

## **Bumpkin 1181**

Chapter 1181 Different Kind of Intention

"Let's go over there. It's spacious there."

Eleanor uttered those words while pointing to a wide area not far away.

This time, she didn't ask for Hendrey's permission at all. The passive Hendrey could only accept it.

While everyone got up and walked toward that area, Matthew remained seated.

As Veronica waited for everyone to walk past, she walked up to Matthew and gave his shoulder a pat from behind. "Let's go over and take a look. Be careful not to reveal our plan accidentally."

The man put his wine glass on the table discontentedly and glanced at Veronica. "Have you thought about the punishment tonight?"

Veronica's mouth twitched as she forced a smile. "I didn't do anything wrong. Why should I accept any punishment?"

"You didn't do anything wrong? It must be my fault, then."

He got up and walked away without looking back.

"Uh... Hey..."

Veronica found his jealousy both funny and annoying. However, she could only let him be angry since she couldn't coax him in front of so many people.

When she walked over, Eleanor and Hendrey were already in position. Unexpectedly, Zac and Liam were interested. "Come on, let's make a bet."

"I bet on Hendrey," Zac said.

"I must support my elder sister," Liam added.

"Eleanor," Xavier mentioned.

"I think Hendrey will win for sure." That was Antheena.

Tiffany joined in. "Hendrey."

"Eleanor," Dominik chipped in.

Troy uttered, "I support my boss' choice."

Veronica hesitated. "I will bet on... Eleanor, I guess."

So, everyone's gaze fell on Matthew.

Matthew said calmly, "I don't have any money."

Where would a mere cook get money from?

Veronica didn't say anything.

He is really getting into character.

"If you don't have money, forget it. Four votes for Hendrey Johnson and four votes for Eleanor Ledger. That's pretty fair. You can start." Liam laughed. "Come on, take out your money and place your bets. Let's get started."

Eleanor stood in front of Hendrey, clasping her hands together and bowing deeply, "Mr. Johnson, please don't hold back."

"Just until the limit," Hendrey said.

"Take your positions, begin!" The moment Liam shouted those words, the two started their fight.

Eleanor clenched her fist and threw a left hook directly at Hendrey, but he caught it with his bare hands and easily defused the attack. She used her momentum to perform a front flip and kicked Hendrey.

Chapter 1182 False Accusation?

Putting down his wine glass, he smilingly slurred, "Miss Murphy, I... I like you. Will you... be my woman? Hehehe, I am the prince of the hidden clan. If you become my woman, I will give you the best of everything. How about it?"

Liam, who was in a daze, said as he rushed toward Veronica and held her in his arms.

"Liam, what are you doing? Let go of me!"

Veronica felt like her head was filled with lead, heavy and uncomfortable.

When Liam rushed over, she regained some clarity and tried to push him away. However, Liam refused to let go.

"Darling, just be with me. Your husband is dead, and I don't mind you at all. Be with me, okay?"

"Are you crazy? Get lost!"

Veronica struggled and resisted, but whether it was because of the strong alcohol or something else, she felt weak all over.

Not far away, Matthew noticed that Veronica was missing and turned his head to see what was happening by the bonfire.

Immediately, his face darkened visibly, and he ran over there.

A scream then echoed through the air.

Everyone turned their heads and saw Iron Pillar pinning Liam to the ground, beating him mercilessly, causing him to scream in pain.

"What's going on?"

"Go and see."

Everyone hurriedly ran to the bonfire, and Hendrey and Eleanor also stopped and followed.

The soldiers guarding nearby saw the prince being beaten and immediately surrounded them.

"Outrageous! How dare you lay your hands on the prince?"

"Take him down!"

"Veronica, has your bodyguard gone mad?"

"Stop him!"

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Veronica saw Matthew draw blood from Liam's mouth with his punches. While she still had some rationality left in her, she stood up and grabbed him. "Stop it!"

She tried to stop him, but how could Matthew listen?

After Matthew pushed Veronica away, he grabbed Liam by the collar, clenched his fist, and punched Liam hard. Liam staggered back four or five meters and fell to the ground, spitting out blood.

Dozens of soldiers surrounded Matthew and told him off in a hidden tongue. "Stop! Don't move!"

When everyone was puzzled, Xavier noticed Veronica's slightly disheveled clothes and furrowed his brows, questioning, "Did he touch you?"

Chapter 1183 What I'm Best At

Liam fainted on the spot.

In that instant, everyone was shocked.

Even the calm and composed Matthew had a profoundness and astonishment in his gaze as he looked at Xavier.

Although one in love was supposed to be selfish and not allow others to care, Matthew was surprised when he saw Xavier protecting Veronica.

Back at Primrose Residence, Xavier was the one who stood in front of Veronica and saved her life when Antheena was hunting her down.

Matthew kept this debt in his heart.

As someone who clearly distinguished between gratitude and grudges, he knew that he owed Skyler a favor.

"Take Liam to the hospital. You guys, protect the scene!"

Dominik, being clever as he was, naturally knew that Liam had ingested something he shouldn't have, which caused this reaction.

He turned his body and glanced at the people present. "Everyone, there is something suspicious about what happened today. No one is allowed to leave until it is investigated thoroughly."

"How dare anyone attack Big Bro Liam! Investigate thoroughly and find out the truth!" Eleanor angrily reprimanded and then pointed at Matthew. "And you! You dare lay a hand on the prince of the hidden clan? Lock him up!"

She didn't mention Xavier, only targeting Matthew.

Presumably, it was because Matthew had just challenged her dignity.

"Are you using your position for personal gain, Princess Eleanor?"

Veronica stood in front of Matthew. "Or is it that the hidden clan royalty can manipulate everything?" She pointed her finger at Liam, who was being held up by soldiers. "Liam intended to violate me in front of everyone. My bodyguard was just doing his duty."

She was still dizzy, but in order to force herself to stay awake, she tightly clenched her hands hanging by her side, with the nails of her left hand embedded in her palm. The pain that came made her maintain her consciousness.

The only thing she couldn't control was that her body felt weak and powerless.

"Even if he made the first move, it's not up to a mere bodyguard to retaliate!"

"Ha, how ridiculous." Veronica sneered. "Do you want him to violate me first before making a decision? Then, you should be grateful for Liam. If it wasn't for my bodyguard beating him, he might have already reported to the underworld."

"Enough." Dominik raised his hand to stop them. "Take them to the palace and have someone examine the scene."

With that, everyone was taken into the palace and assigned rooms to rest in.

Perhaps to avoid collusion behind the scenes, each person was given a separate room with someone guarding outside.

Dominik promised that they would be allowed to leave before dawn.

Veronica was worried about Matthew, but the man only shook his head at her, indicating that she shouldn't worry. She couldn't say anything either.

Little did they know, Matthew was taken away and brought to a side hall after he separated from Veronica.

## Chapter 1184 Remove Your Makeup

"Is that so?"

As Matthew raised an eyebrow, a slight curve appeared at the corner of his lips.

The woman propping her elbow on Matthew's shoulder exuded a heroic and bold aura. "From the moment I first saw you, I noticed something unusual about your face. Although you disguised yourself very well and fooled everyone, you couldn't fool my eyes."

Disguising oneself was Eleanor's specialty and her favorite pastime.

When she was young, she couldn't leave the palace because of her identity as the leader of the hidden clan. Because of that, she had to disguise herself and deceive the soldiers to leave the palace successfully.

Since then, she had occasionally disguised herself. She eventually became an expert in disguising herself.

No one would have thought that this personal hobby would inadvertently help her greatly.

"It's no wonder you're the leader of the hidden clan. You're wise and clever, and your innocent appearance truly deceived the world."

Originally, because there were many rivals around Veronica, Matthew could hardly contain himself and wanted to reveal his identity. Unexpectedly, Eleanor saw through his disguise.

He naturally didn't bother to pretend anymore.

"The world is simply ignorant. You can't fault me for it."

Eleanor turned around and walked to the desk next to the right window. Then, she took something from the top and leisurely went to Matthew's side before she slowly raised her hand to present the object in front of him. "This should be your true identity."

In her hand was a photo, and the person in the photo was none other than... Matthew!

Even though Matthew knew that Eleanor was intelligent, he was still somewhat surprised when she took out the photo.

This woman was not as simple as she might seem.

"I will take your silence for agreement."

Eleanor's red lips curled into a confident smile as she looked at the photo in her hand with shimmering eyes. "Sharp eyebrows, starry eyes, a nose that stands out; you are handsome and masculine. Your appearance is exactly the type I like. Fortunately, unlike young and effeminate men, you are domineering and cold. I would be disgusted otherwise."

She held the photo, admiring it while murmuring.

After speaking, she stood in front of Matthew with her arms crossed and head tilted while she stared at his face. "I want to see your true appearance. Hey, can you remove your makeup?"

Matthew's gaze remained cold, his expression icy.

Eleanor had a feeling he would refuse, so she added, "As an exchange, I promise to help you conceal your identity."

She was using reverse psychology on him, making it difficult to understand her thoughts.

"Why?" he asked concisely.

"You came to the hidden clan for Veronica, and those behind-the-scenes people don't know about your existence. You are an unexpected factor in their plans. I am looking forward to the day when you expose your identity and ruin their plans."

Chapter 1185 Join My Harem

"As the leader of the hidden clan, you should wish for nothing but her death. Why..."

Matthew had doubts about Eleanor's words.

Logically, it didn't make sense.

"Haha... That's because you don't understand me." She turned around and placed the photo back on the table before she sat on the edge of the table. "As for me, I appreciate heroes. Even if I become the head of the clan, I won't casually kill someone with talent."

For some reason, Matthew had a gut feeling that Eleanor was someone who would do as she said.

Human intuition was a strange thing.

"Come with me."

Eleanor beckoned him and led him to the bathroom. Standing by the sink, she handed him a bottle of makeup remover. "Use this to remove your makeup. It's very convenient."

Hearing that, Matthew rolled up his sleeves and took the makeup remover before leaning over to start removing his makeup.

Throughout the process, Eleanor stood beside him, eagerly watching him without blinking.

Five minutes later, Matthew had completely cleaned off the makeup on his face and neck, revealing a fair complexion.

His skin used to have a healthy tan, but because of the thick makeup on his face recently, his skin had become fair.

Matthew wiped the water off his face with a towel and turned to face Eleanor. "Satisfied?"

Facing each other, Eleanor looked up at the man in front of her. Matthew was enveloped in a soft glow in the dim light of the bathroom, making his already exquisitely beautiful face appear even more three-dimensional and profound.

His eyebrows were slanted, his eyelashes were long and thick, and his pupils were as black and shiny as obsidian after removing the colored contact lenses. His nose was straight, his thin lips were moderately thick, and the contours of his cheeks were particularly prominent. He was incredibly handsome.

When he slightly curved his lips into a subtle smile that softened his coldness, especially... It intensified his tenderness and bestowed a gentle refinement, making him radiate an unattainable nobility.

Thump, thump, thump...

Eleanor's gaze slightly froze, and in her eyes, there was only Matthew. Everything around her became blurry at that moment.

She felt a burst of excitement in her heart, her heart pounding as if it was about to jump out of her throat.

Because of her identity as the leader of the hidden clan, she had been surrounded by various handsome men throughout the years. Those men who either flattered or fawned over her resembled loyal dogs.

Only the man in front of her ignored her. He was exceptionally noble, especially with that distinctive face, which gave her infinite admiration and overlapped with the prince charming in her dreams.

"I am a married man. You should restrain yourself, Princess Eleanor."

Matthew reminded her and strode out of the bathroom.

Eleanor didn't say anything at that.

Chapter 1186 I Put Something in the Wine

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A servant brought Matthew a cup of tea while the man casually sat on a chair on the side. Matthew picked up the tea, blew on the steam, and took a sip. "You are confident, Princess Eleanor."

"Before you came to the hidden clan, I sent people to investigate you and Veronica. I know your strength very well."

She stood up and strolled to him with her hands behind her back. She got close to him when she sat directly on the armrest of Matthew's chair. "A woman who can stand alongside you must have enough strength and ability. Obviously, Veronica is... far from it."

"I want to marry a wife, not a left or right arm."

He smiled and continued, "As a husband, I must protect my wife. Why does my wife need to be exceptionally wise and powerful?"



Sipping the tea leisurely, Matthew glanced at Eleanor beside him from the corner of his eye. "Princess Eleanor, you have probably found the wrong person. Toy boys suit you better."

Eleanor had nothing to say in response to Matthew's words.

She raised her hand and rested her elbow on his shoulder, tilting her head to look at him. "I'm used to weak and gentle men, but dominant men like you are the most charming. However, there is still a long way to go. You will eventually realize how good I am. I will always keep the position of 'main consort' for you."

"No need."

"You don't have to rush to refuse..." Eleanor smiled instead of getting angry when Matthew rejected her directly. She lowered her head slightly. As she leaned closer to Matthew's ear, she deliberately blew on his earlobe, teasing him. "Believe me. You will willingly marry me."

She was full of confidence.

At the same time, on the other side.

Dominik was questioning others one by one, and Tiffany happened to be the next person.

Tiffany bowed when she saw Dominik in the hall. She directly confessed, "Your Highness, I know who the mastermind is, but... This is for your ears only."

Implicitly, she wanted Dominik to dismiss the others.

Dominik had a small frown on his cold face. Still, he raised his hand to dismiss the servant before he sat in the main seat. Leaning to the side, he rested his elbow on the armrest of the chair and looked at her. "Speak."

#### Chapter 1187 Zac's Plan

"How bold of you to use such methods outside the palace and harm Liam."

While holding a coffee cup with his slender fingers, Dominik spoke in a calm tone that made it hard to discern his emotions. However, his overwhelming aura instilled fear in people's hearts.

"Your Highness, I am truly innocent. Please spare me. If you spare me, I... I can tell you all about Prince Zac's plan."

When she returned after changing clothes at the bonfire banquet, she happened to see a servant delivering wine. Out of curiosity, Tiffany asked who it was for, and the servant said it was for Liam.

As she walked over with the servant, she coincidentally saw Liam standing with Veronica. She deliberately tripped the servant, catching the wine bottle as the servant stumbled, and took the opportunity to drop the drug she carried into the bottle.

Originally, she bought the medicine to bring herself and Liam closer. She didn't expect she could use it on Veronica!

However, Liam was too slow and clumsy. He couldn't even tear Veronica's clothes.

Tiffany's plan to humiliate Veronica failed, and she secretly blamed Liam for being an idiot.

"Oh? Zac's plan?"

Dominik's interest was piqued, his eyes gleaming.

"Your Highness, if I tell you the plan, Zac will definitely kill me. I... I'm scared..."

Skilled at acting, she knelt on the ground, sobbing softly.

Not many men could resist her natural beauty and teary eyes, but Dominik was a smart person. How could he not understand Tiffany's intentions?

"Alright. If you reveal Zac's plan, I will spare your life and keep it a secret."

To him, Tiffany was just a worthless life. However, she would have some value if she exposed Zac's plan in order to save herself.

"R-Really?"

Chapter 1188 I Like Money

The people on both sides remained silent, each with thoughts.

"Now that we've found the cause, how do you plan to solve it, Your Highness?" Matthew, who was sitting next to Veronica, asked out loud.

In the side hall, he had removed his makeup and reapplied it before leaving.

So, except for Eleanor and Veronica, no one knew his true identity.

"Well, hmm..." Dominik hesitated. "Miss Murphy, Liam was impulsive and rude just now. Although it was an accident, we must take responsibility. What compensation would you need, Miss Murphy?"

Veronica thought it was ironic.

Could they give her the compensation she wanted?

"Just give me money. I'm a commoner. I like money."

After coming to the hidden clan, Crayson and the others gave her money so she could spend it. She would have to ask someone else for it if they didn't give her money.

It felt horrible having to ask for money.

After Veronica finished speaking, she vaguely heard someone sneer, secretly mocking her.

But she didn't care at all. After all, she was in a problematic situation exactly because she had no money.

Before she came to the hidden clan, all her belongings were confiscated. When she asked Crayson for them afterward, he said they were left in Castron. What was she supposed to do about that?

"Hahaha! Miss Murphy, don't say that. We are all ordinary people." Dominik let out a hearty laugh and asked Eleanor with a tilt of his head, "What do you think about 700 thousand?"

"You decide, Dominik." Eleanor had no objections. However, her gaze fell on Matthew like she wanted more.

Dominik had a servant bring over a card, got up, and walked to Veronica. As he handed the card to her, he reassured her, "Miss Murphy, this is our heartfelt gift. Thank you for your generosity. Rest assured, as I will personally bring Liam to you to apologize when he wakes up."

He gave her a specially made black card, which didn't require a password and could be used to withdraw money from a specific bank.

This black card was equivalent to a check in her country.

700 thousand was just a drop in the bucket for the hidden clan palace. Also, they valued their reputation more.

Otherwise, it would be of no benefit to anyone if today's incident were to be exposed.

Although it would ruin the reputation of the Ledger Royal Family, Veronica would also be humiliated.

The best way to resolve this was through private conversation.

"Now that everything is settled, we'll leave first."

Veronica accepted the bank card without holding back. She then got up and waved to Matthew before leaving with him.

Chapter 1189 Antidote in the Cup of Tea

If she hadn't been in a normal state, today's matter would never have passed.

On the other side, Veronica and Matthew sat in the car that drove down the mountain.

She handed a wet cloth to Matthew. "Matt, please find a way to test the composition of the water on this cloth."

"What's wrong?" Matthew's face turned slightly cold as if he realized something.

Veronica leaned against the passenger seat with her eyes closed. Even so, she still felt a lingering fear. "Both Liam and I were set up. There's something wrong with that alcohol."

Screech!

Just as she finished speaking, Matthew slammed on the brakes to a stop.

"You were also affected?"

The man's face turned cold as a chill surged to his eyebrows.

"Liam drank four-fifths of that bottle of wine, and the drug was too strong, which is why he lost control. I didn't drink much, so it didn't affect me much. I felt very uncomfortable, hot, and thirsty in the palace room. At that time, a servant brought me a cup of tea. I was parched, so I drank it and felt much better afterward. Not long after, the effects of the drug completely wore off."

Veronica told Matthew everything that happened in the palace. The information revealed in her words made Matthew keenly capture something.

He lowered his gaze and pondered momentarily before asking, "Are you suspecting that there was an antidote in that cup of tea?"

"The bonfire banquet was set up by Liam, and the location was chosen near the palace. Once anything happens, the palace cannot shirk its responsibility. This was probably not Liam's doing, nor was it done by anyone from the palace. The only suspect is... her."

"You mean Tiffany?"

"Yes."

"If it was her, then today's events are even more perplexing." Matthew tightened his grip on Veronica's hand, his thumb stroking the back of her hand as he looked ahead. "After being taken into the palace, everyone was locked in their rooms. Tiffany wouldn't have had time to give you the antidote. So, the only people who could have provided you with the antidote were the Ledger siblings. Excluding the injured Liam, only Dominik and Eleanor could have gotten their hands on the antidote."

Although Eleanor was with him during that time, she had touched her phone, and there was no guarantee that she wouldn't use it to communicate with others and give instructions.

"The problem lies here."

Veronica's face grew cold. "They gave me the antidote, which shows that they have already figured out the problem. In that case, why did they still lie to everyone and conceal the truth for Tiffany?"

## Chapter 1190 A Waste of Acting Skills

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"I'm not sure what her intentions are, but she is quite the schemer. Just be careful."

Matthew didn't want to tell Veronica too much about what happened in the palace, so as not to worry her. "I'll take you back so that you can rest."

"Okay."

Veronica nodded wearily and leaned back in the car seat without saying a word.

Drinking the drugged wine had taken a toll on her body, even if she had taken the antidote afterward. Her body had been exhausted for a long time, and she felt tired.

As soon as they entered the courtyard back at the loft, someone suddenly appeared in front of them.

"Roni, how are you? Why are you back so late? What were you doing at night?" Mateo had been waiting for them all night and was extremely worried.

He pointed to the living room. "Grandpa is also worried about you. He has been waiting."

It was already 11:30 p.m. in the hidden clan's time, which was late.

"It's nothing. I had too much fun."

made up a reason and didn't want

"Oh..."

disappointment on his delicate face. He said with a

"Money? What money?"

to

void, so give me back

that false feeling of happiness today made him

best, but Miss Veronica insisted on going.

a sentence and glanced at Veronica with a knowing look before entering the living

stood in place with her lips pursed. Even though she found it amusing, she didn't want to show it in front

to sleep first. Let's talk about it

go... It's

a drink. Tell me what fun things

brat, get in

had been waiting for Veronica in the living room for a

she shrugged at Mateo. "I'll go  
disappointed expression, she walked into the living  
not only in