

Bumpkin 1211

Chapter 1211 No Say at All

Before leaving, Eleanor put on makeup for Liam to cover the injuries on his face so he wouldn't embarrass himself. That was why no one saw the bruises.

"Liam!"

Dominik sternly reminded, "There is no distinction between high and low in professions. Eleanor has always been interested in new things and is willing to learn sincerely. You should learn from her."

"I... Hmph..."

Liam sat on the couch and let out a dissatisfied snort, grumbling, "You're the eldest brother, so whatever you say is right."

"Hahaha... You brothers have such a good relationship. Seeing you reminds me of when I was young and had the same temperament as His Highness Prince Liam."

Crayson cooperatively commented before adding, "You guys have a seat and enjoy your time. I'll go to the study to do something."

"Alright. Master Waylen. Go ahead," Dominik said politely as he stood up.

Crayson nodded slightly to Dominik, turned around, and went upstairs to the study.

In the study, Hayley was sitting at the desk reading a book.

Hearing the sound in the room, she looked up and saw Crayson walking over. "They haven't left?"

Crayson closed the door and sighed. "They want to have lunch here. Eleanor unexpectedly asked Iron Pillar to be her master and teach her how to cook. That lady is not to be underestimated."

Before leaving, Eleanor put on makeup for Liam to cover the injuries on his face so he wouldn't embarrass himself. That was why no one saw the bruises.

"Iron Pillar is just an ordinary person. Eleanor targeting him indicates she might be trying to recruit him as a spy, though her intentions remain uncertain."

Hayley analyzed the situation.

"If you put it that way, it seems that we can put Iron Pillar to good use." Crayson also came up with a plan.

"No rush. Let's observe first."

"Yes, Madam Hayley." Crayson nodded and then said, "They are all dining downstairs. I'm afraid you'll have to stay here for lunch."

"It's alright."

Hayley didn't mind.

At noon, with Eleanor's help, Matthew prepared a table full of delicious dishes, all of which were Bloomstead's specialty.

Crayson, Mateo, Veronica, and the Ledger siblings gathered in the dining room as they got ready to eat.

At this moment, Eleanor stood up and announced, "Wait. My master personally prepared this meal. He must join us."

Veronica also wanted Matthew to sit at the same table and eat with her.

However, she had some concerns.

First, she was worried about Matthew exposing his identity, and second, she couldn't find a reasonable excuse for him to join the meal.

Chapter 1212 Self-Sufficiency Leads to Contentment

Mateo's face sank. He was just about to refuse when he looked up and saw Crayson staring at him with a sharp gaze. And so, he had to get up and move to the side to sit down.

In the kitchen, Matthew took off his apron and walked over there.

"Come, Master. I saved you a seat."

Eleanor patted the seat next to her and smiled. "Your disciple treats you best, doesn't she?"

She was insinuating something.

Veronica, sitting opposite, felt like Eleanor had just given her an uppercut.

"Thank you, Your Highness."

Matthew didn't hold back either as he sat down directly next to her.

As the elder among the group of youngsters, Crayson finally spoke. "Alright, now that everyone is here, let's dig in."

Although Hayley didn't come down, the few people who knew the situation tacitly avoided mentioning her.

The group sat together in the dining room. Since Eleanor was quite the conversationalist, the atmosphere was lively, and there were no signs of hostility between the archenemies.

At least, they were doing an excellent job at being amiable on the surface.

Veronica thought that Eleanor would make a good diplomat, given her temperament.

A person who remained unassuming, concealing all emotions perfectly, making it difficult to fathom their thoughts... Such an individual made for the most formidable presence.

Mateo's face sank. He was just about to refuse when he looked up and saw Crayson staring at him with a sharp gaze. And so, he had to get up and move to the side to sit down.

"Let me try the fish."

Eleanor picked up a forkful of fish belly and put it in her mouth, savoring it carefully, then gave Matthew a thumbs up. "You are worthy of being my master. The catfish you cooked is delicious. Rich with aroma, a hint of sweetness, and tender flesh; it's delightful!"

"Let me try."

Liam also picked up a piece of fish and took a bite. His eyes lit up at first, and the surprise in his eyes almost overflowed, but he still pretended to be calm and frowned. "Is it that good? It's just average. Let's see... Yes, it lacks a bit of spiciness. It would be even better if it was spicier."

The hidden clan had a preference for food with more robust flavors. They liked to put a lot of chili in everything. In fact, they found joy in spiciness, but not everything had to be highly spicy to be delicious.

For instance, the home-cooked, pan-fried catfish Matthew had prepared. He cooked the fish until both sides turned golden brown, added some onions and slices of radish for a brief simmer, sprinkled a touch of coriander, and then let it simmer on low heat to reduce the sauce.

After it was cooked, the fish had no fishy smell and tasted delicious. It was excellent.

Dominik also picked up a chunk and tasted it. After tasting it, he said to Matthew, "Iron Pillar, your culinary skills are exquisite. The fish is delicious."

"Thank you, Your Highness, for your praise." Matthew glanced at him with a simple and honest smile, nodding.

Chapter 1213 Tacky Nickname

"Come, Master. The stir-fried pork you made is delicious. Let me serve you." She attentively served the dish to Matthew, completely ignoring the strange looks from the others.

Matthew looked at the stir-fried pork in his bowl, furrowing his brows almost imperceptibly. He didn't say anything and only ate his meal.

However, he didn't touch the meat on his plate at all.

He had prepared six dishes and two soups for lunch: stir-fried pork with green beans, fried catfish, roasted pork, stir-fried vegetables, mushroom with meatballs, and stir-fried mung bean sprouts. He also cooked pigeon soup and chicken soup.

The meal was a hit due to its excellent flavors, presentation, and aromas. By the end of the meal, every dish on the table had been thoroughly enjoyed and cleared.

Even Veronica didn't expect that such simple home-cooked dishes would be so popular and in such high demand among the Ledger siblings.

After the meal, everyone left the table, and the servants came to clean up.

The Ledger siblings were ready to leave then.

"Master Waylen, Miss Murphy, Mateo, thank you for your hospitality," Dominik politely thanked them.

"Haha, you're too kind, Your Highness." Crayson chuckled and nodded, echoing the sentiment.

Eleanor mentioned, "Dominik it was my master who made the dishes for lunch. You should thank my master."

"Come, Master. The stir-fried pork you made is delicious. Let me serve you." She attentively served the dish to Matthew, completely ignoring the strange looks from the others.

She couldn't help but show her favoritism toward Matthew. It was as if she wanted to make it obvious to everyone.

"Eleanor, don't forget your identity. You should act with more restraint," Liam reminded her, as he couldn't bear watching this.

However, Eleanor didn't care at all. She waved at Matthew. "Master, thank you for your hospitality. I'll invite you to the palace as a guest in the future."

Dominik slightly bowed. "Master Waylen, Miss Murphy, Mateo, Iron Pillar, goodbye for now."

The refined gentleman exuded an air of elegance and grace in his every move.

The three walked out of the courtyard, followed closely by a group of guards not far behind them.

In the courtyard, Mateo murmured, "What the hell? Grandpa, what are they up to?"

The smile on Crayson's face disappeared as he turned around and gave Matthew a meaningful look. "Come with me."

"Yes, Master Waylen." Matthew turned around and followed him into the living room.

Mateo immediately walked to Veronica's side and whispered in her ear, "Roni, do you think Princess Eleanor has feelings for the loggerhead?"

Loggerhead?!

Veronica's delicate face darkened. "Who are you calling 'loggerhead?'"

How could such a tacky nickname be used for her husband?

She simply couldn't tolerate it!

"Of course, I'm talking about Iron Pillar."

"In what way does he look like a loggerhead to you?"

"Hey, it's just a nickname. Why are you so sensitive?" Mateo thought Veronica was overreacting.

"It's basic manners not to randomly give people nicknames."

Chapter 1214 Dominik Believed Eleanor

"Oh, are you talking about him?" Eleanor propped her elbow on the armrest and looked at Dominik lazily. "Dominik, you and I don't think alike. Think about it. Iron Pillar is Veronica Murphy's chef. If I could bribe him to work for us, wouldn't he become our pawn? On the other hand, the Ledgers wouldn't trust Iron Pillar, but if they see how close he is with me, they will use him too. I reckon that he'll be of great use to us, depending on how we use him."

Her words made Dominik lost in thought.

After pondering on it, he raised his eyes slightly and asked doubtfully, "Do you really think so?"

"Duh."

Eleanor flicked the crumbs of the toast off her fingertips. "Why would I be interested in an ordinary chef?"

These words were obviously against her will, but she said them for Dominik to hear.

Dominik's eyes sparkled with a hint of contemplation. After a while, he pursed his lips into a straight line and presented a smile. "You're right, Eleanor. Tell me more about your plan."

"Well. Here's what I..."

Eleanor explained her plan to Dominik in a methodical manner while he listened to her attentively, taking her plan seriously.

Afterward, he shared his own ideas with her and intended to craft a strategy with her.

"Hahaha. You're my smart brother, after all. That's a wonderful idea!"

After listening to Dominik's plan, Eleanor gave him a thumbs up. "Brilliant. It's really brilliant. Let's do it. I'll head back first."

She waved her hand, put her hands behind her back, and left the side hall triumphantly.

When she turned her back to Dominik, the smile disappeared from her beautiful face. In contrast, her eyes were filled with a cold and chilling gaze, and she immediately emitted a dismal aura.

...

At Bloomstead, Shirley woke up early and cooked breakfast at home. She packed the food, brought it to Wade's mother, and washed her.

After that, she hurriedly rushed to the company for work.

After the regular meeting, Shirley called Garrick and invited him to the company.

This time, he agreed readily.

Jayden and Shawn, having learned their lesson, no longer dared to make things difficult for Shirley.

However, when Shirley brought Garrick to the company an hour later, Jayden and Shawn were truly surprised. They not only showed great respect to her but also flattered her.

"President Brennan, esports games are highly favored by young people now. It is a sunrise industry. If our companies collaborate, you will definitely be guaranteed a profit."

While leading Garrick on a company tour, Shirley explained the current industry situation.

Chapter 1215 Having Dinner Together

"We're just ordinary friends," Shirley replied casually, not wanting to make the relationship between the three of them too tense.

With that, she dealt with company matters until her phone vibrated at 11:00 a.m.

She picked it up to see a WhatsApp text from Wade. 'What time do you get off work? I'll come pick you up.'

Buzz!

Her phone vibrated again, and another text appeared in their chatroom. 'Thanks for taking care of my mother these past two days. Would you let me take you out for a meal?'

After she skimmed through the message, a smile played at the corner of her lips. She quickly tapped a reply on her phone with both thumbs. 'No problem. I wouldn't reject an invitation to a free meal. I'll get off work soon at around 11:30 a.m.'

Shirley didn't actually mind taking care of his mother since it wasn't troublesome at all, but she knew that he was certainly not in the best condition, so having a meal and chatting with him helped alleviate his mood.

'Okay. I'll come pick you up later.'

Wade quickly replied to the message.

Shir replied with an 'OK' and put down her phone, immersing herself in her work.

Time flew by quickly when she was busy, and soon, it was time to get off work.

Jayden and Shawn came over to greet her after work. "Shir, are you not leaving?"

"Would you like to have dinner with me and Jay?"

After realizing Shirley's relationship with Skyler and Garrick, the two of them became even more cautious around her, as if she were a precious jewel.

If they were to accidentally upset her, they were worried that she could use her relationship with Skyler to make him acquire Vincere Games.

"I have plans, so you guys go ahead and eat," Shirley declined them with a friendly attitude.

With that, the two waved goodbye and left the office.

Shirley packed her stuff, put on a thin white jacket, and carried her bag as she walked out of the building.

She stood outside the office building, waiting for Wade.

After a while, she saw Skyler instead of Wade.

"What are you looking at?"

When she heard someone talking to her while she was on her phone, she looked up to find Skyler standing in front of her.

Instinctively, she frowned. "Y-Young Master Skyler, what brings you here?"

Young Master Skyler?!

Hearing the unfamiliar name she had just called out to, Skyler withdrew his smile instantly. "I'm here to talk to—"

"Hey, Shir!"

Before he could finish his sentence, a cheerful voice came from the side.

The two turned their heads in unison and noticed Wade dressed in a suit as he got out of the car. He held a bouquet of bright red roses in his arms, which were adorned with white baby's breath and wrapped in black packaging paper. On top of it was a thin, black gauze, making the bouquet look even more delicate and beautiful.

Chapter 1216 A Surprise

Wade's smile instantly froze. He glanced at Shirley subconsciously and was momentarily speechless. "Oh, alright. Let's take my car."

He pointed to the Audi A8 parked on the side of the road. "I drove my boss' car here."

"Okay."

Shirley didn't ask much and walked toward the car with him.

When they arrived at the car, Wade opened the door to the passenger seat. "Shir, you—"

"She'll block your sight if she sits in the passenger seat with a bouquet. I'll sit here instead," Skyler suggested. Then, he stepped forward and took the passenger seat before fastening the seatbelt.

His movements were smooth and natural.

Under Wade's astonished gaze, Skyler didn't feel awkward at all.

That was because he believed that he wouldn't feel embarrassed as long as he wasn't awkward.

Under Wade's intent gaze, Skyler pretended to look puzzled. "Thank you. I didn't expect you to be quite a gentleman, Mr. Yoder."

After saying that, he reached out to shut the passenger door.

"I..."

Wade's movements froze. He looked at Skyler in the passenger seat and turned his head to look at Shirley. "Sorry, he... I..."

She stuttered and was suddenly at a loss for words.

"Hehe. That's just his personality. Perhaps he's used to being served at home, so it's natural for him to have someone open the car door. Don't mind him." Shirley smiled awkwardly and felt quite embarrassed.

"Oh, sure." Wade shook his head, walked to the car's back seat, and opened the door. "Get in, Shir."

"Thank you."

Shirley got into the car with the bouquet in her arms.

Wade closed the door, hopped into the driver's seat, started the car, and set off.

It was noon, and the road was congested, so the car moved slowly.

Therefore, Wade chatted with Shirley through the rearview mirror. "Thank you for caring for my mother the past few days. As soon as I returned today, she urged me to invite you to dinner. She praised you for being kind-hearted, beautiful, and would make a great partner."

Although he was conveying his mother's words, Skyler and Shirley understood the implied meaning in his words.

"That's very kind of Mrs. Yoder, but don't mention it. It's just a small favor," Shirley answered. Suddenly remembering something, she asked, "By the way, did you invite Monica as well?"

When Wade said he would treat her to a meal yesterday, Shirley told him to invite Monica along.

"Of course I did. She just texted me saying that she has already arrived."

Since the traffic light had turned green, Wade started the car and answered while driving.

Chapter 1217 Can I Bring Someone Along?

Ring, ring.

Suddenly, a phone started ringing. Skyler took out his phone and glanced at it. "I'm going out to take a call." After saying that, he turned and walked out of the private room.

Shirley pouted, "Tsk, Monica, you're so unfair. You only greeted Young Master Skyler and didn't even notice me and Wade."

Wade laughed at her teasing remark, and Monica reached out to pinch Shirley's arm. "You're getting naughtier now, Shirley. The nerve of you to make fun of me."

"Ouch, it hurts, Monica. I was just joking," Shirley whined but laughed happily.

Inside the private room, the atmosphere was lively and relaxed. Still, on the corridor outside, Skyler looked at the overseas phone number displayed on the screen of his phone with furrowed brows, looking very serious.

Clenching his phone, he slid his finger over the answer button and placed the phone next to his ear. "Thomas?"

"Skyler, I just received some news from Boss. You can leave now." Thomas merely relayed the message without mentioning any specific details, but Skyler knew Matthew too well.

Matthew was always cautious in his actions; everything he did was foolproof and flawless. Before he left Castron for the hidden clan, the few of them had a meeting where Matthew had mentioned that he would let Skyler go to the hidden clan.

Miguel was steady in his work, responsible for overseeing and guiding the businesses under his name in Bloomstead; Caleb, although usually quiet, had a wide network and was diplomatic in his dealings.

They complemented each other, which set Matthew at ease, and this was why they ultimately chose Skyler to go to the hidden clan.

Of course, another reason was Skyler's exceptional medical skills. With him around, Matthew would be even more at ease.

"Am I leaving now?" Skyler's grip on his phone tightened slightly as he turned his head and glanced in

the direction of the private room with hesitation.

"What's wrong? Is it inconvenient now?" Thomas asked, sensing that something was off.

"It's not that it's inconvenient. I just want to bring someone along. Is that okay?"

"As long as it's someone trustworthy, no problem."

"Alright, it's settled then." Skyler hung up and returned to the private room, joining the others and finishing his lunch in a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere. After the meal, he sent a text to Shirley, who was sitting across from him. 'I have something to tell you later.'

Buzz.

Shirley's phone vibrated, and the screen lit up. While enjoying a dessert after the meal, Shirley tilted her head and checked her phone, only to see a text popping up on the screen. She looked up at Skyler, ignored the text, and continued with her dessert.

Chapter 1218 To Shirley's Place

Leaving the private room and going downstairs, Wade then paid the bill, and they left the restaurant together. After that, he grabbed the flowers from the car and handed them to Shirley. With a bright smile, he said, "Shall I pick you up this afternoon?"

"I-I have to work overtime tonight. There are still a lot of things at the company that needs to be done," Shirley declined politely.

Although Wade didn't say anything, she could feel his intense and almost fanatical affection in his eyes. It felt necessary for her to pick a time to make it clear to him that she didn't like him.

"Alright, let's keep in touch," he said to Monica with a smile and waved to Skyler. "Young Master Skyler, goodbye."

Monica waved to them, too, before climbing into the car, and only then did they leave.

The car steered onto the road, merged into the traffic, and disappeared. After seeing this, Shirley turned to Skyler and asked, "Did Ron ask you to contact me? What's the matter?"

Looking at Shirley holding a bouquet in her arms, Skyler found it particularly annoying and, with a disdainful glance, pointed to the scorching sun above. "Are you sure you want to talk under the scorching sun?"

"Then, where should we go?" Feeling a little warm, she held the flowers with one hand and raised her other hand to shade her forehead, blocking the blazing sun.

"To your place," he said.

"My place?" Instinctively, she took a step back and shook her head, repeating, "No."

"Do you want to show up at work with a bouquet to show off?" Skyler interrupted, sensing the wariness that appeared on her face naturally. His heart sank as he felt a lump stuck in his throat, which was difficult to swallow. Taking a few steps and coming to a stop in front of her, he lowered his gaze at her from his height. "Am I a wolf? Are you afraid that I will eat you?"

Quietly, Shirley thought, You're more terrifying than a wolf. After hesitating for a moment, she said, "No." Despite what she said, she nodded, revealing her actual thoughts truthfully.

The cold, biting wind blew, and Shirley shivered, biting her red lips tightly without making a sound. Just then, a cab passed by, and Skyler waved to stop the cab. Then, he pulled her into the car and headed straight to her apartment.

Half an hour later, they stood in Shirley's living room. Although it was Shirley's home, a sense of familiarity hit Skyler after he entered, and he relaxed, walking over to the couch with ease and crossing his legs after he plopped himself onto the couch.

On the other hand, Shirley stood in the living room, holding the flowers Wade had given her, feeling lost and confused, with a blank expression on her face.

"Why are you standing? Sit down." Lazily, he leaned back on the sofa and ordered Shirley, acting as though he was the host.

Chapter 1219 Sorry, Matthew

Although the decoration was simple, the place was clean and tidy, with everything neatly arranged, giving a warm feeling of cozy home. Skyler hadn't lived in Shirley's house for long, but after leaving, he would often miss the warmth here when he was in that empty mansion. In contrast, he even liked this place's small and crowded environment.

"What does Ron want you to tell me?" Shirley changed into a pair of slippers at the entrance before pacing to the sofa and sitting down.

"She..." Skyler paused and lowered his gaze. His dark pupils flickered as he said, "Actually, there are many things you don't know. But this time, Roni contacted me to ask you to look for her. As for the company's affairs, I'll arrange for someone to take care of it for you." Speaking of which, Skyler immediately explained, "This is Roni's idea."

Originally, Skyler didn't want to take Shirley away from Bloomstead, but Garrick, that b*stard, kept harassing her. That old fox was scheming, and Shirley couldn't match up to him at all.

Skyler didn't trust Shirley, and even more so, Wade. After weighing the pros and cons, he decided to

take Shirley away from Bloomstead.

"If Ron wants me to look for her, why didn't she contact me directly but contact you instead?" Shirley didn't trust Skyler very much. Despite knowing that Skyler wouldn't sell her out even though he was a jerk, she couldn't help but have some instinctive doubts.

"She's with Matt now, and it's not news in Bloomstead that he is 'dead,' so many people are keeping an eye on Roni. Are you sure you won't expose Matt's identity if she contacts you?"

In his heart, Skyler apologized to Matthew a thousand times. He was desperate; otherwise, he wouldn't have betrayed Matthew.

"What? President Kings? Didn't h-he—Uh!" This shocking news came too suddenly, and Shirley couldn't believe it. Springing to her feet, she sat next to Skyler, grabbed his sleeve, and questioned him.

But before she could finish her sentence, Skyler covered her mouth with his hand and scolded her, "Do you have a death wish?"

Upon hearing his reminder, she gathered her thoughts together and immediately fell silent, nodding to indicate that she wouldn't say anything more.

Right then, they realized that their relationship was somewhat intimate.

Shirley's fair and delicate face blushed like she was meeting her first love, and she immediately released Skyler's hand and lowered her head, not daring to look at him.

As Skyler was much taller than her and she had her hair pulled into a ponytail, he could see the redness on her ears and neck. It was precisely because of this unintentional embarrassment of hers that Skyler's adrenaline surged, and he suddenly felt uncomfortable.

Chapter 1220 Do You Find Him Familiar?

Two weeks later, the Hidden Clan.

In the morning, Veronica and Matthew were in the study, studying. After lunch, she told Crayson that she was a little full and wanted to take a stroll down the mountain.

As usual, Matthew followed closely behind. Walking up the steps, Veronica lowered her voice and asked, "What's the matter? Why do you want to bring me out secretly?"

According to the task list given to her by Crayson, she was supposed to start martial arts training at three o'clock in the afternoon.

"You'll know soon enough." Matthew smiled mysteriously and led her down the mountain.

After passing through the bustling market and three streets, they finally arrived at a restaurant called 'One Piece Restaurant.'

Standing at the entrance of a teahouse, Veronica looked at the name on the sign and murmured, "One Piece Restaurant?" Then, she glanced at Matthew thoughtfully.

In Bloomstead, Matthew also owned a top-notch restaurant, One Piece Restaurant, and now, he had brought her to another restaurant with the same name.

Did this guy open a branch in Hidden Clan without my knowing? she wondered.

The man pursed his lips and smiled. "Smart."

Although Veronica didn't ask any questions, they could understand what the other was thinking with just a glance.

"So, this is why you asked me to come here."

With a knowing nod, she walked into the teahouse with great interest, carefully observing the style and features of the building.

"This teahouse combines both tea and private dining with separate private rooms that integrate modern and hidden clan design elements," Matthew explained, introducing the idea behind the teahouse to her as they went upstairs. The teahouse had just opened, and although the decoration looked very new, there were already quite a few guests.

Pleasantly surprised, she gave Matthew a thumbs up. "Impressive." Looks like I've underestimated his influence.

To be able to open a teahouse in the bustling market of Hidden Clan in such a short time, every staff member of the place must be reliable and trustworthy.

"I've bought this seven-story building," Matthew said casually, but this news shocked her once again.

At Hidden Clan, the buildings were all wooden lofts due to the characteristic architecture, so the number of floors was limited, with the highest being only seven floors, and there were few buildings like that.

However, Matthew had bought one of them just like that, and it would require at least dozens of staff members to manage. Furthermore, they had to be his trusted staff.