

Extraordinary 771

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Sc*mbag! Frank Venti, so this is what happened back then!

Meanwhile, Naomi, who was waiting at home anxiously, shared the heartbreaking video clips on her Twitter with a comment: Director Maxwell's virtue is finally proven after so many years. On the other hand, that jerk only deserves to end up rotting in h*ll!

After the release of the movie, she had gained a large number of fans. Not to mention, she had played the role of an assistant who was temporarily deaf and mute in the movie very well.

Many commented they could not resist feeling touched and crying after watching the movie.

The video clip shared by her immediately drew her fans' attention.

They indirectly had a soft spot for Greg because of her and turned to rebuke Frank for his despicability instead. Even the truth of how he plagiarized Greg's script years ago was dug out.

The moment the truth was revealed, everyone started to sympathize with Greg and abhor Frank.

Nevertheless, they had forgotten how they used to strike at Greg too. Blinded by Frank's words, they added insult to injury to the pitiful man by taking Frank's side. Shielded by the invisible barrier of social media, they never stopped reprimanding and humiliating the man.

Standing at the entrance of the police station, Greg had cooled his head off. He turned to the young man alongside him and uttered casually, "Jonathan, let's go."

He had just started to stride off when a familiar voice sounded behind him. "Greg..."

It turned out to be Millie calling him.

He halted in his tracks but restrained himself from turning around. After regaining his usual composure, he stated solemnly, "Mrs. Venti, you haven't divorced Mr. Venti. Hence, please address me as Mr. Maxwell."

With that, he strode off without turning back to look at her.

Jonathan flashed a resigned look at Millie, who looked pale and feeble. He could not help but heave a silent sigh. What a pitiful woman.

In the meantime, in a hospital in Maredania, a man was lying in bed in the VIP ward 1303 of level thirteen. The sun shone brightly through the window, cascading on the man's devastating good looks.

The man had long eyelashes, a high-bridged nose, and thin, seductive lips. Even if he was only dressed in an oversized hospital gown, others could not resist wondering how stunning he looked when he opened his eyes.

Sitting next to his bed, a beautiful young woman was in a deep slumber with her long, lustrous hair flowing down her back. The dark circles beneath her eyes implied that she had not been sleeping well lately.

“Mmm.” The man suddenly let out a murmur, waking the young woman up.

She opened her eyes and arched her brows as she looked at the man gradually opening his eyes in bed. “Are you awake?”

Lucas felt somewhat groggy after waking up.

After quite a while, he finally came to his senses. Gazing at Ashlyn, he asked hoarsely, “Ashlyn, where is this?”

He scanned the surrounding in bafflement. Why does everything look different after only a night of sleep?

After scrutinizing him for a while, Ashlyn found that the deviousness in his eyes that had been present recently was gone. In its place was his usual indifference.

Hence, she asked tactfully, “Lucas, have you recovered?”

Massaging his temples that were throbbing due to a long period of unconsciousness, he asked quizzically, “Why're you asking if I've recovered...”

His voice trailed off as he looked up abruptly at Ashlyn, turning pale instantly. “Do you mean that my other personality emerged?”

Whenever the second personality emerged, he usually sustained a temporary memory loss of what happened during that period. In other words, he was oblivious to anything done by his second personality.

Ashlyn nodded. “Yes. You have a fever. This is a hospital in Maredania. We'll return home after your fever subsides.”

Fever? Why do I have to receive my treatment in Maredania? Lucas racked his brain to have a grasp of the situation, but it only aggravated his headache.

As his headache worsened, he could scarcely wait to find out what his other personality had done.

He was worried sick. Did my other personality get all worked up and hurt Ashlyn?

Acutely sensing the drastic change in him, Ashlyn tried to appease him. "Don't overthink. You have a severe mental illness. Thus, we need a skillful doctor to help you with your treatment. Sinclair has recommended one to me, and I'll allocate time to go and visit him soon. I'm convinced that he'll be able to treat your illness."

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What did she say? She's going to find a doctor to treat my condition? She... Lucas' heart was thumping loudly. What is the meaning of this? Does she care that much about my matter? Not only that, did she really come all the way to Maredania for it?

"Honey..." He wanted to say something, many things, but he wasn't sure how to.

"All right, no need to say anything." Ashlyn stood and poured him a cup of water before giving it to him. "Drink some water first."

The warm water flowed down his dry throat, making him feel much better.

Then she opened a thermos. "Drink some oatmeal porridge. You were out for two whole days, so you have to eat something."

"I want to eat the food you make..." Lucas stared at her with affection. That feeling of being touched bubbled out of the bottom of his heart. "I made it myself." Ashlyn knew that no matter how old he was or whether he was sick, he would always be that childish. Even a bowl of oatmeal porridge has to be specially made for him!

When he heard what she said, joy surfaced on his cold, handsome face. "Thank you."

Because it was her cooking, his appetite increased significantly.

She poured him a bowl of oatmeal porridge and gave it to him. "Eat up."

At that moment, Spencer brought an invitation card to the hospital. When he knocked on the door and opened it, he saw the sweet scene of Ashlyn interacting with Lucas.

His heart immediately softened. "You're finally awake, Mr. Nolan. Do you—"

Before he could finish, Ashlyn shot him a pointed look. "Where are the daily necessities I asked you to buy, Mr. White?"

Spencer was stunned for a second before quickly saying, "Ah, they're in the car. I was in such a hurry to get back here that I forgot to take them with me."

She stood and walked out with him. "Let's go and grab them together."

Spencer immediately understood what she meant and followed her out. Then he handed the invitation card to her. "This is the invitation to Old Mrs. Yates' birthday banquet. Why aren't you letting me tell Mr. Nolan about it, Ms. Berry?"

"I don't want him to worry." Ashlyn stared at the invitation card as she grabbed it. There was a tinge of coldness and worry in her voice. "The Yates family has deep and extensive roots in Maredania, and the family is very influential. Let's hope everything will go smoothly."

She only told Lucas that she would find a doctor for him and nothing about dealing with the mess herself.

After she kept the invitation card in her bag, she said, "Let's go and buy some daily necessities at the hospital's mart."

More than a dozen minutes later, Spencer and Ashlyn carried the daily necessities they had bought, such as shampoo and toilet paper, upstairs.

They brought two big bags of items back to the ward.

Lucas was reading a magazine on the bed. When he saw the two of them, he furrowed his eyebrows and asked, "Why did you two buy so many things?"

"We can use them too if needed." Ashlyn smiled. "Are you feeling discomfort anywhere?"

Lucas shook his head. Affection was present in his dark eyes as he stared at her for a long while. "Do you have something you want to tell me about?"

He didn't believe it took them more than ten minutes to reach the underground parking lot from his location. What are they hiding from me?

She sat next to the bed and held his big, cold hands. "You just need to focus on recuperating, all right?"

Then she gently patted the back of his hand. "I still have things to do, so I'll be heading out now. Spencer will keep you company here."

There were still many things she needed to prepare before attending tomorrow's banquet, so she couldn't keep staying by his side.

"Where are you going? What are you doing?"

"I'll tell you about it after I come back." Ashlyn's slender figure then left the room without turning back.

Lucas narrowed his eyes, though it was hard to tell what he was feeling from his emotionless expression. "What is she doing?"

His deep, magnetic voice rang in Spencer's ears, which Spencer perceived as the demonic voice of a devil from hell.

Spencer gulped and stuttered, "I-I also don't know."

"Tell me the truth."

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Spencer didn't at all have the guts to see Lucas' cold expression. He felt the surrounding air getting thinner as a chill ran down his spine.

"She..."

Five minutes later, the atmosphere in the ward was heavy.

Spencer lowered his head before carefully raising it again to look at his employer. He had told Lucas everything, no lies.

And yet, Lucas' face remained darkened.

It was as though Lucas could sense Spencer's stare as he turned his line of sight to his subordinate. "Let's go!"

"Go?" Spencer was dumbfounded.

"Mhm." Lucas got off the bed without hesitation.

Before Spencer had the chance to ask where his employer was going, Lucas was already heading outside, so he had no choice but to follow.

The tickets to Trashy Idol sold like hotcakes. A new record was set every day.

The day Ashlyn left, the total revenue was eight hundred million. Currently, the sales had surpassed one billion. Not only that, that number was climbing higher.

Greg returned to his condominium, sat on the couch, and struggled to calm down.

After a moment, he gently approached his son's room and saw the boy sleeping soundly on the bed.

The child's chest rose and fell as he breathed in his sleep.

Greg's eyes turned red as he stared. It'd be so nice if everything that happened was just a dream. If only our family wasn't a broken one and is still as perfect as it used to be. However, time waits for no one, and everything's changed.

With tears welling in his eyes, he silently walked out and closed the door.

At that moment, his phone rang.

Heading over, he grabbed his phone and looked at the screen.

Trashy Idol had been nominated by an award show and had an entry in many categories, which included the best newcomer award, the best male lead award, the best script, the best director, etc.

It was an announcement sent by the organizers of the award show.

Greg stared at the message for a long, long time. It's been far too long. I've waited for so many years. Finally, my work has once again entered the most influential award show in H Nation.

He covered his face and cried at a low volume uncontrollably.

Even though he had succeeded and Frank was arrested, he didn't feel as happy as he thought he would.

All he felt was a sense of loss and emptiness, as though he had lost his sense of purpose in life.

Since Greg couldn't sleep, he began cleaning up the house. He still had no idea why Ashlyn had sought him out back then.

There were many more talented and famous directors than him, and yet, she chose him.

His head was in a buzz as he absentmindedly grabbed things.

When he arrived in front of a bookshelf, he lost his balance and smashed into the furniture.

The books on the shelf fell toward him. Thankfully, he managed to dodge quickly and avoid being hit.

These books had been brought over from the place he had in the slums.

He squatted down, preparing to pick them back up.

It was then a picture slipped out of a book and landed on the ground.

Greg curiously picked the picture up and saw a beautiful lady holding two girls, one taller than the other. He was standing behind the woman. At that point in time, he was much younger as he was only twenty-odd years old.

A few of his ex-classmates were standing next to him in the picture.

He stared at the picture with shock as memories began flooding back into his mind.

“Dr. Chapman...” It was a group photo taken with his school doctor during his graduation year. Back then, his family was quite poor, but the doctor was very kind and helped him whenever he needed.

When he heard she had passed away in a car accident with her younger daughter, he felt sad for them.

At that point in time, he had earned a little money, thanks to the wages he received during his internship in the movie industry.

He visited the school where the doctor's remaining daughter studied a couple of times to bring her snacks and clothes.

After a while, the teacher there told him that the daughter had changed schools and had been brought to the countryside by her grandmother.

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Greg's head was buzzing.

The picture was old, so it had turned yellow and smelled of mold.

However, his attention was drawn to the determined look in the older daughter's eyes. That look resembled Ashlyn's a lot.

A wild guess flashed through his mind. It can't be, can it?

His heart was thumping loudly, as though it was going to jump out of his chest.

Even though it was already late at night, he still called Ashlyn's number.

The phone rang, but no one picked up.

Many possibilities flashed through his mind. He wanted to find out if his guess was right.

“Jonathan, please help me take care of my son with Naomi for the next two days.”

“Why are you calling me and telling me this in the middle of the night, Director Maxwell?” Jonathan had just fallen asleep when he was woken up by the call. His head felt like it was exploding.

“I'm going to Maredania right now to find Ms. Berry to ask her something!” Greg sounded emotional as he spoke. “Remember to come here with Naomi tomorrow morning!”

When he finished, he hung up the phone.

The next morning, he woke up early, packed his bags, and headed to the airport.

“Where do I get the ticket, young man?” an old woman asked in a small voice after stopping him in his tracks.

Greg couldn't help but furrow his eyebrows. This old woman seems quite familiar. Where have I met her before? I can't remember.

He was in a hurry to get on his plane, so he quickly pointed and said, “Over there. That's where you get the ticket. Where are you flying to?”

The old woman smiled. “My daughter-in-law has invited me to Maredania! Even though I'm pretty old, I've yet to travel outside of the country!”

“Then I think we'll probably be boarding the same plane. Come, I'll accompany you.”

Greg would've never imagined that the old woman would do something rather unexpected at Bianca's birthday banquet.

Coincidentally, the old woman's seat was next to his.

He took good care of the old woman since they were from the same city, and she was old.

It was his belief that any adults would be reminded of their parents when they saw the old woman.

Hence, he just did what seemed natural to him and didn't give it too much thought.

After getting off the plane, the old woman smiled. “Thank you. You're a good man.”

“Where are you going? Do you need me to send you to your destination?” Greg felt the cordial old woman was pleasant to interact with, too.

“No need. My family will pick me up,” she said as she stood by the road in front of the airport's entrance.

He didn't say much of anything else as he bade the old woman goodbye and headed to the hotel room he had already booked.

When he found Ashlyn, her red lips curved upward. “You're here just in time, Director Maxwell. I'm in need of a male companion.”

Greg couldn't say what he originally wanted to say because he didn't have the opportunity to do so. A few fashionable young men and women swarmed toward him, surrounding him, before giving him a makeover.

Half an hour later, Greg was in a black suit and staring at himself in the mirror speechlessly. He was used to wearing casual clothes, so the suit made him uncomfortable. Why am I dressed like I'm going to an award ceremony?

"What are you trying to do, Ms. Berry?" he asked.

"I want you to accompany me to a banquet," Ashlyn informed before taking the vacated seat.

The men and women from earlier began giving her a makeover, too.

Greg felt like he was breaking down as the day approached its end. Ashlyn had been so busy that he hadn't had a chance to talk to her.

Soon, it was already seven in the evening.

The Yates family's castle was brightly lit. It certainly made the prestige of the Count's Mansion obvious.

Bigshots from all around Maredania and different industries had shown up at the venue.

Even the oil tycoon, Nicholas, and his little brother, the president of the International Piano Association, Caleb, showed up.

Someone mentioned that they heard even the president of the country had sent his blessings.

It was apparent that the Yates family was very influential in Maredania.

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While the Yates family didn't have a lot of descendants, Ryan was a very hardworking person. Not only did he excel in the arts, but he was also an educated person. Thus, he took very good care of the family business. While Keanu was still the count, it was only a matter of time before the title was passed to Ryan.

Ryan would undoubtedly do great things when he entered the president's cabinet.

The guests who attended the banquet were envious of Bianca when they saw how impressive the turnout was. One by one, they started wishing her a happy birthday.

"Seems like the president trusts and relies on Old Mr. Yates and Mr. Yates, huh?"

"Mr. Yates has accomplished much despite his age and is well known worldwide! He'll no doubt surpass

the older generation!”

“That's right! Old Mr. Yates led the air force for many years. I wonder when Mr. Yates will serve his time there?”

Bianca was in a good mood that day.

She was wearing a dark red outfit and was sitting on the main seat. There was a bright smile on her face. “It'll happen soon. Since the piano competition ended successfully, he will be entering the air force next month. My husband said that he has to start from the bottom rank, though.”

“It's quite unexpected that Mr. Yates became a pianist after he graduated from the military academy. All of us thought he was going to give up on the path of the military!”

“Nonsense. Playing the piano is just his hobby. As you all know, my older daughter has been very talented at playing the piano since she was a child. She won many awards in piano competitions when she was just a little kid. He missed his older sister a lot over the years, and so he learned how to play the instrument.” Bianca sighed when she mentioned that.

Mary, who had just entered the hall, was shocked when she heard that. What? Playing the piano?

Penelope, who was holding her mother's arm, whispered, “Mom, you know how to play the piano? Did you learn it when you were little?”

Mary quickly returned to her senses and smiled gracefully. “I've already forgotten how to do that. Let's head in.”

“Ah, speak of the devil. My eldest daughter is here!” Bianca waved at Mary with a warm expression. “Come! I'll formally introduce you to everyone.”

Mary was wearing a red gown. Even though she was already over forty years old, she still maintained a stunning body, which wasn't at all easy.

God knew how long she had been waiting for the moment to be officially recognized as the eldest daughter of the Yates family!

Even though Bianca had delayed the announcement again and again, it was finally time for Mary to declare in front of everyone that she was the eldest daughter of the Yates family.

Not only that, but she would also be telling them her daughter, Penelope, was the granddaughter of the Yates family.

I'm an elite now, and I'm not at all on the same level as that b*tch Ashlyn anymore. A b*tch like her only deserves to stay at the bottom of the social hierarchy forever! Mary approached Bianca with her

daughter in her high heels.

When Bianca saw the red gown Mary was wearing and then glanced at the mini black dress on Penelope, she furrowed her eyebrows.

Her eyebrows furrowed even more intensely when she saw how Mary was swaying her hips while walking. Why is she walking like that? It's like she has waist pain or something.

She suppressed her dissatisfaction and spoke to Mary and Penelope. "Sit."

Her desire to introduce the two of them to the crowd was shattered again.

The other guests were slightly taken aback when they saw the two women.

"That's the eldest daughter of the Yates family? She's good-looking, but the red... If people didn't know any better, they'd think she's the birthday girl!"

"Yeah. Also, why is her daughter wearing black? She's the only one here wearing that color. Doesn't she even know the most basic etiquette?"

Everyone knew that when attending a birthday party, one should wear brightly colored clothing and avoid wearing black outfits. One should also not outshine the birthday host.

So, the mother was wearing a red outfit, as though it was her birthday being celebrated, while the daughter was wearing black, as if she was attending a funeral.

The crowd was confounded as to what they were doing.

Bianca felt utterly embarrassed.

However, since there were a lot of people around, she didn't reprimand the two of them and plainly said, "I was just talking about your past with your relatives, Mary. These are your uncles and aunts."

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Bianca casually introduced Mary's relatives to her. Mary swiftly stood and greeted them.

However, when Bianca didn't go on to introduce her to them, Mary found herself getting anxious.

With a pompous smile, she said, "Greetings, everyone. This is my daughter, Penelope Berry, and I'm Mary Canter. Both of us were found not too long ago."

The crowd was speechless.

Bianca was so angry that she almost fainted. I can't believe Mary doesn't know how to read the room

and is so eager to present herself! She doesn't have the composure of a prestigious family's daughter at all.

The relatives, who were initially a little curious about Mary and Penelope, stared at Mary with slight shock.

Nevertheless, none of them showed their emotions on their faces because they were all very shrewd.

One of the aunts, Ysabelle Yate, smiled. "When you were little, I haven't gotten married yet. So many years passed in the blink of an eye. You were very talented at playing the piano when you were a child, so much so that everyone called you a prodigy. I've missed you all these years."

Her eyes reddened as she continued, "Back then, it really wasn't my intention to lose you. Now that you're back, I can finally put my guilt to rest."

She had a very good relationship with her niece back then. One time, she brought the young girl to the mall to play. However, when she turned around, she couldn't find her niece anymore.

Ryan's grandfather ordered her to kneel in the memorial hall for three days and three nights as punishment. She knelt for so long that her knees became swollen. As a result of the cold and wet memorial hall, she developed arthritis. Whenever it rained, her knees would ache.

However, she never complained about it.

She was the one who hadn't kept a close eye on her niece, and it was her fault her niece disappeared.

It was why she had been looking forward to the day when Mary returned.

Seeing Mary standing before her, Ysabelle couldn't control herself any longer and hugged Mary. "I'm sorry for what I did, Mary. I've caused you to suffer for all these years."

Mary was taken aback before she quickly replied, "No, no. I've had a pretty decent life, actually."

"That's enough, Ysabelle. You're scaring everyone." Bianca spoke plainly while Matilda rushed over to pull Ysabelle back to her seat. "This is supposed to be a happy day. You mustn't cry."

"Yes, yes, I'm not crying. These are just tears of joy." Ysabelle grabbed some tissue papers and wiped her tears away. "Play a song for me, Mary. I love listening to you playing the piano."

Mary's expression froze. "The family I was taken into didn't nurture my piano skills, so I've... forgotten how to play it."

"How is that possible? You won awards in piano competitions when you were a child! How can you have possibly forgotten how to play? You were really good at playing back then. Even if your adopted family

didn't nurture your piano skills, you should at least remember how to play Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star, right?"

Everyone in the Yates family was artistically talented. Even Ysabelle knew how to play two different instruments.

Almost everyone couldn't help but turn their attention to Mary.

Mary's face was flushed red with embarrassment. D*mn it! Why is the whole "knowing how to play the piano" a thing? I've never learned how to play the piano, nor am I talented at it!

Penelope also didn't know how to play the piano because she never liked the instrument.

However, Ashlyn had always been interested in playing the piano.

Mary was getting beyond frustrated and was at a loss for words.

Seeing how things were getting awkward, Bianca spoke up. "Since she has forgotten how to play it, let's just forget about it. She'll have time to relearn it in the future. Matilda, hire a piano teacher tomorrow and have them teach Mary and Penelope how to play."

W-What? That can't be real... Mary started feeling dizzy. Why should I learn something as useless as playing the piano at my age? It's not like it can benefit me in any tangible way!

A relative smiled at Penelope and asked, "Do you have any other talents, Ms. Berry? Your uncle is a talented pianist. While your mother doesn't know how to play the instrument, do you?"

Penelope felt embarrassed.

She had always been a lazy child who found learning stuff like that annoying. Naturally, she didn't have any talents.

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"I also don't know... I don't have any talents when it comes to music," Penelope replied in a small voice as her face flushed with embarrassment.

Her timid demeanor was at odds with her peers' graceful behavior.

She was acting in an overly plebeian manner.

Bianca grew upset when she saw that.

However, when she thought about how Penelope was her descendant, she swallowed her anger and

tried to calm down.

“Which school did you graduate from? It seems like you spent all your time studying instead, right?” the same relative asked again.

Penelope blushed even harder. She was on the verge of tears. “I-I studied how to become a nurse in university.”

“I heard you two once lived in Lake City. Did you graduate from T University? That's pretty good.” The older relatives knew T University was a famous medical school. Some Maredania residents even enrolled there to study medicine.

“T University is pretty good. I heard they even invited a famous surgical expert to hold a lecture there about half a year ago. I think her last name was Berry. Anyway, the video on that lecture garnered over a hundred million views on the internet. I heard it was a very interesting class. My son is studying to be a doctor there.”

Another older relative added, “That expert was really young too. Not only that, she's pretty. I forgot what her name was. Was that person you? My son admires her a lot. She apparently took H Nation by storm. I heard she also recently invested in a movie that's in cinemas right now. Maredania is going to have showings for that movie soon. I think it's called Trashy Idol?”

Penelope felt like she was going crazy.

She was feeling so jealous that she was digging her nails into her palm, almost causing blood to flow out. Why is that b*tch Ashlyn still taking the spotlight even after I've come to Maredania? Why am I still being compared to her even after I'm already in the Yates family? I don't understand why I'm always living under her shadow!

Mary's expression froze when she heard that. She instantly understood the relatives were talking about Ashlyn.

In response to that, she took a deep breath and suppressed her desire to throw wine toward that relative's face. Then she smiled. “Yeah. That lecture was indeed held by my daughter. I didn't expect it would get so many views. Penelope likes to keep a low profile, so we never knew about that.”

Penelope stared wide-eyed at her mother. She whispered, “What are you saying, Mom? That's Ashlyn's lecture!”

Mary smiled warmly and replied in a tiny voice, “So what if I lie about it? It's not like Ashlyn's here! They don't know who she is either!”

Penelope steeled herself and squeezed out an ugly smile at the relatives. “Thank you for the praise.”

The moment she finished, she quickly lowered her head as she felt very guilty.

Bianca couldn't help but furrow her eyebrows once more after witnessing Mary and Penelope's performance.

Based on what she knew about them, if Penelope really was a medical expert, Mary would've mentioned it a long time ago instead of keeping it a secret until then.

When she noticed the way Penelope was avoiding everyone's eyes, it was pretty obvious to her that the young woman was feeling guilty.

Bianca couldn't help but shake her head. I bet that expert with the last name Berry is someone else.

For the past few days, Mary and Penelope had been talking to her about another child in the Berry family.

After seeing how Penelope was acting, Bianca's impression of Ashlyn instantly worsened. Is this how the Berry family raises their children? Penelope's upbringing must be awful. Since Ashlyn was raised in the countryside, I bet she's even worse than Penelope. In fact, I'm certain that the expert with the last name Berry isn't Ashlyn.

Even though it was her birthday banquet, she was getting quite pissed off.

She thought about it and asked, "Didn't you also invite your mother-in-law? Why isn't she here yet?"

"She's arriving soon. I've sent a driver to pick her up." Mary was enjoying the admiration the crowd was showing her as she held her head high. So what if I don't know how to play the piano? My daughter is a medical expert!

"I didn't expect Ms. Berry to be able to hold a lecture at T University at such a young age," a random relative commented.

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"It's truly incredible."

"That's right! I'm very impressed."

Many guests couldn't help but praise Penelope.

However, some of the guests there had attended Ashlyn's lecture before, so they couldn't help but ask, "That expert... I remember she doesn't look like Ms. Berry."

Someone immediately refuted, "You probably just remembered her face wrong. Many people don't actually resemble how they appear in pictures."

Penelope gradually raised her head and spoke humbly to the crowd. "I still have a lot to learn. No need to praise me like that. I'll get embarrassed."

Her sickly sweet tone and voice killed the liveliness of the atmosphere.

It wasn't until after a while that people started speaking again.

Bianca pressed her fingers to her forehead with a pained expression and asked Matilda, "Is Ryan back yet?"

"Mr. Yates is on the way back, Old Mrs. Yates. It will probably take him another half an hour to arrive," Matilda swiftly answered.

"We'll start the banquet after he has returned."

At that moment, Caleb and Nicholas approached Bianca debonairly.

When they first arrived, many people wanted to chat with them.

It wasn't until then that they managed to be free from the crowd.

The brothers spoke almost in unison. "We hope that Old Mrs. Yates will live long and prosper!"

Caleb then gave her an invaluable jade necklace with detailed patterns carved on it. "I picked this jade pendant myself before asking a master craftsman to carve the patterns. She's a very talented person who doesn't easily agree to a request like this. Do you like it, Old Mrs. Yates?"

Almost everyone in the crowd knew a handcrafted jade pendant like that was hard to find because a master craftsman was difficult to come by.

After all, almost all jade pendants nowadays were carved by machines.

Very few people were willing to spend considerable effort to learn the art of carving. Currently, the younger generation had many more options to choose from, which made a challenging profession like that a less popular choice. As time passed, fewer and fewer people were interested in learning that skill.

When he said that, it instantly garnered many people's attention. They couldn't help but aim their gaze at the jade pendant in Bianca's hand.

Detailed patterns spanned the entire pendant. At the center was a figure of a local deity smiling warmly. The deity was holding a vase and sitting on a lotus flower.

"The carving looks so real! Her kind smile makes people feel like she has achieved enlightenment."

"That's right! The carving looks so good."

"I wonder who's the craftsman responsible for it."

Caleb smiled mysteriously. "Who else can it be but the most mysterious one?"

"Oh my god! Are you saying this was done by the mysterious craftsman who has never shown herself in public before? I heard she has a pair of godly hands despite her young age! Many people want her to carve something for them, yet she only takes on one request every year! This pendant probably cost hundreds of millions!"

"You're incredible, Mr. Powell!"

"I heard she always hides a secret symbol on all her works, which is an S. Old Mrs. Yates, can you try to look for the S symbol on the pendant?"

Bianca was shocked too. She never thought Caleb would intentionally seek out the legendary craftsman to make that jade pendant for her.

Without a second of delay, she looked for the symbol.

An invisible S was located at the bottom of the pendant.

"There really is one!" She stood up emotionally and showed it for everyone to see. "There is one here! I'm grateful for your thoughtfulness, Mr. Powell."

Caleb smiled. "It's worth it as long as it makes your birthday banquet a happy one."

Mary stared at the scene emotionally. My eyes didn't deceive me! Mr. Powell is as rich and handsome as a wealthy man can be! More importantly, he's still single!

Her eyes were glued to him, admiration shining in them.

What the crowd wanted to know was what kind of gift Nicholas would present after Caleb gave Bianca such an expensive item.

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At that moment, Nicholas, who had been standing next to Caleb, pulled out a box.

He handed it to Bianca with both his hands and suggested, "Open it up and take a look, Old Mrs. Yates."

Bianca didn't care if the gifts were expensive. All that mattered to her was if any thought had been put into selecting it.

She had lived for a very long time. When she was younger, she had followed Keanu when he was piloting a plane or going to the battlefield. Now that she was getting on in the years, all she wanted was the company of her descendants.

It was why, unlike the surrounding guests, she wasn't excited to see what kind of expensive gift Nicholas had prepared. After all, she had seen plenty of those in her life already.

She gently opened the box.

When Bianca saw the handkerchief inside the box, her expression changed, and she stood abruptly. "This is..."

She carefully took the handkerchief out and stared at it seriously with wide eyes.

The crowd was confounded by her reaction as they thought it was just a normal handkerchief.

They didn't understand why she had such a big reaction.

Bianca examined the handkerchief with awe and disbelief. "This flower was done by using an overlock stitch while this bird was sewn using a straight stitch! Look at this! The large word 'Longevity' here is made up of a hundred smaller 'Longevity!' Don't look down on this small handkerchief. Even a master embroiderer like Leslie wouldn't be able to create such perfect stitches!"

"Are you kidding me, Old Mrs. Yates? Does this small handkerchief really have a hundred 'Longevity' words on it?" Someone couldn't help but question because they found it hard to believe.

"It really does!" Bianca smiled. "Matilda, bring me a magnifying glass."

Matilda quickly went to grab a magnifying glass. Thankfully, the castle had everything, and all the tools inside were stored tidily.

After a while, she returned with a magnifying glass. Bianca grabbed it and positioned it above the "Longevity" word.

As she did so, the crowd saw that it was indeed made up of many small versions of the word "Longevity."

"Oh my god!"

"Old Mrs. Yates really isn't lying!"

"It really is a hundred smaller 'Longevity' forming one large 'Longevity!' Mr. Powell clearly put a lot of thought into his gift!"

"It's probably going to be hard to find another handkerchief like this in the world! Who's the creator of this?"

"I'm really curious about this master embroiderer who's apparently even more talented than Leslie!"

Bianca sighed wistfully. "I've seen a similar work like this once, more than ten years ago in Lake City. Back then, a graceful woman made a handkerchief just like this during a light rain before giving it to me. I've preserved it ever since. I didn't expect to see her work again after so many years! This is truly the work of fate."

"Are you saying you already have a handkerchief like this?" Caleb stared at her with shock. The embroiderer we know should have only been a child more than ten years ago. There's no way she could do something like that back then. Why is Old Mrs. Yates saying Nicholas' gift was made by the same person?

At that moment, Bianca ordered Matilda to bring her the old handkerchief she mentioned and put it on the table for everyone to see.

Both handkerchiefs were almost of the same size.

The only difference was that her old handkerchief only had a single 'Longevity' stitched in the center with red strings. The rest of the handkerchief was clean and wasn't decorated with any other stitches, while the one Nicholas gave her had birds and flowers surrounding the center.

Even people who didn't know anything about embroidery could tell the way the two "Longevity" words were stitched were the same.

"Can you let me meet the person who made this, Mr. Powell?" Bianca asked emotionally. "It's been more than ten years since I last met her. She saved my life back then, but I couldn't find her afterward. I..."

Nicholas cast a troubled look at her and explained, "It's not that I don't want to let you meet her, Old Mrs. Yates. It's just that... I also don't know who she is. I gave you this present today because I have a request I hope you'll fulfill."

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Bianca was stunned for a second before her heart sank to her feet, and she spoke seriously. "Mr. Powell, if you're referring to that matter, I hope you won't bring it up again. Since my daughter has returned, the marriage contract between you two back then still counts."

There was an uproar among the crowd when they heard that.

They couldn't believe Mary had an engagement with him.

Although, that helped them understand why he had remained single for so many years. It was because he was waiting for the eldest daughter of the Yates family.

Mary was confounded. Marriage contract? I have an engagement with him?

She couldn't help but turn her line of sight to the debonair and towering Nicholas.

While he was Caleb's older brother, and both of them looked equally stunning, Caleb had the demeanor of an artist. On the other hand, Nicholas possessed an air of ruthlessness that was fitting for a businessman.

No matter who she ended up marrying, it would be a great thing.

Unable to help herself, she began to dream about her future. If I can marry Nicholas, I'll be the wife of an oil tycoon, and Penelope will be his daughter! Both of us will be even more of an elite! Who won't envy or admire us when that happens?

At that thought, she couldn't refrain from asking, "Why didn't you tell me about this before, Mother?"

"As your father and I are still considering this matter, we elected not to discuss it with you for now," Bianca replied seriously.

Then she turned to Nicholas. "Mr. Powell, do you think you can easily break off an engagement just because you're an oil tycoon?"

"There's no need for you to be so difficult, Old Mrs. Yates. Ms. Canter and I have no feelings toward each other. It's extremely unfair for her to be bound to me. I don't want to prevent her from living the life she wants. Therefore, I think the engagement should be annulled." Nicholas stared at Bianca emotionlessly.

A cold and firm expression was on his face. His body began exuding a ferocious aura that enveloped the whole venue.

Some of the guests felt chills travel down their spines.

A few of the older guests recalled that matter. "While they had an arranged marriage, no one mentioned it until now because the eldest daughter of the Yates family disappeared."

"To think after so many years... Is the Yates family really going to force the Powell family to comply with the engagement?"

"Ms. Canter has already given birth to a child with another man. I don't think that's a good idea."

“They don't seem like they fit each other!”

The atmosphere within the banquet hall was getting pretty cold. Bianca and Nicholas were staring at each other, both with no intention of backing off.

It was at that moment a set of footsteps shattered the awkward atmosphere.

People naturally stood to the side and made way for Ryan, who was wearing a white suit, to pass through.

Behind him was a beautiful woman. A light-blue fishtail dress wrapped around her delicate figure. Her long, dark, shiny hair was pulled up high, leaving only a few playful strands in front of her forehead.

She had brown eyes, red lips, and simple makeup applied to her face. Her posture was graceful, and her slender neck was as beautiful as a swan's.

Additionally, her fair arm was holding the arm of a mature-looking man wearing a black suit.

Everyone stared at Greg and Ashlyn curiously as they wondered who the two were.

The guests had often attended various gatherings in Maredania, yet none of them had seen someone as beautiful as her before.

No one could figure out who she was.

The person who thought Penelope wasn't the guest who held a lecture at T University earlier blurted, “I think she's the expert who held a lecture at T University that day.”

“A woman as beautiful as her must be a celebrity, right?” a random guy standing next to him wondered, completely ignoring what the man just said.

Ryan swiftly arrived in front of Bianca and uttered, “Happy Birthday, Mother. These two are my friends. I met them in H Nation. She's Ashlyn Berry, and he's Greg Maxwell.”