the chairman had apologized repeatedly to him, Gerald finally felt a little satisfied.

Gracie was extremely surprised.

What was going on?

The chairman had actually ordered his men to beat Preston up just because Gerald had made a small report.

This was beyond common sense. Something was not right! Her years of experience instantly made her realize that something was not right! Moreover, it seemed as though the chairman was also very afraid of him.

At this moment, Gracie quietly pulled her daughter, Noelle, aside. She wanted her to ask Gerald about his background and identity.

Why was the chairman referring to him as Mr. Crawford?! Could it be that he was the Mr. Crawford

from Mayberry City, then?!

The Poorest Rich Man 1240 | THE INVISIBLE RICH MAN 1240 | The Secretly Rich Man 1240

CHAPTER LIST“Gerald? Are you full already?” asked Noelle as she attempted to stop him from leaving.

The subsequent birthday party was extremely hasty if anything, mainly due to what happened a while back. Even so, nobody dared to speak up any longer, especially Gracie who had remained obediently quiet this entire time.

“Indeed I am!”

“I see... By the way, Gerald, my mom wanted me to ask you what you did for a living...” asked Noelle in a soft tone, though it was evident that she was curious about that as well.

After all, everyone had seen how Chairman Wadder treated Gerald earlier.

“Me? Good question! I wonder what I do for a living myself!”

Hearing that, Noelle simply replied with a laugh. Gerald was getting more and more mysterious by the second...

“Actually... Could... it be that you’re the legendary and mysterious Mr. Crawford from Mayberry City...?” asked Noelle again, her voice gentle.

By that point, Gracie and the others had gathered behind Noelle. All of them were holding onto their breaths as they anxiously looked at Gerald while awaiting his answer.

Gerald himself simply shook his head with a wry smile on his face before replying, "Is it important whether I'm him or not? To be quite frank, there's something I've needed your help with for some time now, Noelle... I wonder if you see me as a friend enough to willingly lend me a hand..."

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His eyes were serious as he stared at Noelle while asking that question.

After observing how she kept looking at him for a while, Gerald could discern that her feelings toward him seemed to be different from before. They felt much more sincere.

With that in mind, Gerald felt that it was finally a suitable time to ask that question. He was honestly also slightly worried that if he allowed those feelings to continue developing beyond this point, he would inevitably end up hurting her.

"Also, regarding the crisis the Shadwells are currently facing... Let's just say that you'll be receiving the funding you require before long. Once that happens, you won't be bogged down by too many worries and all of you will be able to do as you please again!" added Gerald.

Upon hearing that, Gracie and the others immediately took in a deep breath.

If Gerald had said the same thing about an hour ago, then Gracie would've certainly assumed that his statement was fake. Now, however, she knew that every word he said was entirely true.

“But of course I treat you as a friend! In fact, I’ve considered you to be my best friend ever since you saved me from that kidnapping attempt! A best friend that has quite a bit of secrets... Regardless, now that you’ve even helped my family, I truly wish to repay my gratitude to you! What help do you need? I’d gladly lend a hand!” replied Noelle, resolution in her tone.

While she had been grateful toward Gerald for a while now, Noelle hadn’t really seen him as anything more than a good friend. After spending more time around him, however, she was now seeing a different side to Gerald. Not only was he shrouded by mystery, but he was also surrounded by a strong aura. Deeply intrigued by these two attributes, it made her realize that she was starting to get attracted to him...

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With that in mind, as long as she could make Gerald happy by helping him, she’d certainly attempt to do whatever he asked for.

Upon seeing how willing and sincere Noelle’s reply had been, Gerald immediately grew excited though he didn’t show it.

“...However, there’s one thing I wish for in return!” added Noelle.

“What is it?”

“Once I help you, I’d like you to tell me your true identity... I don’t want you to hide it from me anymore! Is that acceptable...?” asked Noelle as she looked at Gerald with a smile.

“Deal!” replied Gerald extremely straightforwardly.

The second Gerald said that he required a drop of fresh blood from Noelle’s finger, Noelle, Gracie, and the others were exceedingly confused and doubtful about his request. Nevertheless, it wasn’t that big a deal so Noelle simply handed him a drop of invigorating blood...

With that done, that meant that Gerald had to keep his side of the promise. Noticing that everyone was extremely eager to see how he was going to explain the incident earlier, Gerald wasn't about to shamelessly break his promise.

After laughing bitterly for a while, he fished around in his pocket before taking out a tiny device. Upon pressing it, two tiny 'beeps' could be heard.

All was silent for a while... Until seconds later, droning could be heard coming from atop the building! Was... Was that a helicopter...?

Their question was answered shortly after when true enough, a helicopter began taking off from the top of the building!

The Poorest Rich Man 1241 | THE INVISIBLE RICH MAN 1241 | The Secretly Rich Man 1241

CHAPTER LIST

The black helicopter—that looked similar to a falcon—was unmanned, and it was currently flying itself toward Gerald's location through its autopilot system, absolutely stupefying everyone else who saw it.

That helicopter... It had to cost at least fifteen million dollars, right...? Did it belong to Gerald?

Noelle found herself covering her mouth in her flabbergasted state. Gerald had given all of them his answer without even needing to directly say it.

Soon enough, the helicopter touched down and Gerald got into the cockpit.

Looking at Noelle from inside the helicopter, he then smiled before saying, "There's your answer. If there's anything else you need in the future, just look for Zack!"

After flashing her another subtle smile, he then flew the helicopter away without even turning to take a second glance.

"...Oh... my... God. He... H-he really was Mr. Crawford from Mayberry! Gerald's Mr. Crawford! My god, we're going to be rich! The Shadwells are going to be living prosperously!" shouted Gracie as she began dancing around in joy.

While everyone was celebrating, Noelle seemed to be the only one who was at a loss. It... It seemed like she had just lost something very important...

Gerald himself had finally acquired his second drop of invigorating blood. As the saying went, true things truly did come to those who waited!

Regardless, Gerald had no time to waste and he immediately tried detecting the yin aura from the blood that he had kept within a small bottle. The results were simultaneously surprising and delightful.

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'Once I've received the baptism of heaven, I'll undergo a rapid increase in strength! In other words, I won't be helpless anymore before Queena! Speaking of which, the pledge of the holy water is about to begin soon... I wonder how grandpa and the other great masters are doing right now... Could they still be searching for where the pledge of the holy water was being held...?'

Though he was curious about how his grandfather was doing, Gerald wasn't particularly worried about him. After all, Christopher was there as well, and that old man had undergone such immense training that Gerald could safely say that he was a powerful person, even among the other great masters.

Even so, he was now under Gerald's control, and Gerald had left the issue of Christopher's life and death to be managed by his grandfather. With that in mind, Christopher was pretty much forced to help Gerald's grandfather, even if he didn't want to.

Whatever the case was, the only thing left for Gerald to do—once he was able to rid himself of his current predestined relationship—was locate the woman in white.

'Once Queena's out of the picture, I'll hopefully be able to find the woman in white without much trouble! Since all the mysteries of the Sun League are connected with the woman in white and judging from how much I've currently progressed, I'm definitely slowly getting closer to the truth!' Gerald thought to himself.

Regardless, now that he was high in the sky in his helicopter, Gerald sprinkled the blood over the jade charm. Immediately after, he sensed that the jade charm was already attempting to locate the stone. With that in mind, Gerald calmed himself as well, hoping to detect the Zircobsite stone for himself.

It wasn't long before Gerald heard a low rumble. The odd thing was, the odd rumble didn't seem to be coming from an external source. Instead, Gerald could hear it coming from the depths of his heart! As the sound continued resonating in his mind, Gerald could almost feel his body pulsating in rhythm with it. It was almost as though his body was interacting with its surroundings.

It didn't take long before Gerald began sensing a particular area that seemed to emanate a mysterious 'repelling' power. In other words, the area seemed to be actively preventing him from heading in that direction.

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Gerald knew for a fact that that meant that the Zircobsite was there. After all, the Zircobsite was a stone filled with yang energy. It was only natural for the yin-filled blood to repel against it.

Feeling ecstatic, Gerald then shouted to himself, "I've got you now!"

Without thinking much, Gerald then began flying the helicopter in that direction. It was only when he was halfway there when he soon realized that he was heading toward ...

"...Mountain Top?" Gerald muttered to himself in surprise.

'...Hold on, aren't I headed for Mountain Top Villa now...? Could the stone have been buried in the innermost parts of Mountain Top this entire time...?'

Upon touching down atop the mountain, he got out of his helicopter. With how strongly his heart was reacting now that he was standing here, Gerald got the confirmation that he needed that this was the place he was looking for.

Shortly after his arrival, the entire mountain began shaking, and several of the plants growing there were quick to wither as well! Gerald deduced that the plants were being sucked dry due to the sudden release of yang energy.

Though he was extremely happy to finally have located the stone, Gerald immediately suppressed his joy and gave Zack a call.

He had already told Zack about what needed to be done once the item he was looking for was found. Due to that, the moment Zack answered the call, the project instantly commenced.

Zack himself had already hired an engineering team that consisted of a few thousand people, and they were to begin working as soon as Zack ordered for it. The team was expected to operate for twenty-four hours without stopping until they were able to penetrate the mountain's surface and obtain what Mr. Crawford needed...

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were to begin working as soon as Zack ordered for it. The team was expected to operate for twenty-four hours without stopping until they were able to penetrate the mountain's surface and obtain what Mr. Crawford needed...

The Poorest Rich Man 1242 Soon enough, a few thousand workers arrived, ready for duty.

Since their task was to penetrate the mountain, they had no real choice but to first demolish Mountain Top Villa.

Of course, with such a major operation happening, observant people soon realized what was happening. With that, news about it began spreading online like wildfire, causing a heated discussion among those in Mayberry.

"Are they really planning to demolish Mountain Top Villa?"

"They are! D*mn it! To even consider demolishing that villa that cost over a hundred and twenty million dollars... How rich they must be!" discussed fans of the building among themselves.

Regardless, even with so much information about the incident circulating the net, the administrative department of Mountain Top Villa hadn't seemed to receive any news about the demolition yet. It didn't help that when Zack wanted something done, he didn't ever explain himself to those from the subordinate departments. After all, to him, there was no need to.

However, it should be noted that for the administrative department, Mountain Top Villa wasn't just some ordinary residence. It had been painstakingly built with the combined efforts of several engineers. To those from that department, it was less of a building than it was a piece of art.

Moving back to the present, as the workers continued performing their tasks, an angry-looking

woman—who looked to be around twenty-seven—stomped her way toward one of them before shouting, “Hold it! Who the hell told all of you to demolish this place! Aren’t you aware of who owns this place? How very daring!”

“Lady, we get orders from Chairman Lyle, we execute them. If you have any problems with that, then just go meet him directly!” sneered the worker in response.

His response made her so angry that she instantly took in a deep breath to calm her nerves. Raising her head to look at the many other workers—from the demolishing team—who were higher up the crowded mountain, the woman then frowned before making her way up there.

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The moment she arrived, however, she was just in time to hear a deafening explosion, followed by the sight of one of Mountain Top Villa’s walls crumbling to the ground!

She was just seconds too late to attempt to prevent something like that from happening. Knowing that, the saddened woman instantly began scowling at all those rude people extremely sternly!

At that moment, both Zack and Gerald were in the garden of Mountain Top Villa.

Turning to look at Gerald, Zack explained, “Based on our estimations, the fastest the project can be completed will be in two days and nights!”

“Noted. Do continue working hard throughout these two days then, Chairman Lyle. Be sure to keep an eye around here and should there be any news, contact me immediately!” replied Gerald.

“Very well, Mr. Crawford!”

As soon as Zack’s sentence ended, a bodyguard came running over before saying, “Mr. Crawford! There’s a woman attempting to cause trouble out there! She says she’s from the Mayberry Organization as well, and she’s desperately trying to get in the way of the project! If possible, we’d like to force her out of this place! What do you say, Mr. Crawford?”

“What a b*stard! How dare anyone try to stop Mr. Crawford from doing what he wants! Get that person out of this place no matter who they are!” roared Zack.

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“B-before that, she said her name was Rita! She told us that as long as we mentioned her name, you’d know who she was, Chairman Lyle!” replied the guard.

“...R-Rita...?” muttered Zack, stunned as he turned to look at Gerald.

Rita was Mila’s second cousin, and she could be considered to be Mr. Crawford’s elder sister. With that in mind, Zack’s anger immediately dissipated.

Gerald himself was shocked to hear that familiar name out of the blue. After all, he previously had quite a number of encounters with Rita, and he knew for a fact that her relationship with Mila was very good.

‘What’s Mila’s second cousin doing here...?’

Though Gerald had missed both Mila and his own family throughout the two years, he certainly hadn’t forgotten to be concerned about the condition of Mila’s family.

As long as there was a way to compensate Mila’s family, he’d definitely do so without the slightest

hesitation. Up till this point, Gerald had made sure that the Smiths would be able to live worry-free for a few generations monetary-wise. It was the least he could do.

Regardless, even though he had returned to Mayberry twice within these two years, he had never personally visited any of Mila's family members throughout that time. After all, ever since Mila went missing, he had felt immense guilt toward the Smiths.

Mila had chosen to be together with him, yet in the end, she disappeared. What else could that mean aside from the fact that he hadn't taken good care of her?

He didn't even know how to face any of the Smiths, so now that Rita was here, Gerald was filled with immense terror.

Chapter 1243

Soon enough, a few thousand workers arrived, ready for duty.

Since their task was to penetrate the mountain, they had no real choice but to first demolish Mountain Top Villa.

Of course, with such a major operation happening, observant people soon realized what was happening. With that, news about it began spreading online like wildfire, causing a heated discussion among those in Mayberry.

"Are they really planning to demolish Mountain Top Villa?"

"They are! D*mn it! To even consider demolishing that villa that cost over a hundred and twenty million dollars... How rich they must be!" discussed fans of the building among themselves.

Regardless, even with so much information about the incident circulating the net, the administrative department of Mountain Top Villa hadn't seemed to receive any news about the demolition yet. It didn't help that when Zack wanted something done, he didn't ever explain himself to those from the subordinate departments. After all, to him, there was no need to.

However, it should be noted that for the administrative department, Mountain Top Villa wasn't just some ordinary residence. It had been painstakingly built with the combined efforts of several engineers. To those from that department, it was less of a building than it was a piece of art.

Moving back to the present, as the workers continued performing their tasks, an angry-looking woman—who looked to be around twenty-seven—stomped her way toward one of them before shouting, “Hold it! Who the hell told all of you to demolish this place! Aren't you aware of who owns this place? How very daring!”

“Lady, we get orders from Chairman Lyle, we execute them. If you have any problems with that, then just go meet him directly!” sneered the worker in response.

His response made her so angry that she instantly took in a deep breath to calm her nerves. Raising her head to look at the many other workers—from the demolishing team—who were higher up the crowded mountain, the woman then frowned before making her way up there.

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Chapter 1244

At that moment, the doors to the villa were opened, and in stepped a few bodyguards, dragging Rita along with them.

Rita herself was struggling quite a bit to get free as she shouted, “Unhand me! Unhand me this instant!”

“Cease this at once!” shouted Gerald as he immediately began walking over to them.

“...Gerald?” muttered Rita in a rather surprised tone the second she saw him.

From the moment her cousin had gone missing, she hadn't met or even heard any news about Gerald.

Snapping out of her shock quickly, Rita then thought to herself, 'Humph... Gerald Crawford... The rich heir of the Crawford family with near-endless wealth... Being so powerful, I had my doubts that you'd still think fondly about my cousin after all this time... Hell, you never even contacted us from the day she went missing! You probably don't even care about whether my cousin's dead or still alive!'

Back then, Gerald had only sent Zack over to pacify the Smiths. Relaying what Gerald had told him, Zack told them that they could ask him for help if they ever faced any issues. The Crawfords would definitely try their best to help the Smiths regardless of their requests.

Even so, those from the Smith family knew that Gerald had only said that out of courtesy since Mr. Crawford was attempting to express his regret. After all, with Mila now missing, why would any sort of relationship still exist between Gerald and the Smiths? The Smiths were well aware that they truly had no reason to continue being involved with such a wealthy family anymore.

Understanding that, they simply rejected any financial support that Zack provided them with.

Honestly, if it wasn't for the fact that Rita had found out that they were demolishing Mountain Top Villa, she wouldn't have come over so angrily to meet Zack in the first place. After all, this place was supposed to be Gerald and Mila's wedding house.

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'Even though Gerald knows about that... Humph! How ungrateful!' Rita thought to herself, a great wrath within her.

Even so, after two years of not meeting him, Gerald appeared to be much more mature compared to how he had been in the past. What more, he looked much sturdier and muscular as well, an aura of prestigious superiority surrounding him.

Regardless, Gerald nodded at Rita before saying, "Rita! My cousin! I hope you're doing well! How've you been lately?"

"Humph! Like I'd dare to trouble you with my concerns, Mr. Crawford! And since when have I become your cousin? The Smiths are definitely incapable of claiming a relationship with a relative such as yourself!" sneered Rita.

"You b*tch! How dare you talk to Mr. Crawford like that?!" shouted the guards as soon as they heard Rita's mockery.

"There's no need to shout on my behalf! Stand down!" growled Gerald as the guards immediately heeded his words and left respectfully.

Gerald's command had been so domineering that everyone who heard it felt chills run down their spines and simply felt the urge to revere him. Even Rita felt the same thing, and as she looked oddly at Gerald, she thought to herself, 'It's just been two years, has it not? How could he have undergone such a massive change...?'

She was right to feel that it was strange. After all, he had previously been a coward yet now...

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“Listen, Rita, I know that we’ve had some misunderstandings and I admit that Mila going missing is my fault for not taking good care of her. Due to that, my responsibility to find her again. Tell me, do you honestly think that I’ve already forgotten about Mila?” asked Gerald as he looked into her eyes.

“Haven’t you?” asked Rita in a casual tone.

Hearing that, Gerald carefully retrieved a small sachet from his pocket and when Rita saw it, she was instantly stunned.

It was the handmade present that Mila had given Gerald back then. Since she had just learned how to sew from her mother at the time, the sachet itself wasn’t very well made. However, Rita remembered that Mila had worked hard sewing it throughout the night. Even the lopsided pair of mandarin ducks were still visible on the sachet.

Rita recalled laughing herself to death back then when she heard that Mila was going to give such a poor excuse of handicraft to the man she loved most. She had been certain that Gerald would’ve chosen to disregard her poor handiwork and simply accepted the sachet with disdain.

To think, however, that he still had it with him till this very day...

“I never forget even the smallest details in my life, so you can be sure that I won’t ever forget about Mila either! I’ve constantly been looking for her throughout these two years, and as long as I know there’s a chance that I can still locate her, I’m willing to go to the very ends of the world just to get her back! With that said, I hope you now believe me when I say that you’ve misunderstood me, Rita!”

Chapter 1245

“...Is... Is that really true...?” asked Rita.

After hearing his explanation and seeing the sachet again, Rita had to admit that she was starting to believe him slightly. It also helped that she knew how Gerald was as a person, at least in the past. Regardless, he didn’t seem like the kind of person who would just forget someone he loved that much.

“I’m saying it now that I’ve never personally contacted you throughout these two years since I was too ashamed to stand before any of the Smiths. Why do you think I kept sending Zack over to help you? Even so, Zack’s told me that none of you have accepted any of my gifts. Is that true?” asked Gerald who hadn’t really questioned their decision before.

“It is. The Smiths have their own dignity to maintain too, you know? Since Mila’s gone missing and both of you aren’t even married, what right do we have to take your things? At least that’s what my grandma keeps saying!” replied Rita now that Gerald had cleared up some initial misunderstandings that she had with him.

With that, she had no problem with detailing how the Smith family was currently doing.

As it turned out, ever since Mila went missing, the Smiths had constantly been enshrouded in gloominess. For the longest time, the loss had been so suppressing that even breathing was sometimes difficult. The mocking and sneering from others only made the Smiths feel like they were continuing to drown even deeper.

The mockery itself had stemmed from the fact that the relatives and friends of the Smith family knew that Mila’s boyfriend was an extremely capable and powerful man. After all, he had purchased them a villa that cost at least fifteen million dollars! A person capable of that must surely be immensely wealthy!

However, since Gerald’s identity was special, the Smiths had never publicly revealed that their future grandson-in-law was actually the rich heir from Mayberry, Mr. Crawford. Regardless, with so many good things happening to the Smiths, it made many friends of the family both admire and envy them. Many of them even tried their best to fawn on the Smiths in their attempts to befriend Mila’s mysterious boyfriend.

The second Mila disappeared, however, huge changes began taking place within the Smith family.

Since Serenity Jordain—who was the old lady of the Smith family and also Mila’s grandmother—was a person with great pride and dignity, she quickly returned the villa that Gerald had given to them once she realized that her granddaughter wasn’t going to be found anytime soon. With that decision made, the Smiths then returned to where they initially lived.

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Serenity even made it a point to reject any charity that Gerald attempted to give their family.

‘With my granddaughter now missing, what would the Smiths even be to Mr. Crawford? There’s no need for us to continue fawning over him so shamelessly!’ That was pretty much Lady Smith’s thought process at the time.

Due to that, they returned to their original lives. Even if people enjoyed their misfortune, so be it.

“...I see. So all of you simply assumed that I had already given up on Mila this entire time, is that right...?” asked Gerald as he took in a deep breath, hints of guilt in his voice.

Though he had been extremely focused on looking for Mila and his uncle, he had to admit that he had ignored Mila’s family. Realizing that now only intensified his guilt.

In response, Rita simply nodded.

“...Then, is Mr. Smith, grandma, and the others doing fine...? Please bring me along. I wish to meet up with them,” said Gerald in a serious tone.

“There’s no way they could be fine... Today’s the birthday of one of grandma’s childhood friends, you know? While that friend of hers ceased contact with grandma as soon as she heard about Mila’s disappearance, recently she’s been constantly inviting all my family members over to her place!”

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“It’s extremely evident—at least to those sensible enough—what Georgia Walford means by this. You see, since Mila already had you back then, my family had rejected Georgia’s grandson’s marriage proposal, and boy did they resent that fact. Regardless, Georgia’s family is quite amazing now, and her grandson even ended up marrying a nice granddaughter. With that in mind, she’s clearly been constantly inviting us over just so that she could show off in front of my grandma. Truth be told, if I hadn’t heard that Mountain Top Villa was going to be demolished, I’d have attended the party as well!”

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Rita bit her lower lip slightly as she concluded her explanation.

“Since grandma already knows that they don’t mean well, why is she still insistent on going?” asked Gerald.

“Well, grandma said that since the Smiths haven’t done anything shameful, our spirits shouldn’t waver. What more, Georgia’s family had invited our family over with great hospitality. With that said, there truly is no reason for us not to be straightforward and just attend,” replied Rita.

“While we’re on the topic, grandma has undoubtedly become more and more stubborn throughout the past two years... It was her birthday yesterday, you know? However, she misses Mila so much that she said that she was unwilling to celebrate it again until the day Mila finally returns!”

“...I see. Regardless, since you’re going to attend the birthday party later anyway, allow me to come with you!” replied Gerald.

Georgia belonged to the Sier family, and in a way, it was quite similar to the Smiths. After all, they were both ordinary companies that weren't too large or small in Mayberry in the past. Unlike the Smiths, however, the Siers had been developing extremely rapidly in the past two years.

Meanwhile, Lady Smith had just arrived at Georgia's villa along with the others from the Smith family.

The villa itself was a top-notch structure that had quite recently been built in Cloud City. With its construction price being over twelve million dollars, the building was considered to be quite prestigious, topped only by a few other villas inclusive of Mountain Top Villa.

Regardless, upon entering Georgia's home, the Smiths found that many of the guests there were unfamiliar faces.

Even so, just as Serenity had told them time and again, despite having lost Mila, the Smiths couldn't just remain cowardly and simply hide at home. They still had to be daring to head out and meet others!

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Anyway, seconds upon their entry, all of the Smiths were greeted by the sight of a sixty-year-old woman—who was being supported by a boy and a girl on either side of her—whose face was beaming as she walked toward Serenity and her family.

Had the guests not known that today was the old woman's birthday, it wouldn't have been a stretch to assume that she was the reincarnation of Queen Elizabeth the second!

Of course, she was none other than the current head of the Sier family, Lady Georgia Walford.

While Georgia and Serenity were rather good friends from when they were young, their relationship had always been rather hard to describe, especially as the two besties continued growing up with each other.

Putting it simply, both of them enjoyed competing with each other rather unrealistically. As kids, they'd compete with each other to see whose clothes were nicer. When they started studying, they began competing to see who got better grades instead. Even after entering society, they continued competing by seeing whose job was better and who married a better husband. Now that they were old, they were still competing by seeing whose family was stronger. Aside from that, they also enjoyed comparing their children with each other, competing to see who had more capable and outstanding offspring.

Even after doing it for so many years, both of them simply continued being competitive. They were just that kind of people.

Regardless, the second the old woman saw Serenity and her family entering, Georgia could already feel the sky being particularly blue that day.

"You're late, Serenity! I had just brought some old friends of mine over to have a look at the birthday gifts that had been given to me! Why don't you head over there later to have a look for yourself? In the meantime, I'll be moving around to serve all the other guests present! There's just so many of them, you know? Regardless, since a few of my grandsons-in-law and granddaughters-in-law haven't presented their gifts to me yet, you aren't too late to the party! In fact, I'd say that you're just in time to see them present their gifts to me!" said Georgia in a humble tone and a delighted smile on her face.

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Gavin couldn't help but feel embarrassed upon hearing Georgia's statement. Were there even that many guests present?

Serenity herself began displaying an even more unpleasant expression than she had before. However, she quickly forced on a smile before replying, "It seems that you're truly leading a good life now, Georgia! A stark contrast to how poor you and your family were when you were younger! I still

remember that it was always your family who had to send gifts to others back then! Good for you now that others are sending gifts to you instead!”

Lady Smith wasn't about to show any weakness before Georgia anytime soon. Georgia herself instantly felt her expression stiffen upon hearing that.

Even so, both the old ladies were extremely slick, and neither of them were going to reveal their true emotions without a fight.

“Indeed! Now that I'm much older, I get to enjoy all my wealth and happiness together with my family! Speaking of which, my grandson-in-law got me a new car a while back, you know? I'm already over sixty! I wonder what he was thinking when he bought that new car...” said Georgia as she faked a sigh while making sure to pay attention to Serenity's reaction.

Back then, her grandson had liked Mila a lot. Due to an extremely powerful and rich heir becoming her boyfriend, however, his chance of being together with Mila was shattered. That caused her grandson to suffer a broken heart for quite a long time. Naturally, Georgia had been sad to see her grandson in such a state as well.

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Chapter 1247

Regardless, everything was fine now. After all, her granddaughter had gone missing and that rich heir boyfriend of hers had most definitely forgotten about the Smiths by now.

“Still, remember how my grandson had constantly tried to gain Mila's affection for a time, Serenity? I wonder if you're regretting allowing Mila to turn him down now... Though I'm sure you didn't have much say in that... After all, it's a matter that concerns only the children! Even so, as the head of the family, you should've been a bit stricter in deciding for her, don't you think? If only you had been, then Mila wouldn't have acted out of spite and continued furthering her studies in Hong Kong! If that didn't happen, she could have already married my grandson now and opened a company together! Now wouldn't that have been great!” declared Georgia as several of the guests who heard that began shaking their heads.

“Indeed! What an absolute pity!”

As comments about the situation continued being said aloud, those from the Smith family found themselves blushing deeply. This was especially so for both Gavin and Helen, the parents of the missing girl.

With Georgia mentioning Mila’s name so many times and continuing to poke their sore spots, the parents couldn’t help but get teary and red-eyed.

The two weren’t the only ones saddened either. Mila had been Serenity’s most adored granddaughter, and the old woman had watched Mila grow from when the girl was just a baby.

With Georgia saying all this to her face now, all sorts of emotions were beginning to brew within Serenity, and none of them were good feelings.

To think that those people had continuously tried to fawn on them back when Mila was still together with that rich Gerald... Now that they knew that Gerald was no longer supporting them, however, it seemed like they were taking all their past compliments back. In fact, nothing seemed to please them more now than enjoying the misfortune of the Smiths.

Understanding that, the old lady remained silent and simply sat down at a table, her family doing the same soon after.

For the next hour, the Smiths simply remained seated there, observing the expressions of the other

guests. By then, several of them had been sitting so still that they found themselves having pins and needles. Just as they were feeling that they were nearing their limit to how much more shame they could take, a servant suddenly walked into the villa with a man and a woman following behind him.

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The duo was, of course, Gerald and Rita.

Since Serenity's health hadn't been all that well recently, Rita had been staying close to her at all times to take care of her. However, since Rita had earlier heard that Mountain Top Villa was getting demolished, she wasn't able to stick by her grandma's side till now.

When those from the Smith family saw who was standing beside Rita, all of them ended up gaping in bewilderment as they simultaneously muttered, "...Gerald?"

All the Smiths felt like they were dreaming. It truly was none other than Gerald! But... Why would Gerald be with Rita? And why was he even here today?

Needless to say, everyone was overcome with extreme shock.

"...Oh? Is that Rita I see? Why have you only arrived now? Regardless, who's that beside you? Could he be your boyfriend?" asked Georgia as soon as she saw the two who had just entered.

Since Georgia was quite close with Serenity, she knew Serenity's relatives and friends well. That said, she also knew that Rita was Serenity's niece, and that she was also a favorite of that old woman aside from Mila. With that in mind, it was natural that she felt the need to inquire about the new face.

Shortly after Georgia's question, Justin Sier—her grandson—and his recently married wife began

walking over. Seeing that, her granddaughter—Quin Sier—and her husband walked over to the group as well.

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“Grandma,” said both of them in unison as Justin took a peek at Rita.

Following that, he laughed rather bitterly before saying, “It’s been quite a while since we’ve last met, Rita! Not only have you become prettier, but it also seems like you already have someone now!”

“Who is she, hubby? Are you close to Rita?” asked a gorgeously-dressed woman who was standing beside Justin.

“Hmm? Oh, she’s the person I mentioned to you before! Mila’s cousin! It’s a pity though, she could’ve been my cousin back then as well! Oh well!” sneered Justin.

“Ah, I see!” replied the woman in a cold tone.

From that alone, it was evident that Justin had already told her about the incident of him going to the Smith family’s home to propose to Mila.

“Justin, you can’t just greet Rita when her boyfriend’s standing right next to her. Go ahead and greet him as well!” said Georgia while scanning the ordinarily-dressed Gerald from head to toe.

Since Rita had always been an arrogant and proud girl, Georgia had no idea why she would get herself a person like that. After all, Gerald looked vastly different from all the other rich heirs there.

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Georgia had purposefully raised her voice to ensure that everyone there heard her.

Now that everyone's attention was on Gerald, Justin smiled subtly before saying, "Ah, so you're my cousin-in-law! A pleasure to meet you!"

He showed no interest in even wanting to shake hands with Gerald, and his wife simply stared at Rita's boyfriend, sizing him up from her husband's side. While Gerald certainly didn't dress luxuriously, she just had a gut feeling that something was wrong with him.

"Since you're so exceptional, I believe that your boyfriend must be equally as excellent as well! Do introduce him to us!" said Georgia.

"Apologies, Lady Walford, but he isn't my boyfriend," replied Rita as she turned to look at the rest of her family who were still seated at the table.

The Smiths hadn't even recovered from their shock yet, and their mouths simply remained wide open as they continued staring at the duo in silence. Even Serenity hadn't been able to regain her wits in time to reply.

"...Oh? So he isn't your boyfriend? Then what position does he have to own a right to be here today?"

'What on earth are you trying to pull off here...?' Georgia found herself thinking.

“This here, is Gerald. And he has every right to be here today since he’s Mila’s fiancé!” explained Rita.

“...What? Mila’s... fiancé? But how could that be? Hasn’t she gone missing for at least two years? Shouldn’t her boyfriend have broken up with her a long time ago?” replied Georgia.

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She was well aware that Mila’s boyfriend was extremely powerful. After all, he had completely overshadowed them back when Mila was still around. Now that Rita had said such a thing, all the guests in the villa immediately fell silent as they stared at Gerald.

“...Mila’s Fiancé? Him? Is she for real?”

“What on earth is happening...?”

As the others whispered among themselves while discussing the current situation, Gerald said, “Though Mila isn’t here at the moment, I’d like to assume that I’m already part of the Smith family since both of us have already been in a relationship for such a long time. What more, we’ve already decided to marry each other! With that in mind, I’m sure you won’t blame me for coming over since you invited the rest of the Smith family here today anyway, right Lady Walford?”

While it was true that Gerald was using his engagement with Mila as his excuse to be here, he wasn’t lying about both of them verbally agreeing to marry each other. Though Gerald had planned to get engaged with Mila after her studies ended in Hong Kong, well... All that happened.

Regardless, after hearing what Gerald had to say, Georgia and the rest of the guests instantly became stunned.

“Holy cr*p! Is he really the same boyfriend from before? The extremely wealthy man?!”

“From the looks of it, he truly is! Oh god, he’s here!”

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As Georgia felt chills run down her spine after hearing all the exclamations of surprise from the guests, she composed herself before saying, “...But of course I wouldn’t mind! In fact, it’s an honor to our family that you could come!”

Following that, she retracted her hands from the two lovely children who had been supporting her this entire time. There was no need for her to be pretentious before Gerald.

With that, Gerald and Rita then headed over to the table where Serenity and the others were currently seated at.

“Grandma, Mr. Smith, and Mrs. Smith! I’ve returned!” said Gerald as he looked at them with a smile.

“M-Mister Crawford! W-we...” stuttered Serenity who felt like she had just awoken from a long dream.

After all, the Smiths had already assumed that Gerald had long forgotten about them in the past two years.

“I promise that regardless of what happens to Mila, I’ll take care of everything in the future,” said Gerald before all the members of the Smith family.

Hearing that, several of the Smiths including Mila’s elder sister, Irene, began crying in excitement.

They truly had suffered way too much injustice in the past two years.

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CHAPTER LIST

Suddenly hearing all this truly touched every single one of the Smiths, including Serenity. They now finally realized that they had misunderstood Gerald this entire time, and that Mila hadn't misjudged him.

Regardless, the atmosphere of the setting instantly changed rather drastically now that Gerald was here. Though not many of the guests had even paid the Smiths any attention earlier, more and more of them were now heading over to their table to toast and chat with them in hopes of being able to deepen their relationship with that family. Of course, there were also those who immediately began fawning on the Smiths as well.

Even a few of the presidents were already surrounding Serenity while saying, "Speaking of which, it was your birthday yesterday, wasn't it, Madam? Why didn't you send us invitation cards to attend? Such a pity that we weren't able to celebrate with you... Whatever the case is, we'll certainly make up for it later!"

With all this happening, the person who was suffering the most was most definitely Georgia.

After all, she had initially invited Serenity and her family over to show off her grandson, granddaughter-in-law, and grandson-in-law. To think that Mila's powerful boyfriend would make a sudden reappearance out of the blue! She definitely needed to be respectful toward him! However, that wasn't even the biggest shock for her.

Gulping, Georgia then asked, "...Madam, what did you say his name was...? Mr. Crawford? Which Mr. Crawford are you referring to, exactly...?"

The second the guests heard Georgia's question, all of them instantly fell silent in shock. After all, everyone present was well aware of who Mr. Crawford was, especially since they were in Mayberry. Hearing his name alone was enough to cause everyone to become momentarily stupefied.

"Which other Mr. Crawford would you assume him to be? Of course he's the Mr. Crawford from Mayberry! I bumped into him while I was at Mountain Top Villa, you know?" replied Rita as she took a peek at the guests' reactions.

Mr. Crawford from Mayberry? Mountain Top Villa?!

Who could remain calm after hearing all this? At that moment, multiple screeching of chairs—being pushed against the floor—could be heard as everyone immediately stood up, flabbergasted expressions on their faces.

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Georgia was now barely able to breathe herself.

"Could it really be true? Could Mila's extremely powerful and wealthy boyfriend truly be Mr. Crawford from Mayberry?"

"Thinking about it now, it shouldn't be fake! After all, Mila and Mr. Crawford both graduated from Mayberry University! We also know that her boyfriend is exceedingly rich! With that in mind, I have reason to believe that he truly is Mr. Crawford!"

“Oh god! We should have figured out earlier that Mila’s boyfriend was actually Mr. Crawford!”

While all of them were feeling bewildered as they discussed this sudden revelation, they were simultaneously filled with regret. Why hadn’t they just continued maintaining a good relationship with the Smiths? If they had, they would’ve definitely become both prosperous and successful by now.

Staggering slightly, the panting Georgia had to be supported by the two children again to avoid falling. She needed to head over to greet Gerald right this instant!

‘Oh god! He truly is the real Mr. Crawford! He even introduced himself as the son-in-law of the Smith family! There is absolutely no way we’ll ever be able to compete with Serenity’s family now!’

Though Georgia had initially seen fluffy white clouds in the blue sky, all the clouds were now dark and thunder was flashing ever so often. Her heart was completely desolate now.

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Just as Justin himself was about to head over to Gerald to kneel as a sign of his respect, Yana Shute—his wife—suddenly said in a doubtful tone, “...Something’s off... Why does he look so familiar... The more I look at him, the more I feel like I’ve met him somewhere before...”

“What’s wrong, Yana? What do you mean he looks familiar? Regardless, head over there quickly and help us apologize to Mr. Crawford for neglecting him earlier! He’s clearly the real deal!” said Georgia.

“...Hold on, grandma! There’s no need to be so nervous! I... I think that he isn’t really Mr. Crawford!” said Yana as she held onto her grandmother’s shoulder.

“...What? Why would you make such a bold claim?”

“Call it a gut feeling, but I’m fairly certain that he used to be my classmate when I was much younger... The more I look at him, the more he resembles that old classmate of mine!”

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Yana’s voice sounded much more determined now.

“A... A classmate?” replied both Justin and Georgia, both equally shocked by her claim.

It was as though they were hearing some story from The Arabian Nights, and they had their reasons to be doubtful. After all, such a coincidence was pretty much unheard of! What more, though Yana had a powerful family background, there was simply no way she would have been able to afford or even have the status to be Gerald’s classmate!

“...What kind of classmate could you be referring to? Do note that we can’t afford to make jokes about such things, Yana. I’ll have you know that I have some prior knowledge about Mila’s boyfriend, and I can confirm that he truly is extremely powerful. It’s the reason why so many of us are willing to believe that Mr. Crawford really is her boyfriend after he revealed his identity! If we end up offending him now, we may not be able to survive in Mayberry any longer!” said Georgia as she began smacking her thighs in her anxiety.

“That’s right, Georgia! You’d best think about it carefully first! Are you really sure he’s your classmate? Please don’t end up mistaking him for someone else!” added Justin.

“I’m fairly certain that he’s my primary school classmate. After all, I clearly remember that during my primary school days, my dad had been focused on expanding his underground forces and had chosen to begin development in Serene County. Due to that, I naturally had to follow him and that’s how I ended up studying in a primary school there. Regardless, there was a person called Gerald in my class, and after hearing that name again after so long, I couldn’t help but start doubting him. After all, the more I

look at him, the more familiar he seems. I hadn't said this earlier since I admit that I couldn't really remember what he looked like. However, after observing him for a while now, I truly believe that he's the same Gerald I used to know!" replied Yana as she squinted her eyes in confirmation.

"The Gerald I knew back then... I remember him being in a particularly difficult position since he was so poor... If I'm recalling correctly, both of us even had small talk back then! Regardless, what do you think, grandma? Is it not possible that the Smiths hired someone to impersonate Mr. Crawford?" whispered Yana.

Upon hearing that, Georgia felt her heart skip a beat as she thought, '...Honestly, what she's suggesting isn't completely out of the question!'

"...Quite frankly, even though I was the one who had invited them over, I hadn't expected Serenity and her family to actually attend this birthday party. After all, they'd definitely expect me to show off a lot. Despite being aware of that, she actually came! I found it odd that she had been able to remain so confident up till this point. It's also strange that Rita only showed up now, and with Mila's boyfriend of all people!" muttered Georgia as she further analyzed the situation.

'You know, after hearing what Yana had to say, I'm starting to think that Serenity had planned for all this to happen all along! If my guess is correct, then Serenity is definitely trying to embarrass me on purpose! What a vicious old witch!' Georgia thought to herself, seemingly seeing the bigger picture.

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From what Justin and Yana had heard their grandmother say, even they were starting to arrive at the same conclusion she was. After all, all of it simply made sense.

"...Regardless, we still can't act blindly, Yana. We should at least make sure if he's absolutely your classmate first!" added Georgia who was clearly still slightly frightened. After all, if they truly had made a mistake, then a major mishap would undoubtedly befall them.

“Haha! Not to worry, grandma! I’m now more than certain that he’s the Gerald I used to know! However, since you’re still worried about it, I’ll double-check just to make sure it’s him! Still, to think that small fry of a pauper would actually dare impersonate Mr. Crawford!” said Yana, with disdain in her tone.

While Yana was already a hundred percent sure that he was her old primary school classmate, she was just taking these extra steps to prove to the old lady that he was no threat to them. With that, she immediately waltzed over toward Gerald without even the slightest hesitation.

Since the table the Smith family was currently sitting at was now surrounded by people attempting to toast and talk to the Smiths—in hopes of deepening their relationships—Yana casually shouted, “Step aside, please!”

Hearing that, the guests simply nodded with smiles on their faces as they replied, “Miss Shute!”

Yana’s family background wasn’t as simple as one would think. After all, her uncle was a famous head of the underground forces in Mayberry. With that in mind, anyone who knew of her background wouldn’t ever dare to offend her, including these businessmen.

Gerald himself hadn’t been paying attention to any of their fawns this entire time. Instead, he had been focused on chatting with Mila’s parents and grandparents, roughly describing his search efforts throughout the past two years. It was his way of saying that he had never given up looking for Mila, not even for a second.

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However, as he was talking, he suddenly felt the back of his head being hit by someone!

Knowing that there weren’t any warrior-like people in the vicinity, Gerald had long let his guard down.

The fact that he hadn't sensed any approaching murderous intent made him all the more stupefied to realize that someone actually dared to attack him!

Turning around to see who had hit him, he realized that it was none other than Justin's newly married wife! For some reason, she now had her arms crossed as she looked smugly at Gerald.

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