

The Consortium's Heir by Benjamin

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The bodyguards were sprawled on the ground, feeling like they were suffocating. The

only emotion they could clearly sense was terror, but none of them showed it.

This lasted until someone dropped to his knees. Everyone else followed suit.

Darius stuck his hands in his pockets and looked down at them. "Perhaps you guys have

something to tell me?"

The bodyguards had never been in such a pickle before, especially since they only had

two options—to die or to betray the one who pays. They didn't want to go for either of

these options.

Darius sighed, then raised his voice. "I'll count down three." Without giving them time to

think, he immediately started counting down..

"Three!"

"Two!"

Before he could get to "one", someone broke down and shouted a name.

He nodded expressionlessly. Then, he turned to get into the car.

These bodyguards were just poor people that had been hired by the wrong people, so

there was no need for him to go after them. They were going to be out of jobs soon,

anyway.

The moment he turned, he felt a sharp gust of wind coming toward him. At the same

time, he saw the terrified and worried expression on Erin's face through the windshield.

He'd never seen someone express so many different emotions so clearly before, and he

was moved. No one had cared for him so deeply before.

This reminded him of his relationship with Sarah. She'd never done anything for him

before. Even when he'd had to sew his hand up after it'd been slashed open, she'd only

cared about getting her luxury items and bags. With this comparison, Darius suddenly

had to admit how blind he used to be.
Even with all these thoughts running through his mind, he was still vigilant.
Almost at the
same time that he sensed the gust of wind behind him, he whipped around to
be greeted
by the sight of the first bodyguard who'd tried to attack him.
He praised the guy's gut when he saw the blood on the ground. Despite the
strength
behind his earlier blow, the bodyguard still wanted to give ambushing him
another shot.
Therefore, he only used half his strength to swing a punch at the bodyguard,
which still
sent him flying. The bodyguard landed on his back, finally sensing the pain in
his chest
and back. He opened his mouth to say something, but Darius beat him to it.
"You're more loyal than the other guys. It's too bad nothing's going to change,
though,
because your employer has other bodyguards here as well." He spread his
hands.
"I'm sure you're disappointed to hear this: I don't intend to let any of them off
the hook,
but I'll sing your praises the next time I see your employer."
He stood up straight and continued, "Based on my past record, you should've
been dead
by now. You're lucky that I'm in a good mood today. I'll let you live." After that,
he turned
to head toward the car.
He had yet to take a step when he heard the sound of an engine revving in
the distance.
He paused because he didn't know whether this was a threat to him.
He was surprised to see Zack. "You sure got here quickly."
Zack was agitated when he saw Darius. "My dear Mr. Reid, it's been a while
since we
last met. How are you doing?"
Darius couldn't help laughing at his formal greeting. "I'm great, thanks to your
hard
work."
Zack looked lost.
Darius patted him on the shoulder, his smile growing wider. "Alright, alright, I
was just
joking. Now, I'm going to tell you why I asked you to come here."

Zack's expression became serious. "Sir, I've already heard about what happened from Erin and looked into their companies' backgrounds. I can turn all of the assets belonging to five of the companies into ours in a month, at most, but I can't guarantee I'll get the job done for the last company."

Darius' curiosity was piqued. He raised an eyebrow and asked, "What's up with that? Whose company is it?"

Zack handed the document he'd been holding to Darius. "This is everything I found out about that company, and its president's information is right at the front."

Darius flipped the document open and looked at the photo of the man on the first page. He nodded and said, "This isn't the one I beat up." Then, he went through the rest of the document. "Gerald Godolphin, the heir apparent of the Godolphin family. He's the next in line to take over the family." Things were fine until he got to the last line in the description. "His wife is the daughter of Wilson Gillette, the president of Gillette Group."

Darius narrowed his eyes. "If I am right, we helped someone from the Chamberlain family because of them."

Zack nodded. "Yes, you're right. Wilson's youngest son, Hank Gillette, had a crush on your classmate, Pearl Chamberlain, but she wasn't interested in him. There was some sort of conflict between them because of this."

Darius nodded,, but there was an odd look on his face. "I didn't expect such a huge age gap between Wilson's daughter and son!"

Zack continued, "The Chamberlain Group hasn't had much progress in its fight against the Gillette Group, and the Gillette Group seems to have found itself a mysterious backer recently. It made the Chamberlain Group suffer some massive losses."

Darius had already come to a conclusion. It was vague, but it was still a conclusion. He said, "This guy's very mysterious, and his subordinates aren't to be trifled with."

You need
to protect yourself.”
Zack looked grim. “Don’t worry, sir. I’ll take good care of myself and make
sure nobody
can lay a finger on me.”
Darius nodded. “I’ll go to Almiron City when I have the time, and I’ll let you
know
beforehand.”
Zack nodded, looking excited.

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Erin had stepped out of the car the moment Zack showed up. When she saw
Darius
walk toward the car, she hurriedly said, “Mr. Reid, I think I’m needed at the
company.”
Darius nodded. “That’s fine. I can drive, and I’m definitely safe on my own.”
He got into
the driver’s seat and stretched an arm out, resting it against the window. He
closed his
eyes and let out a deep breath before driving off.
Erin remained rooted to the spot, only moving when he was out of her sight.
When she
turned around, she was greeted by the sight of a face, which frightened her.
She backed
away, slapping a hand over her mouth to ensure she wouldn’t make a sound.
Zack touched his face, feeling a little exasperated. He walked toward her,
saying, “I know
you’re madly in love with Mr. Reid, and my face can’t compare to his, but it’s
not bad
enough to terrorize you like that, is it?”
Erin had already calmed down. She rolled her eyes at him and said, “I have
plenty of
work to do. Also, I’m not in love with Mr. Reid; I just admire him.” She turned
and hurried
away.
Zack watched her leave and smiled:
At the same time, Darius was counting the seconds. He needed to make a trip
to Almiron
City, which would take him at least an hour by flight.
It wasn’t a trip that could be completed in a short period of time, so he needed
to check

in on the operations and finances of all the companies under Reid Consortium before he left.

However, before doing any of this, he had to return to Dragon Estate to change into

something appropriate. Only then could he carry out his plan.

There was also something else he was worried about. The last time he'd been to Dragon

Estate was when that despicable martial guy trashed his apartment, which was a long

time ago. He wondered whether everything had been repaired by now.

One and a half hours later, when he arrived at Dragon Estate, he knew he'd been

worried over nothing. The moment the security guard saw him, he gave him a concise

report on everything that had happened since.

"Mr. Reid, I'm so glad to see you again. It's been a while since you came back here, and

your apartment's been restored to be exactly the same as before. The key is with the

manager, and he's personally held on to it all this time."

Darius nodded. He remembered the manager, Elle. He drove up to the main entrance,

and all eyes were on him when he stepped into the building. This didn't bother him, and

neither did their whispers.

"Is he the owner of all those cars? He's so young. Why hasn't anyone ever heard of him?"

"That just goes to show how much richer he is than we are. He's not someone we can

gossip about." The receptionist was excited to see him. "Mr. Reid, it's been a while!

Would you like to return to your apartment right now?"

He nodded. "Yes."

The receptionist made a small, elegant bow in his direction, putting him in a good mood.

In truth, the receptionist was the one in a good mood. Her manager, Elle, had been

extremely busy lately because she didn't know where Darius was. Though she

knew the

Reid family would ensure his safety, she still couldn't help but worry.

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That was why she'd suddenly become overly strict with her staff, and they were

exhausted. Now that Darius was back, it would definitely put Elle in a good mood. This

meant that their torment would finally be over!

At this moment, Elle was seated at her desk. She was holding a document, but it was the

wrong way up. Situations like this had often happened since the officials brought Darius

away. She wanted to call the Reid family to find out what was happening, but it would

make her seem rude.

She picked up her phone and put it back down again—an action she'd repeated

countless times. The moment she put the phone down, it rang, infuriating her.

She put it

on speaker and screeched, "What's going on?"

Though this had often happened lately, the receptionist still dropped the phone fearfully.

It clattered to the floor. This made Elle even angrier, and it showed in her tone. "If you

continue to be this careless, you'll be fired! The residents here are all affluent people,

and you can't afford to scare any of them!"

The receptionist paled. She glanced in Darius' direction, her lips trembling.

She couldn't

bring herself to say a word.

Darius stretched out an arm. When he saw that he'd already been standing there for two

minutes while someone threw a tantrum, he frowned. He bent down to pick up the

phone, then said with a hint of impatience, "I need my apartment key."

When Elle heard his voice, she felt her heart start to race. He was back! Mr. Reid was

back!

Her professionalism kept her from letting out a yelp of joy, though. Her voice returned to

being steady and clear as she said, "Mr. Reid, it's been a while. At most, I'll

only need a minute to appear before you.”

“Okay” Darius’ deep baritone rang out on the other end of the line. Elle hung up and ran out of her office as quickly as possible.

Darius put the phone down, then turned to look at the ashen receptionist. He said,

“There’s no need to be like this since you didn’t do anything wrong. Elle’s a good

manager, and she won’t really fire you. She was just in a bad mood.”

The receptionist tried to force out a smile, but it wasn’t convincing in the least.

Darius knew she didn’t believe him, but he didn’t take it to heart. He merely glanced at

his watch. With five seconds left on the clock, he heard the sound of someone else

approaching.

He looked in Elle’s direction and saw her staring at him, her eyes practically glowing.

An ugly look crept onto his face. He didn’t like it when women looked at him like that. He

was about to say something when she approached him and respectfully presented the

key with both hands.

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Darius took the key. “Thank you.”

After that, he turned to head to his apartment. He stopped after a couple of steps and

turned to look at Ayla. “This receptionist is great.

Ayla’s expression changed, and she immediately nodded. “I understand, Mr. Reid.”

As Darius walked out of the lobby, he vaguely heard Ayla say, “You’re doing an excellent

job, so you can choose between getting a promotion or a raise. You should know that

this is a special situation—if you choose to be promoted, so be it, but I’ll only give you a

raise once you’ve gained enough experience to match up to your position.

However, I’ll

still give you all the power that comes with your position.”

The receptionist wanted to jump with joy at Ayla’s words.

On the other hand, a small smile formed on Darius' lips, but this didn't stop him from heading to his destination. Just as he thought he would soon be at his apartment, he heard someone call his name. The voice was a little familiar, but it hadn't left a deep enough impression for him to remember. He stopped and turned in the direction the voice had come from to see a beautiful woman standing there. He recognized her—she was Pearl Chamberlain, the third most gorgeous woman in his university. She'd once slapped him, then thanked him for helping her. He put his hands in his pockets and watched as she approached him, her chest heaving as she tried to catch her breath. Darius narrowed his eyes. She was attractive, but perhaps her beauty would work better on someone else. He moved his gaze from her chest to her face and asked, "Do you have something you need me for?" Pearl didn't answer him. She was still wondering why he hadn't shown any reaction to her body and had even averted his gaze so quickly. However, it wasn't a question she could bring herself to ask. Then, Darius' question registered in her mind. She felt disappointed but didn't forget what she was here for. "Darius, I want to express my gratitude and do something for you." Darius started to frown. He was about to turn her down when she continued, "I know you don't need my gratitude, but it's all that I can give you." Everyone in the lobby heard her. Darius didn't like how things were playing out, so he headed to his apartment. Pearl ran after him when she saw him ignore her. Her heels clicked rapidly against the floor. The rest of the people in the lobby all looked curious. Darius made his way to his apartment as Pearl ran after him. He was much more

powerful now that his martial arts skills had been awakened. He could hear Pearl struggling to catch her breath as she ran behind him, but to his surprise, she didn't let her exhaustion stop her. Even though she'd slowed down and could barely breathe, she persevered. Darius didn't slow down, however. He was still miffed about what had happened earlier. He only stopped once he was at his apartment. He turned to say to Pearl, "You're pretty fast." She was taken aback and subconsciously wanted to gnash her teeth. She thought about just leaving, but she found that she was so exhausted she couldn't say a word. All she could do now was pant. On the bright side, Darius' attitude toward her had improved. At least he hadn't kicked her out without a second thought. She watched him walk into the apartment. After a moment's hesitation, she followed him. She didn't go into his bedroom or sit in the living room. Her clothes were soaked with sweat because of her vigorous workout, and her hair stuck to her face. When Darius came out of the bedroom and saw her looking so disheveled, he had to admit that she still looked good. He sat down on one of the sofas and pointed at the one opposite him, saying, "You can have a seat." Pearl immediately complied, looking overjoyed. It made his mind go blank for a short while. Once again, he couldn't help but appreciate her beauty. Soon, however, he returned to his senses. "I don't need your gratitude. I only helped your family because I despised Hank's actions." The memory of what happened in the cafeteria replayed in Pearl's mind. She was smart enough not to bring it up. She could tell from Darius' genuine disgust that there had been a misunderstanding. Darius could feel her eyes on him, and he sensed the change in her gaze, but

he didn't react. He merely looked at her silently. Only then did Pearl realize she hadn't answered him. Feeling slightly panicked, she quickly said, "I'm still extremely grateful to you, though. It may not mean anything to you, but it's all I have. Please, give me a chance to thank you." Darius thought about it and noticed that she'd chased after him several times now. He was worried that things would continue this way, so he agreed to her request. "Alright, then. How do you intend to repay me? Make sure it doesn't waste my time, though." Pearl was stunned. She'd originally intended to invite him for dinner, but he'd just made it clear that he wasn't willing to spend time on this. Several thoughts flashed through her mind, but none of them met the mark. She couldn't suggest any of her ideas. Just as Darius was starting to lose his patience, she said, "I'll pick you up tomorrow for the first day of class, then drop you back here at night. How's that?" His expression immediately turned steely, and Pearl felt like she couldn't breathe. She didn't know why his expression had changed so suddenly, and she couldn't even find the words to describe it. She bit her lip, unable to say a word through her fear. She wanted to repay Darius, but it seemed she'd only worsened things. Then, she watched as Darius shot into the study and switched the computer on. She blinked, and there seemed to be a voice in her mind telling her the answer to her questions.

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Pearl wasn't sure whether she'd guessed correctly. She stood up and walked to the study, seeing Darius' fingers flew over the keyboard so quickly that she could barely see them.

She leaned against the door, unable to stop herself from laughing “Do you need my help? I’m willing to help you because of the favor you did the Chamberlain family.”

The only reply she got was the clicking of the keyboard’s keys. Darius didn’t even spare her a glance, let alone answer her. It made her feel a little awkward. She finally walked over to him. She looked at the monitor and said, “To repay your kindness, I’ll stay here with you until you’re done with your dissertation.” Only then did Darius look up at her, his eyes frosty. “I’m busy now, so please remain silent. Otherwise, I can’t guarantee I’ll be as mild-mannered as I am right now.”

This was the first time someone had spoken to her like that. A hint of displeasure flashed across her face, but it quickly disappeared. If she were in his shoes, she’d be annoyed too.

She watched as he flipped through one of the books at top speed. He was going to reach the last page. soon. She stepped forward and grabbed the book he would need next, then placed it on the desk and pulled the book he was currently reading out of his hands once he was done with the last page.

At first, Darius wasn’t happy with this. However, he raised an eyebrow when he saw that the book that had been placed on the desk was the one he wanted to read next.

“How did you know I was going to go for this book?”

“Well, I’m a student too, and I have exemplary grades.” When these words were out of

her mouth, she realized who she was talking to. Darius was at the top of their class!

She shut her mouth and silently watched as Darius rushed through his dissertation,

occasionally helping him switch books or getting him water.

When it was just past 1.00 am, he heard his phone ring, but he didn’t even flinch. He

didn’t even look away from his book, merely saying calmly, “Pearl, answer the

phone.”

Pearl didn't even know when she'd fallen asleep. Her eyes shot open when she heard

Darius' voice, and she answered the phone before she realized what was happening.

“Hello, this is Pearl Chamberlain.” Then, she was answered by a long silence. The fog in her mind slowly started to clear, and she realized something—she was at

Darius' apartment, and she'd answered his phone! So, she hurried to explain herself, but

before she could say anything, the voice of someone old rang out on the other end of the line.

“Did I call the wrong number?”

“No, you didn't.”

The old voice said, “He brought a woman home with him, and he's still awake at this hour?”

Pearl quickly said, “No, sir, that's not it. I'm just here to help Darius.”

Darius heard what was going on in the living room and stopped typing. He walked into

the living room and saw Pearl looking panicked. He held out his hand, palm facing up.

“Give me the phone.”

Pearl jumped when she heard his voice. She didn't expect him to come out here. Of

course, this thought

didn't linger in her mind for long. Soon, she would be filled with regret because of Darius' following words.

“Grandpa, it's Darius.” His gaze landed on her.

She understood that he was telling her to leave. So, she walked into the study and shut

the door before sitting on the chair. It was still warm, making her blush.

Darius sat on the sofa in the living room while speaking to his grandfather.

“Grandpa, it's not what you think. I gave her family enough money to make them as

wealthy as they used to be, so she wanted to repay me out of gratitude. I forgot that

class was resuming tomorrow—no, today- and that I had yet to finish my dissertation.”

Darius felt at ease now that he'd explained himself. He didn't know whether his

grandfather would believe him, but it was true.

He only truly relaxed when James said, "I hope that you don't repeat this mistake and try

your best to complete your studies. At the same time, don't forget about your duty as the

master of the Reid Consortium."

"Yes, Grandpa. I understand." Darius nodded.

James added, "I'll have Bruce whip something up for you so that you don't starve." After

that, he hung up.

Darius put the phone down when he heard the dial tone. He returned to the study and

saw Pearl sitting on the chair next to his with her head on the desk. She'd fallen asleep.

He narrowed his eyes and walked over to the desk, saying, "Pearl, I think you can head home."

This woke her up again, and she looked at him blankly. Her mind only started to operate

when he sat down next to her because she smelled his cologne. It made her feel clean

and happy.

Now that she was completely awake, she realized what Darius had said and what she'd

been thinking of earlier. She suddenly blushed and shot to her feet, covering her face

with her hands. She was worried that he would see right through her.

At the same time, she stole a glance at him. Unfortunately for her, she was in for a

disappointment. Darius wasn't looking at her at all—he was busy working on his

dissertation.

Soon, however, she composed herself. She was only here to repay Darius' kindness.

She knew Darius didn't want to be disturbed at the moment, so she used her actions to

reject his earlier suggestion. He saw this, but he didn't do anything. He was completely

focused on the book in front of him.

When he finished, a new one appeared before him. He turned to Pearl and said, "I know this is tough on you. I can finish my dissertation..." He was interrupted by someone knocking on the door, and she hurried out of the study. She didn't want to hear him tell her to leave again. After all, she'd already been rejected several times, and her dignity was hanging by a thread.

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Pearl opened the door, still caught up in her thoughts. When she saw the woman standing there, her eyes widened in shock. It was Elle, and she was holding a tray. She was a little unhappy to see the beautiful and attractive Pearl, but she soon shook it off. She knew her place, Darius would always be out of her league and more like someone for her to worship. Elle smiled calmly and said, "I'm sorry, I wasn't aware there was someone else here. I'll prepare another set for you." Pearl was angry when she first saw Elle. After all, it wasn't appropriate for a woman to knock on a man's door in the middle of the night. However, she didn't expect Elle only to be here to deliver food. She felt a trace of regret at her thoughts. She quickly held up a hand to stop Elle from leaving. "I'm just here to take care of Darius, so there's no need to prepare anything for me." Elle looked surprised. However, she quickly regained her composure and passed the tray to Pearl. "I'll have to trouble you with this, then. I'll take my leave now." Pearl watched her leave before heading back to the study. Darius' senses were extra sensitive now that his martial arts skills had been awakened, and he could already smell the food when Elle showed up. He looked at his books, then said, "You can leave that in a corner for now. I'll be done in two hours." Pearl's eyes widened. "What? You're almost done already?" She put the tray on the table, hurried over to him, and then bent down to look

at his
computer.
Darius saw something barge into his line of sight, and he turned to look at it,
then
smirked. "Don't you think you're a little too close?"
Only then did Pearl realize they were practically stuck together. She quickly
backed
away while covering her chest. She was about to say something when the
clicking of the
keyboard rang out. He was working on his dissertation again!
She didn't dare to say anything lest it disturbed him, and he told her to leave
again. She
sat on a chair far away from him and observed his side profile.
She heard of Darius about his poverty. Who would've expected he would
actually turn
out to be the richest among them all? And why hadn't she ever noticed how
handsome
he was?
He was the most handsome guy she'd ever seen. If she had noticed him
earlier, perhaps
things would be different now. She was caught up in this train of thought when
it
suddenly occurred to her that it was highly likely Darius was wealthier than
she
imagined.
She'd heard a lot about Dragon Estate and knew that the manager wasn't
someone that
anyone could meet. If one wanted to meet Elle, one had to be among the
ultra-rich of
the Country Sigma.
Pearl's jaw dropped. This was a possibility that had never occurred to her
before.
Moreover, she'd seen the hostility in Elle's eyes when she'd answered the
door earlier.
Rumor had it that Elle was wealthy and probably included in a list of the
Country Sigma's
richest. This wasn't an easy feat.
If Darius could attract the attention of such a woman, there was no imagining
how
powerful his family and background were.
As her imagination started running wild, Darius spoke up. "I can eat now."

Pearl lost her train of thought. Before she realized what she was doing, she'd already started to move. She only returned to her senses when she placed the tray before him, saying, "Wait, what? Have you already finished your dissertation?" Darius shot her a look, seemingly not understanding her surprise. "What's wrong with that? You seem surprised that I'm done." Pearl stared at him, then nodded vigorously at his words. "Yeah, I'm shocked. It took me two whole weeks to finish mine." Darius raised an eyebrow. He knew that some of these students from affluent families only chose to attend the classes they liked, so many didn't know how to do their dissertations. He didn't say anything about this, though. He'd only found out about these things after becoming wealthy, and he understood that it was only normal. Otherwise, he wouldn't be able to find the right people to run his companies for him. Pearl was still trying to process the fact that he'd already finished his dissertation, so she didn't catch the look on his face. She walked over to him, and the light in her eyes amused him. "Can I take a look at your computer?" she asked. Darius got up and moved away from the desk while gesturing at the computer. "Go ahead." Pearl sat down, but the warmth from the seat no longer got her hot and bothered. She was completely focused on the computer as she flipped through Darius' dissertation. As she read it, she realized just how ignorant she was. She looked away from the computer and trained her awed gaze on Darius, exclaiming, "Darius, you're even more outstanding than I thought." This was his first time receiving such high praise. He smiled and asked curiously, "Where do you think I should be placed, then?" Pearl's gaze returned to the computer. "You should be among the professors,

of course.”

Darius’ smile widened. He walked over to the coffee table and lifted the cover, saying,

“Let’s eat together.”

Pearl immediately abandoned the dissertation. Her eyes practically glowed as she

looked at him. ” Really?” The smile on Darius’ face made her heart skip a beat, and if he

didn’t say what he said next, it would make her happiness last longer.

He said, “I’m inviting you to eat with me not because I’ve accepted you but because

you’ve already repaid me.”

She wanted to refute him, but she couldn’t. She sat opposite him, not making a sound

because Darius didn’t like it.

“I’ll leave after eating, then.” 1