

## **Bumpkin 1201**

### Chapter 1201 Milk and Porridge

She knew she should distance herself even more, especially after what happened between her and Skyler.

"What are you assuming? Are you imagining things just because you are giving me a ride?"

The man tilted his head slightly, a hint of a smile playing on his lips.

Silenced by his words, Shirley had nothing to say. She could only start the engine and drive.

They stopped at a hotel to pick up her takeout order.

Skyler watched as she hurriedly got out of the car, looking anxious and flustered. His face grew darker and darker.

Before long, Shirley returned with a thermal container in hand. She was still panting.

She was worried about the food spilling, so she handed the container to Skyler. "Can you hold this for a moment?"

"Can't you put it in the back?"

The man was displeased.

"I'm driving. I'm going to keep stopping and moving. It's gonna spill."

Skyler said nothing at that.

It's just a meal, so why is she being all nervous?

Reluctantly, he took the container from her and said nothing more.

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Hidden clan.

Matthew prepared breakfast in the morning and brought it to the dining room after everyone woke up.

As Veronica came down the stairs and looked at the once-noble man who now willingly served her, she felt sad.

They exchanged a glance from a distance, and the man responded with a smile as if to comfort her.

Soon, everyone sat down and had breakfast together.

Mateo sat next to Veronica and attentively pushed a glass of milk before her. "Roni, have some fresh milk. I had Iron Pillar buy it for you at the market this morning."

The others noticed Mateo's actions. They looked at each other but remained silent, quietly eating their breakfast.

Of course, Matthew, who had just come out of the kitchen, also heard what Mateo said. His face darkened slightly.

Veronica looked up and saw Matthew. Her heart ached for him when she saw a trace of disappointment on his face.

This man had already done so much for her. In fact, he had done more than enough for this lifetime. How could she bear to make him sad?

Even if it was jealousy, she couldn't bear it.

"No need."

Veronica pushed the milk toward Mateo. "I don't like milk."

"You don't like milk? Have some porridge, then. I told Iron Pillar you like porridge and asked him to cook it for you." Mateo was considerate and paid attention to Veronica's preferences.

Chapter 1202 Time Could Change Everything

Veronica directly expressed her feelings, ending Mateo's expectations of her.

Her words shocked everyone.

The people dining at the table immediately looked up, their gazes all falling on Veronica.

Crayson blurted out, "You are not going to remarry? That's ridiculous!"

"Anyone can choose not to get married, but not you," Hayley echoed.

Destiny also chimed in, "Matthew Kings is dead. Do you want to be a widow for the rest of your life? Are you stupid?"

"You're still young! How can you not get married?" Mateo asked. "The rest of your life can be beautiful. You shouldn't live in memories."

Listening to their words, Matthew looked down and walked to the courtyard.

He was satisfied after hearing Veronica's words just now.

Veronica put down the spoon, raised her head, and looked at Hayley with a cold expression on her face. "The reason I came to the hidden clan is not because I have my eyes on the position of the head of the clan or that you're my biological mother. It's because you will use my kids to blackmail me if I don't come. I'm now willing to help you reclaim the position of the head of the clan. However, I won't stay in the hidden clan."

She spoke with conviction. "Whether it's now or in the future, I won't change my mind. Don't even think that I'll find a partner within the hidden clan. Even if I have to get together with a beggar from Bloomstead, I won't fall in love with a man from the hidden plan in this lifetime. Because..."

She deliberately emphasized, "I don't belong here."

"Veronica, how dare you speak to your mother like that?!" Crayson reprimanded her.

Hayley shook her head, wearing her usual elegant and calm smile on her face. "It's alright." She then turned to Veronica and said, "Alright, as you wish. Let's eat."

Some things couldn't be forced, but...

She believed that time could change everything.

After dinner, Veronica went upstairs to study while Mateo sat on the couch with Hayley and the others.

Mateo sighed irritably. "Roni is so firm about this. Do I have no chance?"

He was full of excitement and anticipation yesterday. However, Veronica's answer today was like a bucket of cold water poured over his head, chilling him to the bone.

"You're still too young," Hayley said slowly, sipping her coffee. "Veronica has deep feelings for Matthew. He 'passed away' not long ago, and she can't get out of the trauma. If you really like her, treat her well. Women can't resist a man's tenderness and care. As long as you do well, everything will fall into place."

"Really?"

Mateo's eyes lit up like bright stars.

"I've been there. Would I lie to you?"

"Haha! Got it! Madam Hayley, you're always the best to me."

"Look at what nonsense you're saying. I watched you grow up. You've always been like my child to me."

The two of them were talking about Veronica in the room. Meanwhile, Matthew, who was smoking at the door, overheard their conversation.

Chapter 1203 Study Together

"I know you don't trust me and don't want to tell me too much. But I just need to know that you're okay. Goodbye."

Xavier felt a little disappointed and quickly hung up the phone.

After being interrupted by the phone call, Veronica lost interest in studying and started playing with her phone.

Ding dong!

A message came in.

After buying the phone, both Veronica and Matthew used the cracked version, which could be translated into English.

It was a text message of only a few words sent by Matthew. 'There is an antidote on the handkerchief.'

Yesterday, she deliberately poured tea on the handkerchief, put it in a plastic bag, and brought it out in her pocket.

She only had her suspicions, but she didn't expect something was wrong with the tea.

Tiffany was likely to have already cooperated with the Ledgers.

Or perhaps, due to her extreme lack of security, she was opportunistic and played both sides to ensure her interests. That was why she found a way to agree with the Ledgers.

'Understood.' Veronica held her phone and typed just one word. But after thinking about it, she found a 'kiss' emoji and sent it as well.

Knock, knock, knock—

Someone knocked on the door suddenly.

After Veronica put her phone on the table, she got up and opened the door. Mateo was standing outside with a book in his hand, ready to come in and teach her.

Because Veronica's bedroom was relatively large, half of it was a resting area, and the other half could be separated as a study area.

To facilitate studying, she didn't bother to move to the study.

However, after learning about Mateo's feelings for her, Veronica suddenly felt that it was inappropriate for a man and a woman to be alone in the same room.

"Mateo, how about—"

Veronica was about to suggest going to the study, which would be more appropriate. But before she could finish her sentence, she saw Matthew appear behind Mateo.

"Young Master Mateo, I would also like to study with you." Matthew looked plain and honest, dressed in a black and white checkered shirt.

Mateo was startled by Matthew's sudden appearance. He turned around with a cold face and glared at him. "No!" he snapped.

He was even more enraged when he thought of the three thousand Iron Pillar tricked out of him yesterday.

"This is all the money I have. Here, take it. Consider it as my tuition fee, okay?" Matthew took out three thousand from his pocket.

This money was given to him by Mateo yesterday.

Seeing the money, Mateo reached out to grab it. However, Matthew retracted his hand and asked, "Will you teach me?"

Chapter 1204 Focus

"Okay, we'll go wherever the miss wants to go."

Matthew, who was standing not far away, raised an eyebrow mischievously at Veronica.

Of course, he did it behind Mateo's back.

Mateo felt resentful, but he had to compromise because of Crayson's authority. "Let's go. Hurry up."

Mateo said those words impatiently.

"Wait for me. I'll get a pen and notebook."

Veronica turned around and returned to the room to get a pen, notebook, and the books needed for class. She then left the room and headed toward the study with the two of them.

The study was on the west side of the second floor. Inside the spacious study were rows of bookshelves filled with various books.

Books from the hidden clan, Castron, Destor, and other countries covered various genres.

The diverse collection of books was comparable to a small library.

Five-sixths of the study was filled with books, while one-sixth was a leisure area with a desk and a couch.

Because the attic was a connected double attic, the space was exceptionally spacious.

"There's only one desk. How are we going to study?"

Veronica muttered to herself and then walked out, standing in the corridor and shouting to Crayson on the first floor. "Master Crayson, I'll be studying with Iron Pillar. Can you have someone bring another desk up?"

Crayson, who was talking to Hayley, heard Veronica's words and nodded. "Alright, you two study first. I'll have someone bring it up later."

"Thank you."

Veronica turned around and entered the study after thanking him.

As there was only one desk, Veronica instructed Matthew, "Let's move the laptop aside first. Mateo can sit on the big chair. We can sit on these rattan chairs."

"Okay, I'll listen to you."

Matthew nodded slightly and went forward to tidy up the laptop with her.

In no time, everything was organized. The two of them sat side by side on one side of the desk while Mateo sat on the opposite big chair with books in hand. Like a teacher, he said seriously, "We learned the pronunciation of the 26 letters yesterday. Today, we will start learning some simple words and dialogues."

He held a ruler and lightly tapped on the desk, glancing at the two of them. "Page ten, please."

"Oh."

Veronica responded and opened to page ten, while Matthew obediently followed along.

Sunlight streamed in through the window, casting white light on the two of them. At that moment, the clear pronunciation of the words made it sound as if the two of them had returned to their student days.

Chapter 1205 \"Something\"

Thump, thump...

Her heart raced. Kissing in this kind of environment made Veronica feel nervous and excited; it was as if they could be caught any moment now.

She didn't struggle. Instead, she allowed the man to kiss her passionately.

Between their breaths, she could smell Matthew's unique scent that intoxicated her.

After two minutes of kissing, Matthew finally let her go. Seeing her shy expression, he couldn't help but chuckle. "Your face is so red. Aren't you afraid that Mateo will notice later?"

Veronica panicked and covered her face with both hands. "Is my face really red?"

"What's the matter? We have kissed so many times, but you still get shy?"

"Who's shy? It's because you kissed too passionately that I couldn't catch my breath."

"That's because you're too clumsy. Don't shift the blame." Matthew lightly flicked her forehead. "No surveillance cameras are in the room, so you don't need to be so nervous. I won't eat you."

Creak!

Suddenly, the door to the study was pushed open, and Mateo walked in with a cup of coffee.

He had expected to see the two of them laughing and fooling around or slacking off. To his surprise, they were sitting upright, earnestly memorizing vocabulary.

His stomach churned as he felt like he had misjudged them.

Closing the door, Mateo walked to his seat and lazily leaned back in the big chair, reading a book while listening to the two of them recite words.

However, he didn't notice that both Veronica's and Matthew's left hands were under the table...

The man couldn't keep his hands to himself. He kept playing with her soft fingers, thoroughly enjoying himself.

Matthew was shameless even when Mateo had his eyes on them. Veronica struggled for a moment, but when she realized that she couldn't free herself from his grasp, she could only let him hold her tightly.

"After you finish reading, start writing. You need to read and write vocabulary to remember the words better. Otherwise, you'll never learn it."

Mateo lazily said.

He seemed to have little patience for the two of them. He even looked at Matthew with a hint of disgust in his eyes.

Before long, the two of them took out their notebooks and began to write the words earnestly.

Before coming to the hidden clan, Matthew had studied hard and mastered the hidden tongue in half a year of intense learning.

No one knew how much effort he had put in; they simply thought he had a natural talent for languages. If not, they even thought he was an extraordinary talent.

"Understood."

"Okay."

The two of them obediently took out their pens and notebooks, diligently writing the words.

Chapter 1206 They Came to See Miss Veronica

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"That's not very nice of you."

Veronica smiled helplessly. "I really need to learn quickly; otherwise, it will be troublesome in the future."

"I didn't say you can't learn. I'll teach you."

"You will teach me?" Veronica's eyes lit up. She was a bit curious when she suddenly thought of how Matthew learned the hidden tongue in a short time. There must be a special trick. "Okay, what's the secret? Tell me."

The man chuckled. "There's no secret. You just need to memorize these words."

"No secret? How did you learn so quickly, then?"



"Because..." Matthew raised his hand and lightly tapped her nose with his finger. "Your husband is smart."

Looking at his slightly proud expression, Veronica couldn't help but laugh. "I didn't realize how much you like to praise yourself before this."

Noon.

Matthew prepared a table full of delicious lunch, and everyone ate in the dining room. Right then, Crayson looked up and informed Veronica, "I discussed with your mother today and arranged your schedule. Starting from 6 a.m., you will have classes until 3 p.m. Then, you will start martial arts training. There is not much time. We must make use of every minute."

As Veronica looked at the timetable on the table, her face, as smooth as jade, showed a hint of coldness. "Wake up at 6 a.m., finish at 10 p.m."

She murmured. After speaking, she let out a faint sneer as if venting her dissatisfaction.

Hayley put down her fork and smiled gracefully. "We know it's hard for you, but it's all for your own good."

Veronica picked up a forkful of short rib chili and chewed slowly. "I should thank you, then."

She replied sarcastically without looking up.

After the meal, a servant immediately rushed in before Veronica could go upstairs to study. "Master Waylen, Madam Hayley, Dominik Ledger brought Eleanor Ledger and Liam Ledger here."

Crayson stood with his hands behind his back, frowning. "What are they here for?"

"They said..." The servant glanced at Veronica. "They said they came to see Miss Veronica."

Mateo's eyes dimmed, "Tell them to leave. Who told them to come here without permission?!"

"I'll go see them."

Veronica ignored everyone and walked out.

Hayley, due to her identity, couldn't go out. She could only go upstairs and observe the situation from the window.

She also wanted to avoid them coming in and accidentally seeing her. It wouldn't be good if that happened.

## Chapter 1207 Invite Them In

Veronica was on guard against Eleanor almost immediately.

Veronica was already beautiful with her delicate features, exotic face, thick eyebrows, and big eyes. She had a captivating charm that was not at all frivolous. It was the kind of beauty that was exuded from her every move without being superficial.

Even though Veronica felt confident in her own appearance, she couldn't help but feel slightly inferior in front of Eleanor.

"I haven't been paying attention. Do you need something from him, Princess Eleanor?"

Veronica automatically ignored Liam's apology and focused her attention on Eleanor.

"It's nothing, really. I just think he's skilled and wanted to spar with him," Eleanor replied calmly.

Dominik shook his head and smiled helplessly. "Miss Murphy, please don't mind Eleanor. She has always been like this. She has been practicing martial arts since she was young and enjoys challenging others to test their skills."

"Hey, I'm apologizing to you."

Liam, who was being ignored, threw Veronica a displeased look.

As a high-ranking prince, Liam had never been treated with such disrespect.

"You didn't do it intentionally. Let's just forget about it." Veronica didn't want to hold onto that matter.

She then asked, "Is there anything else? If not, I'll be heading in."

"Are you not going to invite us in for a cup of tea?"

Seeing Veronica about to turn and enter the courtyard, Eleanor hurriedly urged, "Is this how Destorians treat their guests?"

The reason they came together today was because Eleanor wanted to see Matthew.

Now, she was being asked to leave after only standing at the door for a while. Naturally, she felt dissatisfied.

"You—"

Mateo didn't like them and was about to chase them away when Crayson walked out of the courtyard.

The older man greeted, "Princess Eleanor, Prince Dominik, Prince Liam, welcome to my humble abode. I apologize for not welcoming you."

Crayson, who was spirited and energetic, walked out with big strides and smiled proudly.

"Who are you?" Liam didn't recognize Crayson.

On the other hand, Dominik gave a small nod. "You must be the famous Waylen Elrod. Master Waylen, right?"

When the Elrods were still the head of the hidden clan 20 years ago, Waylen was the chief minister of the hidden clan. It was a position equivalent to the prime minister in ancient times.

He was respected by all and was loved by the people for his expertise in governing and leading the hidden clan to prosperity.

"Master Waylen, I've heard of you since long ago. It's an honor to meet you today." Eleanor greeted Crayson with a slight nod.

Chapter 1208 Chef

She asked curiously.

She asked about Iron Pillar just a minute ago and was asking about him again now.

Her frequent mention of him raised the speculation of several people, but everyone only kept their questions to themselves.

Crayson smiled and replied, "Iron Pillar is the chef I brought from Bloomstead. He specializes in cooking for Veronica."

"Oh, really? He must be a skilled chef."

Eleanor smiled knowingly. "I have heard a lot about the culinary culture of Destor, but I have never had the opportunity to experience it. Do I have the chance to taste Destorian cuisine today?"

She took the initiative to make her request.

Dominik's eyebrows furrowed ever so slightly, but he didn't say anything as he maintained his usual composure on the surface.

On the other hand, Liam nodded in agreement. "I have also heard that Destorian cuisine is excellent. Miss Murphy, we are friends, aren't we? Can we stay for a meal?"

"No!" Mateo was very resistant to them and rejected them without any mercy.

"You came here rather suddenly, and the kitchen hasn't prepared enough dishes. I'm afraid it won't be sufficient." Veronica sensed Eleanor's "intention" toward Matthew and politely declined.

Moreover, Veronica already felt guilty about making Matthew their "chef." The guilt put her under immense pressure.

Even though she felt sorry for Matthew, she couldn't do anything to help him. How could she bear to let him cook for others?

He was not even a real chef!

"It's not a big deal. I'll make a call immediately to have someone deliver the ingredients." Eleanor pretended not to understand Veronica's refusal.

Veronica quietly fumed.

Do I really have to make it obvious?

"You—"

Mateo wanted to say something, but he immediately shut up when he saw the sharp gaze Crayson shot at him.

At this moment, Matthew walked in from outside the living room with a few sprigs of cilantro in his hand.

There were many flowers and plants, cilantro included, planted in the courtyard for convenient cooking at home.

"Hey, Iron Pillar."

Eleanor stood up from the couch and waved at Matthew while walking up to him. "Miss Murphy said you are a skilled chef worthy of being called a master chef for state banquets. Would it be possible for me to get a meal out of you? I've been longing for exquisite Destorian cuisine for quite some time now. I trust you wouldn't turn down such a request."

Matthew's face remained largely impassive. "To have earned your favor is an honor I cherish deeply, Your Highness."

Chapter 1209 In the Kitchen

In the kitchen.

Eleanor and Matthew entered the kitchen and closed the door.

Matthew deftly cleaned the fish in his hand and mentioned in a deep voice, "Are you making sure that others will notice your special treatment toward me, Your Highness?"

He suddenly had a headache at how Eleanor was being a little clingy.

"It doesn't matter what others think. It's none of my business. I promised not to disclose your identity to the outside world, and I will definitely keep my word."

In other words, she meant, "I am only responsible for keeping the secret. But if anyone suspects something, it has nothing to do with me."

Of course, Eleanor also had some ulterior motives.

Only the heavens knew how she spent a sleepless night in bed last night because Matthew's stunningly beautiful face kept appearing in her mind.

So, when Liam woke up this morning, she dragged him here to apologize to Veronica.

As the prince of the hidden clan royalty, Liam naturally didn't want to apologize to Veronica. Thanks to Eleanor's arduous efforts, she managed to persuade him to come here.

Her purpose was not to apologize to Veronica but to see Matthew.

She regretted it when she looked at Matthew's slightly ugly, ordinary face.

If she had known, she wouldn't have let him dress up again yesterday but instead, let him show his true face. That would have been much more pleasing to the eye.

"So, should I thank you?"

Matthew casually asked while holding a sharp knife in his hand and skillfully scraping the scales off of a fish.

"Hahaha, there's no need for that. Just make a delicious lunch for me. That will be your way of thanking me."

She pretended not to understand his sarcasm.

However, Matthew knew that Eleanor understood everything.

While he didn't say anything more, Eleanor rolled up her sleeves. "Come on, let me help you. You can also teach me how to cook Destorian cuisine."

At this point, her eyes lit up as she thought of a plan.

Eleanor leaned on the masonry oven with her right hand and tilted her head seductively. "Iron Pillar, I want to be your apprentice. From today onward, you will be my master who will teach me how to cook. How about it?"

"No."

Matthew refused decisively without hesitating.

Of course, being rejected seemed to be within Eleanor's expectations.

Her red lips curved into a subtle smile, and her beauty was imbued with a charm reminiscent of the western regions. "You should understand that by becoming my mentor, you'll gain the freedom to come and go from the royal palace. It benefits both you and Veronica."

Chapter 1210 How Boring

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The pointed edge of his knife pressed against the handkerchief in Eleanor's hand, gently pushing it aside. "Don't think you can sow discord in our relationship with such crude tactics."

If he behaved properly, he wouldn't have to worry that Veronica would misunderstand.

Matthew had faith in the bond he shared with Veronica.

Veronica was standing at the doorway when he heard Matthew's words. In an instant, the threads of worry in her heart unraveled, releasing the burden she had been carrying.

In hindsight, she realized she had been overly concerned.

After she walked into the kitchen, she casually closed the door and put on a graceful smile. "Your Highness, are you looking for a change of scenery?"

Being teased in succession by the married couple left Eleanor both annoyed and amused.

She tossed the handkerchief directly into the trash bin and raised her delicately arched eyebrows. "Ah, how boring. Can't you two cooperate a bit with me? You should have pretended to be angry just to bring a little joy to my day."

Her joke easily resolved the awkwardness.

Her open and unabashed nature was truly something Veronica found somewhat endearing.

That kind of unrestrained and carefree attitude wasn't something everyone could embody.

Veronica and Matthew exchanged glances and smiled at each other. He then lowered his head and continued preparing the fish in his hand, while she slowly let her head hang as she felt warm and sweet in her chest.

"Oh, by the way, I forgot to tell you. From now on, he will be my master and will definitely teach me how to cook step by step. Don't get jealous, okay?"

As she spoke, Eleanor deliberately leaned toward Matthew and raised her eyebrows at Veronica.

Veronica felt helpless in the face of such blatant seduction and provocation.

"Being defeated and being jealous is just a difference in wording. Your Highness, you better be prepared." Veronica crossed her arms and smiled as she turned and left.

"Hey... You! Are you just going to leave like this?"

"Why stay if there's no reason for me to?"

"Aren't you afraid of what I might do to him?"

"Do whatever you want. As long as you have confidence, I will give you mental support." Veronica turned her head, her exquisitely fair face filled with a confident smile.

Her trust in Matthew was evident.

She leisurely walked out of the kitchen, happily humming a tune as she closed the door.

The smile on Eleanor's face instantly disappeared. She felt like a deflated balloon.

After a while, she turned around and glared at Matthew, pouting in a spoiled manner. "I have plenty of time, so I'm not afraid of not winning you over. You underestimate me."

Matthew turned on the tap and cleaned the crucian carp. He mentioned calmly, "Being overly confident is just being arrogant."

"I've been arrogant for so many years. It won't be any different this time."