

## Be Gentle 401

### Chapter 401 How Embarrassing!

The soup sent Leia's taste buds into overdrive!

The sour, bitter, spicy, and salty taste of her soup assaulted her sinuses. It felt as though a thin needle was poking on her nostrils and caused beads of sweat to form on her nose.

She wanted to cough, and there was even an urge to vomit coming from the back of her throat!

However, Leia had to maintain her graceful demeanor in front of the two Crawford elders and the two children looking at her with delighted anticipation. She tried her best to suppress the urge to throw up, and her smile froze on her face.

"How does the soup taste, Aunt Norman? Don't you like it? Big Bro said that it's very tasty! The chef even added truffles in it. It's not only delicious but also healthy! You're so pretty, Aunt Norman. You'll be even prettier after you finish the soup!"

Rainie's fingers kneaded her princess dress, and she smiled sweetly. She looked very adorable.

Allison was overjoyed when she saw that her two grandchildren were kind toward Leia.

No one was more willing to see the harmonious scene.

She grinned. "Look at how considerate my grandchildren are. They're so kind to you, Leia! You should appreciate Rainie's effort and finish the soup."

might favor Leia to be her daughter-in-law, but she adored her grandchildren

twins had always rejected Leia's presence. Allison did not wish the children to have a falling out with their stepmother when Leia would eventually enter the

that Allison had said it, Leia was caught in a dilemma. The range of expressions on her face was fascinating to

the sweat off her nose and tried to suppress the churning sensation in her stomach. "Rainie, is it okay if I finish the soup later?" "Don't you like the soup that I brought you, Aunt Norman? Boo hoo... I brought you the soup because I thought you like soup. Did Rainie do something wrong?" The little girl pouted and stared at Leia with her puppy

Master Crawford was moved by the little girl's adorable

beckoned at his great-granddaughter and hugged her. "Don't cry, dear Rainie. Here, let's eat dinner," he said

Master Crawford placed Rainie's favorite fruit salad on her plate, then shot a withering glance

with that young lady? She seems magnanimous, but she can't appreciate the kind gesture that my great-granddaughter showed her.

'Rainie doesn't even bring me soup!'

**His impression** toward Leia fell by a *little*.

Leia became nervous when she saw Old Master Crawford's unfriendly gaze. 'Oh no, I've forgotten about the most authoritative person in the household. He adores the twins and pampers them. I must have made him angry with my actions earlier.'

**Leia gritted** her teeth, braced herself, and drank the entire bowl of soup mixed with all sorts of seasonings in *one shot!*

*She* placed the empty bowl on the table. Her stomach was churning, and snot and tears were almost coming out of their respective **orifices**.

**Leia** forced a smile that was even uglier than a ghost. "Not bad, this soup is delicious. Thank you for being considerate, Rainie."

**Lanie sneaked** a glanced at his sister and discreetly flashed a victory sign. The two children giggled as they saw how Leia tried to keep her **temper down**.

Meanwhile, Luke came down the stairs with Bianca in his *arms*.

*When Leia* saw the man, she temporarily forgot that her stomach was churning and stared at him **infatuatedly**.

The man looked like a lord. His gentle and handsome facial features were so perfect as though they were sculpted by God, and each of his actions conveyed his maturity. Even though he was in casual clothes, that did not hide his **nobility**.

One would easily lose themselves when they looked *at him*.

in Luke's arms like a Persian cat, Bianca's hair was scattered. She wore a pure white dress that accentuated the fairness of her

uncomfortable when she saw the couple. She thought that she was going to throw

greeted Old Master Crawford and Allison, then sat down at the

Crawford glanced at Bianca but did not say anything. Then, he resumed playing with

a long face and grunted audibly when she

that. She prepared to

all, she was going to live with Luke in the future. Allison would not be able to do anything to them as long as they insisted on

shot a glance at

was refilling Allison's plate in an attempt to gain her favor. Bianca was not sure how to feel about

Chapter 402 No Wonder Queenie and Bianca Are Mother and Daughter!

Leia's expression turned unpleasant when she heard Bianca's laughter. 'Did I say something wrong?'

Ever since she was adopted into the Norman family, she had gone to an elite school and even studied abroad for two years.

She did not believe that Bianca was anything more than a philistine!

Leia was not interested in art since she was young, but her mother was a big fan. She forced herself to read up on art history so that she could humor her mother.

However, she would begin to fall asleep as soon as she opened a book and read about the boring theories and the lives of famous artists. Eventually, she gave up and instead tried to please her mother with other activities she was good at.

Leia stole a glance at Luke.

The man sat on his chair elegantly. He was straight like a pine tree, and his silence was imposing.

However, his demeanor changed as he filled up Bianca's plate.

His penetrating gaze would turn gentle, and the corners of his lips would inadvertently curl up with an indulgent smile.

Leia's heart felt as though it had been clawed by a wildcat; bloody, itchy, and painful.

She lowered her gaze dejectedly.

not bear to see her son ignoring

Leia was confidently showing her knowledge about the painting, her impression of Leia became better. She did not know that what she said

a scallop in Leia's bowl and started praising her again. "See, that's a cultured overseas graduate for you. Leia is more knowledgeable than certain country bumpkins who have never seen the world. I'm sure that some people here don't know how to tell a genuine piece of art from a phony, let alone appreciate art! Don't you think so

not name any names, but she was glancing at Bianca disdainfully. Her mockery

Master Crawford's expression instantly sank. He slammed his cutlery on the table and frowned hard. "If you don't know anything, can you shut up? You're

did not know that Old Master Crawford had a passion for art history when he was young. He had studied in France for several years and majored in art. He met his wife there, and they returned to the country to start a

had not dabbled in art since, but he retained what he

was one of his favorite impressionist painters, and he had collected several of Monet's works. Leia tried to show off her knowledge but failed miserably, and that had changed Old Master Crawford's impression

thought that Leia was knowledgeable and talented, but he realized that she did not know anything

favorable opinion of her instantly

"Did I misspeak, Father?" Allison retorted in the face of Old Master Crawford's irritation.

**Bianca calmly** interjected, "Aunt Allison, Monet is not English but French.

Also, he is an impressionist painter and not a **realist**."

Allison wanted to laugh at Bianca. What would country bumpkins know about **art**?

Old Master Crawford's gaze sparkled under his bifocals. "You know art history, young lady? Tell me then, what can you say about this painting? Do you know if the scene is a sunrise *or sunset*?"

He lifted his walking stick and pointed at the painting of water lilies hung on the wall behind **him**.

Bianca opened her eyes wide and tried to take in every detail so that she could answer the old **man's question**.

However, she could not see the sky or the stars in the painting. How was she going to determine the *answer*?

**Leia** glared at her coldly, waiting for Bianca to make a fool of **herself**.

**Under the** table, Luke squeezed Bianca's hand, telling her not to be nervous.

patted the back of his hand and smiled confidently at

the painting for a while, Bianca gave her opinion. "Old Master Crawford, the painting depicts a sunrise. It's not very obvious, but I can tell from the dewdrops on the lily pads. Also, the water in the background is light blue, the water illuminated by the sun is golden, and the water under the lily pads is blue-green. You will only get this scene in the morning. That is what nature tells

was the first time that Old Master Crawford had a better impression of Bianca

he spoke to Bianca again, his voice was gentler. "I didn't expect that you do know your art history. Let me ask you again, what are the different art movements in Western oil painting, and who are their proponents, and what are their famous

answered his question accurately and could even tell some of the artists'

Crawford laughed at Bianca's humorous answer. He was full of praises for the

and Allison's faces turned ashen. How did things turn out

dinner had improved Old Master Crawford's impression

the same time, Leia seemed to have lost the old

was very late when Leia

sitting on the couch in the living room, focusing her attention on a tome of art history in her

Chapter 403 My Situation Is Hopeless!

Queenie was very protective of Leia.

After losing her birth daughter, she had considered Leia to be her only daughter. She felt very sorry for Leia when she saw the aggrieved tears in her daughter's eyes. 1

She hugged Leia and said gently, "Can you tell me what happened, my daughter?"

Leia wanted to complain to her mother about how heartless Luke had been.

However, she was afraid that her complaints would cause her mother to be prejudiced against Luke. She swallowed the words that were on the tip of her tongue.

Her gaze flashed, and she started sobbing. "Mom, I think Luke... doesn't like me. That Bianca isn't a pushover either. She embarrassed me in Crawford Manor earlier. She thinks that she's smarter than me, and she showed off her knowledge in front of Old Master Crawford. Even Old Master Crawford is favoring her more than me now... I really like Luke, Mom. He's the first man that I like. What should I do?"

Leia rested her head on Queenie's shoulder, and warm tears slid down her cheeks.

Queenie endearingly wiped her daughter's tears with a napkin. She could not bear to see her daughter being so sad.

Then, she handed her a cup of warm water and comforted her, "Be a good girl, Leia... Don't cry. If you like Luke, then I will help you make your wishes come true."

held the cup and said pitifully, "I don't know if I did something wrong, but he doesn't seem to care about me. I still love him, and this love doesn't diminish just because he ignored me. Instead, it's like boiling water in a kettle, and I think that my situation is

the sparkle in Leia's eyes, Queenie could tell from experience that her daughter was irredeemably in love with

felt sorry for her daughter, though she had to remain impartial. "There's nothing wrong with liking someone, not to mention that Luke hasn't married Bianca yet. However, if his heart is set on Bianca, we shouldn't try to step in between them. You're an outstanding girl, my daughter, and you shouldn't stoop to ruining other people's

first, Queenie thought that Bianca would not be an

Leia was better than Bianca in every way, no matter her looks, family background, or career. She believed that her daughter would easily captivate Luke's

Apparently, she had underestimated Bianca.

Leia was gentle, considerate, and knowledgeable. Meanwhile, Bianca was wild, haughty, and lowly. How would the Crawford family

closed her eyes to hide her true

the best thing that happened to her, but that "best thing" had turned into a sharp knife that slashed mercilessly at her heart

so, she did not want to

She did not mind losing everything, but not that **man!** 2

Soon, it was almost Christmas.

Most of the employees of T Corporation had gone on vacation, but on a rare occasion, Luke *fell sick*.

He had overworked himself in *that period*.

He would leave for work every morning and come home very late at night. Most of the time of the day was spent in his **office**.

*Moreover*, he was extra busy making sure that there were no loose ends in the Greenview Regalia arson case.

*Right after* Christmas was the trial of Jillian Dove, the culprit behind *the arson*.

He had promised Giovan Sonny that Jillian would be put to death, and he would hold to that *promise*.

Luke contacted several important people in the federal government to get that done. After that, he held an emergency meeting with the board of directors to discuss the change in equity among the directors.

*After* that, he held two video conferences with separate overseas partners, securing two deals that were worth at least a hundred *million*.

afternoon, the twins had tummy aches because they ate something wrong. He and Bianca rushed them to the hospital. It was only until the evening when he managed to breathe a sigh

the evening, Luke's usually healthy body could not take it anymore. He had a fever as the result

he went to work earlier that morning, he had already felt that his nose was blocked and his throat was hurting. He did not feel good, but he thought that those symptoms would go away after a while. He did not expect that his

throat felt like it was on fire, and his body felt uncomfortable hot and cold at the same

felt as though his head was going to explode, and his body was buried in a ton of concrete. It was so heavy that he almost could

next to him on the bed and tucked him into the blanket. Her eyes began to mist when she saw how weak and helpless the

had worked too hard. He would not have been able to last for long even if his body was made of

one end of a thermometer into his

was shocked by the reading. "103.5 degrees! This is a serious

well, I've already contacted Johann, and he's on his way here..." "Don't worry. It's just the common cold. I'll be fine," Luke comforted

Chapter 404 Luke and Bianca's Third Child!

Johann arrived, examined Luke, gave him a prescription, and fed him liquids. After that, Luke's high fever subsided a little.

Bianca breathed a sigh of relief.

She was busy the entire day. Earlier, they sent their children to the hospital. As they recovered, Luke fell sick. She had to take care of the big one as well as the little ones.

When she prepared the liquid medicine for Luke, she took a whiff of the pungent smell of medicine, which instantly caused intense discomfort in her stomach...

Bianca hastily ran to the bathroom and dry-heaved into the hand basin, but nothing came out of her mouth.

The nausea subsided a while later.

Bianca seemed to have realized something.

She remembered how Sue had dry-heaved in the washroom at the office, as well as her reactions when she was pregnant with the twins. She abruptly covered her mouth and tried to recall when was the last time her period came.

Her period should have been one week ago, but it had never come.

Luke had always been wearing protection when he made out in bed with Bianca, except for one particular night last month, when they were caught in the heat of passion, and Luke did not wear a condom. Bianca remembered that it should have been her safe period, and that was why she did not take any morning-after pills either.

'Oh my god, did I strike the jackpot?'

was plagued by a mess of emotions when she returned to the

had taken his medicine and was chatting with Johann while holding a thick financial report in his

that Bianca's face was very

came next to the bed, he brought her into his arms. "Thank you for your hard work today. Why do you look so pale? Have you overworked yourself too? Please examine her body,

looked graceful and bookish like a gentleman. His eyes carried a natural

whistled and smiled. "I say, Sis, what's wrong with your family? We're just a few days from the new year, and the two little ones have tummyaches, Luke has a fever, and now you're not feeling well. Did you forget to leave cookies and milk for Santa?" "Shut

a murderous glance at Johann, which immediately shut

resumed his serious expression. "Please give me your wrist, Ms. Rayne, so that I can take your

Bianca stretched out her delicate arm.

two fingers on her wrist and sensed her pulse. Suddenly, his expression became serious, and he furrowed

was already feeling nervous. She became even more apprehensive when she saw the change in his

Her gaze met Johann's eyes. She was not sure how to feel when she looked at **him**.

"Am I sick, Mr. Stiles?" She asked *nervously*.

Johann wanted to pull her leg for a bit longer. He decided otherwise when he saw Luke's hawk-like glare on *him*.

He lifted his hands as though surrendering. "I say, Bro, you don't have to look at me like you're going to murder me! You're frightening me! Alright, there's nothing major with Sis. She's only pregnant..."

Thud!

The financial report fell from Luke's hands and scattered all over the floor.

**Luke hugged** Bianca's waist tightly. His voice wavered as he spoke to Johann. "Did you say that Bianca is pregnant?" "Yes, she's been pregnant for at least a month. Congratulations, there'll be a new addition to the Crawford household!" Johann smiled slyly as he glanced at the usually composed man.

Bianca was instantly flustered.

She and Luke had planned to have new children only after their marriage, and the sudden new life had disrupted her plans. She felt as though a ball was bouncing against the walls of her heart. It was a nuisance, but at the same time, she felt warm.

**Luke took** a deep breath. His lethargic body seemed to be infused **with vitality**.

**His gaze** flashed with a hint **of ecstasy**.

He hugged Bianca tightly, as though he wanted to fuse together with the woman he deeply loved.

not even that excited when Bianca was pregnant for the first

Bianca's soul did not belong

they were secretly in love with each other, but they had never interacted. Moreover, their relationship used to be strictly financial. He only knew that she had twins when she went for a check-up at

had feelings for her, but those feelings were not as

to make sure that she had her title as Mrs. Crawford first. He planned for a baby only after

not expect to have a third child that

pleasant surprise caused his intelligent brain to go

his expression changed abruptly when he realized that Bianca had been taking care of the three people in the family for the whole day. She must be

carried Bianca onto the bed, lay her flat, and covered her with a

caressed her tender and fair face. "Please rest for now, Bianca. I... I didn't know that you're pregnant. If I had known about that, then I shouldn't have fallen sick. I'm sorry to cause you to worry about me..." He was not making

Bianca was dumbfounded.

#### Chapter 405 Don't Play Rough, You'll Disturb the Baby

After Luke calmed down from the joy, he asked Johann about taking care of a pregnant woman.

Johann told him a lot of things.

Luke listened to him attentively. He also used a recording pen in case he forgot what Johann told him.

He even asked Johann to email him the relevant information after Johann returned home.

Johann recommended to him several famous books about pregnancy.

They contained detailed information about taking care of a woman during and after pregnancy, as well as the solutions to any problems that may arise.

Bianca wanted to fall asleep as she listened to that. Luke, however, continued to take notes.

That was not their first child. Bianca did not expect that Luke would be so concerned...

Before Johann left, he said jokingly to the couple, "There's something else I should remind you, Sis. You don't have to be embarrassed after hearing it."

Bianca did not know what he was talking about.

is he going to

turned to face Luke. "Actually, the reminder is for you. Pregnant women can exercise, but you have to keep your urges in

in the prime of your health, while Sis is quite delicate. She won't be able to withstand

stood up and threw a pillow at Johann's head, causing the latter to shield his head

did not wish for other people to talk about their personal business, nor did he want other people to see Bianca being

a reminder! Don't go overboard. Otherwise, you might disturb the baby. I've just helped you, and that's how you repay me? Sigh, I'm so unlucky to have a "friend" like you! Boo hoo, you'll have to help me,

could not help but laugh when he saw the gentlemanly Johann behave

thank you, Doctor Stiles. We will remember what you

was Bianca's second pregnancy. She was not as fearful and clueless as the last time. Instead, she felt that it was a pleasant

gently caressed her flat stomach, and a motherly gentleness suffused

The baby was the proof of love between Luke and **her**.

After she gave birth to Lanie and Rainie, she was not there in the crucial period when they *grew up*.

**This** time, she would be by the baby's side from the first **moment**.

That way, she would give the child a complete and happy childhood.

*Bianca* was worried that Lanie and Rainie might not take the news well, i

*Too* many such examples happened in real life. There were even news reports that some children could not accept that their mother had given birth to a younger sibling, and they killed the newborn baby out of cold *blood*.

*She* did not expect that her worries were unfounded.

*When the* twins found out that their mother was pregnant and that they were going to have a new baby brother or sister soon, they *were ecstatic*.

Currently, the two children were arguing in the living room whether the baby in Mommy's womb was a boy or *a girl*.

"**The** baby in Mommy's tummy must be a pretty girl like me! She can't be a boy. You might be handsome, Big Bro, but your toys are different from mine. I want a little sister so that we can play house together! I want to braid my little sister's hair and share our dolls' clothes. Ah... I want a little sister!"

the moment, Rainie was not behaving like a little lady. She was pointing at her brother with one finger while her other hand rested on

was sitting on the couch, relaxing, dressed in handsome white

not concerned about his sister's aggressive attitude. The way he sat on the couch looked like his father shot a disdainful glance at his sister, who only knew how to act cute. "Mommy must be bearing a little brother. Girls are weak. When our little brother grows up, we can protect

on her thumb. She was struggling internally. "But if it's a little brother, he won't be able to play dolls with me..." "Silly! If we have a little brother, you can dress him up like a doll! When he grows up and starts earning money, he can buy a cart full of dolls for

for a bit and found that what her brother said

Rainie changed his mind. "What you said makes sense, Big Bro. I hope that Mommy gives birth to a little brother. Yay! I'll have a little brother soon! I'm so

facepalmed when he looked at how his silly little sister was so easily

he sincerely hoped that the baby in Mommy's womb was a

too gullible. He had to be on high alert at all times so that others would not take advantage of her. If the baby were another naive and gullible little sister like Rainie, it would be very tiring to protect the both

Chapter 406 She Was Angry! She Was Furious!

Susan did not expect that Louis was standing at the door.

She instantly came to her senses and remembered what she said at the peak of her rage.

She had to admit that the twisted marriage to Zachary Crawford had caused irreparable psychological damage, but undeniably, she was a doting and caring mother to her son Louis.

Her position in the household was precarious, and she only had her son to rely on. She could not afford any cracks in her relationship with Louis.

"What are you saying, my son? I don't understand," Susan said sheepishly. "See, Luke already has a pair of twins, and now Bianca is pregnant with a third child. You'll have to buck up and get your mother a grandchild soon. That way, the Crawford family business wouldn't fall entirely into the hands of Allison and her son!" "Tell me honestly, Mom, did you hire someone to cause Luke's car crash?" Louis was not beating around the bush.

Louis's gaze was like Zachary's. Susan felt an inexplicable panic when looking into her son's eyes.

Then, she began to feel sorrow.

Those were exactly like the eyes that had captivated her heart.

Zachary Crawford was an experienced casanova. He had promised Susan the moon, which made the naive Susan fall in love with him. Her parents were not fond of Zachary, thinking that he was unreliable because of his attitude.

Back then, she was a naive young socialite who was deeply in love. Why would she care about anything else?

seemed to be devoted to her whenever they were together. She did not see his multiple affairs with

her parents objected to her marriage, she had even threatened to commit suicide. Not only that, she had carnal relations with the man despite her strict upbringing. After that, her parents had no choice but

the man he loved, thinking that her world

not expect that Zachary's other lovers started crawling out of the woodwork even before they had finished their

her cold war with

first, Zachary would attempt to comfort her. Eventually, he grew tired of her tantrums and began to keep a distance from her. Sometimes, he would not return home

forced to face the harsh realities

family's influence, she managed to deal with Zachary's mistresses. Unfortunately for her, Zachary was a total playboy. After dealing with one mistress, another younger and prettier woman would take her place, as though

grew tired of dealing with the endless stream

parents convinced her that she would be able to secure her position in the Crawford family if she could bear a son. Eventually, all the riches of the Crawford family would fall to

**She did** not bother dealing with those innumerable mistresses. Instead, if she ever found that any of those women became pregnant, she would get someone to forcefully abort it.

She did not expect that one would slip away.

Unknowning to her, Allison Tanner, an escort and one of Zachary's sugar babies, **became pregnant**.

*She was* already five months pregnant when Susan caught wind of it. Furthermore, the baby in her womb was *a boy*.

**Susa was** furious. She wanted to cut Allison into a million *pieces*!

*Zachary seemed* to have sensed that Susan wanted to harm Allison. He hid Allison from public view, and Susan could not find her no matter how hard she tried. Finally, Allison successfully gave birth to Luke.

That did not change anything.

**Susan was** Zachary's legally wedded wife. She would remain as Mrs.

**Crawford as** long as she did not relinquish her position, and Allison would forever be *a mistress*.

When she was pregnant with Louis, Zachary died in an accident, and Allison lost her footing in the Crawford household.

the woman with death and enticed her with money, which led to Allison marrying another man and her child being sent to

Master Crawford took Luke back from the orphanage on his own accord because he missed his dead son. He was also afraid that the young child might not be used to living in Crawford Manor, and he brought Allison back to the household against

she could do was to use underhanded schemes to disrupt the mother and son's

did not expect that Luke was intelligent, capable, and hard-working: everything that Louis was not. Luke was also a business prodigy, which gained him the trust and favor of Old

afraid that she and her son's position in the household would be

another fortuitous twist of events, the outstanding Luke was diagnosed with

Master Crawford had to move him to a small town to recuperate. Later, she planned a near-fatal car crash in the small town, which caused him to fall into a coma for an entire

Somehow, the child survived the ordeal.

recovered, Luke Crawford seemed to be a totally different person. He went overseas to study for

Master Crawford seemed to have noticed something and sent someone to protect Luke. Susan had to watch her every

Chapter 407 Meeting the Normans

At the study.

Louis opened the door and looked at his brother Luke, sitting at the desk and carefully perusing some documents.

The heater was turned on, and the man was only dressed in a black shirt, which accentuated his mature demeanor.

From the door, Louis could see that his brother's legs were crossed.

Even he had to admit that his brother was very charming when serious.

Louis sighed again. He would also have been attracted to his brother if he were not a straight man.

His brother was a workaholic, even working when it was the holiday period. Louis, though, would find sitting in front of a desk even for half an hour unbearable torture. Indeed, his brother Luke was his idol.

Luke seemed to have noticed that someone was looking at him. He lifted his head, saw that it was Louis, lowered his head, and continued his work.

It was noon, and the sunlight was comfortable. The gentle rays shone through the floor-to-ceiling window and around Luke, enhancing the handsomeness of his sculpted face.

Louis was caught in a daze looking at his brother's face, even though he already knew that his brother was more handsome than him.

"Luke," he called out softly.

Luke's penetrating and profound gaze glanced at him. He lit a cigarette before asking, "How is your mother?"

course, he knew about Susan suddenly

who gloated at Susan's misfortune, he performed his responsibility to his elders. He did not personally go and visit her, but he had called Johann to

Master Crawford had begged him to forgive the things that Susan had done to him; he did not make her culpable, but he could not forget those things either. He had almost lost his life in a car crash of her design, which made him lose out so much time that he could have spent with

the other hand, he understood that all those tragedies would not happen if his mother Allison had not inserted herself into Zachary and Susan's marriage. He empathized with Susan, and that was why he could tolerate

to atone for his

fell asleep after taking some medicine. Johann said that it was psychological, and she will need therapy. I'm sorry,

felt guilty as he looked

that what he overheard earlier might

his mother had plotted that car crash, that was a dark and horrifying side of his caring and loving mother that he never

elder brother was still a boy back then. How merciless could someone be to wish death upon an innocent

the document in his hands down and took a drag of his

concerned when he saw that Louis was bothered by something." What's wrong? You're not yourself

Louis suddenly sounded serious. "I've decided, Luke. I'll help you in the company after the weekend."

Luke exhaled a smoke ring and looked at his younger brother intently." You're already helping in the company *now, Louis.*"

Louis was so embarrassed that he did not look at his elder brother in the eye.

He took a deep breath and clenched his fists. 'I'm not joking, Luke. **I'm serious.**'

**Earlier, he** went to the company under his grandfather's coercion. However, he had been slacking and taking every other day off. His only "help" was that he did not actively sabotage his elder **brother's work.**

Now that he found out one of his mother's secrets, he felt guilty toward Luke.

**He wished** that he could help alleviate some of his elder **brother's work.**

"Mm, I trust you."

*Luke did* not know what caused the sudden change in Louis's demeanor, but he was happy with that change.

*He* doted on his younger brother with a different mother.

Louis breathed a sigh of relief.

**He** looked at his gold watch and remembered that he had something to do later. "I'll chat with you later, Luke. I'll have to make preparations for Ms. Norman's birthday party in the *evening.*'

*Luke's* hand paused in mid-air. "Ms. Norman? Do you mean Leia Norman?" "Yes, Leia Norman's 22nd birthday. I've also received an invitation," Louis said.

Luke did not reply.

was a common occurrence for socialites to have grand birthday parties. Naturally, such events were the perfect opportunity for someone to expand their social

received an invitation from Leia earlier, but he had tossed it into the trash and forgotten about

was not fond of crowded places. He would rather not go to those parties unless it was

Luke had an interest in attending the upcoming party. He remembered Bianca's grievances from the last Norman family

appeared on his face as he flicked the silver lighter in his hand. "I'll go tonight

six o'clock in the evening, the sky was getting dark. An eye-catching black Rolls-Royce sped toward the Norman family

scenery along the drive was barren because it was

snow on the trees looked

sat in the back seat and looked out of

was quite nervous when she remembered that she would be meeting her "love

not understand Luke's decision. Luke knew that she was not happy to see Leia, so why would he bring her to Leia's

Chapter 408 A Challenge to Bianca!

At the birthday party, Bianca saw Queenie chatting with a group of noblewomen.

Queenie's hair was tied into a bun, and she was wearing a deep blue embroidered evening gown. She was the epitome of elegance as she chatted with her friends.

Frankly, Bianca had never seen another woman with a uniquely elegant air as Queenie Ziegler.

She carried the air of nobility, but she did not look arrogant. Instead, she seemed kind and gentle, though with a hint of authority.

Even though Queenie had traded barbs with her before because of Leia, Bianca could not get herself to hate the woman. Instead, she somehow felt that the noblewoman looked familiar.

"You're so lucky, Mrs. Norman. Your grown-up daughter is both beautiful and talented!" "Yes! Ms. Norman is gentle, beautiful, and knowledgeable. I wonder if she is currently seeing someone?" One of the extravagantly dressed noblewomen asked.

"You're too kind. Leia doesn't have a boyfriend yet. If you know anyone suitable, you can recommend them to my daughter," Queenie said gently.

Queenie knew that Leia was a stubborn girl.

Perhaps it was her first time falling in love, she thought that Luke was the only person she needed in her life.

Queenie was more experienced. She knew that men of Luke's caliber were rare, but Luke did not like her daughter one bit.

marriage without love was pure agony. Leia would not find bliss even if she managed to

why Queenie wanted to take the opportunity to find a good match for Leia. She sincerely hoped that her daughter would be

Meanwhile, Leia was feeling dejected.

did not know what Queenie was doing for her. Her love for Luke was like a mania. The more she could not get it, the more obsessed she

even thought that all the men in her birthday party did not add up to Luke's

Queenie for helping her find a match among the partygoers. She thought that her mother did not give the best to her because she was

Leia's eyes were brimming with negativity.

afraid that she might lose control of her temper, and so she quickly went to get some fruit punch to calm herself

she lifted the glass, she saw Luke and Bianca in

put the glass away and turned to look at the man she loved. Luke was currently shielding Bianca as they walked among the crowd. The scene had caused her anger to flare up

anger burned within her. She was going

*"Mrs. Norman."* After Luke brought Bianca to greet Jack, they went in front of *Queenie*.

**Queenie** looked at Bianca, seemingly in a *daze*.

*Bianca* was dressed in a simple satin dress, and she put on light make-up. Her eyebrows were thin, her nose bridge was tall, and her straight hair had been permed into a wave. As she looked at Queenie with a smile, her gaze was so animated that they seemed to **talk**.

*For a* brief moment, Queenie thought that she saw her younger self in Bianca.

*Then, she* shook her head. That young lady was Leia's love rival. Why would she look *like herself*?

What a ridiculous thought.

Luke formally introduced Bianca to Queenie. "Mrs. Norman, this is Bianca Rayne. She is the mother of my two children, and she will soon be my wife and my only partner in life."

**Queenie** was taken aback, but soon, a smile appeared on her face. "You don't have to emphasize that, Mr. Crawford. If you and Ms. Rayne love each other, then I shall give you my best wishes. You can't force love, and I know that more than the two of you. Ms. Rayne, I didn't mean those words that I said to you, and I hope that you will pardon any of my transgressions. Everyone here is a guest. Make yourselves at *home*..."

Bianca was quite surprised.

Queenie's attitude toward her had improved by a lot. She knew that it might have been because of Luke's imposing demeanor, but she did not think that Queenie, who doted upon her daughter, would change her attitude because of the man's protection.

**Leia** did not say anything, though a mixture of jealousy and sorrow was evident in her eyes. She did not even hear the young ladies around her talking to her.

replayed in her mind. "Bianca will soon be my wife and my only partner in life." "Your only partner in life?" "Hah!" Leia

so sure that Bianca Rayne will be your only partner in life, Luke Crawford? You don't even know if you'll get to marry

party officially started at

the birthday girl, was dressed like a princess. She stood proudly next to Mr. and Mrs. Jack

table next to her was a twelve-tiered

the darling of the Norman family, received the birthday wishes from those noblewomen and their sons. She was so happy that she

that, Leia performed a piano piece

people cheered, she stepped onto the temporary stage, wearing white gloves. She sat in front of an exquisite

quite nervous. She was even more nervous than the time she won an award. The man he loved was looking

calmed herself down and

might not be a good actress, but she had certain talents in musical instruments. She performed "Swan Lake," her favorite

Chapter 409 Stealing the Spotlight at the Party!

Bianca was nervous while facing Leia's challenge. Her palm in Luke's hand started to sweat.

She did not know how to play the piano at all.

Bianca looked at Luke for help, but he was extremely calm.

Luke squeezed Bianca's hand, indicating that everything would be OK. He smiled and said to Leia, "I'm sorry, my girlfriend hurt her hand yesterday. She won't be able to play for everyone."

He lifted Bianca's hand and showed it to everyone.

Bianca was peeling an apple for the twins the night before and had accidentally sliced her index finger. It was wrapped with a band-aid, and that was the perfect excuse for not being able to play.

The guests nodded in understanding.

Luke continued, "She might not be able to play the piano, but she has a sweet voice, and I think she can make it up with a song. As her boyfriend, I shall be her accompaniment."

Bianca was shocked. She looked suspiciously at Luke.

She was indeed good at singing, but she was extremely shy and had never sung in front of other people. How did Luke know that she could sing?

smiled at her and mouthed the

grandfather sent him to the small town to alleviate his depression, he suffered from insomnia at night. While running laps around the field to burn off energy, he suddenly heard a beautiful singing

he searched for the source of

moonlight, he eventually found a cute girl with shoulder-length hair singing under an ancient

fully engrossed in her singing and did not notice his presence. He hid himself on the other side of the elm tree, quietly listening to her singing. The young girl's voice was melodic and pure. It washed away the darkness of his soul and brought him to

the first time Luke saw Bianca. He thought that she was special; she was not dazzlingly beautiful, but she was pure and ephemeral. Her unique demeanor was hard

that moment, her voice had nourished his barren heart, and her looks had charmed

eventually found out that the girl with the shoulder-length hair was named Bianca Rayne. That name had occupied an important position in his heart since

he had never told Bianca about that

I can play any song that you want to sing. Believe in yourself, and believe in me,' Luke told

to what Luke told her, Bianca took a deep breath and flashed him a big smile, telling him that she was

**Luke carefully** helped Bianca up the stage and seated her on a white bar stool. Then, he sat down in front of the piano.

**The man** rested his slender fingers on the keyboard. His ten fingers looked clean, and his fingernails were impeccably manicured. Together with the black and white piano keys, it was a *comforting sight*.

**Bianca sang** "A Thousand Miles," one of her favorite songs.

"Making my way downtown, walking fast, faces pass and **I'm homebound...**"

Her voice instantly captivated the audience.

Her voice was gentle and ethereal. With Luke's piano accompaniment, it was a mesmerizing **performance**.

*When Bianca* started to sing, she could forget **her surroundings**.

The song had conveyed her feelings.

**'Cause you** know I'd walk a thousand miles if I could just see **you tonight...**"

**It** was a very lovely tune, but Bianca wanted to cry when she sang that **line**.

with Luke was approaching stability. Even though they had sworn to be with each other through thick and thin, and Luke had promised her that he would be by her side forever, she nevertheless felt

provocative gaze and posture did not give her a sense

sense told her that Luke might one day be a thousand miles away from

That worried her.

as elegant as a prince. His sculpted hands nimbly danced on the piano keys, creating musical notes that glided through the air

was a grand yet melancholy tune that carried Bianca's

men in the audience transfixed their eyes on Bianca, while the women stared unblinkingly at

and admiration for them were

Bianca's emotional state was delicate.

clean and ethereal voice, she had voiced her yearning of being together with her significant other. As the song reached its climax, it was so beautiful that it caused people

the end of the song, Bianca came to her senses when she fell into an embrace that carried the faint scent of mint. She had tears in her

Chapter 410 Queenie and Bianca Chatting Together!

The applause in the hall belonged to Bianca. Leia's strode stiffly to the bathroom.

Several youths greeted her on her way there, but she did not see them.

She also ignored their gossip as she walked past them. "She's just the adopted daughter of Mr. Norman. Why is she so cocky?"

In the bathroom, Leia splashed cold water over her face in an attempt to cool herself down.

However, it was all in vain.

She could not control the feelings of anger and sorrow within her.

Leia stared at the woman with the contorted face in the mirror. She could not believe that it was herself.

Tears started to flow down her cheeks.

Suddenly, she was shocked by the sudden appearance of a rugged and burly man!

"Ah... how... how did you get in here? This is the women's bathroom..."

Leia stared at the wolf-like gaze of the man with her tearful and bloodshot eyes. In a panic, she wanted to run away, but the man grabbed her delicate wrist!

had suddenly appeared in

man's gaze seemed to tear Leia apart, carrying the scent of blood and threatening to swallow Leia

was very afraid of

intuition told her that he was very dangerous. It would be almost impossible to get rid of him if she became

you running away? I miss you! Don't you miss me? Do you remember that wild night, hmm? You were gushing..." Wayne's hands went around Leia's body as he spouted

since he had his way with Leia that night, he was not interested in other

to propose to her, but he was dispatched on a month-long mission and did not have

soon as he got back, he went to look

was used to being pampered. She had never been molested so roughly

to maintain her ladylike guise and cursed at Wayne. "Who do you think you are, you scoundrel? How dare you treat me like that? Stop spouting nonsense and

to slap him, but he caught her

special forces soldier, Wayne was never gentle. With a crack, he dislocated her

Leia's face went pale instantly, and tears of pain slid down her cheeks. She pressed her lips tightly, which made for a *pitiful sight*.

"**I'm sorry**, my dear, I'll fix it for you now..." Wayne laughed *monotonously*.

*That* made Leia even more afraid of the man with the savage face.

**He** grabbed Leia's arm and twisted it again. With another crack, he put the bones of the wrist back in place.

*However*, the pain made Leia groan in agony. "Get lost! If you don't go away at this instant, I'll call *the security!*"

*Leia knew* that all the guests at her party had elevated *social statuses*.

The man must also be a socialite to be able to gain access to **the event**.

However, the man disgusted her.

"Have you really forgotten about that wild night, my dear? You were begging for more and more that night... you also clamped your slender legs around my waist and did not let me go... oh... my god! The mere thought of it drives *me crazy*..."

**Wayne** pinned Leia down with one hand while exploring Leia's body with his other.

"Let go of me... you lecher... Jack Norman, my dad, is **the Provincial**

If... if you dare lay a finger on me, my dad will

not move away. She did not expect that the man was

unrestrained actions made her panicked and humiliated. All she could do was to threaten him using her next to her ear. "Scream all you want, Ms. Norman! Get everyone's attention and bring them all here. I'll say that you were the one who seduced me because you couldn't bear to be lonely... you can even say that I've violated you. Of course, Mr. Norman might be angry, but what can he possibly do to my Blatt

family? I'll marry you if it comes to that, no big deal. If you want to become the joke of A City, scream all you

out several photos and waved them in front of her face. "Look at our Ms. Norman, the darling of A City. She looks pure and aloof, but in private... Tsk, I can't believe that she can be so wild in

woman's body in the photo was entirely uncovered, even the most private parts. Her shapely body was pinned under the man, and her expression was one of

aghast when she saw that the subject of those photos was

face of that woman was hers, and the man pinning her

buzzed, and her face

suddenly shoved Wayne away, snatched the photos from his hand, tore them to pieces, and stomped on them as though she went crazy. "No! That's not me! It's not! You must have edited them. You want to ruin my reputation. Who are you? Who sent you here? It must be that Bianca, right? How much money did she give you? I'll pay you double. No, ten times! How about

panic, Leia's beautiful face was viciously

began to wildly guess how those photos appeared, unwilling to believe that the woman was really