

Under the Heiress' Facade #Chapter 181 - Read Under the Heiress' Facade Chapter 181

Chapter 181

"No problem," Kane promised heartily.

He then summoned Nathan to the cell and told him to take over the brand-new case. At the same time, he ordered the other officers to take Brandon away so that they could start investigating him.

Once Kane was done issuing his orders, he said to Hera, "Ms. Youngworth, we're now launching the respective investigations. In that case, would you like to visit my office for a while? Perhaps you'd like to have a bite to eat there?"

Things would be way easier as long as Hera agreed to leave the detention facility.

"It's fine. I'll wait right here," Hera rejected the suggestion.

If she were to leave the cell, Queenie would never be charged with the crime of falsely accusing her of something she didn't do.

Meanwhile, Shaun decided to bombard Bernard with WhatsApp messages.

Daddy Shaun: "Bernard, as expected of the lady who catches your eye!"

Daddy Shaun: "She's a ruthless one, that's for sure!"

Daddy Shaun: "You'd better watch out for yourself in the future. Don't go around provoking your future wife, alright? Otherwise, you'll be facing nasty consequences!"

Back in the study at Skyview Heights, Bernard sat in front of his computer with his elbows resting on the desk. He intertwined his fingers and placed them before his lips; his sharp eyes fixated on the monitor before him.

The monitor was playing the live footage from the security cameras' feed in the detention facility. In fact, this particular angle was directed at Hera's cell. White codes were swiftly streaking across the black backdrop at the bottom of the footage.

At that moment, his phone screen lit up. Bernard glanced at the screen to see Shaun's barrage of messages. Only then did he decide to pick it up.

Then, he texted Shaun back.

A second later, Shaun's formerly relaxed expression contorted instantly on the footage.

Bernard: "I've already snapped a screenshot of this conversation. I'll forward it to Hera later on."

Shaun fell silent after that.

Seriously, Bernard and Hera really were alike in certain ways.

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Since Hera refused to leave the detention facility, Kane was extremely stressed. If he couldn't get Hera to leave, he'd get berated by his higher-ups later on.

So, he kept urging Nathan to complete the investigation as soon as possible.

Nathan took the lead of the entire police force. He divided the officers into three squads.

The first squad would go to the Gaskell residence to take Queenie back to the police station. The second squad would drop by the hospital just to perform another check-up on Zylar's injuries. The third squad was tasked to go to Cavenridge International Academy to seek out the only witness of the incident—Christopher.

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After Queenie left the Norburgh Police Department, she headed straight to Reinland Hospital to check on Zylar.

Upon entering the ward, Queenie didn't see Amelia and Camille there. A hint of displeasure crossed her eyes, though a look of distress soon set in the moment she noticed the thunderous-looking Zylar lying on the hospital bed.

Queenie approached Zylar before saying, "Zylar, I got some good news for you. Hera's definitely going to jail for good this time."

Zylar was feeling depressed because there was a chance he might stay mute for the rest of his life. The moment he heard the good news, a sparkle appeared in his previously cold and empty eyes.

Since Hera was going to jail soon, Christopher would be able to see her true colors for himself. He'd definitely patch things up with Zylar after that, right?

Once that was to happen, Zylar would be able to secure a spot in Vardhar University's guaranteed admission list.

Queenie and Zylar silently celebrated for a few moments before a troop of police officers kicked the door open and barged into the ward abruptly.

"We're launching an investigation at the moment. Please cooperate with us."

Nathan showed his police badge to the Gaskells before saying to Queenie, "Queenie Killian, please come with us to the police station."

Queenie had a feeling that something wasn't right. But she instinctively ignored it, thinking that Hera would soon receive her sentence from the court.

"Alright. Deputy Chief Hobbs works really fast, huh?" she remarked smugly.

Nathan shot a look at one of the officers, who immediately understood his intention. He pointed his camera at Zylar while asking, "Zylar Gaskell, we need to relaunch the investigation on this case. Are you able to speak?"

Zylar was pissed when he heard the question. He replied immediately, "No, I can't!"

But his voice came out loud and clear.

Everyone in the ward fell silent for a moment. Zylar, on the other hand, was stunned to hear his own voice.

"I can talk again!"

Zylar was shocked by the sudden turn of events as well. He couldn't help but cry happy tears after repeating a few vowels to test his voice.

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Zylar no longer had to worry about the possibility of becoming a mute.

"Mom, I can talk!" he exclaimed excitedly. But when he raised his head, he noticed everyone else staring at him as though he was an idiot.

"Since you're not injured to the point that you can't walk, you'll be following us to the police station as well," Nathan stated.

Zylar also thought that Hera was about to receive her jail sentence, so he nodded in agreement.

He wanted to witness Hera getting thrown into jail.

Under the passersby's curious gazes, Nathan took Queenie and Zylar back to the police station. Then, he led them to the detention facility.

Both Kane and Shaun happened to be away at the moment, leaving only an officer keeping Hera company.

The sight of Hera playing on her phone in her cell put Zylar in a good mood. For a moment, he really wished that Christopher was there to witness this scene.

But Queenie had a feeling that something was wrong. Still, her sense of superiority muddled her brain just enough to temporarily ignore that weird feeling.

"Oh? It turns out that Gideon didn't even hire a lawyer for you, huh?" she asked mockingly.

Hera was sitting in front of the security camera with the back of her phone facing the camera. She was in the midst of completing the mission Piglet had accepted for her, so she didn't bother sparing Queenie a glance.

It was then Queenie finally realized why things felt off for her.

Hera's cell door was wide open, not to mention she was playing on her phone! Weirdly enough, Brandon was absent as well!

Typically speaking, suspects detained in the detention facility would have their means of communication confiscated immediately.

"I've brought them here."

At that moment, Kane and Shaun returned to the cell from the men's washroom.

Queenie was shocked when she turned around to see them. She initially thought that Brandon was the one who had invited them to the detention facility.

Truth be told, Queenie had always wanted to kiss up to the famous Thompson family, who was known for its military prowess and achievements. But she never had a chance to do so in the past.

How was Brandon able to invite Shaun to this place?

Queenie was perplexed, to say the least. Either she, Zylar, or Hera was the reason why Shaun decided to come.

Since Shaun didn't come at the Gaskells' behest, could it be that he came here because of Hera?

That was impossible. Hera had grown up in the countryside. How was it possible for her to get acquainted with Shaun?

That was why Queenie's gut told her that Shaun and Kane came to the detention facility because of the Gaskells.

Some time ago, rumors were circulating about the possibility of the Gaskells working with Raven, which was a major boost in their reputation and fame. Recently, their stock prices skyrocketed simply because they were revealed to be extremely close to Dr. Shadow.

It was only natural for Shaun to favor them.

"Mr. Thompson! Chief Manford! Hi there!" Queenie greeted them smilingly.

She slapped on a friendly demeanor, as though she was close to them. "I didn't expect you two to come over and personally deal with this miniscule matter of mine. Honestly, I'm flattered."

"This is no miniscule matter, Mrs. Gaskell. Since Brandon can't deal with this matter properly, I'll be the one dealing with it in his stead," Kane replied seriously.

Upon hearing Kane's answer, Queenie's weird feeling came back in full force. But she continued smiling at Kane and Shaun.

"Thank you in advance, Chief Manford, Mr. Thompson."

At that moment, a police officer led a gray-suited man wearing a pair of frameless glasses into the building.

"Hello, everyone. I'm Ms. Youngworth's lawyer, Rupert McLaggen."

Hera stopped keying in the codes for a moment. She quickly raised her head to look at Rupert.

A lawyer? Did Gideon hire Rupert for her?

On the other hand, Queenie's smile began to fade away the moment she spotted Rupert.

Rupert was a famous lawyer in Jadonia. No common folk would be able to afford to hire him.

Was he actually Hera's lawyer?

The weird feeling that was haunting Queenie began to intensify.

"Chief Manford, Captain Olson, I've brought Christopher here." Another officer led Christopher into the building at that moment.

"Christopher, why are you here?" An ominous feeling began seeping into Zylar's senses when he saw Christopher.

Christopher just looked at the Gaskells grimly without responding to them. On the way to the detention facility, he found out what happened from the officer escorting him.

This time, he was extremely disappointed in Zylar and the rest of the Gaskells.

Queenie's smile had completely disappeared at that point.

Based on how things were unfolding at the moment, the police didn't intend to issue Hera a prison sentence. They were actually here to confront Queenie.

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Queenie was no fool. When she realized something was off, she immediately contacted her lawyer.

Just because Gideon hired Rupert for Hera and got Christopher to come over didn't mean that Queenie would let them get the upper hand on her.

There was no way Hera could turn the tables in her favor, seeing as Kane and Shaun were present.

Hera finished her mission just as everyone involved in the case finally showed up. She put away her phone and tilted her head.

"Let's begin," she stated.

The combination of Hera's poker face and her icy demeanor made her seem even more superior compared to the others.

Kane shot Nathan a look, who understood it immediately. The latter then reopened the case file, which he had reinvestigated earlier.

"Queenie Killian, we've reconfirmed the validity of the information gathered from the investigation on the report you've lodged this morning. The victim, Zylar Gaskell, is able to speak normally without any problems, which doesn't match the report you've made."

Queenie's lawyer was a woman named Michelle Doyle. The latter had gotten to know all the necessary details this morning so she could defend Queenie right away.

"Although Zylar regained his ability to speak this morning, that doesn't mean he didn't get injured. We have written proof from Reinland Hospital as well as the medical staff's witness statements that Zylar couldn't speak at all last night."

"You should provide the evidence that shows Hera crippling Zylar to the point that he can't speak, not evidence given by the hospital," Rupert refuted.

He had already been briefed on what had happened when Michelle was making her way to the detention facility.

Michelle was speechless, to say the least.

As expected of the best lawyer in Jadonia, the moment Rupert spoke up, he targeted the most vital weak point in Michelle's defending speech.

Reinland Hospital was still unable to determine the exact cause behind Zylar's muteness. This meant no one had any evidence that Hera was the culprit other than Zylar's own statement.

Still, Michelle had no choice but to continue, "The teacher working at the mailroom in Cavenridge International Academy can prove that Zylar could still speak normally before leaving the mailroom during after-school hours.

"But after he got into the conflict with Hera, he could no longer speak once he returned to the mailroom."

"I can prove that," Christopher spoke up at that time.

Queenie felt a lot more relieved upon hearing Christopher's words.

She was worried that Hera was the one who had summoned Christopher to the detention facility. Now that Christopher was defending Zylar, Queenie felt at ease.

"But Hera didn't rob Zylar's ability to speak. At that time, I had gone to the mailroom to collect my package. That was when I witnessed Zylar bullying Hera. After I shoved him away, he didn't speak anymore."

Christopher continued, "Hera was worried that I might misunderstand Zylar, so she offered him a way out. So, Zylar took the initiative to carry Hera's parcel for her. He injured his fingers purely by accident."

Both Queenie and Zylar were stunned.

"I didn't hit her! She was the one who struck my throat's acupuncture point! That's why I got anxious and tried to get her to undo it!" Zylar explained hastily with widened eyes.

"Acupuncture point? You must've read too many fiction novels." Hera chuckled lightly.

"You!" Zylar didn't know what to say.

He remembered feeling Hera's hand grazing across his neck. Right after that, he couldn't let out a single sound.

If Hera didn't strike his acupuncture point, then what was it?

"I suspect that Zylar's so-called muteness is just an act. Otherwise, why couldn't the hospital find out what was wrong with his throat?" Hera continued, seemingly deep in thought.

Shaun, Rupert, and the others turned to look at Zylar as though realization had just dawned on them. In a way, they were very cooperative with Hera.

"Hold on, that's not the case! Don't spout lies in my face!" Zylar tried to defend himself.

Queenie's gaze darkened. "Christopher, you've known Zylar for so long. Don't you trust him? Why are you falsifying your testimony just to help Hera out? Did she threaten you as well?"

"I side with justice, not with people I'm affiliated with," Christopher replied righteously. "Also, I'm ashamed to admit that I only got to witness your true colors after knowing you Gaskells for such a

long time. Truth be told, I've already cut Zylar out of my circle a long time ago."

Zylar didn't expect to see Christopher blatantly admitting the truth in public without sparing his pride. He was so pissed that his breathing started becoming heavier.

Queenie inhaled sharply as well. Her mind was plunged into so much chaos that she couldn't be bothered to question Zylar about what had happened between him and Christopher.

Christopher's testimony ended up turning the tables in Hera's favor. Queenie and Zylar wouldn't be able to win if the debate went on. That was why Queenie needed to think of a way to reverse the situation.

She turned to look at Shaun and Kane while pondering about how to make her request known.

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Meanwhile, Michelle argued, "Why would we call the cops on you if you didn't hurt Zylar at all?"

Rupert refuted, "That's because you want her to go to jail!"

The truth was exposed so abruptly that Michelle didn't know what to say for a moment. She wanted to backpedal to the "it's all a misunderstanding" route, but Rupert never gave her a chance to do so.

"To sum it all up, Queenie twisted the truth and conspired with a member of the police force to lodge a fake police report. She did all this to frame Hera and get her imprisoned.

"In doing so, she has committed two crimes—false accusations and deliberate framing of others. Sir, I implore you to make this a valid case."

"Request approved. This case is now valid." Nathan waved a hand. Almost immediately, two officers stepped up and grabbed Queenie from both sides.

Queenie was stunned by the sudden plot twist. She turned to look at Shaun and Kane once again.

"Mr. Thompson, Chief Manford..."

Shaun nudged a foot against the cell's iron door as he smoked from his cigar, clearly enjoying the show. He couldn't be bothered to spare Queenie a glance.

"I think it's necessary to look into her crime of bribery as well," he added.

How dared Queenie use such underhanded methods to frame Hera? Shaun felt he wouldn't be able to face Bernard anymore if he didn't resort to brutal methods just to deal with Queenie.

Queenie was stunned upon hearing Shaun's suggestion.

Wasn't he supposed to side with her?

"Don't worry, Mr. Thompson. We'll definitely investigate every single thing she's done," Kane said firmly.

Then, he turned around to look at Hera. "Ms. Youngworth, are you satisfied with the outcome of this matter? If you're still unsatisfied with it, we can continue discussing your concerns in my office instead of hanging around this cell."

Kane simpered at Hera. His demeanor and tone were extremely respectful.

Needless to say, Queenie and the others were very shocked. They had been stealing glances at Shaun and Kane the whole time, but they never expected to find out that the case was specifically reinvestigated just for Hera's sake.

"Thanks. It's a pretty decent outcome," Hera replied, rising to her feet. Then, she exited the cell.

Kane heaved a sigh of relief. Finally, he was able to get Hera out of the cell.

Hera stopped at the doorway long enough to glance at Queenie coldly. "Sorry for taking up your spot, Mrs. Gaskell. It's all yours now."

Her tone was neutral, yet she was able to say such infuriating things.

Queenie gritted her teeth furiously while glaring at Hera. "You bitch!"

She got careless this time.

Never did she expect to see Shaun backing Hera up.

Undeniably, Hera was exceedingly beautiful. Everyone knew Shaun changed his girlfriends frequently. Once he was sick of Hera, Queenie would make sure that Hera would pay for what she had done.

Now that things had progressed to this stage, Queenie could only swallow the bitter defeat in front of Shaun and Kane. She'd have to wait for the Gaskells to bail her out.

Otherwise, she might have to go to jail for real if things worsened for her.

Nathan grabbed Queenie's shoulder firmly before shoving her into the cell. Then, he slammed the cell door shut and locked it.

"Mom!" Zylar wanted to stop Nathan, but he was too late. An officer escorted him out of the detention facility soon.

Since everything was already dealt with, Shaun said disdainfully, "Alright, let's leave. This place stinks like hell."

Hera, Kane, and Nathan fell silent at the complaint.

Shaun didn't look so disdainful when he first arrived at the detention facility. He had spent a few hours there before finally revealing his disdain.

He was definitely doing this on purpose, wasn't he?

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"You can leave first," Hera said all of a sudden.

Shaun could tell that Hera had something to say to Queenie. "Alright. I'll wait for you outside."

After that, he strode out of the detention facility hastily. It seemed that he truly despised the place.

Kane had worked so hard to get Hera out of the cell. He was worried that she might change her mind about leaving, so he shot Nathan a look as a hint for him to wait outside for Hera. Then, he told Shaun to leave with him.

Once those two were gone, Hera was the only one left in the dark corridor. She stood before the iron door while gazing at Queenie, who was the one trapped inside the cell this time. Her eyes were cold and merciless.

Ironically enough, Queenie was the one harping Hera about spending her best years regretting her choices in prison this morning. To think that their identities and positions would be swapped in the afternoon...

"You think you can cripple me by doing this?" Queenie glared at Hera ferociously.

Once the Gaskells bailed her out, she'd definitely destroy Hera. Also, she'd make sure to implicate the entire Everett family as well.

"Well, you'll get sentenced to a number of years in prison just by committing the false accusation and bribery crimes, so I won't be able to destroy you with those crimes. But what if you're pinned with another charge called premeditated murder?" Hera replied coolly.

Queenie's arrogance dissipated instantly. A trace of shock crossed her malice-filled eyes. It might be fleeting, but Hera still managed to capture it.

If one was charged with premeditated murder, they'd definitely be subjected to a death sentence in Jadonia.

"Are you threatening me? That won't work on me, you know!" Queenie snarled out in response.

"Who do you think murdered Isabella?" Hera dove into the topic right away.

Rage had flooded Queenie's mind at that time, but the mention of Isabella's death made her mind go blank. That was how she managed to calm down.

She glared at Hera warily without saying a word.

Didn't she spend money to stop the news from getting spread around?

How the hell did Hera find out about Isabella's death?

Queenie then recalled the way Kane and Shaun had backed Hera up earlier. Isabella's case mustn't be reopened no matter what.

"Who on earth are you?" Queenie asked after a while.

Hera replied, "I'm here to piss you off."

Speechless, Queenie clenched her fists tightly. She was so angry that she didn't even realize her nails had dug into her palms.

Hera said the same thing she had said to Queenie last time.

Previously, right after Hera said that sentence, Queenie's scandal was quickly leaked to the public. As a result, the Gaskells were attacked by anonymous hackers, causing their stock prices to plummet.

Back then, Queenie had hired someone to investigate Hera.

Hera's information matched the rumors which had been swirling around the city. She was the Everetts' biological daughter who had spent most of her life in the countryside. There was nothing glaringly special in her information other than the fact that she looked gorgeous.

But now, Queenie's opinion of Hera was starting to change.

"Also, did Robin really die in the accident he caused after drinking and driving?"

Hera's tone was very soft at that time. She continued staring at Queenie calmly while saying, "You'll be sentenced to death once the Young family's deaths are pinned on you. If you don't want to get framed for their deaths, I advise you to think it through before the court gives its verdict."

Queenie stared at Hera, who began making her way out of the detention facility, with shock in her eyes. All color was drained from her complexion at that time.

Who on earth was Hera Youngworth? How did she know about what happened to the Young family back then?

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Once Hera walked out of the detention facility, she inhaled deeply, clearly relishing the fresh air.

Although Queenie's case wasn't enough to make an impact on the Gaskells' influence in Norburgh, it was enough to strike them where it hurt the most. The Gaskells would definitely do everything in their power to bail Queenie out.

Hera brought Isabella and her family up in front of Queenie on purpose. Since she was already exposed to the murderer, there was no need to hide the fact that she knew about the Young family's deaths anymore.

Queenie must have known about Isabella's death too, but she might not necessarily be the murderer.

Had Queenie chosen to kill Isabella and her mother just to shut them up for good, there was no need for her to wait till this very moment to strike. Moreover, she was revealed to have gotten into a conflict with both Isabella and her mother in the past.

If Queenie were to kill Isabella and her mother right after the conflict, she would undoubtedly be screaming at the world that she was the murderer. This plan had too many flaws, which didn't suit Queenie's perfectionism and meticulousness.

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There was a reason why Hera had purposefully asked Queenie who she thought the murderer was. She wanted to bait Queenie into taking action right after she got bailed by the Gaskells.

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Once Hera left the detention facility, she found out that Shaun and Rupert had already left some time ago. She wanted to call Gideon, but her phone was already switched off due to the lack of battery.

Hence, she took a taxi back to the Everett residence.

The moment Hera got out of the taxi, she bumped into Gino, who happened to have returned from school.

"Why did you escape from jail?"

For a moment, Gino looked shocked. Then, he peered to his left and right, as though he was afraid that someone might have spotted Hera. After that, he grabbed Hera's hand and dragged her into the Everett residence quickly.

"Can't you just wait in jail for a few hours longer? Gideon is already contacting his connections and potential lawyers to bail you out!"

As Gino spoke, he kept scanning around the manor in hopes of locating suitable hiding spots for Hera. Those hiding spots had to be discreet as well in order to prevent the police from finding her.

Hera was speechless, to say the least.

"Hera! Are you alright?"

Lilith, who had spent the whole day waiting in the living room anxiously, was equally stunned to see Hera.

She rushed over and took Hera's hand as well. Then, she began checking Hera over for any injuries.

"Don't tell me you escaped from jail!" Mildred slowly walked over with her walking stick. Judy propped her the whole way.

Once again, Hera didn't say anything.

It seemed like her family was having a hard time envisioning her getting released from jail as an innocent person.

"I'm fine. Gideon's friend and lawyer helped prove my innocence," she explained patiently.

Gino fell silent after hearing her explanation. He released Hera's hand immediately, feeling a burst of awkwardness surging into his heart at that moment.

"It's good to see you doing fine. You must be hungry, Hera. I've already made honey-glazed ribs for you."

Lilith let out a sigh of relief.

"As expected of Gideon!"

Mildred looked proud. She eyed Hera up and down for a moment before continuing, "You should take a bath and wash away all that bad luck! Judy, break out my precious can of caviar for Hera."

Lilith thought Mildred was about to lecture Hera again. Unexpectedly, not only did Mildred spare Hera from a scolding, but she also gave Hera the caviar.

Hera just shot Mildred an impassive look before heading upstairs. After she got back to her room, she charged her phone and took a bath.

Both Gideon and James had returned for dinner. It was the first time the family of six sat at the dining table together.

Lilith and Judy whipped up a lavish feast for the family. Gideon even popped open the vintage bottle of

Chateau Lafite Rothschild, which et

James had stored for many years. It remained sealed for a long time simply because James couldn't bring himself to pop the cork and drink from it.

"We're celebrating Hera's safe return. Cheers to that!" Gideon said while raising his wine glass.

"Cheers!"

Since Hera and Gino were still minors, they toasted to the celebration with juice instead.

It was rare not to hear anyone humiliating or mocking each other at the dining table. For the first time ever, the Everetts ate and drank happily. Hera secretly observed the genuine smiles etched on everyone's faces. She felt quite touched once again. The familiar surge of warmth swirled around her heart this time.

The reason why she was willing to reunite with the Everett family was because she needed the esteemed identity as their daughter. That way, it'd be easier for her to carry out her revenge.

Little did she know that she'd be able to sit at the same table with her family amicably despite having gone through so many hardships with them. After dinner, Hera knocked on the door of Gideon's study.

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"Gideon, thank you for your help. Please convey my thanks to your friend and Mr. McLaggen as well. These pills can help save one's life when they're in danger. Please give the boxes to them on my behalf. It's my way of thanking them,"

Hera placed two black velvet boxes on the desk as she spoke. She wasn't one to owe others favors.

Gideon glanced at the boxes. There weren't any logos on the covers, which led him to believe that Hera had crafted the pills instead of buying them. "Did you craft the pills yourself?" he asked in surprise.

"Yeah."

Her answer stunned Gideon to the core.

"What other skills do you have?" he asked again.

So far, Hera had demonstrated her skill in treating illnesses and crafting medicines. Not only that, but she was also capable of speaking fluent Terranian as well.

Hera was such a talented girl. Gideon had a feeling that James must be a complete buffoon back then, seeing as he refused to acknowledge Hera as his actual daughter.

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"I suppose I'm also talented in wolfing down food as well," Hera joked.

Gideon burst into laughter, clearly amused.

Despite Hera's skinny frame, she had a huge appetite. She was unlike the other young girls who ate very little each meal just to maintain their figures. Hera was the type who cleaned every morsel off her plate. In fact, she enjoyed eating desserts too.

"You should take the pills back. I wanted to ask you how you managed to get out of jail," Gideon replied.

He had been contacting everyone he could think of while trying to come up with a way to bail Hera out of jail the entire afternoon. But when his contacts heard that Queenie and Brandon were the ones behind Hera's imprisonment, they dared not offer their help.

They claimed that they couldn't afford to step on Queenie's and Brandon's toes at this time. Also, they wouldn't be able to do anything to people as powerful as those two.

Gideon only stopped when he received a phone call from Lilith, who informed him of Hera's return.

He was curious as to why Queenie and Brandon could let Hera off the hook so easily. After asking around, he found out that Shaun and Kane had visited the police station.

Was Hera acquainted with Shaun as well?

"That wasn't you? Then it could only be..." Hera looked surprised.

A gorgeous face popped into her mind at that moment. Was Bernard the one who helped her out?

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Back in Skyview Heights, Bernard sat on the couch in a black shirt and long pants. He gripped a wine glass while swirling the red liquid around elegantly.

Shaun sat across from him. He had a cigar in his left hand, whereas his right hand clutched the glass by the mouth carelessly. The ice cubes rattled with his every move, and his cognac sloshed around as well.

"Bernard, I admit that I was wrong back then. I'll down three glasses of cognac as my punishment," Shaun said.

After draining three glasses of cognac heartily, he continued, "It's wrong to purely claim that all women will be attracted to men who spend the right amount of money. I need to add one more condition."

Bernard raised an eyebrow as an indication for Shaun to continue speaking.

"Power plays a huge role as well."

This was the conclusion Shaun had reached after meeting Hera in the police station.

He had met all sorts of women, yet it

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was his first time meeting someone like Hera. She was gorgeous and sexy, though she had a cold personality and was very opinionated. Regular men could

never score a chance with her.

Bernard opted not to say anything about Shaun's ridiculous conclusion.

"Then again, you've been keeping a low profile for way too long recently. If not, why would trash like Queenie have the guts to bully Hera?" Shaun dusted the ash off his cigar. Content

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Bernard sipped some red wine from his glass. "It's time to force the Gaskells into bankruptcy."

"This can be chalked up to your wooing progress being far too slow. No one else knows that Hera's your girl. Do you need my help?" Shaun raised an eyebrow.

If it weren't for the fact that Bernard had a crush on Hera, Shaun would've been interested in courting her.

The colder a woman seemed, the stronger his urge to conquer her.

"No need for that. You can leave now," Bernard replied ruthlessly.

"Tch! I can't believe you told me to get lost after ordering me around! You're the only one who's bold enough to do this to me!" Shaun complained, clearly displeased.

Still, he threw his head back and downed the rest of the cognac before getting up to his feet.

Suddenly, sounds of the electronic lock being unlocked could be heard coming from the outside. The front door was opened the next moment.

The first thing Hera noticed was a strong smell of smoke wafting from inside the residence. A frown graced her features as she turned to look at the couch.

Wisps of smoke could be seen

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surrounding the living room. A few bottles of wine sat on the coffee table, their corks already popped. Bernard sat on the couch while holding the wine glass that he had yet to set down due to the time constraints.

Hera made eye contact with Bernard coolly. There wasn't a trace of emotion on her face.

She had specifically dropped by Skyview Heights just to thank Bernard in person. Little did she expect that she'd witness him drinking alcohol behind her back.

Bernard had yet to make a full recovery from his injuries. He was forbidden from drinking alcohol and eating spicy food.

It had only been one day since Hera last saw Bernard, and yet he was already breaking one of the rules. What if he did something else behind her back?

Meanwhile, Bernard didn't expect to see Hera returning to Skyview Heights all of a sudden. As a result, he was caught red-handed.

Wasn't Hera supposed to return to the Everett residence?

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The next thing everyone knew, Bernard raised his wine glass at Shaun.

"Thank you for doing me such a huge favor, Mr. Thompson. I'll definitely repay you for your benevolence in the future. Please, help yourself to the alcohol. Cheers."

Bernard then drained his glass dry. He made sure to cough a few times after that as though he choked on the wine.

Shaun, who was taken aback by the sudden performance, was extremely confused.

Didn't Bernard tell him to leave? Why did he make it seem like Shaun was the one forcing him to drink?

How the hell did he get framed?

Then again, Shaun had no choice but to take the blame for the sake of Bernard's future happiness.

Still, he was starting to feel concerned for Bernard. After all, he was willing to bend over backward just to cater to Hera's wishes.

"Mr. Thompson, thank you for your help today. This is a life-saving pill that I've crafted. Think of it as my gift for your help."

Hera pulled out a small velvet box from her bag and passed it to Shaun. The dark box formed a sharp contrast against her fingers, making them look extremely slender and beautiful.

The faintest trace of a smile was present on Hera's beautiful face. For some reason, Shaun had a feeling that he was accepting a lethal pill instead of a life-saving pill.

Then again, it was a gift from Bernard's beautiful wife-to-be. Shaun was more than thrilled to accept poison from Hera as long as it was a gift from her.

After accepting the box and putting it into his pocket, Shaun replied, "No problem. You can treat me to a few drinks next time. I'm leaving now." What Shaun didn't know was that the pill would end up saving his life in the future.

"Sweetie, I didn't mean to drink on purpose..."

The moment Shaun closed the front door behind him, Bernard immediately plastered an innocent look on his face.

He continued, "I was worried about you, but I was in no condition to pick you up. So, I had to ask Shaun for help. He likes drinking a lot, you see. I can only humor him by going with what he wants. But really, I didn't drink much at all."

Hera glanced at the bottles on the coffee table again. Clearly, she had noticed that half of the wine was gone.

Bernard didn't drink much, huh?

Upon noticing Hera turning to leave with an impassive look on her face, Bernard rose to his feet immediately before sweeping the bottles off the coffee table.

Sounds of glass crashing onto the floor rang out abruptly at that moment.

Hera turned around immediately, only to see Bernard slumping against the coffee table. She rushed over to help him up immediately. "Are you okay?"

"I'm not!"

Hera quickly checked Bernard over. It appeared that he didn't sustain any injuries.

She remained silent afterward.

"I know my mistake now, sweetie. Can you please not get mad at me?" Bernard continued to play the pity card despite having gotten Hera's attention. "I'm not mad at you."

Bernard proceeded to study Hera's beautiful face. "But you keep ignoring me. You also tried to leave."

Hera was speechless for a moment.

"I was going to craft you some hangover pills," she explained.

et

It was all thanks to Bernard that Hera was released from her cell so quickly without a hitch in the process. Also, she got to turn the tables on Queenie. Bernard's

contacts played a huge role in

ensuring that things went well.

e

Hera couldn't bear to see Bernard ruining his own body by consuming alcohol. She was both angry and distressed because of this. Bernard's lips curled into a small smile.

"There's no need for that. My alcohol tolerance is quite strong."

In the past, he had gone through

special training just so he could

complete a spy mission. As a result,

he was able to keep his mind clear

even after guzzling down four pints

of content belongs to

Hera fell silent after that.

Even though Bernard claimed that he didn't need hangover pills, she still went ahead and crafted some for him. He still had to take anti-inflammation pills, so he needed to be careful when it came to

alcohol intake. Content belongs to

Bernard just went along with the flow obediently. He seemed to have pondered about an issue for a long time, for he soon spoke up. "Even Shaun has a gift. Why didn't you give me one?"

Once again, Hera didn't know what to say.

She knew that Bernard was playing the pity card on purpose, yet she didn't have the heart to expose him, nor did she want to turn him down. Suddenly, Hera recalled the ongoing deal she had with the grandmaster of Astral Nova. The best gift she could prepare for Bernard was an opportunity to cure his illness once and for all.

That was why she needed to get her hands on the century-old gurdyroot as soon as possible.

As for the photos requested by the grandmaster...

Chapter 189

Hera fixed her gaze on Bernard before scanning him from the bottom to the top. It was as though she could see his muscular figure through his clothes. In the end, her gaze landed on Bernard's gorgeous face.

"You want a gift from me? Not a problem. Give me ten of your selfies. I need to trade them for the medicinal ingredient I need," she said.

It was Bernard's turn to be speechless.

"Right. I want the selfies that are similar to the one you sent to me by mistake in the past," Hera added.

Bernard remained silent.

He had been wondering how Hera would get her hands on his photos. Never did he expect that she'd request them from him in such a blunt manner.

"I don't have any selfies left. I don't really take them," Bernard denied right away.

"Didn't you send someone else your selfie last time? You even claimed that you sent it to the wrong person!" Hera gazed at Bernard suspiciously. Clearly, she didn't trust him.

"Are you jealous?" Bernard looked at Hera with a mysterious smile on his face.

Upon recalling the incident involving Bernard and Camille back then, Hera's long-forgotten irritation came back in full force.

"Don't switch the subject! The medical ingredient is meant for you. Now, hurry up and give me the photos," she urged stonily.

Hera really was a stubborn one.

Bernard opened his photo album and showed it to her.

"Seriously, I don't have any photos of myself. I didn't send the photo to the wrong person back then; I sent the wrong photo to you. I wanted to send you another one, you know. You're the only one who gets to see my selfies."

Initially, Hera didn't want to look at the photo album. But her eyes still betrayed her by gliding over to Bernard's phone screen.

There were only two photos in his photo album.

The first one was the photo

featuring his abs, which had been sent to her in the past. The other photo was a photo of Bernard's gorgeous looks. There was even a caption at the bottom of the photo, but Hera couldn't make it out since the font was too small.

Hera was still doubting Bernard's reason, so she raised a hand and swiped the screen upward to check the album properly.

True to Bernard's words, there were only two photos in his photo album.

"Who did you strike a deal with? What sort of medical ingredient are you trying to barter for?" Bernard asked despite knowing the answers to those questions.

Hera didn't want to reveal too much information to him. She gazed downward instead.

"It's a guy with a weird fetish. I'm trying to get my hands on a medicinal ingredient that can save your life."

Bernard was momentarily silent when he heard the answer.

"Is it the Eclipse Stone? I heard that Dr. Shadow obtained it," he said.

At the same time, he studied Hera's expression carefully in order to capture the slightest change in her expression.

Hera's expression was still stony,

but her eyelashes fluttered slightly the moment she heard Dr. Shadow's name being mentioned. She was a great actress, but Bernard still

noticed the hint of strangeness.

"It seems that you think too highly of yourself." She chuckled icily in response.

As if the Eclipse Stone was worth ten of Bernard's selfies!

Chapter 190

If it were that easy, Hera wouldn't have to go to the Astral Nova Auction to bid for the damned pearl. Not only did she spend 880 million dollars on it, but she also had to agree to three of the grandmaster's conditions.

Thanks to that, she wasn't able to buy any other medical ingredients, nor was she able to settle the second half of the payment.

Ugh! She was dirt poor at the moment!

Bernard couldn't help but smile. He didn't want to expose Hera's identity, seeing as she didn't want to come clean to him just yet.

"Enough with the nonsense! Just snap ten selfies and send them to me!" Hera tossed the phone back to Bernard before turning to head upstairs. She wanted to go to bed soon.

Bernard grabbed her hand immediately. "I'm still sick, so I can't take my own selfies. Why don't you take them for me?"

His action caught Hera by surprise. Bernard's hand was quite big, and he had long, slender fingers. Even though the residence was very warm thanks to the thermostat, his body temperature was rather low. It was a sign that his health was still poor.

Hera turned around to see Bernard sitting on the couch. He was in the midst of undoing his buttons.

Just as Bernard was about to undo his fourth button, Hera quickly placed a hand on top of his hands to stop him. "Have Douglas take the selfies for you tomorrow." Her ears were starting to redden out of embarrassment. "No way. Not anyone gets to see my body, you know." Bernard turned that suggestion down immediately. Hera shot back, "Didn't you shower with your comrades in a communal bathroom during your time in the army?" Also, Douglas had been dropping by Skyview Heights over the past few nights to rub Bernard down, hadn't he? "My time in the army is ancient history now. Besides, I was always the last one in the bathroom. It was often deserted."

Hera remembered seeing scars littering Bernard's back and waist. Almost every single one of them signified a fatal attack delivered by his enemies. It was extremely difficult for him to survive till now.

The thought of Bernard getting hurt in the past made Hera's heart ache for him.

"This wound must have hurt a lot, right?" she asked while gently caressing the scar on Bernard's chest.

"Not really. I'm already numb to it."

et

Bernard's response made Hera's heartache worsen. Just how many times must a person get severely injured for him to get used to such horrible pain? Content belongs to

If only Bernard had escaped from the Killian residence together with Hera and Catherine...

Perhaps his destiny might turn out differently today.

An icy glint crossed Hera's eyes the moment she recalled the Killians.

Having sensed the shift in Hera's mood, Bernard said, "It's getting late now. I'll tell you the stories behind the scars next time."

Hera snapped out of her memories at that moment. Only then did she realize her current posture made her seem like a female gangster who was about to take advantage of another man. She quickly withdrew her hand before getting up to her feet. Then, she headed upstairs with reddened ears.

Bernard's voice drifted from behind her. "You should rest early. Let's take the selfies you need this Sunday. I'll prepare for the photoshoot."

Hera didn't say anything in response.

What did he mean by "the selfies you need"?

She was only doing this because she needed to trade the selfies for the medicinal ingredient just to cure his illness!

Also, what sort of preparations did he have in mind for the so-called photoshoot?

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After returning to her room, Hera washed up in the bathroom before plopping onto her bed. She

managed to fall asleep after that and even had a dream.

The following day, she jolted awake because of the dream.