

# **Under the Heiress' Facade #Chapter 171 - Read Under the Heiress' Facade Chapter 171**

## Chapter 171

Gurdyroots weren't exactly rare on the market. Century-old gurdyroots, on the other hand, were very rare to find nowadays.

Hera opened her laptop and logged into the Divine Forum, which she hadn't visited for quite some time. She asked a few alternative medical practitioners who were quite well-known for their own merit while ignoring the unread notifications. Alas, none of them possessed a century-old gurdyroot.

Her phone rang loudly at that moment. It was a call from Bernard.

"It's already night time. Where are you?" His husky voice drifted out of the loudspeaker.

Hera glanced at the time. Only then did she notice that it was already 7:00 pm.

The sky had already gone dark. All the streetlights on the campus were brightly lit.

"I'm still at the academy," Hera replied.

"Which part of the academy?"

Bernard's question caught Hera off guard. "Are you still at the academy?"

She remembered telling Bernard on WhatsApp earlier that afternoon that she needed to perform her duty roster chores, so she'd go home later than usual. That was why she wanted Bernard to go home on his own after he was done with his business at the academy.

"Yeah. I've just completed my business. I'll come get you right now. But I don't see any lights in the junior year students' classroom block."

"Don't go anywhere. I'll go find you instead."

Hera recalled that Bernard was still stuck in his wheelchair, so she quickly switched off her laptop and put on her jacket. She made sure to lock the chemistry lab up before scurrying away.

There was a short distance between the chemistry lab and classroom blocks. Hera descended all the way to the first floor. She spotted Bernard as she hurried down the path.

He could be seen sitting in his wheelchair on the deserted path. The dim yellow streetlight traced the outline of his handsome face, casting dark shadows on a portion of his face.

Bernard's regal-like bearing and sitting position made him seem like he was sitting on a throne instead of a wheelchair.

But the night breeze was extraordinarily chilly. His hands, which rested on the arms of the wheelchair, were starting to turn blue from the cold—the thought of Bernard wheeling everywhere in search of her strummed Hera's heartstrings.

"Why didn't you call me in advance?" she asked while approaching Bernard. A ball of white mist escaped from her lips as she spoke.

The temperature in Norburgh often dipped a few degrees lower during winter nights.

"I've already texted you, but you never replied," Bernard said. He dragged out his words slightly, making him seem pitiful and helpless.

Hera tapped on her WhatsApp and switched accounts once again. Only then did she notice the text message Bernard had sent her half an hour ago. He had told her that he'd come over to pick her up.

Suddenly, she felt a little guilty.

Bernard lifted the woolen quilt that was draped over his lap in an attempt to drape it over Hera's shoulders. But he couldn't reach her due to him being a lot shorter than her, seeing as he was

confined to his wheelchair.

He was silent for a moment before saying, "Come here."

Hera could tell what Bernard was trying to do. She opted to stand before him without budging at all, her eyes silently fixed on his figure.

"Perhaps you can try to stand up."

Bernard didn't respond at all. He had a feeling that Hera was mocking him.

But if he were to rise to his feet right in front of Hera, she'd have discovered that he was perfectly capable of caring for himself.

So, Bernard reached out to take Hera's hand.

Surprised, Hera soon felt the coldness flaring from Bernard's bigger hand, making her heart skip a beat.

Suddenly, Bernard pulled her into his arms with a strong tug.

His actions shocked Hera, but she dared not squirm around for fear that she might accidentally make contact with his injuries.

Bernard's frame was a lot warmer than his hand. His familiar smoky scent shot up Hera's nostrils instantly, though it felt colder thanks to the night's chill. It made her head clearer than usual.

As Bernard draped the quilt over Hera's shoulders, he placed his hand on her back and pulled her closer into his arms. He breathed in her light fragrance at the same time.

The dim light cast down on the pair, dragging out their shadows on the desolate path.

Suddenly, two beams of light were pointed in their direction. It appeared that a car had cruised into the campus and had chosen to go down the path they were on.

Hera snapped out of her trance and got up instantly. Meanwhile, Bernard shot a displeased look at the incoming car.

Douglas, who was seated in the driver's seat, could feel Bernard's murderous gaze being fixed on him. He shuddered instinctively before stepping on the brakes.

He didn't mean to interrupt Bernard and Hera's private time on purpose!

Upon spotting the familiar license plate number, Hera moved to open the car door. The moment she saw Douglas, she commented, "I see you're back from your vacation."

"Yes, Ms. Youngworth," Douglas replied.

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The sad truth was that Douglas never got to go on a vacation.

On the way home, Bernard's car got stuck in a traffic jam, thanks to the evening rush hour. Typically speaking, they could reach Skyview Heights in over ten minutes. But they were stuck in the jam for half an hour this time. Unfortunately, they had yet to reach their destination.

Hera leaned against the seat while playing on her phone. Suddenly, she felt something weighing her shoulder down. It turned out that Bernard had rested his head against her shoulder.

She turned to see Bernard's face, which was magnified before her. Did he fall asleep on her shoulder?

Only when Hera was staring at Bernard from this angle did she realize how thick and long his eyelashes actually were. Now that his eyes were closed, his eyelashes were able to cast down crescent shadows on the spot under his eyes.

Bernard's skin was smoother than that of a regular woman's. The outlines of his tall nose and sharp jaw were accentuated even more, thanks to the glow of the streetlights.

Anyone would've killed to have a face as gorgeous as Bernard's.

Hera's mind began to wander as she stared at Bernard blankly.

Douglas focused on driving the whole time. Once the jam finally cleared up, he put his foot on the gas pedal and sped down the road.

Skyview Heights was just right ahead. Douglas stole a glance in the rearview mirror at that moment, only to get stabbed in the heart at the sweet and tender sight.

If he were to stop the car now, would Bernard wake up from the jolt? Would he be dissatisfied because he was ruining the rare moment?

Douglas then recalled the murderous look Bernard had shot in his direction before getting into the car earlier. Realization dawned on him as he steered the car slightly to the left.

Just like that, the car drove past the gateway of Skyview Heights.

Douglas reminded himself that this was for the sake of Bernard's future happiness. In a way, he was also doing this for the sake of his year-end bonus.

He ended up making three laps around Skyview Heights.

Just as Douglas was about to do the fourth lap, the security guard posted at the gateway couldn't hold himself back any longer. He could recognize the license plate number belonging to one of the apartment's inhabitants, so he stepped forward to stop the car.

"Are you new to these parts? Can you even find the entrance properly? You've already done three laps around the area, you know! I'm getting dizzy just by looking at you!"

Hera snapped out of her trance, thanks to Douglas applying the brakes abruptly. Even Bernard was woken up by the sudden jolt.

Everyone in the car fell silent for a few moments.

Once Hera and Bernard got home, they unanimously decided to avoid bringing up what had happened in the car earlier.

After dinner, Hera reminded Bernard to take his medicine on time. Then, she returned to her room to bathe and wash up for bed.

Sometime later, she lay on her bed in her pajamas. She then tapped on WhatsApp before switching to Shadow's WhatsApp account.

Her conversation with the grandmaster of Astral Nova was still stuck at the part where he wanted her to become his wife. Hera thought for a few moments before an idea popped into her head.

She tapped on her keypad for a while before sending the text message.

After that, Hera opened the photo album. She was about to send a photo to the grandmaster when her phone suddenly vibrated. It was a call from Lilith.

The moment Hera answered it, she heard Gino's voice drifting from the loudspeaker.

"You refused to pick up my calls earlier, and you didn't even call me back! Yet, you picked up Mom's call right away! Am I even your actual brother?"

Hera was momentarily stunned. It was then she remembered having spotted Gino's missed calls in the afternoon, but she had completely forgotten to call him back.

"What's the matter?"

"Can't I call you even if there's nothing going on? Why aren't you coming home again?"

It was rare for Hera not to hang up on Gino the moment she heard his complaints. Instead, she swiped the calling interface away.

She was about to continue texting the grandmaster of Astral Nova in order to find out how to get her hands on the century-old gurdyroot. That was when she saw the photo she had just sent to him.

The sight of the photo caused Hera to jump out of bed right away. She promptly deleted the photo after that.

Since when was that photo saved in her photo album?

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At the same time, Bernard stared at his phone in his study downstairs.

Shadow: "Do you mind taking a man as your wife?"

Bernard was speechless when he saw the question.

Then, Shadow sent him a photo on WhatsApp. It was a photo of a man biting the hem of his white shirt while taking a selfie of himself in the mirror.

The moment Bernard tapped on the photo, Shadow instantly deleted it.

But he was very sure that it was the photo he had sent to Hera some time ago, which shocked him to the core.

To think that Hera actually saved that photo into her own album!

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"What happened?" Gino asked when he heard the sounds coming from Hera's end of the line.

"I'll talk to you about the things you brought up just now. I need to go now."

Hera ended the call before swiftly typing a sentence into the WhatsApp private chat. "Will you believe me if I tell you that was the wrong photo?"

She hesitated for a moment when she was about to send the message. Then, she deleted the whole thing.

Hera needed to stay calm. Maybe the grandmaster hadn't seen the photo yet.

Thinking that luck might be on her side, she deleted the sentence before the photo.

Hera wanted to send Piglet's photo and information to the grandmaster of Astral Nova earlier. Since Piglet preferred men, this mission was suitable for him.

But in the end, she screwed up.

Grandmaster of Astral Nova: "You have a nice body. Are you trying to seduce me?"

Grandmaster of Astral Nova: "But I haven't had my fill of looking at it. Why don't you send me the same photo again?"

Hera was stunned, to say the least.

She opened the photo album, only to see Bernard's photo in it. The date it was saved happened to be the same day Bernard had sent the photo to her. She must have accidentally saved it while fighting Samantha for her phone.

Shit! This was all a huge misunderstanding!

Hera quickly tapped on the photo to delete it. But when the system asked her if she really wanted the photo gone, she ended up tapping "no" for some reason.

She had to admit that Bernard was insanely hot and sexy.

That was when Hera remembered what Bernard had done to her back then. She swiped back to the WhatsApp private chat and decided to go with the flow.

Shadow: "You like it? I'll give you the photo in exchange for the century-old gurdyroot in your possession."

Meanwhile, Bernard smiled as he stared at his phone in the study.

It seemed that Hera was pretty skilled at turning the tables in her favor.

Bernard tapped a slender finger on the desk rhythmically. What would Hera do if she were to find out that he was the grandmaster of Astral Nova?

Back in Hera's room, she breathed a sigh of relief when she noticed that the grandmaster wasn't replying to her message. It'd be weird if he did end up agreeing to her request.

Grandmaster of Astral Nova: "Deal."

The message stunned Hera to the core.

What? Did that really just happen?

Grandmaster of Astral Nova: "But you need to send me ten sexy photos of yourself from different angles."

Hera fell silent at the absurd condition.

Was this really the grandmaster of Astral Nova? Did someone else hack into his account?

To think that the grandmaster would have such a weird fetish...

Despite feeling confused, Hera still downloaded a few photos of sexy men from the Internet before sending them to the grandmaster.

Grandmaster of Astral Nova: "Are you doubting my memory? Are you refusing to take the deal?"

Hera fell silent after seeing the message.

How the hell could she get her hands on ten of Bernard's sexy photos taken from different angles?

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Christopher sat on a bench outside the operating theater in Reinland Hospital. He kept sneaking glances at his watch from time to time.

He originally wanted to drive Hera home after school, but his plan was ruined.

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Queenie, Terence, and Amelia rushed over at that time.

"Christopher, what on earth happened to Zyler? Is his injury serious?" Queenie asked worriedly.

"Mrs. Gaskell, Zyler had accidentally hurt his hand when he was carrying a parcel for his classmate. His right index finger and middle finger suffered from bone fractures as a result," Christopher explained.

"Who's the classmate that's bold enough to command Zyler to carry their parcel for them? His hands are meant for playing the piano, not for manual labor!" Queenie snarled out.

The last person whom Zyler was willing to suck up to at all costs was Giselle, who had already returned to the countryside.

Christopher frowned slightly upon seeing how vile Queenie actually was. He pursed his lips, not wanting to answer her question.

He had always thought Queenie was the bold and straightforward type, but now she seemed more like a mean and vile woman.

Terence was the observant type. He nudged Queenie slightly as a hint for her to keep up her appearance in front of Christopher.

"That parcel seems heavy. How could Zyler be that careless?" Terence commented tactfully.

After that, he said to Christopher courteously, "Christopher, thank you for taking Zyler to the hospital. It's already this late, which means you haven't had dinner yet, right? I'll order something for you—"



"No need for that. Since you guys are here, I'll go home now." Christopher turned the offer down curtly.

As he walked out of the hospital, he glanced at his watch once again. He wondered if Hera was still at the academy.

Terence wanted to walk Christopher out of the hospital. But the sight of Christopher's swift gait gave him an inexplicable feeling that the former was being cold and distant toward him.

It was as if Christopher had done his part by taking Zyler to the hospital.

The doors of the operating theater were flung open at that moment.

"Doctor, how's my son's hand? Can he still play the piano in the future?" Queenie asked hurriedly.

"We've successfully reattached the bone fragments together. He should be fine as long as he recuperates for three months," the doctor said.

"He 'should be' fine?" Queenie was dissatisfied with the doctor's verdict. "Do I sound like I want an uncertain promise? I want his hand to be as good as new! No matter what, you have to heal his hand to the point it's as good as new!"

Zyler was destined to become a famous pianist. His hands mustn't be harmed no matter what.

"Of course, ma'am."

The doctor nodded before continuing tactfully, "But we haven't found out the exact reason behind Mr. Gaskell's muteness..."

"You useless piece of trash! It's all thanks to trash like you that Reinland Hospital's reputation is ruined!" Queenie insulted angrily.

Then, she roared at Amelia, who stood next to her, "What are you standing around? Call Camille right now and tell her to get over here stat!"

Reinland Hospital was actually a branch hospital owned by the Chime family in Norburgh. When the doctor heard Camille's name being uttered, he feared for his future in the hospital. But at the same time, he disliked Queenie's unpleasant and hot-tempered personality.

Did that woman seriously think she was capable of summoning Camille, the precious daughter of the Chime family?

Amelia looked troubled as well. "Mom, have you forgotten that Camille has returned to Jedburgh? She's celebrating her grandmother's 90th birthday today."

"Look at the time! The birthday banquet must be over now, right? Just call her first! I want her to get over here to treat your brother first thing tomorrow morning no matter what!" Queenie barked out harshly

"I'll do my best." Amelia clenched her fists tightly in response.

Queenie was the type who barked out orders without caring if Amelia could carry them out.

The thing was, Camille was Amelia's friend, not her servant. Besides, the Chimes' social status was a lot higher than the Gaskells'. The Gaskells should be honored if Camille agreed to Queenie's ridiculous demand and personally came over to treat Zyler.

To think that Queenie was bold enough to demand Camille to rush to Reinland Hospital first thing the next morning! She was being extremely unreasonable, that was for sure!

At that moment, a nurse wheeled Zyler out of the operating theater. Queenie dashed forward right away and bent over Zyler's hospital bed. Then, she began comforting him in soft tones.

The stark bias made Amelia feel even more distressed. Her eyes were now red-rimmed. She turned on her heel and left the corridor.

Soon, Zyler was transferred to a private ward. Queenie and Terence crowded around his bed in concern for him. They didn't care about Amelia's absence at all.

"Zyler, tell me, who's the cause behind your injury? I swear, I'll skin that person alive!" Queenie uttered, feeling her heart break at her son's condition.

Zyler opened his mouth instinctively just to reply, but he still couldn't make a sound. That was when he began to panic.

What the hell did Hera do to him? Would he remain as a mute for the rest of his life?

"Don't worry. Camille will come over tomorrow to treat your illness," Queenie continued comfortingly, the distress in her eyes growing stronger every second.

Terence opened a notepad on his phone and passed it to Zyler. With difficulty, the latter managed to type out a message with his left hand.

"Hera's the reason why I'm like this!" it wrote.

Queenie's gaze darkened visibly after reading the message. "It's that filthy bitch again!"

To think that Hera would show up with a target painted on her back before Queenie could cause trouble for her.

## Chapter 175

The Chime residence, which was located in Jedburgh, was illuminated by bright lights from the inside out.

Priscilla Shaw's 90th birthday banquet lasted from noon till late evening. Full courses consisting of delectable cuisines were laid out on long tables. All the seats were occupied by esteemed guests, who spent long hours clinking glasses with each other while chatting merrily.

"Mr. and Mrs. Chime Senior, you really are blessed to have a miracle doctor like Ms. Chime in your bloodline. Surely she brings your family pride and joy!"

Many family members and friends who came over to the main table to wish Priscilla a happy birthday would always bring Camille's title up as the famous Dr. Shadow.

Augustus Chime and his wife, Priscilla, had always been a humble couple. They were also shocked when they discovered that Camille was the elusive and famous Dr. Shadow, an entity sought out by the rich and the influential from the news. At the same time, they were elated as well.

The Chimes came from a lineage of doctors. Their forefather had spent most of the toughest, battle-hardened years to save countless lives as doctors. Hence, he was bestowed the title "Dr. Miracle".

After that, modern medicine was introduced to Jadonia, which impacted alternative medicine. The Chimes were greatly influenced by the ideology of modern medicine, so they ordered their children to abandon alternative medicine in pursuit of modern medicine instead.

Because of that, the Chimes never produced another miracle doctor until recent years.

The fact that Augustus' descendant was a miracle doctor would forever remain the proudest achievement he had gained in his life. He and Priscilla were all smiles throughout the day.

"Oh, you flatter me too much. I just did what a doctor's supposed to do. Dr. Shadow is just a nickname that everyone has bestowed to me," Camille said with a smile.

She presented herself as a gentle, humble, and gracious woman. Because of the magnificent first impression, countless rich madames adored her greatly and wished to introduce their sons to her.

"Ms. Chime, you really are amazing for snatching the bid on the Eclipse Stone from the grandmaster of Astral Nova! Can you show us the stone and let us admire it?" a wealthy woman asked.

Everyone agreed to the suggestion immediately.

"I've always heard that the Eclipse Stone is a mythical treasure. Never did I expect for people to be able to find it for real! Ms. Chime, please show us the Eclipse Stone so that we can feast our eyes on its glory."

"Precisely! We hope the Eclipse Stone's blessings can be rubbed off on us by admiring it."

"We've never seen the Eclipse Stone before, so we'd like to study it up close."

More and more guests began piping up, making Camille feel increasingly uneasy. Her smile was starting to seem awkward.

"Camille, why don't you grant everyone's wish by showing them the Eclipse Stone?"

Priscilla was eager to see the Eclipse Stone for herself, thanks to the guests' words of marvel.

She had never gotten to touch the Eclipse Stone. Even though she had attended the auction, her seat was too far from the Eclipse Stone for her to look at it properly. She only got to look at the stone via the monitor.

The quality and the texture of Eclipse Stone were mesmerizing, to say the least. Priscilla couldn't wait to feel the actual stone in her hands.

"I'm sorry, Grandma. I was in a hurry to come here, so I didn't bring it with me," Camille said apologetically.

"Do remember to bring it back next time, alright? That way, your grandfather will be able to take a good look at it as well." Priscilla patted Camille on the back of her hand.

"Alright." Camille nodded in response.

Although the guests felt it was a shame that they couldn't see the Eclipse Stone in person, they couldn't help but discuss it. Naturally, Camille felt a mixture of uneasiness and guilt weighing down on her heart.

Thankfully, her phone rang at that very moment. It was a call from Amelia.

Now that she finally had an excuse to leave, Camille quickly excused herself from the banquet hall so that she could pick up the call.

Johnson, who had been loitering in a corner, noticed Camille leaving the hall. He said his goodbyes to his associates before following her out of the hall as well.

A while later, Johnson finally located Camille sitting on the swing in a corner of the garden. The sight of her silhouette gave him mixed feelings.

Camille was the daughter of the Chimes' main branch. As for Johnson, he was just a descendant of one of the branch families.

Even though both of them were cousins, their status in the family was completely different.

Camille was the precious daughter who was the apple of everyone's eye. Meanwhile, Johnson was just a lowly son from a branch family that the main family didn't acknowledge. When he was a little boy, he was warned to stay away from Camille no matter what.

Since then, Johnson admired yet feared Camille greatly. He never thought she was Dr. Shadow, the very being he admired with all his heart.

"Dr. Shadow," he called out.

Camille ended the call at that moment. She turned around to see Johnson, which was shocking for her.

"Why did you leave the banquet hall as well, Johnson? Come, take a seat."

She scooted to the side to make space for Johnson.

"Thanks." Johnson walked over to the swing, but he didn't sit down. "It's been a while since you last logged into the Divine Forum."

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Camille's heart went tense for a moment. She gazed at Johnson, wondering if he had an account on the Divine Forum.

The truth was that Camille also had her own account on the Divine Forum. She'd log into the forum every now and then to read the academic theses uploaded by other doctors. Also, she'd poke around to see if Dr. Shadow was online or had posted a new thesis.

It had been half a year since Dr. Shadow was last online on the forum.

"Yeah. I've been quite busy lately." Camille glossed over the answer.

A hint of suspicion crossed Johnson's eyes at that moment.

"Have you gotten your hands on a gurdyroot?" he probed.

"Gurdyroot?" Camille hesitated for a moment before nodding with a smile. "Yup. I got it."

Johnson clearly noticed the fleeting confusion. Grimness began to set in on his expression.

Earlier this evening, Dr. Shadow had suddenly logged into the Divine Forum and messaged Johnson to ask if he had a century-old gurdyroot. After he said no, she never responded to him.

"What's wrong?" Camille was starting to feel uneasy upon detecting the slight change in Johnson's expression.

Could it be that Johnson knew Dr. Shadow privately?

"It was nothing. It's great that you got yourself a gurdyroot." Johnson forced out a stiff smile.

"Ah. Thanks. It's too chilly out here, so I'm going back to the manor first."

Camille's eyes became shifty. She came up with an excuse before hurrying out of the garden.

Johnson remained rooted to the same spot as he stared at Camille's receding figure. A solemn expression could be seen on his face.

Was Camille really Dr. Shadow?

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The next morning, Hera stepped into the classroom just as the first bell rang. She had only sat down briefly when a grim-faced Kerry led a few police officers into the classroom.

Hushed whispers began to spread across the classroom.

"Who's Hera Youngworth? Please step out of the classroom and go to the police station with us," the leader of the troop stated seriously.

All of the students turned around to look at Hera, who sat in the last row. She stood up calmly and exited the classroom with the police officers.

"What's going on?" she asked impassively.

"You're pinned with assault and battery charges. Please return to the police station with us for further questioning."

Hera's brows were instantly scrunched into a frown.

After the leader showed his warrant for detainment, the police officer behind him whipped out a pair of handcuffs immediately. He cuffed Hera's wrists together before taking her away.

At the same time, a well-dressed Queenie sat on the couch in the deputy chief's office at the police station. Brandon Hobbs, said deputy chief, served her a cup of coffee while sucking up to her.

"Don't worry, Mrs. Gaskell. I'll be the one personally dealing with this case for you. Judging from Mr. Gaskell's injuries, it won't be a problem for the court to sentence her to imprisonment that lasts between three to ten years."

Queenie frowned at her newly done manicure. "Aren't there harsher punishments? I'd prefer it if she gets locked up for the rest of her life!"

"That'll be more difficult to pull off." Brandon looked troubled. "But ten years is more than enough to teach her a lesson."

"Fine." Queenie relented reluctantly.

After that, she pulled out a check and slid it across the desk. "I'll leave this matter in your capable hands, Deputy Chief Hobbs."

Since Hera was ballsy enough to harm Zylar, Queenie wanted to subject her to a fate worse than death.

Brandon glanced at the check, a greedy smile soon spreading across his face. But he wasn't in a hurry to accept it.

"You're being way too courteous, Mrs. Gaskell. Tossing her behind bars for ten years is a walk in the park for me. But before that, are you sure she and the Everetts aren't influential at all?"

The police chief was about to retire soon, meaning Brandon would be promoted to the chief's position in no time. He needed to be very cautious at a critical juncture like this.

Queenie just chuckled in response. "Don't worry. The Everetts have already gone bankrupt. In fact, they've racked up a humongous debt, so they can barely take care of themselves now, let alone Hera.

"Gideon, on the other hand, is quite capable and has amassed some connections on his own. But those connections of his are just nobodies. They can't do anything to reverse the situation in their favor.

"As for Hera... she's just a country bumpkin from the countryside. Without the Everetts' support, she's no different than a homeless person on the streets."

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Brandon relaxed visibly upon hearing Queenie's words. He accepted the check giddily afterward.

Someone knocked on the door at that moment. A police officer opened the door and informed, "Deputy Chief Hobbs, we've brought the suspect to the station. She's currently in Interrogation Room 3."

"Got it." Brandon rose to his feet.

Meanwhile, Hera sat in Interrogation Room 3 while thinking if she had committed assault and battery on someone recently. Then, she saw Brandon and Queenie walking into the room, followed by a police officer who was in charge of taking her statement.

"Do you know what crime you've committed?" Brandon thundered while maintaining a stoic façade after taking a seat across from Hera.

Suspects who were typically cowardly or guilt-ridden would be overcome with so much fear that they'd give up all the details the moment they saw Brandon's stoic face.

But Hera remained calm and composed. She parted her lips long enough to spit out a few words.

"Why don't you tell me?"

Queenie was displeased at Hera's calm attitude. To her, Hera was just a country bumpkin. She had no one to help her out, so by right, she shouldn't be calm at all.

Brandon didn't expect to see such a young girl looking so composed despite being in the police station. She didn't look frightened in the slightest, either.

He slammed a hand onto the desk heavily. "She doesn't look remorseful at all! Are her parents notified about this arrest?"

"Yeah. A guardian should be here soon," the police officer replied.

Coincidentally, someone knocked on the door at that moment. The officer went to get the door right away.



Gideon strode into the room in the next moment. His expression grew sullen when he saw Queenie. A frown appeared on his face when he saw Hera being handcuffed.

"Officer, I'm Hera's older brother. What happened?"

Upon hearing Gideon's voice, Hera whipped around to look at him.

Gideon thought she was frightened, so he shot her a comforting glance. "Don't be scared. I'll protect you."

Hera didn't respond to Gideon at all.

The truth was, she wasn't scared in the slightest. But Gideon's words made her feel warm and tingly on the inside.

On the other hand, Queenie didn't expect to see Gideon in the station. She thought James would be the one coming for Hera's aid.

It was all thanks to Gideon that the Everetts didn't become homeless after their bankruptcy.

"Tell him what his sister has done," Brandon said sternly while rapping his knuckles on the desk.

The police officer acknowledged the order immediately by explaining, "During the after-school hours yesterday, Hera Youngworth assaulted Zyler Gaskell in the corridor outside the mailroom of Cavenridge International Academy. This resulted in Zyler losing his ability to speak.

"Hera's purpose was to coerce Zyler into carrying her parcel for her. He ended up suffering from fractures in his right index finger and middle finger."

As the officer spoke, he placed multiple documents on the table. This included pictures of Zyler's injured fingers, which were set up in their respective casts, as well as the doctor's letter to prove the validity of the injuries.

"My son is being hospitalized as we speak! He has yet to regain his voice! You can forget about settling this case in private!"

Queenie folded her arms in front of her chest. She was very fierce and demanding.

"This is a severe assault and battery case! Hera needs to take legal responsibility no matter what! Resolving this dispute in private is a no-go this time! The legal route is the only way to settle this case!" Brandon added while tapping on the photos.

All the trio did was accuse and berate Hera for what she had allegedly done. It was clear that they wanted to pin the crime on her.

"Hera, is what they said the truth?" Gideon chose to ask Hera that question first instead of looking at the evidence.

He believed that Hera wasn't the type to hurt others without a valid reason.

His trust in Hera made her feel very warm and happy on the inside. Still, she wondered if he'd be disappointed in her the moment he found out that she was the cause behind Zylar's loss of voice.

Hera looked at Queenie and said, "Since your son's fingers got fractured, why did you seek me out, then? I'm not a representative of the insurance company, you know."

"Stop changing the subject! If it wasn't for—"

Brandon extended an arm immediately to stop Queenie from speaking. It seemed that he had picked up on a key point.

"So, this means you don't deny the fact that you're the cause of Zylar's muteness!" he said.

"Do you have evidence on that?" Hera just gazed at Brandon coolly.

"The victim is the best evidence! Very well. Since you don't deny that plausibility, that means you've admitted to it! You can wait for the court's verdict now! Case closed!"

Brandon closed the case on the spot before rising to his feet. "Take her away and wait for my orders!"

After that, he left the interrogation room.

Queenie slammed her hands onto the desk before standing up as well. Her gaze was firmly pinned on Hera the whole time.

"You think you can take on me in a clash, huh? Well, you're far too wet behind your ears for that! Enjoy living your best years out in regret behind the bars, Hera!"

She left after saying her piece as well.

## Chapter 178

It was clear to Gideon that Brandon and Queenie pushed Hera around because they had more power and authority over her.

He could only clench his fists furiously. If only he was a lot more influential and powerful. That way, Hera wouldn't have to suffer from this injustice.

"Hera, why didn't you deny their claims just now?" Gideon asked.

Instead, Hera's response gave Queenie and Brandon leverage over her.

"What's the use in denying it?" Hera shot back.

Since Brandon, the deputy police chief, personally handled a minor case like this, that meant he and Queenie must have conspired together to pin the blame on Hera.

This was the power of authority.

Gideon's fists tightened even more. Still, he did his best to comfort Hera soothingly.

"Don't be scared. I have a few contacts who work in the police department. I'll contact them later to ask for their help. No matter what, I'll clear your name."

Hera smiled faintly. "Thank you, Gideon. I'm not scared at all."

Her blatant trust in Gideon filled him with limitless vigor and energy. He mustn't let Hera get sentenced to jail and leave a criminal record which would tarnish her life no matter what.

...

Meanwhile, Bernard sat on the couch in his residence at Skyview Heights. He was playing chess on his tablet to pass the time. Tiramisu nestled against him while fast asleep.

It was rare for those two to stay in the same room amicably and peacefully. Soon, however, Douglas would shatter the cozy atmosphere with some bad news.

"Bernard, I was informed that Ms. Youngworth was taken away by the officers from Norburgh's police department. Till now, she has yet to leave the station," Douglas reported after ending the call.

Bernard paused in his movements. He raised his head immediately, his gaze cold and sharp.

He had just dropped Hera off at the academy, yet someone was bold enough to whisk her away so soon.

"Mrs. Gaskell was the one who lodged a police report and had Ms. Youngworth taken to the police station. She claimed that Ms. Youngworth had assaulted and harmed Zylar, so she wanted Ms. Youngworth to be sentenced to jail," Douglas continued.

After that, he added, "How should we deal with this matter?"

It wasn't optimal for Bernard to personally visit the police station just to deal with the matter due to his injury.

Bernard put down his tablet before picking up his phone. Then, he dialed a number.

The call went through soon enough. Shaun's playful voice drifted from the other end of the line.

"Hey, Bernard! What's up?"

"Shaun, I have a job for you."

"What is it? Do you need me to become your wingman in your pursuit of love?"

"Take some men with you to the Norburgh Police Department right now and bail my future wife out," Bernard commanded icily.

"Holy shit! Who the hell's that idiotic to lay a hand on your future wife? I'm going there right now!"

...

Once Brandon left the interrogation room, he bade Queenie goodbye before returning to his office. He then summoned an officer into his office.

Sitting at his desk with his feet propped on the desk, he pointed at Hera's case while saying, "Prioritize dealing with this case first. You must wrap it up before the chief returns!"

"What sort of case is that? Why can't I be notified about it, hmm?"

The door was flung open at that moment. The chief of Norburgh Police Department, Kane Manford, was revealed to be standing at the doorway.

Shocked by his appearance, Brandon couldn't stop himself from falling off his chair.

"C-C-Chief Manford, why have you returned?" he stammered as he clambered up to his feet.

"If I don't get back here soon enough, there's no telling what you might do to overthrow my authority here!" Kane exclaimed ferociously.

Then, he turned away and gestured respectfully to the person behind him. "This way please, Mr. Thompson."

Brandon looked at the doorway, only to see a man in a red suit stepping into the office.

"M-Mr. Thompson!"

Chapter 179

"Mr. Thompson, it's an honor to see you here! Please take a seat!"

Brandon quickly approached Shaun and began showering him with respect. He invited Shaun to sit on the couch.

But Shaun moved to sit on Brandon's office chair right away with his hands stuck in his pockets. He proceeded to put his feet up on the desk as well. Then, he lit a cigar.

Upon witnessing Shaun's antics, the assistant was shocked, to say the least.

This was his first time seeing someone acting so boldly in front of Kane and Brandon.

Nonetheless, this was expected of Shaun Thompson, who descended from one of the four influential families. His grandfather was the famous Alex Thompson, who used to be a general in his time. It was no wonder everyone addressed Shaun with reverence.

"Your seat seems pretty comfy, huh?" Shaun commented after taking a drag out of his cigar and exhaling the smoke slowly.

The thin wisps shrouded the outline of his handsome face.

Brandon could feel chills running down his spine after hearing Shaun's words. He stood up straight, his smile turning stiff.

"S-Surely you must be kidding, Mr. Thompson."

"Am I kidding?" Shaun's expression changed drastically at the word. "You've grown bold enough to lay a hand on my sister-in-law! Do I look like I'm kidding?"

Brandon was so shocked by the outburst that he didn't know what to do.

"Y-Your sister-in-law, sir?"

Didn't Alex only have one grandson? How was it possible for Shaun to have a sister-in-law?

"How preposterous!" Kane had already taken the liberty to review the case his assistant had passed to him. He was so furious that he hurled the case file right at Brandon. "Release her this instant!"

Brandon stared down at the papers from the case file scattered everywhere on the floor. The paper on top of the mess revealed Hera's full name, causing his breath to hitch in his throat.

Hera was Shaun's sister-in-law?

Didn't Queenie claim that Hera was just a country bumpkin with no power at all?

What the hell was going on?

Shaun was the one who brought Kane to the office just to demand Brandon release Hera!

That meant the man Shaun viewed as a brother must be extremely intimidating and powerful.

Brandon had a feeling that he was about to lose his job. Queenie's scheme had doomed him this time.

"T-This is all a huge misunderstanding! I'll release her right now!"

After that, Brandon ordered an officer to release Hera from her cell.

At the moment, Hera was being imprisoned in a holding cell on her own.

The cell was dark and damp. While the other criminals in the cells next to Hera's looked low-spirited and half-dead, she was the only one who sat on her bench calmly with her eyes closed. Apparently, she was meditating at the moment.

Hera looked as cool as a cucumber, as if she wasn't trapped in a cell at all.

When Brandon opened the cell door, the first thing Shaun saw was Hera, who was in the midst of meditating. He perked up at the sight.

He had always been curious about how special Bernard's beloved future wife truly was. This time, he was able to get his answer.

Hera was a lot prettier than Shaun had imagined. In fact, she and Bernard made a perfect couple.

"Ms. Youngworth, Mr. Thompson is here to bail you out," Brandon said respectfully in a low tone, as though he was afraid that his voice might startle Hera.

Hera's thick lashes fluttered slightly upon hearing Brandon's voice. Then, she slowly opened her eyes, which showed nothing but calmness.

She glanced at Brandon, noting how humble and lowly he was acting at the moment. This Brandon and the arrogant Brandon who had interrogated her earlier that morning were completely different.

Then, Hera turned to look at Shaun.

She couldn't recognize him at all. Was he one of Gideon's contacts?

That man had pretty decent looks. He looked pretty successful as well. Judging by his attire, she guessed he came from a wealthy and influential background.

Only then did Hera realize the reason behind Brandon's change in attitude toward her.

Hmph! What a pathetic bootlicker!

However, Hera didn't move an inch. Instead, she closed her eyes again and continued meditating.

Shaun was intrigued, to say the least.

Chapter 180

As expected of the girl Bernard had his eye on. Hera was definitely a special one.

Meanwhile, Brandon looked confused.

Since both Shaun and Kane had personally arrived to set Hera free, shouldn't she be leaving the cell right away?

Why was she still sitting there? Did she fall in love with the cell?

"Ms. Youngworth, Mr. Thompson is here to bail you out. You may leave now," Brandon reminded in a humble tone once again.

"Do you even know the art of speaking, you dumbfuck?" Shaun delivered a kick at Brandon's ass. "What do you mean by 'bail'? She didn't do anything wrong in the first place!"

Brandon almost tripped and fell because of the kick.

After steadying himself, he quickly changed his tune. "Y-Yes! Of course! She didn't do anything wrong! I was the one who messed everything up! I'm really sorry!"

Only then did Hera raise her head coolly. "My things," she said.

Her phone and acupuncture kit were confiscated before she was thrown into the cell.

Upon hearing Hera's words, Brandon quickly ordered an officer to bring her belongings over. Then, he presented them to her respectfully.

At that moment, Brandon finally had a taste of what it really felt like to have shot himself in the foot.

After Hera stowed the acupuncture kit into her pocket, she accepted her phone leisurely. Then, she turned on the camera app and started recording Brandon.

"What are your mistakes?" she asked.

Shaun grew even more intrigued when he realized what Hera was doing. The way she handled this incident was similar to how Bernard would usually act.

Brandon's expression went stiff. He didn't say anything in response.

Why did Hera's interrogative tone and demeanor seem so familiar?

"Well? Spit it out!" Shaun delivered yet another kick at Brandon.

Brandon felt both humiliated and aggrieved to have received two kicks in a row. But he dared not protest, seeing Kane said nothing about the kicks.

He thought for a moment before replying, "I went against the principles and ethics of my career and sullied it with my misdeeds. I didn't investigate the case fairly, choosing to draw my conclusion just by listening to one side of the story. In doing so, I ended up wronging you, Ms. Youngworth. I'm sorry about that.

"I promise you that I'll write a report detailing my self-reflection after this. I'll always take this lesson to heart."

"Does that mean you're not denying the fact that Queenie Killian was the one who conspired with you to frame me for the crime just to throw me into jail?" Hera questioned while glaring at Brandon icily.

Brandon was very sure that the thermostat in the detention facility was turned on, yet he felt cold sweat rolling down his forehead.



The way Hera spoke while glaring at him mirrored how he had behaved while interrogating her this morning.

To think that his retribution came so soon!

What was worse was that Hera had asked Brandon this sharp question right in front of Kane. If Brandon were to say yes, he'd have admitted to bribery. If the answer was no, he'd be suspended from his job because of his poor performance as the deputy chief.

No, Brandon couldn't afford to let anyone investigate him at this point.

But judging from her courageous demeanor, she would never leave the facility if he didn't answer her.

Yes. This time, Brandon really shot himself in the foot.

In the end, he weighed his pros and cons for a few moments before saying, "I shouldn't have believed in Queenie's lies. I didn't carry out my job well and ended up making the wrong judgment."

"You claim to have made the wrong judgment?" Hera chuckled coldly in response. "No. That was a false accusation!"

Brandon trembled instinctively. As a member of the authorities, the fact that he consciously broke the law despite knowing all about it meant that he had committed a huge crime.

"Ms. Youngworth, I've already ordered my men to investigate this case thoroughly. I promise you, we'll uncover the truth and clear your name. Do you have any other requests?" Kane quickly intervened, unable to stomach Brandon's pathetic lies anymore.

He was definitely a smart man. At this rate, things were going to be tense and awkward if he didn't do anything about it.

Hera would never leave her cell as long as the case remained unsolved.

To think that Kane had thought of Brandon as a charismatic and capable officer who stuck to his principles no matter what.

If it wasn't for Shaun summoning Kane back to the police station under the guise of an emergency, he wouldn't have witnessed the scene. Ironically enough, Kane was planning to recommend Brandon as the next deputy chief prior to this incident.

Brandon wasn't charismatic at all; he was the type who sucked up to the powerful people and bullied the ones weaker than him.

Not only did Kane need to rethink who to nominate, but he also needed to purge the bad apples out of the police force in order to rectify everything.

Hera looked at Kane coldly. "Yes. I'd like to lodge a report. Queenie Killian has made false accusations against me."