

Ex-Wife 1721

Chapter: 1721

"What is it?" Justin asked hesitantly, feeling like he was walking into a trap set by an overly clever little boy.

Seeing how Justin was slowly entering his trap, Adie smiled mysteriously but kept Justin guessing.

"You should know my mommy well since you like her so much. Why don't you try to guess?"

"You want me to guess?" Rubbing his chin, Justin nodded contemplatively.

"I guess the thing your mommy needs the most is the sincerity of an excellent man like me. It's the reason why I've appeared in her life, because I'm just the thing she needs."

"Ugh!" Adie pretended to vomit and complained, "You're so cheesy, Mr. Baldwin; no wonder my mommy doesn't like you. You say you're sincere but isn't that just an empty promise? You should let your actions do the talking."

"Haha! You're so young. Do you even know what empty promises are?"

"Yes, I do. Empty promises are promises that are never kept while sincerity is the exact opposite." Adie narrowed his eyes at Justin.

"Do you want to make empty promises or let your actions speak for you?"

"Okay, stop beating around the bush. Just tell me what you want me to do." Amused, Justin found himself completely under Adie's control, and they had circled back to Justin making contributions again.

"Well... My mommy doesn't need love... but she does need money, the money to revive the Everheart family. Isn't your family very rich? Can't you give my mommy some? I'm sure a few billion isn't a lot for you," Adie said bluntly, negotiating like a businessman. His idea was simple-he figured that his mother's life would be simpler if she had more money, and then, she could spend more time with him and Abby.

“So, that’s what you want?” Justin chuckled and agreed to it without any hesitation.

“Yes, you’re right. I’m the sole heir of my family, and I do have a lot of money. I can always give your mommy money if she needs it.”

“Really?” Adie’s eyes lit up, and he nodded approvingly. “Sir, you’re pretty reliable. I think it’ll be good if my mommy dates you. She can just make herself happier by buying things. Well, I’ve made up my mind to pick you as my new daddy because you’re so much better than my dumb scumbag daddy!”

“You said it! Oh, I’m going to record this.” Justin was over the moon because he had finally gained Adie’s approval. He immediately fished out his phone and recorded Adie’s words.

In his opinion, the first step to winning Renee’s heart was to win over her two children. He felt that Abby would be easier to persuade since she mostly cared about looks, so as long as he dressed up handsomely, she would be on his side. The troublesome one was Adie because he and Stefan were so alike in their deviousness and intelligence.

Justin would always fall into Adie’s traps before he even knew what was happening, much like what had just happened. He had willingly promised to give up a few billion for nothing.

That was how smart Adie was. Justin and Adie returned to the ward triumphantly, both feeling like they had gained something.

“Where did you go, Adie? I was worried about you.” Renee let out a sigh of relief the moment she saw Adie.

“I picked your favorite flowers for you, Mommy, and I got you something really good!” Adie handed the bouquet to Renee and declared proudly.

“Huh?” Renee looked confused.

“Benefactor, please come in.” Adie beckoned Justin in with a finger and said seriously,

“I’ve already discussed it with Mr. Baldwin, Mommy. He’ll give you money instead of making you empty promises from now on. Just give him a figure, and you won’t have to work so hard anymore.”

“What?” Renee’s jaw dropped, and she stared at Adie in disbelief. What had the little troublemaker done now?

However, Justin walked to Renee’s bed and nodded sincerely. “Adie’s right—I’ve never really done anything for you. Please let me do something for you now by giving you money, after all... it’s pretty much the only thing I have.”

Renee massaged her aching temples and grumbled, “Stop being unreasonable.”

“No, I’m being serious. I want to give you money.” Justin wanted to show Renee how deep his feelings for her were. He would have banked the money directly into her account if he could.

Helpless, Renee said to Justin, “Don’t take Adie’s nonsense seriously. Plus, I have money, and even if I needed money, I wouldn’t take it from you for nothing.”

“No, it’s not for nothing! I’m willing, and it’ll make me happy. I’m paying for the emotional value of it, so it’s a great bargain.” Justin protested, trying to convince Renee.

Renee sighed in exasperation. “Are you out of your mind, Justin? No one will give people money for nothing.”

Before Justin could answer, Adie eagerly defended him.

“No, Mr. Baldwin’s brain is working fine. The one whose brain is ruined is my scumbag daddy. He’s forgotten about you, Abby, and me, which is completely unforgivable!”

Renee's expression became tense, and she immediately asked, "How do you know he's forgotten about us? Did you meet him?"

"Yeah, I met him when I was picking flowers for you in the garden downstairs, and I even saw the woman who's about to marry him. I find her quite strange," Adie replied honestly. He knew that Seraphina wasn't a nice person given what he had overheard in the garden.

"What's so strange about her?" Renee asked curiously.

"I heard her on the phone saying that they have to stop some kind of brain surgery by getting that person into a car crash or some accident by drowning. It sounds like she's going to do something bad."

"She wants to stop a brain surgery?" Renee muttered, instinctively feeling like something was off. However, she didn't ask Adie anything else about it. After playing with her children for a while, she asked Margaret to take them home.

Justin stayed behind, and looked at her in concern. "I heard that Quinton wants to leave Beach City for a while, so you have to be extra careful. Odd things have been happening lately, and a lot of people are coveting your family..."

Justin only said that because he had noticed bad things happening to his family ever since he started cooperating with the Everhearts.

Most of them were attacks on their finances, like Justin's business partner abruptly withdrawing their funds, one of their factories catching fire, and the higher-ups finding fault with him for no reason.

However, there had also been physical attacks directed at Justin and Quinton.

Quinton found a man-made bomb under his car the day before, and Justin realized that his car brakes had been tampered with when he started his car. Quinton hadn't told Renee about all this because he didn't want her to worry, but Justin felt that she should be aware of just how serious the situation was.

“That’s why I think someone might have caused your fall!” Justin said urgently.

Renee clenched her fists and inhaled deeply.

“Okay, I’ll be careful. Quinton and I just got some time off, and there are already people getting restless.”

“So, what’s your plan now? Do you want to leave the hospital early? It’s crowded here, so anything can happen; it’ll be safer if you stay at home,” Justin suggested carefully. Now he knew why Quinton had suggested it earlier.

Unfortunately, Justin hadn’t thought that far ahead, and Renee had suffered the consequences.

“I’ll think about it,” she replied indifferently. Truthfully, her lower back had almost healed, but... she didn’t want to leave. She didn’t want to let go of her nights with Stefan so soon, but she also had to be smart about this. Renee took a deep breath and made up her mind. All good things had to come to an end, and those precious memories were more than enough.

“I... I’ll ask to be discharged tomorrow.”

In the quiet ward that night, Stefan appeared again. Once again, he had brought her a lot of her favourite foods, but she looked distracted this time, as if something was weighing on her mind. Stefan frowned and asked her,

“What’s the matter? Are you getting sick of the food?”

“Yeah, I’ve been eating it everyday after all. You don’t have to bring me food tomorrow, and... you don’t have to come here anymore,” Renee said softly. Stefan raised his brows, and realization bloomed on his face.

“You’re leaving.”

“Aren’t you too?” She glanced at his healed neck and chuckled.

“You’re not so weak that you have to stay in the hospital for a month just for bruises, right?”

“Yeah, I... I guess I don’t know what I want,” Stefan said quietly. He knew their time together had an expiration date, but he didn’t want it to stop.

The air was thick with tension and unsaid words. Both of them had so many things to say, but neither spoke.

“I heard that you’re going to have brain surgery?” Renee suddenly remembered what Adie had said to her.

Stefan looked at her abruptly. “Who told you that?”

Adie would pass by this large garden every time he came to visit Renee, and he had always wanted to pick some of the colorful flowers in it for Renee. His mother loved beautiful things, and flowers were one of the most beautiful things in the world, so Adie felt that Renee would definitely be happy when she saw them.

There were many types of flowers blooming brightly in the garden, including large roses, lush rhododendrons, and bright peonies. It was a beautiful and calming sight, and Adie decided to pick one of each to put into a bouquet for his mother. He walked into the flower shrubs, and the image of him surrounded by fresh flowers looked like a scene from a movie.

As he plucked some flowers, he heard a woman’s angry voice as she spoke on the phone.

“I don’t care, we have to put an end to this surgery and stop Owen from coming to the hospital! Is it that hard to make a person disappear? People die in plane crashes and car accidents all the time! Doesn’t he like fishing? He can drown at sea then! Just stop calling me and asking questions, all I want to hear is that you’ve got the job done.”

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When he heard that, Adie stopped plucking flowers and focused on the woman. He instinctively felt that there was something wrong with this bad-tempered woman.

It was none other than Seraphina, and she didn't notice Adie as she argued with the person on the phone. "Stefan can't know about this because he's still in the hospital... All you have to know is that he wants to have the surgery. As long as you get rid of Owen, I can find him another neurosurgeon. Listen—we'll be the ones who suffer if he gets back his memories, okay? Right, I'll leave it to you then."

After that, Seraphina impatiently ended the call and left the garden.

Stefan? Adie tried to digest what he had just heard in the garden, and wondered if that lady had been talking about his scumbag daddy. If she was, it meant that his scumbag daddy had lost his memories... which was why he didn't remember Adie.

Adie realized now that there might have been an accident, and Stefan might not be a scumbag at all. It was a lot to think about.

Suddenly, a cold voice interrupted his thoughts.

"Hey, what are you doing here alone? Where are your parents?"

Adie stood up and looked around. When he saw who had spoken, his eyes grew wide and the flowers fell from his hands.

Stefan neither admitted nor denied it because he didn't want too many people knowing about it.

"If you really want to have the surgery...

you should remind your surgeon to be careful because someone is trying to plot against him," Renee said carefully, unsure if what Adie had heard was true or not.

Stefan stared at her sharply. "What do you know?"

“Nothing, I... I just feel that people like us should be careful since we’ve got so many enemies.”

“Enemies?” Stefan’s frown deepened as he asked, “Did you get into trouble?”

“I’m safe. Plus, those people can’t do anything to me,” Renee said confidently.

She was the world’s top killer, so anyone wanting to mess with her was looking for trouble.

Even though she was still recovering, she could definitely handle them.

“You’re very sure of yourself, but you have to be careful too,” Stefan reminded her gently.

“You too. Be careful,” Renee echoed. It felt like a silent confession of love, a promise that they would both meet again after the storm had passed.

Stefan left Renee’s ward late at night, and Renee didn’t dwell on it as she was already dozing off.

The incense in her room smelled very nice tonight, and Renee felt her thoughts start to blur.

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Soon, her body went limp, and she lost consciousness. The woman standing in the shadows waited until she was sure that Renee wasn’t conscious, then turned to the two men nearby and ordered, “Take her away!” Three days later, the crew started shooting *The Choice of Love* as scheduled on an island a few dozen kilometers away from Beach City.

The show had gotten a lot of funding because of popular guests like Santiago, Megan, and Xavier too as a big shot from the entertainment industry.

The crew had booked a whole villa for the six guests to spend time with each other.

“Ladies and gentlemen, this show is going to be a little different from other shows. The cameras will start filming as soon as you step onto the island, and the footage will be streamed live worldwide except for when you’re using the washroom or sleeping.

Basically, just keep in mind that you’re being filmed, and please give us your cooperation.”

Before they boarded the ship, Billy Hughes, the host of the show, explained the rules of the show again.

“No problem. I’m not scared because I’m the same in front of the camera and in private,” Megan said enthusiastically.

She was famous for her straightforward character, and coupled with her innocent looks, she had earned the nickname ‘The Candid Megan ‘.

A lot of people enjoyed watching her on TV.

“Ugh, there’s no privacy at all... it’s inhumane!” Angel muttered crossly.

She had the highest academic qualifications among the female guests, and she was known for her talents and aloofness.

Unlike Megan who fawned over Xavier and Santiago, Angel had yet to expose her preference.

“If you find it unacceptable, you can quit...”

Does anyone want to quit?” Billy asked them as he stood at the ship entrance. Nobody responded, so he grinned and continued, “Well, it seems like nobody’s backing out just yet. Now, we’ll start the first session of our show called ‘In The Same Boat’.”

“In The Same Boat?” Stupefied, everyone wondered what kind of trick the crew was trying to pull here.

Smiling, Billy explained to everyone,

"Relax— it is what it is. When we're on the island, the eight guests will be divided into four teams by drawing lots. It's time to see who you're destined to be with... People who get balls of the same colour will be on the same team... That's what 'In The Same Boat' is." The atmosphere became silent.

After a while, Skylar complained, "That's so dumb! What if two men or two women get paired up?" Scratching his head, Billy grinned eagerly.

"There's nothing wrong with that. After all, our show is called The Choice of Love, so it doesn't always have to be a same-sex couple.

People could even become great friends here! The possibilities are endless."

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"It's obvious that they're trying their best to get viewers, but I'm looking forward to it.

We should just try to have a good time while we're here." Leia was quite eager.

"Yeah, that's right! I don't care who I get paired with, but I'll surely fall for Miss Osborne if I get a cute partner like her."

Megan was a social person and wanted to get to know Leia better, and both seemed to have a lot to talk about.

"Cute?" Xavier burst into laughter. "I'm afraid you've got her all wrong."

"Isn't she cute? She's got soft, chubby cheeks like a baby! Ooh, I just want to kiss those cute cheeks!" Megan giggled and wanted to kiss Leia on the cheek, but Xavier pulled Leia aside quickly.

“Nobody’s allowed to touch her like that,” he growled.

“That’s not your call to make!” Leia snapped and pushed Xavier away.

“As long as I’m comfortable with that person, they can touch me. Muah!” Just to rub her point in, Leia kissed Megan on the cheek.

Everyone cheered excitedly.

Xavier gritted his teeth, trying to calm himself down because he couldn’t make a scene on live camera.

He had finally found a woman he sincerely loved, and now he had to fight off advances from men and women.

‘Karma really has it out for me,’ he thought miserably.

“Haha! That’s exactly what we want. I wonder how everyone’s going to react when they’re on the boats...” Adam laughed as he watched the scene from his tent and smacked his thigh joyfully.

At last, it was time for the guests to be divided into their teams. There were eight balls of four different colors in a paper box, and there was only a fist-sized hole in the box to prevent anyone from cheating. Hence, it didn’t matter who the person was, they were all subject to fate.

“Okay, let’s see what colour everyone got,” Billy said eagerly. Everyone revealed the ball in their hands, and the four pairs were Megan and Skylar, Luna and Santiago, Hugh and Angel, and Leia and Xavier.

“Damn, enemies really are destined to meet!” Leia groaned when she realized Xavier and her had both picked red balls.

Just when she wanted to get away from Xavier, destiny decided to mess with her.

If this had been one of his schemes, she would have refused, but it genuinely was a random result.

She would only look pretentious and spoiled if she made a fuss, so she resigned herself to silent fuming.

"Well, fate has spoken! You can't say no." Smiling victoriously, Xavier tapped Leia's ball with his.

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"Hello, my boat partner."

"Watch it, or I might just kick you off the boat when we're in the middle of the sea," Leia growled under her breath.

"It's okay, I can catch up to you even if you do."

You may not know it but I was once the champion of freestyle swimming," Xavier boasted, completely unbothered by Leia's aloofness.

He firmly believed that the law of the jungle was the truth, and would do everything in his power to win. To him, his love for Leia was more important than his dignity.

As he watched them, Santiago smiled and commented lightly, "Fate or not, compatibility is what matters most. It's just a one hour ride anyway." After that, he looked at Leia.

"Just hold on for a while; I'll be waiting for you on the shore."

"Okay, Mr. Dalton. My heart is with you even if I'm on another boat. Please wait for me!" Wiping away her tears, Leia waved her white handkerchief exaggeratedly as if she was being kidnapped by pirates.

"Don't worry. I'll wait for you until the end of time," Santiago said tenderly, his gaze gentle.

"Ugh, stop being a hypocrite! It's all fake!" Xavier scoffed as he shoved his hands in his pockets.

"You know nothing. It's for the show. Hmph!" Leia brushed past Xavier and got onto the boat, her nose in the air.

Xavier followed closely behind her and held her shoulders.

"Be careful, my dear. I'd be heartbroken if you fell and hurt yourself." Gritting her teeth, Leia huffed.

"Stop pretending." Shrugging, Xavier replied with a smirk, "It's for the show." At that moment, the cameras were on, and everything they said and did was being broadcasted to the viewers.

Just before the boat was started, Leia whispered to Xavier, "Behave yourself. This is a live show, so don't humiliate yourself in front of the whole world." Xavier smiled affectionately as he stared at her beautiful face.

"I don't understand. What exactly can't I do?" Leia rolled her eyes.

"Isn't it obvious? Do I need to spell it out for you?"

"You mean something like... kissing you?" Xavier murmured softly, then leaned down and kissed Leia's lips.

"Mmph!" Leia was caught off guard by Xavier's sudden kiss.

She tried to push him away, but he just held her and kissed her more passionately.

Since it was a live show, everyone tuned in to it was now watching them kiss.

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The netizens went wild, pushing the show's popularity to the max.

[Ah! what am I watching? Is everyone seeing this too?]

[Yeah, they're actually kissing! It's a real-life example of an overbearing president falling in love with a woman. It's so dreamy...]

[No wonder I heard that Universal Entertainment is going to promote someone else—their boss has had a change of heart!]

[Does that mean that Leia is a homewrecker? How could they cast a homewrecker in a dating show? It's outrageous!]

[No, she's not. Obviously, Mr. Stuart has given up on trying to please that pretentious woman...]

[Hey, who are you referring to? Did Miss White offend you? Please don't slander her!]

Endless comments popped up, and the netizens took different sides.

Some of them supported Xavier and Leia while others saw Leia as a homewrecker and tried to seek justice for Shirley.

However, most of them weren't fans— they were just mesmerized by this romantic scene that looked like it was from an idol drama.

Meanwhile, the camera crew who was filming the entire thing didn't know what to do.

They didn't dare to stop filming because their viewers had shot up, but were also hesitant to keep recording. They had no choice but to turn to Adam.

"Don't disturb them— pretend it's a documentary." Sitting in the tent, Adam frowned deeply as he watched the two people on the screen.

Initially, he had wanted to pair Leia and Santiago up, but Xavier had come out of nowhere.

Compared to the reserved Santiago, Xavier was the textbook definition of a direct person who took what he wanted when he wanted it.

It hadn't even been twenty minutes into filming and Xavier had already managed to make the show so popular.

Even the best script couldn't produce such an effect.

Even if Adam was the director, he couldn't do anything because of the view count. In the end, he just let Xavier and Leia be.

As the sun set in the background, the sky was painted red, creating an even more beautiful scene. Finally satisfied, Xavier let go of Leia.

"You absolute scum!" Leia slapped Xavier, bristling like an angry kitten.

"It's a live show! Don't you know that?"

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"I do... That's why I did it." He rubbed his red cheek, then wrapped his arms around her waist and leaned down.

"Didn't you enjoy yourself too? Let's show the audience how sweet a kiss between two people in love can be."

"Pervert!" Blushing, Leia slapped him again, but to her dismay, Xavier pushed her against the railing and kissed her again.

The netizens were immediately in uproar, and comments filled the screen of the live broadcast.

[Ah! A slap and a kiss. I love this kind of forced love so much!]

[Isn't he just a pervert? Am I the only one who thinks that Miss Osborne needs legal help?]

[If he's ugly, he's a pervert, but he's handsome, so it's true love! It's so cheesy but I love it... I want more!
] There were endless comments.

Meanwhile, Shirley was sitting in front of the TV and watching that scene too.

At that moment, Shirley was staring at the screen fiercely, full of hatred and envy.

“How dare you steal my Xavier from me, Leia? Just wait and see... I'll make you realize just how harsh the entertainment industry can be!”

Taking a deep breath, Shirley called Henry Zimmerman, the boss of an online marketing company. Henry had hundreds of social media outlets and was good at controlling the public opinion.

“It's been a while, Miss White. Why are you calling today?” The man answered the call, sounding surprised.

“Mr. Zimmerman, I've found a way to make money, and I thought you might want to know about it...”

“What? Tell me now, I need that cash!” His voice was filled with urgency.

“Do you know Leia Osborne? I'll ensure you lead a worry-free life as long as you ruin her reputation.”

There was a low chuckle on the other end of the line.

“Sure, I’ll get to it now. My company is great at ruining reputations and creating social death, so just wait for my good news!”

After ending the call, Shirley smiled wickedly.

After Xavier stopped kissing her, Leia immediately backed away from him. “Xavier, you’re really the most shameless and arrogant person I’ve ever met!”

Although Xavier’s perfect face was red from her slaps, he wasn’t embarrassed at all. In fact, he seemed quite proud of them as he showed them off. “Being shameless is just a means to get what I want... which is you. You should know that I hate beating around the bush.”

“Hmph! You claim you’re straightforward, but you never faced your true feelings back then, did you?” Leia recalled their past relationship, remembering the pain she had soldiered through during that time.

She had been infatuated with him and had wanted to give him everything, but now, she had regained her wits and didn’t want to make the same mistakes again.

“Yeah, I didn’t handle it well, and I lost you. That’s why I know now how important it is to be straightforward,” Xavier said solemnly and took a step towards Leia, his gaze intense.

“Let’s stop fighting, okay? Well take this trip as a fresh start, so let’s fix things and spend the rest of our lives together, okay?”

However, Leia remained quiet. Her face was bathed in sunlight, and the breeze toyed with her hair.

Xavier suddenly held his hand out for Leia to shake. “Hello, Leia Osborne. I’m Xavier Stuart, and I’m glad to make your acquaintance.”

“I...” Leia stared at his outstretched hand hesitantly. She would be lying if she said she wasn’t moved by his sincerity, but she didn’t know if they could really start over after everything that had happened.

However, before she could reply, they reached their destination. “Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to Villa Amour! It’s now time to pick a house. There are six houses with different conditions here, and they’re in separate locations on the island. You can pick whichever you like, but it’s first come, first served!”

Leia’s eyes lit up when she heard that, and she pushed Xavier away as she rushed to get the nicest house. “Hurry up! I want a house that faces the ocean!”

Xavier watched in bewilderment as Leia zoomed away, and vaguely wondered if picking a house was more important to her than their future together.

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Leia ran faster than everyone else, and managed to pick the best house there.

Xavier, on the other hand, was left with the last house because he was slow. It was a very small cottage without a roof, and his jaw dropped when he saw it. Being used to a life of luxury, he immediately turned to the crew and protested, “How can I stay here? I want a different house!”

“I’m sorry, Mr. Stuart, it’s the rules. The guests have to compete for the houses, and the person with the most points wins the right to change their house,” Billy explained to Xavier patiently. Although Xavier was the president of Universal Entertainment, he still had to obey the rules of the show. If not, the audience would make a fuss.

“I can change my house...” Xavier rubbed his chin thoughtfully, then asked, “How do I get more points?”

“It’s very simple-you just need to do more farm work. We have farmers on the island, so you can earn points by feeding the farm animals, helping them give birth, or even by cleaning up the farm.”

Xavier groaned and said miserably, “Are you sure this is a dating show? This sounds more like illegal free labour.”

Billy just laughed awkwardly and shifted the blame to Adam. "You know that Adam is the director of this show, and he's just finished shooting Happy Days. He likes the guests to get their hands dirty, especially because he sees more of a reaction that way."

"How do you expect me to look charming while I'm picking up manure and helping a pig have babies? I have to hand it to Mr. Jiminez, he certainly comes up with the most unique ideas," Xavier bit out furiously.

"Fine! You want me to earn points, right? All the manure for the next few days is mine! No one can snatch them away from me!"

Xavier rolled up his sleeves, then looked around and asked eagerly, "Where are the pigs? I'm going to help with the farrowing, and then I'll roast the piglets for dinner!"

"Umm... There's no rush, Mr. Stuart. Why don't you check out your room first--"

Xavier interrupted Billy impatiently, "It's just a cottage; there's nothing to see. I'll find that pig and make it my partner, and then your view count will be over the top, won't it?"

"You... You don't have to make such a big sacrifice, Mr. Stuart." Frightened, Billy wondered if Xavier had gone crazy.

However, the audience was very excited.

[Oh, my! Xavier wants a pig as his partner.]

[He's really strange. How could he do this for the view count?]

[I want to be that pig!]

After calming down, Xavier obediently dragged his luggage to the cottage. It was very small and only had a bed in it, and it reeked offish. Xavier just sighed resignedly and laid on the bed, realizing that the only good thing about the cottage was that its roofless design gave him a beautiful view of the sky.

“Wow, it looks amazing. I’m sure it’ll be nice to stargaze here at night... even more so if Lei could be here with me.” Xavier grinned goofily as he fantasized about watching the stars with Leia in the cottage.

Meanwhile, the other guests were jealous of Leia for getting a large house that faced the ocean.