The Consortium's Heir #Chapter 251 – 260

Read The Consortium's Heir Chapter 251

The Right Decision

"Don't do things that irk me anymore if you're that terrified of me.Otherwise, I can't promise you'll still be breathing when you leave this place today," said Darius.

Bilgi trembled even more. He looked up and saw Darius smiling, yet the latter did not seem genuinely happy.

That only worsened Bilgi's fear, causing his teeth to chatter from his increased trembling. He knew Darius was not kidding.

Getting killed was an outcome Bilgi did not predict for himself, and he was unsure if he could stop Darius from making it a reality.

Thus, his knees wobbled like jelly once more, unable to support the weight of his body.

His brain then went blank for some time.

Only when his knee bashed into the ground, igniting a sharp sensation in his leg, did he finally snap out of his daze.

As that happened, Bilgi could not help but let out a shrill that made everyone's skin crawl.

His alert gaze fixed on Darius, yet the latter ignored him and strolled toward the couch instead.

Bilgi had never imagined this to happen.

Despite parting his lips, he realized there was nothing more he could say to Darius; the latter would never forgive Bilgi, no matter what Bilgi did now or how much he begged.

Hence, he felt the best option was to flee the scene at once.

Determined to do it, he slammed his palms against the ground, pushing himself off the ground.

Then, he hurtled ahead without fully standing up.

About two seconds later, he looked up and saw an incoming group of people in black uniforms.

A smile immediately broke out on his face just then.

He could not help it, as he felt the group's arrival meant he would turn out victorious against Darius.

Knowing he was currently in a humiliating posture, he inhaled deeply to gather his courage before standing upright.

Trembling with excitement and rage, he glowered at the security guards while pointing at the door, barking, "You guys got here far too late! I'll report this to your superior and have them punish you! Don't be upset with that, though. You should be grateful you made it; otherwise, I can promise that you would all have lost your jobs if you had arrived slighter later—"

His saliva splattered everywhere as he spoke.

On the other hand, the security team halted, their foreheads creasing at Bilgi.

Their leader unbuttoned his cuffs while approaching Bilgi, remarking, "Your existence shocks me."

That made Bilgi's eyes light up at once. He smugly rested his hands on his hips, standing in a wide stance.

"-but since you're proactively trying to resolve my problems, I can pretend your tardiness never happened and forgive you guys." He waited until the leader was almost by his side before suddenly clapping, turning, and charging toward Darius' room.

Once there, he hammered his fist into the door.

"Don't be a chicken, Darius! Open up now! Support has arrived to aid me, and they'll do nasty things to you, like how you treated me earlier! It's going to make me so happy!"

That was when a burning sensation ignited on one of his cheeks.

Bilgi then lost control over his body, and his head felt heavy as he stumbled to the ground. He eventually landed on his back, struggling to turn himself over.

It seemed as though he had not stood up at all today.

Earlier, a crisp crack sounded when his head collided with the floor, which confirmed his belief that something was wrong.

Still, he tried his best to wiggle and face the other direction, doubt clouding his now stormy gaze that snapped over to the security guards' leader.

"Why did you do that to me? Aren't you here to help me? Don't you know I work for the Gillette family?"

Those words came out quickly like a stabbing knife, but the man did not pay them much heed.

Instead, he arrogantly dusted his hands and sighed.

"I should be having my afternoon break if it weren't for you. Also, why does it matter if you work for the Gillettes? It's not like you're a member of their family. You're merely a lapdog to them—scratch that. You're a stray mutt that keeps trying to leech off them."

Meanwhile, on the other side of the door, Darius got dressed in the clothes Erin had prepared.He came out of the bedroom to look at himself in the mirror.

Darius had always been handsome and tall, and Erin knew his body well, so she intentionally picked out clothes that would accentuate his best features.

Once he got fully armed in a nice suit, every inch of him glowed so much that he could light up any dark space.

Erin even could not tear her eyes away from him.

On the couch, Kate did not think twice before standing up when she saw Darius dressed like that. She desperately wanted to throw herself at him but knew it was impossible.

So, she stood there, blushing like a schoolgirl.

Erin wanted to chuckle at Kate's reactions but knew it was improper.

Thus, she spun on her heel, looking at the door instead.

"Mr.Reid, should we handle the situation outside?"

"No need."

Darius shook his head.

"Security will make the right decision. We just have to concentrate on getting ready for tonight's banquet."

Nodding, Erin kept quiet as she stood behind Darius. She later helped him put on his necktie and ensured all his accessories were where they needed to be.

Some time passed before Darius grabbed his car keys, placing one hand in his pocket while swaying the other as he walked.

Soon, he stopped in front of the door.

Erin was quick to step forward to open the door for him.

Only then did Darius notice that Bilgi was still on the ground, despite it being silent outside the room for a long time.

Many security guards surrounded Bilgi, preventing him from getting close to Darius, no matter how hard he tried.

Darius lightly shook his head, then glanced at the security guards' leader.

"Why is he still here?"

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The security guards' leader panicked. He bowed deeply, explaining, "1m terribly sorry, Mr. Reid. We wanted to toss him out of the hotel, but the hotel's

previous lobby manager, Samantha Williams, phoned us and gave strict orders not to harm this man. She also told us to set him free."

As the leader spoke, he cautiously eyed Darius before instantly looking down at the ground.

Darius had noticed the former's actions but did not voice his complaints.

After all, he knew the security guards had no say in the matter, so they were innocent. He placed both hands on his hips, sighing.

"So, as the head of security, you should be able to make your own judgments."

The leader could not help but tremble just then.

He could sense the aggression behind Darius' words and felt he had made the wrong decision earlier, endangering his current position.

There was nothing else he could do except appease Darius so he could keep his job in the long run.

"All right, Mr.Reid.I know what I have to do," he said while nodding.

Then, he quickly bent down and strangled Bilgi, lifting the latter by the neck.

The skin on the back of Bilgi's neck felt like it was about to rip. He frantically thrashed his legs around, wanting to get back on the ground.

However, the more he panicked, the more things went wrong; he eventually fell, landing on his butt and wailing from the pain.

Darius massaged his ears at that moment.

Upon seeing that, the lead security immediately understood what the latter was feeling and rushed up to cover Bilgi's mouth.

Only after the security guards left Darius' vision did his features soften.

Erin found it odd and whipped her head around to face Darius.

"Mr.Reid, I don't think you actually blame them for not removing him."

Following that, she saw Darius' gaze flash past her, and her heart dropped.

She thought, "Crud, I made another serious mistake—I shouldn't have assumed or tried to guess what Darius was thinking.But I couldn't help myself..."

She lowered her head as the scene fell silent.

A second passed.

"You're right. I don't blame those guards. Still, they should've known what they should and shouldn't do. As for you, there's no need to be so scared every time you say something wrong," said Darius before he walked forward.

Not expecting the former to respond with such care, Erin's heart raced, and her breathing quickened.

She was so occupied with her excitement that she did not think about what Darius was doing now.

It ensued until Darius stopped at about 35 feet away.

He turned to ask, "Why aren't you catching up to me?"

Only then did Erin snap out of it and chase after him.

Once the two left the hotel corridor, Kate came out from Darius' room with a grim look.

Jealously caused her body to tremble as she thought, "There must be more to Darius and Erin's so- called boss and secretary relationship. I bet they're dating! No way. That can't be true!"

She froze there, anticipation building on her face as she hoped Darius would turn to look at her or realize she had gotten left behind.

Sadly, it was apparent that both of those things would never happen.

She watched as Darius and Erin got in the elevator, the doors eventually closing.

At that point, Erin could not help tilting her head to examine Darius 'expression.

She asked, "Mr.Reid? Why didn't you ask Kate to come with us? I don't think leaving her alone in your hotel room is a good idea."

"Indeed."

Darius nodded with a smile.

It only lasted a second before his face returned to its usual calmness.

"That's not a good idea, but it'll save us from humiliation. After all, the hotel's current lobby manager is Alicia, yet Kate still managed to enter my room. I feel Alicia owes us an explanation."

Erin's gaze became downcast as she refrained from speaking anymore.

The elevator door opened right after their conversation ended.

Darius then strolled to the front desk, where a new female staff stood.

She had no clue who Darius was, so she treated him like she did with other patrons.

Flashing him a sweet smile, she bowed and politely asked, "Is there anything I can help you with, sir?"

"I'd like to see your current lobby manager, Alicia Rodriguez."

Hearing that made the receptionist's smile stiffen.

Nevertheless, she boldly attempted to ask, "I believe I can help with whatever it is you need."

Not a word came from Darius.

That was Erin's cue to step up.

She stated, "I think you should respect your patrons' choices.

And now, my chairman is asking to see your lobby manager."

The receptionist could tell the two were determined, so she reached out to grab the corded phone and say, "Miss Alicia, there's a man and a woman in the lobby who wish to see you."

She then hung up and bowed before Darius again, explaining, "Please have a seat.Our lobby manager will be with you shortly."

Darius did not move.

Instead, he merely stood there and stared into the space ahead.

A few seconds passed when the sound of high heels clicked in the lobby.

The clicking grew louder, and Darius knew those were Alicia's footsteps.

He rooted to the spot, placing both hands in his pockets while staring at the doorway where Alicia would soon enter.

When the latter finally showed up, Darius arched a brow.

The last time he saw her was four hours ago, but it seemed like she had already become a different woman.

Before, Alicia had an innocent beauty about her; nothing was imposing about her aura.

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Alicia now looked like a strong career woman.

Darius locked eyes with her and was about to speak, but she suddenly ran in his direction.

It sparked a grin across Darius' face as he knew Alicia was still the same, innocent girl at heart.

As he stood there and stared at her, his clenched jaw loosened.

All the while, Erin stood next to him.

She paid attention to his shifting expressions, bitter disappointment forming in her heart.

Yet, Erin did not verbalize her feelings or show them on her face.

She knew such things would often occur in the future, especially if she wanted to stay beside Darius as more than his secretary.

She needed to get used to him being popular among women.

Regardless, Darius did not have the slightest idea of what Erin was thinking, and neither did Alicia.

At that moment, Alicia had arrived before Darius and was formally bowing to greet him and Erin.

"Thank you, Mr.Reid and Miss Erin.I don't know what kind of life I'd be living now if it weren't for your help." Darius could tell she was sincere from her gaze.

Even so, he sighed for the longest time before replying, "But the way you handle things at work still needs improvement." Alicia became as white as a sheet when she heard that. Yet, Darius continued,

"Because a woman entered my hotel room today with a key, and it happened without anyone realizing it."

Not a hint of liveliness showed on Alicia's face.

Her gaze tremored as it struggled to meet Darius' eyes.

Even her voice became as small as a squeak when she said, "I'm sorry for my negligence, Mr.Reid! I'll do my very best to investigate the matter and give you a proper explanation at once!"

Then, she bowed as deeply as possible before rising and speeding across the lobby, her heels leaving behind a trail of loud clicks.

Erin did not expect that reaction from Alicia.

Shocked, she turned to look at Darius, stating, "She seems nervous, Mr.Reid."

"Yeah," said a nodding Darius.

"She's not skilled at hiding her emotions yet and will need some time to mature."

That was when Erin noticed a rare patience from Darius that he never once showed her. It made her fists coil tautly.

On top of that, she stared at Darius with conflicting emotions.

She parted her lips, wanting to speak but eventually decided against it.

However, Darius was an awakened martial artist; he had keen senses that could detect the emotions of those around him.

Hence, he knew what Erin was feeling.

Nevertheless, he chose not to express his opinion as he felt Erin herself needed to process those emotions.

Darius then smoothed out his clothes and headed out of the hotel.

When he arrived at the yard outside, he saw a brand-new car with no license plate parked at the hotel door.

With both hands in his pockets, he turned to look at Erin.

"Is this the car I'm taking today?" Erin sensed Darius was in a bad mood, so she lowered her head in shame.

She even recalled how gentle and understanding Darius was with Alicia earlier, which only made her feel more aggrieved.

Knowing it was unwise to express such things, Erin merely nodded and explained, "Yes, Mr.Reid.I felt a license plate was unnecessary for the car as long as you, someone renowned, was sitting in it.Also, because Almiron City's government is still in a newly established state, they can't make official decisions yet, especially those involving wealthy companies."

She thought Darius would be satisfied with her explanation but was shocked to see his features had hardened.

"I can't believe you'd have such an idea," he snapped.

Erin had never been on the receiving end of Darius' happier moods, yet it was also the first time she had experienced such dissatisfaction from him.

She stood there, trembling, parting her lips but unable to utter anything.

Fear swarmed her senses, leaving her frozen as she stood there with her eyes glued to Darius.

Meanwhile, Darius sensed her emotions but did not react to them. He just stood there, eyes locking on Kate, before he spoke with a husky but blank tone.

"I know you're frightened by how I'm treating you.

However, I'm unsure if my behavior toward you now has also made you realize your mistake."

Erin remained still, unable to muster even the slightest reaction.

Getting no response from the former, Darius turned around only to see an unmoving Erin. Her expression and the way she stood stayed the same, as though time had stopped.

Darius did not speak anymore regarding the matter.

Instead, he walked to the car, reached out to open the passenger door, then got in.

Only after hearing him open the door did Erin realize what she needed to do.

She ran toward the driver seat, reaching out and inhaling deeply before getting in the car.

When she fastened her seat belt, she realized the car keys were already inserted in the ignition.

She pursed her lips at Darius while turning the key.

"I'm very sorry, Mr.Reid.This was my mistake—"

"Your reflection of what you did is wrong. It upsets me,"

Darius interrupted.

Erin's eyes grew wide at him.

"I-I don't understand what you mean, Mr.Reid."

A lengthy sigh came from Darius before he elaborated, "You've remained by my side. Yet, you're behaving differently toward me compared to when you were in the previous company. I'm very disappointed. Perhaps it's because you've developed many feelings you shouldn't have toward me, but I'm sure you're aware you tackle basic tasks well if you wish to stay by my side."

All color drained from Erin's face at that point.

She believed any woman would react bashfully when their secret crushes were revealed.

However, to have their feelings get pointed out so candidly would undoubtedly make most women stiffen.

So, although Erin gripped the steering wheel sturdily, she was so distracted by her emotions that she could not turn the car in another direction.

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Asigh slipped out Darius' lips when he saw Erin behaving that way. He reached over to press the autonomous driving function before speaking up.

"You need to calm down and park the car along the road.We'll continue this conversation then."

Erin began taking many deep breaths.

After she parked the car, Darius continued, "The mistakes you've made today aren't because you messed up—it's because your mentality has changed. You've become more arrogant, thinking we can use money as a crutch to do many things because we're rich now."

In under a second, Erin's eyes looked like they were about to pop out.

She turned to look at Darius, a whoosh sounding from her sudden movement. Her widened eyes soon met Darius' blank ones. She could not deny that Darius was right, and that this mentality was a mistake that she never realized she was making.

Before she could respond, a loud bang sounded.

Their car violently jolted forward and began driving on its own.

There was nothing Erin could do to stop it, even if she pressed hard on the brakes.

A frown marred Darius' face. He gripped the overhead handle with one hand while reaching out to pull up the handbrake.

The car shook violently before screeching to a halt.

By then, Darius leaned into the seat, shut his eyes, and exhaled for the longest time before smoothing down his clothes. He then got out of the car.

Once he saw the vehicle that crashed into them, his eyes sharpened like daggers.

Darius had seen that car's license plate number during his investigation.

The information he found indicated this car belonged to the Gillette family.

With that in mind, Darius was ready to approach the vehicle when the sound of a driver's seat door slammed shut.

Turning around, he saw Erin walking over with a more concerned expression than before.

"What are you worrying about now?" Darius asked, his voice devoid of emotion.

Yet, Erin misinterpreted his question as him being angry, so her heart pounded with panic. She stood before Darius with chattering teeth.

"M-Mr.Reid, I-I'm sorry! All of this is my fault!"

Her gaze was downcast, focusing on the ground, so she did pay attention to Darius' countenance.

All she could do was speak meekly and quickly.

"If I hadn't made the wrong choice with the license plate, we wouldn't be stuck here, and none of this would've happened."

Darius felt even more helpless now that he knew what she was thinking.He sighed before consoling, "This accident has nothing to do with you.The way you're thinking now is dangerous.Perhaps you should try seeing a psychiatrist."

While the two were engaged in their conflict, a man had alighted from the Gillette family's vehicle. He approached them and said, "I don't think now is the best time for you guys to argue. After all, you guys were the ones who crashed into my car."

That instantly ended Darius and Erin's conversation. The two turned to scrutinize the man.

Both had wide eyes but chose to keep mum, as they were unsure how to react.

Even the atmosphere around them grew tense with silence.

It went on until the man grew impatient.

At that point, he locked eyes with the two and spoke up.

"Are you guys mute or something? How dare you not say anything after crashing into my car? I've never met anyone like you here in Almiron City! You two are lowering the quality of our great city by existing here, so you deserve to get punished!"

With that, the person fished out his phone and pointed it at Darius and Erin.

A flash then came from the phone.

Not a word came from Darius throughout the exchange as he could see the greed flashing in the man's eyes.

From that, he knew what the latter wanted and decided against saying anything.

Of course, Erin was unaware of Darius' plans.

She let out a long sigh, her face hardening as she approached the man.

Many negative emotions brimmed in her heart since she had been super anxious and Darius had just criticized her.

Thus, those emotions overflowed, oozing from her all at once.

She parted her lips, quickly speaking with a pointed tone.

"Has poverty made you lose your mind? Could it be that you stole this car you're driving, huh? That must be why you can't afford the high prices that come with having this car, including its gas money, maintenance, and the modified interiors!"

Her words confused everyone at the scene except Darius, who had one hand on his waist and the other against his car.

Lips curled in amusement, Darius was eager to watch things unfold.

The man in a black leather jacket that came out of the Gillette family's car kept opening and closing his mouth.

Ultimately, he did not utter a word as he had no clue how to refute Erin's nonsensical words.

He inhaled sharply, wanting to say something when Erin beat him to it.

She thundered at the top of her lungs, "You wanted to rebuke me yet did not know what to say, so you kept quiet, huh? That proves what I've been saying is true! Even if you come up with some logical reason now, I have reason to suspect you're pulling excuses out of your ass! Because anyone can easily make up a believable explanation for the crash after having so much time to think!"

Irritated, the man could not stand listening to what else Erin had to say.

He rolled up his sleeves and pointed at her.

"You may be pretty, but that doesn't give you the right to show me up! Besides, money is not the only thing that matters in Almiron City—those with stronger fists get the last word in any argument!"

He assumed Erin would be frightened by then, so he pretended like he was about to lunge at her.

Little did he expect Erin to raise her voice, bellowing at him with a threatening growl in her tone.

"Then your actions thus far prove you're not wealthy—you're just someone who uses brute force! Besides, the car that got crashed isn't yours. You can't afford to pay for the damages to your car, so you're trying to get the corresponding money from my chairman and me to appease your boss."

The man could no longer hold his temper.

One of his feet stomped on the hood of his car, then he pinched the collar of his shirt and pulled it up.

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You're saying I'm not wealthy?

Do you see this shirt I'm wearing?

It's by a small designer from loblia, worth 3 million dollars.

I'm 28 this year, and it's the first time I've been called poor.

Honestly, your accusation is hilarious.

Everyone in Almiron City knows me because I'm a member of the Gillette family!"

While speaking, the man cockily jutted his chin at Erin.He could already picture Erin groveling at his feet for forgiveness.

Should that happen, he was more than ready to claim her as one of his women.

Yet, that did not happen, much to his dismay.

Erin merely stood there with her eyes wide.

"The Gillette family?" she said before letting out a frosty chuckle.

"Oh, I know all about that family—they're filthy rich."

A smirk curled on the man's face.

However, it quickly vanished as Erin placed her hands on her hips. She thundered, "I've heard plenty about that family, like how they used improper means to acquire massive wealth. Likewise, I know they've continued to utilize unscrupulous methods to avoid legal sanctions! Sadly for you, this is why

I've come to Almiron City! Your actions show me that all those rumors are true, meaning I don't have to hold back when dealing with you later on!"

The man's breathing quickened after hearing that.

Utterly enraged, he pointed at her, yelling, "I'm Thomas Gillette, the first heir in line among everyone in the Gillette family! That means I own many of my family's business shares!"

Erin did not expect that. She did not see any information about this man during her investigation of the Gillettes.

Thus, Erin assumed the man was just a minor figure that happened to work for the family or some laughable person who thought he was crucial to them. She never took him seriously up until now.

Stiffening like a statue, her hands gradually retracted from her hips and lowered to her sides. Her heart dropped with worry now that she had revealed her and Darius' motives for being in Almiron City. She cranked her tense body, turning to look at Darius.

Although Darius could tell she was asking for help, he felt he didn't have to step in at that moment.

Yet, it was clear that his secretary and the deputy general manager of his company, Erin, could not resolve the issue. He strolled forward, casually placing his hand on his car's hood, and was very relaxed despite the tension.

"You guys got carried away with your chat earlier. Now, I'd like to know this—you said we parked here and somehow crashed into your car that drove over from behind us. Did I get it right?"

Thomas held his breath, realizing he could not discern what Darius was feeling.

It was his first time struggling to detect others' emotions, so he instinctively straightened his back in a defensive position.

Darius kept both hands in his pockets, his eyes calmly gazing at the former. His voice was stoic like always as he pointed out, "Oh? You're not speaking. Then, I'll take your silence as agreement to what I just said. Shall I continue?"

Thomas instinctively nodded upon facing a calm Darius', but his features twisted into a frown immediately after, as he never intended to nod.

Regardless, Darius did not give him time to ponder his actions.

"I'm shocked if what you claimed about your background is true," remarked Darius, whose eyes locked onto Thomas.

"Because I don't think you can handle managing the Gillette family's businesses now with your poor eyesight and lack of logic." Thomas' features warped hideously just then.

He had heard such demeaning words several times since he took over his family's company.

Even so, he did not think those opinions were accurate.

Unfortunately, he could not bring himself to argue against Darius' words.

Something about the latter's collected look made him unable to speak in that instant.

He just stood there, gawking like a fool.

Meanwhile, Darius saw right through Thomas.

It was understandable as he encountered many like the latter back when he was poor; those people owned average amounts of money but behaved recklessly like they were the wealthiest individuals alive.

Thinking of that, Darius sighed and resumed, "Perhaps what you're saying is true, but know that it'll only bring you more humiliation because even if you genuinely are a rich person, your wealth can never compare to mine.

The only reason you're causing trouble for me today is that my car is new and doesn't have a license plate —you think I'm financially unable to afford a license plate at the moment.

Hence, you probably assumed I was wealthy but did not have much influence."

"Then again," he continued while leaning against his car, "To your understanding of the elite social circles, those with wealth would also have authority. So, you concluded I was someone who'd just acquired my wealth and didn't have time to build my authoritative presence. That made me the perfect target for you—you plan to threaten me with your 'superior' influence and get me to pay a massive sum for your damages. Your car never would've crashed into mine otherwise. This accident only happened because you came up with this plan while driving behind me."

While Darius' tone was calm, his every word spoke the truth and carried a lethal bite.

It made Thomas' face darken as he drilled his gaze into Darius.

He snarled frostily, "How did you know? I never told anyone about it, yet you figured it out.I can't accept this."

As he spoke, he reached for the gun behind his waist, knowing it could easily and speedily clean up the situation.

His actions were not subtle, so Erin saw noticed. Her blood rushed with trepidation.

So, without much thought, she ran in front of Darius to shield him.

That caused Darius' brows to knit.

He reached out and grabbed Erin's collar before tossing her aside in no time.

Unable to resist Darius' strength, Erin got thrown a distance away. A loud gunshot tore through the air just as she made contact with the ground.

It was then that a piercing scream came from her lips.

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"Darius!"

Erin's amplified cries filled the air.

Then, she heard Thomas muttering a curse, which sent a chill down her spine. She did not dare stand and see what had happened to Darius.

Instead, she remained frozen on the ground.

"I'm so sorry, Mr.Reid.I got here too late," a familiar voice suddenly spoke.

"Bridget!"

Erin thought, rising to her feet at an inhumanly fast rate. She then looked over the newly arrived car next to her, where a woman got out from the other side.

Pressing her aching chest, Erin stumbled onto the ground again.

Her legs had given in, and her mind went blank All her body could do was breathe at that point.

On the other hand, Bridget saw Erin from afar and wanted to speak with her.

Before she could, she saw Erin collapse onto the ground.

Bridget assumed Erin had gotten hurt, so she dashed over to Darius, stopping before him briefly to bow.

"Mr.Reid."

While she had not risen from her bow, her eyes continued to examine the other side of the car for Erin.

Seeing that, Darius put his hands in his pockets and sighed lightly.

"Go ahead and see if she's okay."

Joy filled Bridget's otherwise hardened features.

Nevertheless, she hurriedly resumed her usual stoic countenance and bowed at Darius again before rushing to Erin.

There, she knelt to grab Erin's wrist, lifting the latter.

"Don't worry.Mr.Reid is fine."

Fear had caused tears to stream down Erin's face.

When she heard what Bridget said, she nodded and tried to stand on her two feet.

After taking a few deep inhales, she opened the newly arrived car's backdoor and got in.

That confused Darius, so he did not say anything. He merely shot a raised brow look at Bridget.

In response, Bridget raised both shoulders in a shrug.

"Mr.Reid, Erin has shed some tears out of worry for you. Those tears probably ruined her makeup. It's unprofessional to neglect her appearance as your secretary, so she's sorting it out at once."

Darius' lips pursed slightly, but he did not speak. He decided to look at Thomas instead.

At that moment, Thomas knelt as Bridget had broken both his feet.

Thomas could sense Darius' gaze on his body, so he could not help but quiver from head to toe. He could not defend himself as the latter was a powerful figure.

Hence, his gaze ping-ponged everywhere, and his mind was busy brainstorming solutions to his current predicament.

Despite his collected expression, he was panicking on the inside.

He stuttered, "S-Sir, I know I've done many horrible things.Please, I hope you can let me off the hook.How about this? Is there anything you want—I can make it happen! I'll do everything I can to fulfill your wish, regardless of whether it's within my abilities."

He struggled to raise his head and look at Darius, overcoming the fear in his heart. He did so to prove his sincerity to the latter.

Those actions made one thing clear to Darius.

With his hands in his pockets, he curved his lips.

Although, anyone could sense the disdain behind his smirk.

"What you just said has made things very obvious. I believe I know what's going on. Sadly for you, I don't need your help because nothing you do now can make up for the humiliation you caused me earlier."

Thomas' eyes widened in disbelief that Darius would refuse such an enticing offer.

Deep down, he also pondered Darius' first two sentences as he did not understand what they meant.

Thus, after pursing his lips into a thin line, he decided to clarify his earlier offer.

"I think you've misunderstood what I said earlier. I mean to say—I hope I can help out with what you came to Almiron City to do."

A smile spread across Darius' face, but Thomas did not understand what it implied. So, he clamped his lips shut, not daring to make even a squeak.

All he did was cast a pleading look at Darius.

Little did he know he was in for a bitter slap in the face.

Darius did not budge from seeing Thomas' look.

Instead, his smile curved deeper.

"You should know that you're of no value to anyone. I didn't even know someone like you existed in the Gillette family. Situations like this only occur if you're someone intelligent who knows it's best to hide your identity. However, it's clear that's not the case."

A lengthy sigh came from him before he spun on his heel, heading back to the newly arrived car.

"I'm on my way to attend the Gillettes' banquet," he said, "I'm sure we'll see each other there if all goes according to plan. Should you decide to retaliate or discuss some things with me, we can always chat there."

He then reached out to open the driver's seat door.

Noticing his actions, Bridget quickly rushed to the passenger seat, wanting to get in.

That was when Darius looked up and saw her. He stopped in his tracks, asking, "Didn't you drive here?"

Bridget nodded but then quickly shook her head.

"No, Mr.Reid.Edward drove this car while I rode shotgun.He'll drive the Bugatti you were taking earlier to the banquet and join us there."

Darius turned around to look at his previous car but quickly retracted his gaze.

Without saying anything more, he got into the driver's seat.

Bridget could tell Darius approved of what she said from his actions.

Hence, she joined him, getting into the front passenger seat.

Once they got in, Darius caught a whiff of something fragrant in the air.

He then behaved in a way he rarely did; without much thought, his body turned toward the backseat to find the source of the scent.

What came into view was Erin, who now looked as she did way before the incident.

Still, she continued to powder her face, hoping to look nothing short of perfect.

Darius cocked a brow but did not comment on it.

He started the engine but soon heard another car trailing behind.

Looking in the rear view mirror, he confirmed the driver behind him was Edward before driving ahead in silence.

[HOT]Read novel The Consortium's Heir Chapter 256

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Following the navigation system's direction, Darius drove Bridget and Erin to the location of the banquet.

Sometime later, Erin finished fixing her makeup in the backseat.

She felt awful for letting Darius, her boss, drive them all to the event, so she cleared her throat twice to speak.

"Mr.Reid, based on my investigation, the banquet will occur at a location that the Gillettes are familiar with—Remnard Estate, their family home. According to tradition, their family gathers in that estate for significant events throughout the year. Earlier, when we encountered Thomas Gillette, I searched for photos of the Gillette family's events online and did not see him in any of them. Thus, I firmly believe that man has ulterior motives. Not to mention, it's quite an uncanny coincidence that he's showing up now. The Gillettes have always been arrogant. The family's focus isn't on their money. Instead, the Gillettes are more concerned with whoever poses a potential threat to them. It's always been this way, so they've never encountered any trouble. Therefore, I believe that Thomas is a foe."

Pin-drop silence ensued in the car as Darius did not respond to her.

Erin inhaled deeply, gathering whatever courage she had left to say, "But what shocks me is when I investigated the Gillette family's affairs again, I learned that majority of their business shares are indeed under Thomas' name. Such a

transfer of share ownership should've been revealed in the news.Plus, the legal procedures would take some time, so things shouldn't be as it is now."

Darius continued to drive stoically.

Being in the backseat, Erin had no way of discerning Darius' expression. She gulped, anxious as she did not know whether her words had upset him.

Ultimately, she, too, fell gravely silent.

Meanwhile, Bridget was in the front passenger seat and wanted to help Erin.

She bit her lower lip, hesitating momentarily before speaking up.

"I just discovered that the Gillette family's security guard was a classmate of mine back in school. He accumulated numerous injuries after working as a bodyguard for the Reid family for many years, so he got himself a job as the Gillettes' security guard. I've learned a lot about the family from him. For starters, Thomas Gillette used to be a bodyguard, and Gillette isn't really his last name—he doesn't have one. Wilson Gillette, the patriarch of the Gillettes, only took Thomas seriously after the latter participated in a perilous and undisclosed mission for the family. Because of that, Wilson took in Thomas as a son. Some time passed before this got announced to the family's friends. The Gillettes even held a grand party to celebrate this."

A frown marred Erin's face just then. She knew Bridget was only saying that out of good intent.

Yet, she could not suppress the bitterness in her heart, so she interjected, "But these things didn't come up during my investigation. So, if the family did throw a grand party as your friend said, I would've found information about it."

While speaking, she shot several cautious and worried glances at Bridget.

Hesitation lingered in her tone as she did not want to upset the latter.

In the front seat, Bridget did not seem bothered.

Instead, she flashed a more amiable smile.

"I reacted the same when my friend told me all of that. That's why he sent me all the photos from the celebration. I'll text them to you after this. Also, I can tell you this with the utmost seriousness—you couldn't find any information about

the party because it was a secret. The Gillettes invited their closest friends and family but not the media, nor did they publicize it. Although it's possible to find some mentions of the event in media platforms, those will soon vanish under the family's orders."

Everyone in the car, except for Erin, narrowed their eyes curiously.

Erin was the only one who voiced her thoughts.

"I'd like to know if this happened before or after Hank Gillette's death."

Realizing that Erin was onto something, Bridget's eyes lit up. She then turned to look at Erin, who sat in the backseat, and said, "The party happened after. However, Wilson took Thomas in as a son before Hank's death."

Erin nodded while staring into the distance, deep in thought. She no longer looked as miserable as before.

Instead, she stated, "I think I know why that's the case. Because the Gillettes are a large family, many of their younger members are eligible heirs to their family company. However, Wilson endured many hardships and founded the company alone. In other words, the wealth and assets of the Gillette Group have nothing to do with the other Gillette family members—those things belong to Wilson. But he has no heir now that his son is dead. Hence, according to the laws of inheritance, all his wealth would go to his family."

She paused for a breath, then added, "Wilson's getting old, so it won't be long before he retires. When that happens, there's no guarantee the heir to the Gillette family business and wealth will continue to treat Wilson well. In short, Wilson is looking out for his future. He initially took Thomas in because he

wanted a backup family member to rely on in case things went wrong.But when his biological son, Hank, died, his plans changed entirely.That's why Thomas' succession is Wilson's best shot at safeguarding his wealth."

Anod came from Darius.He continued to drive calmly before finally uttering, "What you've said sounds reasonable.However, there aren't any facts to prove them.We should stay alert and examine what happens next to confirm those suspicions."

In the backseat, Erin nodded obediently before taking a long inhale.

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Darius could tell Erin was still nervous.

Even so, he no longer criticized her opinions nor spoke anymore.

All he did was drive in silence.

Stifled by the sudden tension, Bridget regretted riding shotgun just then. She complained in her heart, "No wonder Edward refused to join us!"

Pin-drop silence filled the car.

Such a void was something Bridget had never experienced before, so it suffocated her. She opened her mouth but then kept quiet out of fear, giving up after failing to speak a few times.

Not wanting to focus on the awkwardness any longer, Bridget decided it was better to look through the map on her phone instead.

That way, she could concentrate on ensuring Darius' safety.

When she scanned every last detail on the map, she felt the car slow down.

Numerous expensive cars had parked in the space ahead.

Yet, none cost nearly as much as the car Darius drove.

Thus, when he arrived at the road before Remnard Estate, everyone halted in their tracks, eyes glued onto his pricey vehicle.

Envy and interest lingered in everyone's gazes, but Darius did not care about the attention he received. He honked at the car in front, prompting whoever was in it to hurry up. What happened next shocked Bridget and Erin; they watched as the driver ahead drove closer to the roadside, clearing a path on the previously blocked road.

Darius knew the car was making way for him, so he arrogantly floored the gas pedal, driving down the road ahead at full speed.

Next to him, Bridget's mouth had rounded into an "O" shape.

It stayed that way for the longest time before she eventually turned her attention to Darius.

"I can't believe that happened, Mr.Reid.I've never witnessed such a thing in all the years I've served by your side.Almiron City has continued to shock me, as I've never encountered a place with social rules like theirs.In fact, I've never considered the possibility of such rules."

Simultaneously, Erin, who was in awe, nodded to the former's words. She chimed in, "Mr.Reid, I didn't think such bizarre social customs could occur in real life. Don't the authorities or city officials usually handle these situations?"

Her brows scrunched together with growing curiosity.

While asking that, she opened her laptop and typed across the keyboard at lightning speed, eager to learn why the city operated that way.

Darius only focused on driving and did not answer the women's questions.

The only time he spoke was when he calmly pointed out, "Look at the cars on both sides of the road; the further down we travel, the pricier these vehicles seem. There are a few—not more than three—things out of place so far, and they've occurred in the more than 100 cars we just drove past. Perhaps

some attendees from wealthy families arrived here in less expensive vehicles on short notice. Alternatively, those people might be young heirs and haven't inherited their family's wealth or companies. Therefore, they're unable to afford higher-end cars."

Bridget and Erin dropped whatever they were doing at once.

They then examined the scenery outside their car for some minutes before nodding sternly.

Darius had spoken the truth; the women had no reason to refute his explanation of the varying levels of luxury cars outside.

As Darius parked the car, the entire estate's yard fell silent.

That 'I was because it was a rare sight for another person, apart from the Gillette family members, to drive such an expensive car.

Everyone stiffened like statues, fixating on the vehicle as Darius stepped out with Bridget and Erin in tow.

The three appeared before the audience, standing in a triangular formation with Darius taking the lead. He strolled toward the security guard, where a table and an attractive hostess stood.

Darius stood silently, both hands folding behind his back while his gaze fixed on the document on the table ahead.

That alone made the security guard nervous. He gulped, then looked at Darius to ask, "Is there anything I can help you with, sir?"

Darius nodded, tapping on the document.

"This must be where guests register their attendance, isn't it? You'll just have to write my information on it."

The security guard gnawed on his lower lip and replied, "Sir, I'd I love to help you with that, but I'm sorry to say I have to see your invite first. I can't let you in without proof that you've gotten invited to this event. It's the rules, so I'm sure a wealthy man like you will understand."

Darius had both hands in his pockets.

After raising a brow ¥ sardonically, he placed his palm against the table and leaned closer.

"I forgot to bring it.However, I'm sure you'll allow me in once I mention my name."

Hesitance flashed on the security guard's face.

Yet, he noticed the lavish clothing on Darius, then saw the latter's upscale car. He then shut his eyes and gritted his teeth, batting internally, before nodding.

"I suppose I can break the rules for you. Please tell me your name then."

"Darius Reid," said Darius with both hands behind his back again.

He raised his chin, giving off an air of elegance and pride.

The security guard nodded, sat down, and held the pen to write Darius' name.

That was when the hostess near him voiced her doubts.

"I don't recall seeing your name on the list of guests we invited, though." Brows knitted tautly, Darius turned to look at her. He did not account for this to happen.

Darius was prepared to deal with things should the security guard stop him.

However, he never imagined he would receive a phony invite.

Thus, he folded his arms behind him, stared at the hostess, and asked, "Is that so? Well, how can you prove what you're saying is true?"

The hostess' lips curved into a polite smile at Darius just then.

At the same time, a hint of malice flickered in her eyes.

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Darius knew that meant the hostess wanted to do something vicious or planned to ruin his reputation and humiliate him.

Despite that, curiosity filled Darius' mind as he looked forward to seeing what tricks the hostess had up her sleeve.

Thus, he silently stood there with his arms behind him.

That reaction was not what the hostess expected. Her lips parted slightly in shock, but it only lasted briefly as she soon snapped out of her daze.

Then, she fished a document from her pocket and revealed it to everyone.

"We invited 120 guests for tonight's banquet, and 'Darius Reid' isn't one of them. Furthermore, our guests have assigned hostesses who will lead them to their seats—but you don't have a hostess. Not to mention, you seem unaware of our customs, so I doubt you've ever been on the guest list of the Gillette family's parties before."

The hostess' voice grew louder by the second.

"I believe everyone here knows only the wealthiest figures in Almiron city, or any other city, can appear in our guest list!"

Confusion filled her face as she stared at Darius. She raised both brows and rounded her eyes like an innocent victim, hinting for the latter to explain.

Because she looked so pitiful, it sparked anger in every male guest present, causing them to scowl at Darius.

Seeing all those frowns entertained Darius, who did not bother to hide his amusement, so he chuckled sarcastically.

"I know many of you here have little wealth. You guys assume you're wealthy just because you received an invite from the Gillette family. That has also caused you guys to overestimate your status in society. Erin stood aside the entire time, but her jaw fell open right then. She could not believe Darius had candidly insulted everyone there. Her eyes became glazed with worry, fearing that the men would attack Darius. Even so, she immediately concealed how she felt, thinking it was unwise to reveal her emotions since many cameras were recording outside the venue.

She knew grave consequences would await if the cameras captured her faltering emotions.

Hence, she stood behind Darius with a stoic expression.

Even her gaze seemed empty.

Bridget stood beside the former.

Since Bridget had received professional training, she never once revealed how she felt on her face.

Nevertheless, Bridget secretly felt thrilled by the twist of events.

Never did she expect Darius to insult everyone at the venue.

That made her blood rush so much that even her breathing quickened.

Both women's thoughts were unknown to Darius. He stood rooted to the spot, hands behind his back as he stared the hostess down. He then spoke with a neutral tone.

"So, let's talk about why you're here then."

Something about his eyes felt sharp.

Like a blade, it pierced the hostess, who was too dazed to react.

At the same time, she felt defenseless and began to tremble fervently. She stumbled two steps back, her eyes glossy with fear as she looked at Darius.

That made Darius' lips curve upward.

He rolled his eyes at her, taunting, "That pitiful look of yours doesn't work on me.It'll probably ignite a primal desire to protect you from the other men here, but I believe these guys can easily see through your greedy nature. That's why you'll never get a happy ending, even though you're working at a prestigious event like the Gillettes' party. Your dreams of marrying someone affluent won't come true because all of Almiron City's upper-class bachelors will ostracize you."

The hostess' once rosy cheeks grew as pale as chalk. She could also sense that all eyes were currently on her.

The hostess' chest rose and fell quickly from how flustered she felt.

She met Darius' gaze and snapped, "You've said many things, but they don't make sense to me.Perhaps you're hallucinating.Of course, why you've insulted everyone isn't any of my concern.I was merely informing you that you

didn't have an invite, meaning you're not a guest of the Gillette family, so you can't enter."

With that, she straightened her back confidently.

Although she locked eyes with Darius, her gaze still trembled with terror.

Nevertheless, she pointed at the door, ordering, "You have two options now—the first is to leave, or you can continue to throw a fit.If you choose the second option, I'll call security and have them escort you

out.Although, that'll be humiliating for you, as I can't guarantee the guards won't cause a scene when kicking you out."

Darius' hands had returned to his pockets by then. He sighed lengthily before declaring, "I've given you many chances, but it's clear you don't care for them."

The hostess could tell Darius was threatening her, so her body trembled even more. Her knees grew weak like jelly, unable to support her body weight, causing her to fall on her butt.

When the men around them witnessed such a scene, their hearts pounded with outrage.

Not wanting to stand idly by, they turned their heads toward Darius, and one of them voiced their disapproval.

"That's not very gentlemanly of you! She's only doing her job as a hostess, fulfilling the instructions of her superior! Don't you know her future depends on whether she completes her tasks well? Besides, she could lose her wages for this month and starve! The same can't be said for you, though—you're rich! So, why would you make things difficult for the poor girl?"

The person's voice rang out speedily, getting his message across in no time while he hid among the crowd.

Since Darius was an enlightened martial artist, he turned to look everywhere, scanning the faces around him.

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Darius was sure he had looked at everyone present, yet he could not determine the source of the voice.

That was because he did not see anyone open their mouths when the person spoke.

It rattled Darius.

Still, he kept a blank countenance with both hands in his pockets.

"If any of you guys find those words reasonable," Darius said calmly, "Then you should be helping this hostess out instead of allowing her to stay here and start trouble."

He sounded so unbothered that no one dared look into his eyes.

In truth, he found it silly how the person's retort made everyone, including the security guard earlier, glower at him in distaste.

Thus, he turned to face Erin, instructing, "That lady looks like the epitome of all hostesses. Her dress, shoes, necklace, earrings, and every little accessory appears expensive. On top of that, her hands are smooth, free from any scars or wrinkles caused by hard labor. That said, I'd like to know what she used to do before working here, and I believe you can give me an answer at once."

Erin looked up at that moment, her face lighting up as she took ina look of trust from Darius. Her heart raced as she nodded and whipped out her phone in a split second.

"I had the same doubts as you, Mr.Reid.Here's all the information I found earlier."

Following that, she flashed her pearly whites, smirking at the hostess.

There was nothing the hostess could do except stand her ground.

Nonetheless, her breathing deepened as she balled her fists by her sides, her features hardening at Erin.

"Quit beating around the bush! Since you claim to know things, there's no need to utter such unnecessary things to attract everyone's attention. I have the utmost confidence that no one here will fall for your lies!"

"Perfect." Erin's smirk broadened.

"I'll admit I'm shocked to hear you say that, Miss Gillette."

Sharp inhales came from everyone at the scene.

Soon, every person held their breath, indicating how collectively startled they were by the truth.

The Gillette family was the oldest and most renowned family in Almiron city.

With that in mind, everyone was shocked to learn a daughter of the Gillette family had disguised herself as a hostess and welcomed others at the main door.

After a long pause, everyone's foreheads scrunched up in confusion as they had never seen a Gillette family member that looked like the hostess before.

Erin could tell the other guests were doubting her, but she did not care.

Instead, she stayed emotionless and added, "You never received formal education from the Gillette family because you're an illegitimate child. Also, before the Gillettes could do a physical checkup on you, they assumed you were a boy and took you in. That was the outcome your mother desperately wanted, as she had worked hard for it over many years. Sadly, you ruined your mother's plans because

you weren't properly educated, revealing your gender to everyone. Furthermore, the death of Hank, your half-brother, only made everyone more upset with your deception. That's why the Gillettes have never publicly announced you as their family member."

Despite Erin calmly revealing the shocking truth, everyone fell into a grave silence.

It was because they were witnessing the unearthing of the Gillette family's secret, something they should have never known.

Their participation alone was detrimental; they knew no one could get away unscathed if this matter angered the Gillette family.

Hence, all color drained from the faces of every guest.

They then glared daggers at the hostess and Erin.

Not a single reaction came from Erin, however. She stood there with her hands by her sides, boldly meeting everyone's furious scowls.

Erin could not care less if the people now had a negative impression of her; she did not rely on them for a living, after all.

Unfortunately, things were different for the hostess. Her face darkened more than anyone present.

It was hard enough for her to join the Gillette family from the start; her father was very disappointed when he realized she had been lying about being a boy all this while.

Not only that, but he even got himself a non-biological son to inherit all his wealth rather than give everything to her.

For that reason, she showed up in disguise today to meet other affluent acquaintances of the Gillette family; she wanted their help getting back into the Gillettes' good graces.

Yet, it was clear as day that her plan had failed.

Everyone sneered at her, which meant none of them would ever help her now.

The hostess stood frozen, her fists curling tautly as her breathing spiked.

Desperate to resolve the situation, the cogs in her brain turned at the speed of light, but it was to no avail; the guests now saw her as a villain.

All she could do now was alleviate their negative impressions of her.

So, her gaze hardened, snapping over to Darius. She then announced with determination, "What you've said is correct. However, I can't help my lack of proper education or my blood relation to the Gillettes. I didn't choose to be born into this family either. Even so, I'm working really hard to get back in touch with the Gillettes, as you've all probably guessed. While my methods

may seem shameful, this is my last option. You have a blessed, carefree life—sadly, I don't."

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