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“Impossible!”

Startled by what he heard, Stanley quickly regained his composure and asked skeptically, “Dad, are you sure? Could it be a coincidence?”

George smiled. “I never thought about it before this. While jogging just now, I figured those injured men had also offended Severin in the past. I’m sure this isn’t a coincidence! Just leave Severin alone!”

Stanley nodded hesitantly. “Sure, Dad. Guess I’ll have to put up with him. I’m still mad, but I can’t do anything!”

George chuckled. “Hehe, we’ll be fine. Our family’s growing in power, and soon we’ll be rolling in riches. We’ll be better off than how we used to be! Besides, your grandma hasn’t officially announced Diane will inherit our estate. We still have a chance!”

There was a moment of pause before George continued.

“Just listen to me. Instead of messing around with Severin, you should lay low and join me on fishing trips. If things go well and our estate grows, your grandma might leave some properties for us. It’s still better than what we used to have. Get it?”

Stanley’s face glowed as he comprehended. “I got it, Dad. I won’t fall for Severin’s insults anymore. I’m going to laugh in his face too!”

George nodded. “That’s the spirit. Just laugh it off. He’ll leave you alone eventually!”

The two men ended their conversation and took their baths.

Meanwhile, Zachariah Ballard frowned in frustration as he listened to the report from Claude Emerald.

“What should we do, Mister Zachariah? That scoundrel Larry Dune didn’t honor his promise to pay his taxes, and he even attacked the Chavezes and took over their estate. He’s picking a fight with you!”

After his close brush with death the previous day, Zachariah had enough. He decided to give up his fight for power, as he figured he had amassed enough wealth to retire and live happily for the rest of his life. Although Draco Hall’s rise in power was the least of his concerns, he was still worried about Larry Dune’s growing ambition. Most importantly, he feared Draco Hall would do something terrible to his family. However, he also knew he would suffer terrible losses if he were to retaliate against Draco Hall. He didn’t want that to happen.

“Mister Zachariah! Mister Zachariah!”

Suddenly, a middle-aged man hastily ran into the main hall.

“What’s going on?” Zachariah impatiently asked as he tried to hide his anxiety.

The man panted as he delivered his report. “Our scouts... they just phoned us! They said after Draco Hall took over the Chavezes’ estate, they are handing it to the Shanahans!”

“What?! Why is Draco Hall giving their estate to the Shanahans? What’s going on?” Zachariah Ballard grew even more confused.

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“That’s odd. Why is Draco Hall giving up such a valuable estate to the Shanahans?”

Claude Emeraldo frowned as he found the news baffling.

A guardian contemplating nearby decided to speak up. “Sir, is it possible they handed the estate to the Shanahans because they fear our retaliation?”

Zachariah Ballard could only put up a half-hearted smile. “That’s possible. However, taking over an estate is not an easy feat. If they fear our retaliation, why’d they even bother with it?”

Claude gave some thought before replying, “I think I got it. Isn’t Severin one of the members. of Draco Hall? That means Draco Hall could still hold a claim over the estate without paying its taxes to you. That’s quite a good plan from them!”

Zachariah continued smiling. “They are not giving the estate to the Shanahans, not Severin. We have no idea who will take over the Shanahans’ estate in the future.”

Zachariah Ballard didn’t want to escalate the situation into a feud. After all, he needed Severin’s help to save his niece and nephew. A day had already passed, and time was running out. He couldn’t afford to make enemies with the members of Draco Hall, who were his only hope of rescuing Linette and Keagan.

On top of that, Severin had unconditionally saved his life once. He wasn’t willing to repay his kindness with ingratitude. A thought ran across his mind. His daughter was already at the age of marriage. If his daughter could marry into an affluent family from Riverson, and especially the powerful Riverson Mansion, Zachariah could garner their support. Draco Hall would not longer be a threat to him.

Instead of fighting tooth and nail with Draco Hall, he decided that it was wiser to find himself some powerful allies. He didn’t want to think about the future of the Emerald Cloud Gang. It had nothing to do with the Ballards anymore. He also knew Claude was trying to convince him. to team up and fight against Draco Hall.

In the meantime, Claude was also getting desperate.

“Mister Ballard, we can’t drop our guard. If we allow them to grow in strength, they might even take over your estate too!”

However, Zachariah dismissed Claude’s concern with a wave. “Let’s worry about that later. Draco Hall may have destroyed the Chavezes, but it is not a righteous cause for us to attack them with our powerful guardians. Moreover, they did not offend us, and I also owe Severin my life.”

Claude was shocked to hear that. “He saved your life?”

He then realized the dragon-head throne chair in the middle of the main hall had gone missing. “So you were poisoned?”

“Yes!”

Then, Zachariah told Claude everything that had happened to him.

After he finished telling his tale, Zachariah let out a sigh. "I'm getting too old for power struggles. I just want to live the rest of my life in peace. I also think Larry isn't a cruel, violent person!"

Claude could only nod in agreement. "We could only hope that Draco Hall would leave us alone. I also wish to live the rest of my days in

my days in peace too."

"Mister Zachariah! The Hall Master of Draco Hall, Larry Dune, is here to see you!" At that exact moment, one of the guards came rushing in to break the news.

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"What? Why is Larry Dune here?"

Surprised by Larry's arrival, Claude Emerald and Zachariah Ballard exchanged glances.

Claude came to his senses first. "Should I hide first? It would be bad if Larry knew I'm here."

Zachariah nodded after giving it some thought. "Yeah, that's a good idea. You could hide in that secret room over there."

Claude silently nodded and walked to his hiding place. Zachariah then ordered his guards to invite Larry into the main hall.

"Hehe, Master Dune! What brings you here? I thought you were still busy dealing with the Chavezes!" Zachariah laughed as he watched the Hall Master enter the hall.

"Mister Zachariah, I came to assure you not to worry. Draco Hall is a peaceful organization. We won't go around picking on the weak!" Larry replied with a smile.

"So what's your deal with the Chavezes? What did they do to deserve your wrath?"

There was a brief pause before Larry replied. "They didn't piss us off. They offended Mister Feuillet!"

"You mean...Severin Feuillet?" Zachariah frowned.

Larry nodded. "Once again, I assure you that we're looking for peace. We won't make a fuss if no one messes with us. I'm also happy with how things are with Draco Hall now. Let's play nice and get along, shall we?"

He paused for a moment before continuing. "However, if anyone messes with Mister Feuillet, it would be their death sentence. Rufus Chavez made the fatal mistake of kidnapping his wife Diane and tried to make her his own. That was why Mister Feuillet gave the order to destroy the Chavezes!"

"He gave the order?" Zachariah's blood ran cold as he realized how powerful Severin was.

Larry nodded again. "Yes, he did. Mister Feuillet also phoned me earlier and told me to inform you. Draco Hall is part of a powerful organization led by him!"

Zachariah couldn't believe what he had heard. He found it difficult to imagine that the friendly young man was the true mastermind behind Draco Hall.

Larry smiled. "Moreover, no one could match Mister Feuillet's authority. If he wants someone dead, he'll get his wish. However, you don't have to worry. He won't harm you if you leave him alone."

"Alright. I understand."

Zachariah forced himself to chuckle. "Haha. Also, I guess we can put the matter of taxes to rest. After all, we're not short on money. We just don't want any trouble with you!"

Larry smiled as he saluted with his palm and fist. "If that's the case, we'll thank you for your generosity. Don't worry. We'll maintain our peaceful relationship. Perhaps we could also ask for your aid when we need your help!"

"You're most welcome!"

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Zachariah Ballard was aware Larry Dune was just sugarcoating words. His true intent was to remind Severin Feuillet was the true mastermind who kept a low profile. Larry Dune's visit was a veiled threat and a warning for him not to retaliate against Draco Hall.

"Alright, that is all Mister Feuillet wants to convey to you. I'll make my leave now!"

As Larry began to leave the hall, Zachariah escorted him out.

"Don't worry. We also wish for peace too. Moreover, Mister Feuillet saved my life and helped my family too. I'll make sure not to cross him!"

Larry suddenly stopped dead in his tracks. "Oh, right. I have to remind you Mister Feuillet would prefer to maintain a low profile. I hope you'll keep what I've told you a secret. Please don't expose Mister Feuillet's true identity."

"Yes, I understand!" Zachariah nodded in agreement.

Zachariah let out a sigh of relief after Larry Dune left. On top of learning about Severin's identity as Draco Hall's true leader, he was also surprised about how powerful he secretly was. At the same time, Claude Emerald also got out of his hiding spot.

"What do you think about what he said?"

Zachariah turned to look at Claude. "From now on, I don't need your gang to pay me taxes anymore. Apart from testing your loyalty, it was also a warning. But now, my family seemed like a joke compared to Draco Hall. I suppose they are the most powerful right now!" Claude saluted Zachariah as a thankful gesture. "Thank you, Mister Zachariah. Luckily we decided not to attack Draco Hall, and they even came to warn us about it. Even if we team up to fight them, I don't think we're a match for them.

Severin must be on the level of a ninth-level grandmaster, and Larry doesn't seem to be bluffing about him!"

Zachariah pondered carefully. "Yeah, we can't afford to offend Severin. We must be in his good books and keep a friendly relationship with him!"

Claude nodded. "That's right, but being friendly with him isn't enough. We also need to please him to keep the peace between us. Luckily I told Hugo and the rest to leave him alone. Otherwise, we'd end up like the Chavezes!"

Zenoah Ballard suddenly darted into the hall. He seemed to be excited about something.

"Good news, Brother! That was sooner than I expected!"

Zachariah smiled as he figured out what Zenoah was talking about. "I suppose you mean. Keagan and Linette are safe?"

"Yes! They just phoned me about it. Also, they told me someone destroyed the Black Cloud Gang's hideout!"

Tears began to well up in Zachariah's eyes. He had thought rescuing his niece and nephew was an impossible feat. He didn't even have any hope for Severin's promise to come true. After all, the Black Cloud Gang was powerful and formidable. Though, he didn't expect they would meet their defeat that soon!

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"The Black Cloud Gang from Falcodom, destroyed?"

Claude Emeraldo had heard about how powerful and secretive the Black Cloud Gang was. Being a small country, Falcodom couldn't touch the gang. However, someone managed to destroy the gang with ease. Impressed with how things turned out, Zachariah told Claude what had happened to him.

"My goodness. How powerful is this Severin? He only needs a phone call to raid and destroy such a powerful organization from a foreign country. He even rescued your niece and nephew too! That's insane!" Claude exclaimed with surprise.

Zachariah nodded in agreement. "He is indeed mysterious. If he didn't volunteer to help or send Larry to talk to us, we wouldn't know he is this powerful!"

Zenoah Ballard interrupted the men. "Brother, Keagan mentioned that the rescuers will escort Linette and him to our city. They will travel by private jet and arrive at the airport around noon the day after tomorrow."

"A private jet? Wow, we'll have to thank them properly!" Zachariah said in a grateful tone. "Brother, we also have to thank Severin. My son is alive because they are friends!"

Although he had lost all his properties overseas, Zenoah was grateful that his children were alive. No amount of wealth could replace the safety of his children.

"Of course! On top of thanking Severin, we must get on his good side too! It's also amazing that Keagan knows someone incredible like him!" Zachariah laughed.

He gave up making the Ballards the most powerful family in Brookbourn. He also felt a burden. lifted off his shoulder. After all, someone powerful enough to influence foreign countries like Severin would have no trouble dominating a small city like Brookbourn. Zachariah figured his city was in safe hands.

“By the way, Zenoah...did your son mention who rescued him?” Claude asked.

“Yes, he did. He’s the famous War Chief, Valerian Sutcliffe!” Zenoah said excitedly.

“Valerian the War Chief? He’s escorting Linette and Keagan?”

Another chill ran down Zachariah’s spine. The War Chief was one of the four Great War Gods. A visit from someone famous like him would put Brookbourn on the map. That would also attract merchants from other cities to do business there. It would also mean a brighter future for Brookbourn.

“That’s right! I also found it unbelievable when I first heard about it!” Zenoah said.

“Ahem, congratulations! Brookbourn Mansion should give them a warm welcome. Inviting the War Chief to stay over will bolster your reputation!” Claude cleared his throat to hide his envy.

After all, the Ballards and the higher-class families would be the ones to welcome the War Chief. The Emerald Cloud Gang was too insignificant to receive such an important guest. “The War Chief is visiting our city! What a glorious moment!”

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“How many guests do we have? We should prepare two mansions for their stay!” Zachariah Ballard said excitedly.

“Then I’ll take my leave!” Claude Emerald said and promptly left.

The servants of the Ballard family working nearby were surprised when they heard the War Chief was visiting. The news quickly spread among the other servants. The next day, the other families in Brookbourn heard about the news.

“My goodness! The War Chief Valerian Sutcliffe is visiting! I heard the families are inviting him over for dinner! It would bring a great reputation to have him as a dinner guest! That renown will also bring in good business!”

Having heard the news, Catherine Shanahan discussed it with Diane, Severin, and the rest of her family.

“War Chief Valerian is coming?” Severin muttered to himself.

He knew Valerian could get his men to escort Keagan and Linette. There wasn’t any need for him to do it himself. He was a little surprised by how things turned out.

“Yeah. It’s rare for a celebrity to visit our city!”

“Should we also send him an invitation? The other families are doing it too. I bet the War Chief will be staying for a few more days. It’ll be great to have him over for dinner!” Catherine sounded a little overwhelmed.

With a smile, Stanley was the first to comment. "Grandmother, our family may be doing well recently, but aren't we getting ahead of ourselves? The Brookbourn Mansion and the first-tier families are more qualified to invite him over. Even after our recent acquirement of the Chavezes' estate, our family is only second-tier at best. We aren't even in the same league with the first-tiers!"

"That's right! We don't stand a chance! Let's not get in their way!" George chimed in. Catherine's face turned angry. "You think you know better? Even if it's only a one-percent chance of success, we should always give it a shot! Besides, even the third-tier families are trying too! Why shouldn't we?"

"Grandmother's right. We should give it a try!" Diane nodded.

"We should send Diane and Megan to invite him. Maybe he'll fall for their charms and come." Felicia said.

"You think the War Chief would fall for that kind of trick? Someone famous like him has no shortage of beautiful women trying to please him. Do you think he'll accept our invitation because of your beautiful daughters?" Stanley sneered.

"We wouldn't know unless we try, right?" Megan protested, "I'm going to prove you wrong! It's harmless to try anyway!"

"That's right! We're going to try tomorrow!" Diane chimed in as well.

Proud of his wife, Severin smiled. "Okay. I'll drive you two there tomorrow morning. Let's catch a glimpse of the great War Chief!"

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As everyone parted ways after the discussion, Severin and Diane made their way to their car. However, as they exited the main hall, they noticed a bodyguard running past them.

"Madam, Sir! We have visitors from the Emerald Cloud Gang!"

"The Emerald Cloud Gang? Why are they here for?" Catherine Shanahan frowned. "Oh well, they're still our guests. Let them in!"

Claude Emeraldo appeared with some of his men carrying plenty of boxes. After knowing Severin's true identity, he didn't dare to butter Severin up. He decided it would be wiser to start earning favors from Catherine instead. He felt rejoiced when he saw Severin and Diane. Having Severin around to witness his tribute to Catherine would be killing two birds with a

stone.

"Claude Emeraldo, at your service. Madam Catherine, I represent the Emerald Cloud Gang to congratulate your family's ascension to the second tier. Here's a set of jade ornaments, gold bullions, one pair of gold earrings..."

A servant working for the Shanahans received the gifts.

"Thank you so much, Mister Emeraldo. You're too polite! Please have a seat!"

Catherine couldn't hide her smile. She was pleased because the Emerald Cloud Gang decided to show up and congratulate them. Her family didn't often deal with gangs, so this would be their best opportunity to gain some allies. Picking up one of the boxes, Claude walked to Severin and passed it to him.

"Mister Feuillet, what a coincidence. I've prepared a gift for you too. I hope you like it!" "For me?"

Severin was a little surprised, but he figured out Claude's intentions.

"Mister Emerald, I've done nothing to deserve your gift."

The situation turned a little awkward for Claude, but he quickly made a comeback.

"Hehe. You don't have to be so humble, Mister Feuillet. You're capable and skilled in medicine, and we'll need your help in the future. Think of this gift as our gesture of courtesy. I hope you'll accept it."

Severin was reluctant to accept the gift, but he was curious about what it was. When he opened the box, he was surprised to find a thousand-year reishi mushroom. While the mushroom's appearance was a little disappointing, it was emitting immense spiritual energy.

"He's spending this much just to win me over!" Severin thought.

Finally, he accepted the gift and said, "Alright, I'll accept your gift. We'll be friends from now on. You scratch our back, and we'll scratch yours!"

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Claude Emerald was relieved when Severin accepted his gift. However, he also knew Severin was just being humble when he extended his friendship. After all, Severin didn't need his help. Knowing that Severin was trying to hide his identity, he decided to play along. "Haha, of course! We must help each other in times of need!"

Stanley and George, who were watching nearby, exchanged glances. Their lips twitched as they shared the same thought.

"Severin and Claude have rarely dealt with each other. Since when are they on good terms?"

"Mister Emerald, please have a seat. I'll get the servants to prepare lunch for you. We're honored to have you as our guest, so let's have a couple of drinks!" George said.

"Haha, I'm thinking of the same thing too! We should have a drink or two!" Claude laughed as he followed George inside the house.

Severin packed up the box and turned to his wife.

"Honey, I guess we'll have to postpone our trip home. I'm afraid I can't turn down his offer to drink with him."

Diane laughed. "I never knew you had such a good relationship with Mister Emerald. Better still, I didn't know you're such a social butterfly! That's a good thing, though. Your connections are helping our family business to grow!"

"Really? Social butterfly? Now you're being mean, honey." Severin protested.

In the meantime, on the balcony of the teahouse opposite the Shanahan's estate, someone was watching the couple from afar. The elderly gentleman took a good look at Severin. Then, he checked the photograph in his hand and sneered.

"I've finally found you, brat! I'll kill you and finish this mission!"

The man was none other than the Six-Stars Assassin.

On the other hand, in the Ballard estate, Sheila was excited about the War Chief's visit.

"Father, is the War Chief arriving by plane tomorrow?"

Zachariah was sipping tea in a good mood. However, as he had cooped himself inside his home, he didn't know that the news of the War Chief's visit had spread like wildfire. Everyone in Brookbourn was looking forward to meeting the legendary Great War Hero.

When Zachariah heard his daughter's question, he frowned and put his teacup down. "How did you know?"

"Why wouldn't I? Everyone's talking about it on the streets! I also heard the merchants and the high-tier families will give him a reception! They are going to invite him to their homes!"

Sheila giggled as she continued. "Dad, I want to go too! Please take me with you tomorrow! I want to meet the War Chief and take photos with him! It's a chance of a lifetime to meet him!"

Zachariah's lips trembled. "T-they knew?! I thought our family was the only one who knew about his visit! What should we do? We might lose our chance to invite him to our place!"

"That's unlikely! Our family is the most powerful in this city, and it'll be disrespectful of him if he doesn't accept our invitation!"

"It doesn't work that way, Sheila. The great War Chief doesn't need to pay his respects to us." Zachariah shook his head.

"By the way, aren't you supposed to go play with Severin?"

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"Dad? Y-you're letting me play with my handsome Severin?" A shocked expression ran across Sheila's face. She had plans to sneak out of her home, but she was afraid it would anger her father. She didn't expect her father to have a change of tone. What a surprise!

However, Sheila didn't immediately put down her guard. "Hehe, are you testing me?"

"Testing you? I recently have a better impression of Severin. If you can find a way to become his wife, I think that's a good idea too!"

Zachariah thought Severin was more than what he seemed. He was impressed with Severin's ability to mobilize a powerful force with a phone call, his friendship with the War Chief, and also having Draco Hall under his thumb. Compared to the other young men in the city, he would be the best son-in-law he could ever ask for.

“Dad, you’ve changed!”

Sheila looked at his Dad mischievously, and realization dawned upon her.

“Oh, I see what’s going on now. Severin made a phone call to ask a friend to save my dear cousins, and the War Chief was the one who rescued them. So that means they’re friends. Tsk, tsk, Dad. That’s why you have that change of heart, right?”

Sheila gave her father a contempt look. “I’m happy you approve of me hanging out with my dear Severin, but that’s despicable of you, Dad! Hmph!”

“Me, despicable? Then don’t you dare go meet him!” Zachariah jokingly said with a laugh as he watched his daughter happily set out.

Escorted by a team of bodyguards, Sheila rode a car to Severin’s home. However, she quickly learned from Felicia Shanahan that Severin was still at the Shanahans’ estate for a meeting and would only be back after lunch. Sheila looked at the time, and it was only eleven in the morning. Figuring she could reach the Shanahans’ estate by lunchtime, she presented the gifts she had bought for Maurice Feuillet and Felicia. Then, she drove off to the Shanahans’ estate. “That girl likes our Severin, huh?” Maurice sighed as he watched the car drive

away.

“Why are you sighing? Having someone who likes our son means he’s capable!” His wife Judith replied.

“Yes, he’s capable, but he’s already got Diane. Will Diane agree to Sheila getting in between them? Besides, Sheila is kind but also headstrong. I fear if something bad happens to her, the Ballards will show no mercy to Severin or even us.”

A frown appeared across Judith’s face. “I’ve never thought about that. However, isn’t it normal for the rich to have two wives or more? We know Diane is considerate, but will she accept the idea? Moreover, the Shanahans are eager to ride on the coattails of the Ballard family. Do you think the Shanahans will approve if Severin marries Sheila?”

“I think they will. However, I don’t think Diane would approve of it. Even if she did, Sheila might not be content to be on equal footing with Diane.”

Maurice frowned a little before he continued. “Come to think of it. The rich and powerful could afford to marry multiple wives. Severin may have good relations, but is he capable enough to be a match for the Ballards? Will Zachariah Ballard be happy to let his daughter

Severin’s second wife?”

Judith let out a sigh. “Hey, he’s not young anymore, so let’s not worry about him. Why don’t you practice your driving instead and get your license?!”

Meanwhile, Sheila didn’t take long to reach the Shanahans’ estate. However, she realized it wasn’t a good idea to arrive empty-handed.

“Okay, I’ll prepare gifts for Severin’s in-laws, Madam Catherine, Diane, and her sister Megan. I have to set a good impression on them. That way, it’ll be easier for me to win my sweet Severin’s heart!”

She immediately walked into a shopping mall nearby, bought plenty of luxurious gifts, and had her bodyguards carry those gifts to the Shanahans' estate.

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"Miss Ballard? That's a surprise! I must inform the Madam of your arrival!" One of the Shanahans' bodyguards recognized Sheila. After all, she was popular among the bodyguards. "They're having lunch now, aren't they? You don't have to inform them. I'll meet them. myself!"

"Miss Ballard, please let me escort you. They're having lunch at the Madam's house. There's a crowd there, and even Mister Emerald is there too!" The bodyguard said as he happily led the way.

"Mister Emerald is here too?" Sheila was surprised, but she didn't ask any further about it.

The two finally arrived at the courtyard in front of Catherine's house. There were a few tables laden with food. The guests are already seated and prepared to have their meals.

"Can you spare a set of dining utensils, Madam Catherine?" Sheila said jokingly.

"My goodness, it's Miss Ballard! What brings you here? Come, have a seat. You should've told us you were coming!" Catherine was happy to see Sheila.

"Well, I was just shopping nearby. Here are my gifts for you, Madam! I hope you'll like them!" Sheila handed two boxes to Catherine.

"Oh, you shouldn't have! You're always welcome to visit us, and you don't have to be so generous!" Catherine laughed as she received the gifts.

"Hello, Miss Ballard!" Claude Emerald and a few others greeted her.

"Hello, Miss Ballard. It's an honor to have you here!" George and Stanley Shanahan also appeared with smiles on their faces.

"You don't have to be so polite. Please, do continue with your lunch!"

Sheila handed another gift to Felicia Shanahan. "Auntie, I hope you'll like this gift!"

Then, she walked toward William and Megan Shanahan to hand them their gifts.

"This is for us? Thank you so much, Miss Ballard!" The couple was pleased to receive the expensive gift worth thousands from Sheila.

Sheila finally turned to Diane. "Diane, I'm not sure what I should get for you, so I got you this set of clothes and a handbag. I hope you'll like them!"

Severin frowned as he observed what was going on. He estimated the gifts to be worth hundreds of thousands. She was spending that much to try to win his heart.