

Under the Heiress' Facade #Chapter 211 - Read Under the Heiress' Facade Chapter 211

Chapter 211

Seeing the mirrored shock on the students' faces, the teacher felt a sense of satisfaction.

The teacher explained, "The exam questions were meticulously crafted by the delegations of

top universities just yesterday afternoon. The papers were printed under strict security measures and remained sealed until this morning.

"Not even Dean Ludden had access to them. The answer key was only released at noon today, so cheating was absolutely impossible!"

Gino and Zylar were dumbfounded. Every single student present was in a state of utter disbelief.

Even Christopher didn't achieve a perfect score last year, and this year's exam was even more challenging. Yet, Hera finished it in half an hour and got every single answer right!

Weren't there rumors that Hera cheated on the entrance exam and left the midterms blank? How could she possibly achieve this level of academic excellence? And in such a short amount of time!

It was simply mind-boggling.

Whispers filled the air.

"She's the real deal! Is this why the cheating scandal during the entrance exam was dropped?"

"I remember Christopher defended her on the forum, saying it was a misunderstanding."

"Yeah, that rings a bell."

"How is Hera so incredibly gifted? Didn't she come from a small town?"

"Did she intentionally turn in a blank paper to throw everyone off?"

"That's some serious under-the-radar genius!"

"Well, there goes my allowance for the next three months."

The crowd erupted in a cacophony of lively chatter.

Jefferson stood frozen in disbelief. He had invested a total of three million dollars on the bet. If his parents discovered he lost it all in one go, they would skin him alive.

He shot a stiff glance at the still-stunned Gino, then abruptly turned and fled the scene.

In his haste, he collided with Zylar, who was still reeling from the news. Zylar stumbled and fell to the ground.

Snapping out of his daze, Gino saw Zylar's pale face and couldn't resist a sneer. "Bowing down in defeat, are we? Reality hitting hard?"

This hypocrite—who had looked down on Hera for her rural background, broken off the engagement between their families, and indirectly caused the Everetts' bankruptcy—was now getting a taste of his own medicine!

Zylar's expression went through a mix of emotions. He had only scored 150 and was a full 50 points behind Hera, ranking a measly 17th.

His dream of getting a recommendation from Vardhar University was shattered.

Just then, a broadcast

announcement echoed through the

school's speakers. "Respected teachers and students, please return

to your classrooms immediate

and

turn on the multimedia computers. Next, please witness a historic moment for Cavenridge. Content belongs

The students were still buzzing with

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the revelation of Hera's perfect score and were intrigued by what could possibly be even more shocking. Everyone hurried back to their classrooms, powering on the multimedia computers and connecting the classroom projectors to the school's main

platform. Content belongs to

A live stream flickered to life on the screens, revealing a conference room filled with university deans and representatives from prestigious institutions.

Was this a glimpse into the inner workings of the academic elite?

The camera panned, focusing on a tall, elegant young woman standing composedly before the delegation.

It was Hera.

"Ms. Youngworth, you have excelled

in the examination, achieving remarkable results that have deeply impressed us. We present to you this brochure and invitation from Vardhar University. We sincerely hope you will consider our offer." Content belongs

With utmost respect, the Vardhar University representative extended a formal invitation to Hera.

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Hera barely gave the invitation a glance before another representative eagerly stepped forward.

"We're from Rutherford University, renowned for our excellence in mathematics, physics, medicine, law, and business. We'd like to invite you, Ms. Youngworth, to consider our institution."

"We're from Comridge University..."

"Here is the invitation from the Marlborough Institute of Technology..."

"We represent Stanborough University..."

One after another, representatives from over a dozen internationally renowned universities extended their invitations to Hera, a scene that left the entire Cavenridge faculty and student body in awe. This was a moment many could only dream of, yet it was unfolding right before their very eyes!

As the room held its breath, anticipating Hera's choice, her beautiful face remained an enigmatic mask, revealing no hint of her thoughts. The esteemed invitations before her seemed to hold no more value than discarded notes.

In the corner, Christopher watched with bated breath, silently pleading for her to choose Vardhar University, the gateway to their shared dream of studying abroad.

Hera's gaze swept over the pile of invitations before lifting to meet the eyes of those assembled.

A hush fell over the room as she posed a question that stunned everyone, "Are there no universities from Jedburgh?"

The representatives from the world-renowned institutions were momentarily speechless while the Cavenridge students exchanged bewildered glances. Was she truly rejecting these global powerhouses in favor of a local Jedburgh university?

The representatives from Quantford and Bradbury, the two prestigious Jedburgh institutions, were caught off guard. A mixture of astonishment and delight washed over them.

They yearned for this exceptional student, but the overwhelming presence of prestigious international institutions made their own offerings feel insignificant.

To their utter surprise, Hera's question turned the tables.

"Yes, there are!" Representatives from Quantford and Bradbury eagerly extended their invitations.

A silent understanding passed between them. Even if Hera chose the other, it was a win for Jedburgh as long as she remained in the country. After all, their campuses were mere steps apart, fostering a close-knit academic community.

"Thank you," Hera replied, accepting both invitations.

The decision of which university to attend was still pending, but her priority was clear—Jedburgh was her first choice.

The representatives from the global institutions were dumbfounded. They had been rejected!

This was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that countless students yearned for, yet she had dismissed it without hesitation!NôveID(ram)a.ôrg owns this content.

"Ms. Youngworth, could you

enlighten us as to why you're narrowing it down to these two universities? Our teaching resources and overall offerings are undeniably superior." Content belongs

Hera calmly replied, "I have no intention of studying abroad at this time. Should the need arise in the future, I'll reapply."

"There's no need for that. Please keep our invitation. Vardhar University's doors are always open to you."

"As are Comridge University's," another representative added.

"And Stanborough University's," echoed yet another.

A chorus of similar sentiments filled the room. Oblivious to the fact that this scene was being broadcast live throughout Cavenridge Academy Hera responded with a firm tone, "Thank you, but I must decline. If there's nothing else, I'll be on my way." Content belongs

The Cavenridge students watching were awestruck.

That was bold! Those were the world-renowned institutions they all dreamed of attending! Yet, she turned them down so effortlessly!

But strangely, a sense of vicarious satisfaction rippled through them.

As she reached the door, Hera paused, a thought crossing her mind.

If you're looking for other

categories, you might consider

Cindy Fry from junior year, Class A." Content belongs

She remembered how Cindy had helped her out of the locked dressing room the day before, a favor she felt compelled to return.

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Cindy jolted upright as Hera called out her name unexpectedly during the live broadcast.

Anticipation crackled in the air, but before Cindy could learn more about the delegations' offers, the live stream abruptly cut out. NôvelD(ram)a.ôrg owns this content.

The tension lingered, leaving her restless for a long time.

Her own examination score, a decent 189 placing her fourth, wasn't quite good enough for guaranteed admission to Comridge, her dream school.

Despite their strained relationship, the thought of Hera recommending her was a surprise.

Meanwhile, Hera emerged from the meeting room, clutching two coveted invitation letters.

Back in Class K, pandemonium erupted as she entered.

"Boss, you sneaky genius! You pretended to be a slacker!" Katie shrieked.

"So, beauty and brains really do go hand-in-hand. Is it too late for me to start cramming now?"

"Never thought I'd share a class with a top student!"

"Gotta hit the books harder, or I won't even be worthy of being in her shadow!"

The excited chatter attracted Kerry's attention.

Beaming with pride, she entered and congratulated Hera, wiping away a tear of joy. She was a firm believer in every student's potential and recognized Hera's unique brilliance.

"One question, though. Why were you always turning in blank papers?" Kerry asked, her curiosity piqued.

Hera's reply was nonchalant, bordering on smug. "The papers were too easy. I didn't feel like doing them."

The entire class groaned in unison.

Was this the gap between a genius and a slacker? They'd never know for sure.

The afternoon classes dragged by in a blur of excitement, the buzz only fading as the final bell echoed through the halls.

Katie suggested a celebratory karaoke night for Hera. The class president was thrilled at the prospect and immediately volunteered her family's karaoke venue.

Even Kerry was swept up in the festive mood and agreed to join the celebration. She even extended the invitation to Christopher and Cindy.

Hera, a self-proclaimed loner, usually steered clear of class gatherings. But as she watched the infectious excitement swirling around her, a tiny seed of doubt sprouted in her mind. Maybe, for the first time ever, she wouldn't say no. Content

belongs

The after-school buzz was electric as a large group formed. They headed toward the class president's family karaoke chain.

At the school gate, Hera spotted Gino lingering purposefully.

He caught wind of their plans and declared, "This one's on me!"

Hera raised an eyebrow, her gaze laced with skepticism.

"Are you sure you can swing it?" she asked, remembering the Everetts' financial troubles and Gino's probable lack of funds.

Gino puffed out his chest, a show of

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exaggerated pride. "Money? No

problem! My pockets are

overflowing. Tonight, everyone will

feast like royalty! It's all on me!" Content belongs

Hera's lips remained sealed at his words.

"Boss, haven't you checked the forum today?" Katie chimed in, noticing Hera's bewildered expression.

While online forums held little appeal for Hera, she did recall her classmates mentioning something about lost bets.

"Apparently, your brother placed a

five-million-dollar bet on the forum on you doing well. Needless to say, you blew everyone away. The forum gamblers lost big, lining your

brother's pockets with their

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misfortune. The bookie even threw

in another five million!" Content

belongs

Katie sighed dramatically. "Such a genius move! Making money with zero effort. Why didn't I think of that?"

Gino said with pride, "I'm officially a millionaire now!"

He then flourished a card in front of Hera. "Here you go. Spend it all!"

Hera's silence spoke volumes. There he stood, bragging about his newfound wealth, completely unaware of who truly earned it.

Chapter 214

News of Hera's perfect score reached Gideon like a siren song.

He promptly abandoned work early, laden with goodies for a celebratory feast. The aroma of delicious food filled the air as Gideon tirelessly cooked, eager to surprise Hera when she returned from school.

Just as he plated the final dish, a message buzzed on his phone.

Gino: "We're skipping dinner! I'm treating Hera and her classmates to a celebration. Enjoy the feast!"

Gideon's eyes narrowed. He had specifically instructed Gino to bring Hera home for a surprise, but his good intentions were trampled by Gino's bravado.

Fury simmered within him, and he tapped out a swift reply: "Return my money."

Moments later, a notification pinged, and five million had landed in his account.

This was followed by another message from Gino: "Five million, repaid."

However, Gideon wasn't finished yet: "Principal repaid. What about the 50 percent interest?"

Gino's reply arrived promptly, punctuated with a string of exclamation marks.

Gideon was unfazed and countered: "Just clearing accounts between brothers, you know, the usual exorbitant interest rates for family emergencies. Gino's response was a

defeated silence, followed by a grumbling message: "You're not my brother, you're a high-interest loan shark!"

Despite the slight sting of disappointment, Gideon refrained from interrupting Hera's celebration.

He settled down for a quiet dinner with his parents and grandmother, savoring the delicious food he'd prepared. Later, he retreated to his study, diving back into work.

It was 9:30 pm.

Gideon's phone buzzed with a notification, and it was a location message from Hera.NôvelD(ram)a.ôrg owns this content.

Hera asked, "Gideon, can you come pick us up?"

The weight on his chest instantly lifted. He had instructed Hera to call him after 10:00 pm if she was still out, a promise she rarely kept.

Yet, she remembered this time.

A smile tugged at his lips.

He replied swiftly: "I'll be there soon."

Then, he grabbed his coat and keys in a flurry of activity.

Following the address, Gideon pulled into the karaoke chain's parking lot. As he approached the entrance, a woman's scream pierced the night. "Hey! Let go of me! If you come any closer, I'll scream for help!"

The voice was somewhat familiar.

Gideon was drawn by the scream and found a harrowing scene unfolding in the dim alley beside the karaoke chain.

Huddled in the meager light, several thugs encircled a woman, their coarse hands tearing at her clothes.

The woman was Amelia. She was clad in a tight leopard-print dress that offered little defense. Her short hair was disheveled, and her top hung precariously, a testament to their aggression.

"Go ahead, scream louder," one of the thugs sneered, raising his hand to strike again.

"Let the whole world know how the eldest daughter of the Gaskells plays her games!"

The venom in his voice fueled Gideon's rage as he silently stalked closer, the darkness concealing his approach.

Swelling rose around a fresh bruise,

and blood trickled from the corner of

Amelia's mouth. Tears welled in her eyes, blurring her vision. Her

expression contained a flicker of innocence amidst the growing resentment. Content belongs to

She clamped down hard on her lower lip, fixing a fierce glare on the thugs.

Queenie was still in the detention center. Earlier, they had sought Aurora in Jedburgh, but she was with the Killians' matriarch at a church, so they were turned away.

Terence couldn't think of a solution,

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so he told Amelia to seduce Shaun. He said that if she succeeded, she would become a member of the Thompson family and Hera would be nothing. This could turn the Gaskells' crisis around. Content belongs

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At the time, Amelia felt very uncomfortable, but in the end, she softened and agreed. She was driven by her long-standing desire for Queenie's attention. She believed that winning Shaun's favor would earn Queenie's recognition upon her release. Content belongs to

However, Shaun's brutality exceeded her expectations. She was delivered to thugs without even meeting him, and their aggression intensified despite her defiant stare.

"Why play hard to get? You're dressed this way to sleep with someone, right? Mr. Thompson isn't interested, so entertain us instead."

"Haha, scream again! Why did you stop?"

Just as they were about to strip her, a man's voice rang out. "Stop!"

Chapter 215

The thugs turned, finding a tall, handsome man with a phone at the alley's entrance.

Amelia looked up, recognizing Gideon with a start. She quickly lowered her head again. The shame of being seen in such a vulnerable state by him was almost unbearable.

"This doesn't concern you, kid." The lead thug growled.

Gideon raised his phone, his expression cold. "The police will be here in five minutes. If you don't want to get caught, I suggest you leave."

The thugs exchanged glances, and one whispered to the leader, "He's the eldest son of the Everett family."

Realizing who they were dealing with, the leader spat at Amelia and snarled. "You got lucky this time. Don't let me see you again! Let's go." With that, he and his men disappeared into the night.

Gideon approached and saw Amelia on the ground, disheveled and distraught.

She immediately turned away as she was afraid he would offer help. She quickly stood, clutching herself and shivering.

She kept her head bowed, not wanting Gideon to see her face. Ever since the Gaskell and Everett families' falling out, they had become enemies. Gideon must not have recognized her. That was the only reason he helped. She couldn't bear the thought of him recognizing her and mocking her. "Has the Gaskell family fallen this far?" Gideon's voice was cold.

Amelia's eyes widened. Had he known who she was all along? Was he deliberately here to humiliate her?

The thought made her fists clench. Just as she was about to respond, a grey cashmere coat was thrown over her head.

Hesitantly, she pulled it down, only to see Gideon's tall figure receding into the night.

She stood there, stunned. She held the coat that still carried the warmth of his body and the faint scent of his cologne. A complex emotion welled up inside her as she stared at the coat in her hands. Content belongs

Gideon reached the karaoke room where Hera and her friends were. Seeing Kerry, who was pregnant, escorting each student out, he understood why Hera had called him.

If Kerry hadn't insisted on having the students guardians pick them up, Hera would likely have gone home alone. The realization brought a wave of emotion, nearly bringing him to tears. Content belongs

"Thank you, Ms. Lane. You should head home and rest," he told Kerry. After getting Hera and saying their goodbyes, the three headed outside.

In the Norburgh winter, nights were colder than days. Their breath formed mist, and ice crystals lined the roadside flowerbeds.

Noticing Gideon was only wearing a cashmere sweater, Hera asked, "Gideon, why are you dressed so lightly?" NôveID(ram)a.ôrg owns this content.

Gideon felt a surge of warmth, knowing Hera still cared.

"I left in a hurry and forgot my coat. It's not too bad. The car's heater is on," he replied, omitting his encounter with Amelia. At the parking lot, he opened the backseat door for them.

"Trying to look cool, huh?" Gino teased as he got in.

Gideon gritted his teeth and started the car. He then asked Hera, "Skyview Heights or home?"

He knew Hera lived at Skyview

Heights, presumably in a house Bernard had arranged. It was usually just her and Tiramisu, with occasional visits from Bernard. If not for Bernard's clean reputation with women, Gideon would suspect he was treating Hera as a mistress. Content belongs

The thought enraged him, but he was worried that meddling too much would alienate Hera. So, he had to respect her choice.

His dear Hera, whom he hadn't even had a chance to treat properly, was already being snatched by that old Bernard.

Chapter 216

Bernard had just finished an international virtual meeting when he suddenly sneezed. Douglas immediately looked over.

"Did you catch a cold? Do you want to meet Ms. Hera?" Douglas asked.

Bernard replied, "I'm fine. No need for that."

Hera was having a reunion with her schoolmates. He didn't want to disturb her. However, it was also almost time to pick her up as well.

At this time, his phone screen lit up. There were notifications from WhatsApp.

He unlocked the screen and saw that the message came from Hera: "I'm not going back tonight. I'm going to the Everett residence."

Bernard was silent for a while, then he looked up at Douglas. "Yes, I want to."

Douglas was confused. "You want to meet Ms. Hera?"

"Yes."

Douglas was speechless. Didn't Bernard just say that he was fine?

At the Gaskell residence, the lights were all turned on in the living room. Terence was pacing back and forth in front of the floor-length windows. The news that Queenie was arrested had spread in the business circles via gossip. Gaskell Corporation's eligibility for a bidding project was canceled, and even two big clients that were long-time partners stopped their partnership for two new products.

The company's stocks had not been looking good the past few days. Terence was incredibly frustrated and smoked cigar after cigar.

At this time, Amelia returned, clothed in an ill-fitting sheepskin coat.

The maids saw that her appearance was unkempt and quickly asked, "My goodness, miss. What happened to you? Should we call a doctor?" Terence immediately looked back and walked over, asking, "Amy, how did it go? Did Mr. Thompson say anything?"

Amelia watched Terence. His

expression was full of anxiety, but it seemed like he didn't notice how terrible she looked. Even the maids were kind enough to ask about her well-being, but her own father only cared about whether she had done her job. Content belongs

She couldn't help but feel a chill rise in her heart.

"Say something! How did it go?" Seeing that she was silent, Terence urged hastily.

Amelia shook her head. "Nothing happened. Before I could even meet Shaun, I was chased off by some gangsters."

Terence's eyebrows knitted together

as his expression darkened. In

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frustration, he blurted out, "Why are you so useless? You can't even accomplish a simple task. Your mother was right; you're a

A

good-for-nothing brat! Raising you

was a waste of effort!" Content belongs

Amelia stood rooted to the spot. Even though the heating in the living room was at a comfortable level, she still felt a chill spread through her body. "Dad, am I truly so worthless to you?" her eyes were red as she asked.

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Since she was young, Queenie had always favored Zylar. Even Amelia's favorite hobby, playing the piano, came about because Zylar had a fleeting interest in it. Queenie immediately hired famous pianists from Jascil as a private tutor for him. Only then did she have a chance to practice alongside him.

Content belongs

However, because her talent was nowhere as good as Zylar's, Queenie forced her to quit piano and made her learn accounting, which she wasn't interested in.

After learning accounting, Queenie still felt that she wasn't good at it. Although Amelia was the finance director of the company, Queenie wanted to watch over everything she did.

In the beginning, Amelia thought that Queenie was only looking out for her. However, in the process of getting constantly nitpicked, she realized that Queenie was biased. In her eyes, Amelia was not as perfect as Zylar.

Amelia even comforted herself by thinking that although her mother was hard on her, her father still loved her. However, she forgot that her father was obedient to her mother.

At this moment, she realized that in this family, she was just the laughingstock. Even their sworn enemy, the Everett family, would pity her and give her clothing. But her father would only care about Queenie's matters.

"It's nothing, you're overthinking things." Terence snapped out of his anger and realized that he had said something harsh due to his emotions.

As if he just noticed Amelia's wounds, he said, "Go back to your room and tidy up. Get a doctor for Amelia."

His latter words seemed to be for the maids.

Amelia tightened her grip on the coat. Her heart turned cold as she went up the stairs.

Chapter 217

Hera stayed at the Everett residence for two nights and only returned to Skyview Heights on the weekend.

Bernard was not there, so she took the time to sort out the photos she took on Monday.

The camera was already delivered from Lumiville. She plugged it into the computer and looked through the photos. She realized that Bernard had also taken a lot of photos of her.

One of them was a side profile photo of her sitting at the desk while Tiramisu was standing on it. Its head was tilted up, and they were nose to nose with each other. She liked it a lot, so she sent it to her phone to use it as her WhatsApp profile picture.

Then, she chose ten private photos of Bernard and cropped his face out. Then, she logged onto her anonymous WhatsApp account to send the photos to Grandmaster of Astral Nova: "These are the photos you wanted. Please review them. When will you deliver the gurdyroot?"

On the other side of the screen, Bernard was sitting in Shuttle Venture's CEO's office. It was rare that he would review the company's emails himself. Shuttle Ventures was one of the smaller companies under Killian Corporation. Two years ago, when he retired from the army, Chad assigned him to work in this company.

In those two years, one could count the number of times he physically went to the office on two hands. Usually, he would hand over his work to the vice president, Harold Greer. Only when Killian Corporation sent people over to audit the company would he be present.

At this time, his phone on the table lit up with notifications. He had new messages from WhatsApp. Bernard used his computer to change accounts and saw the ten photos.

These were all his private photos. No matter how bad the ratio was, his head had been cropped out awkwardly.

Bernard was speechless. All of a sudden, he felt doubtful about Hera's sense of aesthetics.

Even so, he politely replied: "These photos are not bad."

He thought about it for a while then sent her the timing and location: "2:00 pm at Room 808, level four, Imperial Hotel."

Not long after he sent the message, the computer notified him that there was a hacking attempt.

Bernard's slender eyes narrowed. Someone actually broke through his firewall! This was interesting. It had been a while since he had met a worthy opponent.

His fingers interlocked and balled into fists as he relaxed the joints. He tilted his neck left and right. Then, his fingers landed on the keyboard, furiously tapping away.

On the other side, Hera stared at the codes flitting across the screen. Suddenly, her typing stopped.

She had just broken through the other person's firewall, but her hacking attempt was halted.

Then, an urgent notification popped out on the screen, notifying her that her firewall had suffered a breach and there was a virus attack. The other party even retaliated.

Hera squinted slightly before her fingers flew across the keyboard again, stopping the invader's attack.

The two of them took turns attacking and defending. After several rounds, neither of them succeeded in taking down each other's system.

It had been a long time since Hera

met such a strong opponent. The last person whom sheNôveID(ram)a.ôrg owns this content.

acknowledged to be a really strong opponent was Mr. S. Now, she was even more curious about this Grandmaster of Astral Nova. Content belongs

In the beginning, she felt doubtful about this deal and wanted to figure out this person's identity. Because they had agreed to the deal too easily, Hera suspected that they knew about her true identity. Content belongs

When she recalled their interactions, she found the biggest point of suspicion. Although she changed her voice at Astral Nova, one could still tell whether her voice was male or female. Content belongs

On WhatsApp, she wrongly sent over Bernard's photos, but the other person didn't say anything about it. They even gladly accepted the photos.

The gender difference was so obvious that any normal person would find it weird, but they didn't. This was the crux of the issue.

Hera never would have thought that the other person was also a hacker.

Chapter 218

Keyboards clacking, Hera and Bernard fought for dozens of rounds. The longer it took, the faster they attacked, and the more difficult it became.

Hera's eyes flitted back and forth on the screen, scanning the lines of codes that kept appearing. She felt cornered by the other person's virus who had the advantage of surprise. She could feel that this person was better than her.

She sharpened her focus, and her typing sped up.

Suddenly, the other person stopped defending and attacking. Hera finally found an opening and immediately cleared the virus. Then, she quickly ramped up her attacks. Just as she was about to break through the other person's defenses, the screen turned dark.© - All rights reserved.

Her laptop was out of battery! She remembered that she had connected the power source before this. As her gaze followed the charger, she saw Tiramisu chewing on the cable merrily!

Hera was speechless. She stood up and snatched away the cable, wagging her finger at Tiramisu's nose. "Suddenly, I understand why your father always wanted to turn you into stew."

Tiramisu looked shocked. Its master was being negatively influenced! It scampered away.

Hera sighed in exasperation.

On the other side, Bernard was typing at top speed. He had the advantage of being first and was about to hack into the other person's defenses to check their Inte Protocol address. Suddenly, there was a commotion outside the office, and the door was pushed open. Two people barged in. The leading person was a young boy, around 15 or 16 years old. Right behind him was a man who looked around 25 years old.

They were sent from Killian Corporation.

The man was called Frederick Killian. He was Bernard's fourth brother and Rhett Killian's son. He was in charge of auditing for Killian Corporation's sub-companies.

The young boy was Roman Killian, the adoptive son of Aurora, who was Bernard's eldest brother's daughter. He was smart and lively, good at being likable among the Killian family members. He was well-loved by Chad and Aurora.

Bernard immediately stopped typing. He glanced up at the two men walking in as a chill emanated from his gaze.

Douglas followed behind them and apologized, "I'm so sorry, I couldn't stop them..."

"Why do you need to stop us? Is it because Granduncle Bernard is slacking off at work?"

Roman skipped curiously to Bernard's desk and peeked at the computer screen.

Bernard swiftly used a hotkey to change windows. It changed to display the private photos he hadn't exited before this.

Roman took a look and became

shocked. Oh... Granduncle, why are

you looking at such racy photos at work? What's more, these are photos of a man! Don't tell me you like men?" Content belongs

Hearing this, Frederick's eyes lit up. The way he looked at Bernard also changed.

"No wonder you aren't married yet. It's because you have different tastes," he teased.

Douglas was astonished. What was Bernard looking at? What a great misunderstanding!

Bernard put on a stern poker face and said coldly, "As members of the Killian family, where have your manners gone? Get out and knock on the door again!"

Frederick's and Roman's expressions froze. They didn't expect Bernard to be so strict.

If they were talking about ages,

Frederick was older than Bernard by

one year, but Bernard was

technically still his uncle. Regarding

this, Frederick had always felt uncomfortable about it. Content belongs

Especially since Bernard was a bastard child. Even though he had been accepted into the Killian family and was officially registered in the family registrar, he was still an outsider. Content belongs

This time, the headquarters sent them to audit his company, but Bernard wouldn't even show them an ounce of respect.

Chapter 219

"Gentlemen, if you will." Douglas opened the door and gestured for the two men to go out.

Although Frederick felt annoyed, he could feel the threatening pressure emanating from Bernard. It was a sign that he was about to get angry. After all, it was true that they were the ones in the wrong.

He didn't want to give Bernard a chance to reprimand them in the future, so he could only smile. "You're right, Uncle Bernard. Roman, let's go. We'd better wait for Bernard in the meeting room."

Roman looked displeased, but he still understood what Frederick meant. They would comply by going outside, but they wouldn't do such a thing as knock and reenter the room.

It was better for everyone to go to the meeting room and discuss any matters of business there. At the same time, Bernard had better make sure that they didn't catch him with any dirty business.

"Okay," Roman drawled and went out with Frederick.

The moment the door closed, Bernard immediately returned to the coding page. However, the codes looked abnormal. The other person's computer was turned off.

With just a bit more time, he could have gotten the other person's information, but they escaped. How interesting! If they met again, the other person would not get away so easily.

He reopened WhatsApp and sent a message to Samson. Then, he logged out and turned off the computer before going out of the room. `NôveID(ram)a.ôrg` owns this content.

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At Skyview Heights, Hera was eating takeout. She kept on thinking of the inte address that she failed to hack that afternoon and searched for it on her phone. It was Shuttle Ventures' officialwork.

Grandmaster of Astral Nova was at Shuttle Ventures?

If she recalled correctly, it was a small subsidiary under Killian Corporation. Now, it was under Bernard's supervision. Grandmaster of Astral Nova invited her to meet at the Imperial Hotel at 2:00 pm, which was not far from Shuttle Ventures.

Suddenly, her phone rang, disrupting her train of thought. It was from Leon.

"Raven, I'm in Norburgh with Damian. He's here to record a show. Are you available to have lunch? We want to thank you for treating Damian, allowing him to recover fully."

Leon followed Hera's instructions

and gave Damian the medicine for a week. Not only did his

gastroenteritis heal, but his stomach problems were also treated. Leon was very impressed, so he wanted Hera's help to treat his own ailments. Content belongs

"I'm occupied this afternoon, so I'll have to pass on lunch. If you want to repay me, I actually need a driver right now. You can play that part," Hera said.

"Sure, send me the address," Leon agreed enthusiastically.

Hera sent him an address. After tidying up the takeout boxes, she took her equipment and went out.

...

At 1:30 pm, Leon arrived at the

address that Hera sent him. He saw a person around five feet six inches, wearing a black trench coat and a face mask. It was hard to telD whether it was a man or a woman.

Content belongs

He was about to call Hera when that person opened the car door and sat in the backseat.

Leon looked back and asked tentatively, "Boss?"

Hera pulled down her mask. "Head to the Imperial Hotel."

"Why are you dressed like this? Are you planning a robbery?" Leon teased.

Hera thought about it for a while. "Something like that."

Grandmaster of Astral Nova agreed to meet her so readily. It was possible that they had some tricks up their sleeve. If there really was some trickery, she would be ready to react accordingly. Hence, she needed a driver as an accomplice. Content belongs

Leon was shocked. "No way, boss! I was just joking. Are you for real?"

The shock made his hand jerk, and the steering wheel swerved to the side slightly. The car beside them immediately honked, and Leon quickly straightened the steering wheel.

"Drive carefully. Don't talk," Hera said.

How could Leon stay quiet? "You dragged me into this. As your accomplice, shouldn't I understand more about the plan?"

Chapter 220

"Wait for me by the entrance," Hera said.

After 20 minutes, Leon stopped the car at the entrance of the Imperial Hotel. Hera wore a mask and got out of the car.

It was after lunch hour, so there were only a few people in the hotel. She went into the elevator and pressed the button to the fourth floor. There was a pub and entertainment center on the fourth floor. It was usually very lively at night, but right now, there weren't a lot of customers. Hera walked out of the elevator and saw two men far ahead who were walking out from the bar. She quickly hid behind a pillar. As the footsteps came closer, she heard them talking.

"No wonder Granduncle is still single at 24 years old. It's not that he doesn't care about inheriting the shares from Great-grandpa but that he actually likes men."

"Roman, we can talk about this after going home. Don't speak of these things here."

They stopped at the elevator, waiting for the doors to open.

"Why can't we talk about it?" Roman complained, looking very displeased.

He continued, "He acts indecently. He can't even control himself and looks at those things in the company. Who knows how wildly he acts in private? I feel disgusted just thinking about it."

"How dare he point fingers at us and call us rude for disturbing him when he's watching porn? He must have been a pervert since young!"

As Frederick listened to him, his gaze darkened. "That's enough. It's the 21st century. Is that really so strange?"

Roman looked at Frederick in surprise. He was a little taken aback that Frederick would speak up for Bernard.

However, Roman also realized something. He nodded and replied, "That's true. Granduncle likes men, and it's impossible for him to get married legally in this country. If he doesn't get married, then he can never inherit the shares that Great-grandpa left behind for him!

"It's just as well. We'll have one less competitor."

Frederick's gaze remained dark, and he stayed silent as if he was contemplating something.

Seeing that he was quiet, Roman continued, "No wonder there was no progress when Chad tried to arrange for him to marry the daughter of the Chime family. After we return, I must tell Chad about Granduncle's sexuality.

"Instead of arranging a business marriage for him, they might as well introduce you to Camille..."

Then, the elevator doors opened, and they entered. The doors closed as Hera came out from behind the pillar. She recognized the two men.

When she was still with the Killian family, she was around Frederick's age, so she took him as a brother.

Ever since she could remember, Frederick had always liked to bully her. When Bernard protected her, Frederick would simply point fingers at Bernard. [NovelD\(ram\)a.org](http://NovelD(ram)a.org) owns this content.

At the time, Bernard was hot-headed and would fight Frederick. Frederick couldn't win, so he would complain to Chad. Then, Chad would always punish Bernard by making him kneel for hours and write essays. Content belongs

As for the other person called Roman, Hera had never met him After Hera left the Killians, Aurora couldn't conceive naturally, so Roman was adopted. She heard that Aurora and Chad favored Roman. Content belongs

In that case, the man that Roman kept calling "Granduncle" was... Bernard.

Bernard liked men?

When she recalled their interactions, Bernard always flirted with her frivolously. Was it because he was

gay, so he only treated her like a niece? Was that why he never did anything immoral? Content belongs

Suddenly, Hera felt an inexplicable sense of disappointment.

A server walked up to Hera and asked, "May I help you, miss?"

Hera came back to her senses. "How do I get to Room 808?"

When the server heard the room number, he immediately said politely, "Please come with me."

This room was not open to the general public, so if anyone was looking for this room, they had to be an important guest.

Hera followed the server to the room. When she went in, there was a muscular man in a black suit.

Hera recognized him. He was the bodyguard who invited her to meet Grandmaster of Astral Nova last time.

"Your grandmaster is not here?" Hera looked around the room, but there was only the bodyguard.

Under the Heiress' Facade #Chapter 221 - Read Under the Heiress' Facade Chapter 221

Chapter 221

"No, the grandmaster told me to give you this." Samson pushed a velvet box on the table toward Hera and watched her carefully.

Previously, there were news articles that reported that Dr. Shadow was the daughter of the Chime family. He met Camille before at Astral Nova, but her presence felt different from when he actually met Dr. Shadow.

The person in front of him was the real Dr. Shadow whom he met last time.

If it weren't for Bernard, who was watching them from a hidden compartment in the room, Samson would have rushed forward and ripped off Dr. Shadow's mask.

He was dying to see what kind of person was hiding under that mask! How dare Dr. Shadow ignore protests from Astral Nova and give away the century-old gurdyroot!

Hera looked at the velvet box and glanced up at Samson again. Then, she opened the box.

Inside the box, there was a century-old gurdyroot of premium quality. She held it up and examined it closely to determine if it truly was a rare gurdyroot that was around two hundred years old.

Indeed, it was the real thing. By using around ten photos of Bernard's naked body, she managed to obtain a priceless gurdyroot. This made Hera even more curious as to who Grandmaster of Astral Nova was.

"I'll take this gurdyroot. Thanks." Hera placed it back into the box.

Samson said, "Please do."

Hera took the velvet box while Samson stayed still. She turned around to leave, but when she placed her hand on the doorknob, she suddenly looked back and asked, "I'm sorry to ask this so suddenly, but is your grandmaster into men?"

Samson was perplexed. How could this be?

In the compartment room, Bernard was speechless as he watched them from the one-way mirror.

Samson suddenly thought of something incredible. "Are you a woman crossdressing as a man?"

Hera was taken aback. She never expected this to happen!

Suddenly, she felt that Samson was ambushing her from behind. She sidestepped him and avoided his attack.

Then, Samson's hand reached

toward her mask. Hera blocked his hand with the velvet box. In her other hand, with a twist of her wrist, two silver needles appeared between her fingers. She flicked the needles toward him. Content belongs

Samson immediately used his arra

to shield himself. The needles prated his suit and pricked his arm wasn't painful, but his arm immediately felt numb. Content belongs

Hera took the chance to open the door and run off with the velvet box.

At the same time, the door to the compartment room behind Samson opened. Bernard came out with a stony expression.

Samson immediately turned around and knelt on one knee in apology. "I'm sorry, Bernard. I couldn't help myself and wanted to see her real face." "Get out of my sight! Run ten laps around Norburgh right now!"

Hera ran out of the room. There was no one in the corridor. She went through the safety exit to reach the first floor.

At the entrance, Leon had barely

been waiting for half an hour when he saw Hera rush out. She yanked open the door to the backseat and jumped in. Immediately, he started the car and joined the flow of traffic. Content belongs

Hera took off her mask and looked back. Seeing that no one was chasing after her, she breathed a sigh of relief.

"Boss, did you just commit daylight robbery?"

Leon drove as he glanced in the rearview mirror at the velvet box beside Hera. He shivered.

She truly was God Raven, bringing a storm with her wherever she went.

Chapter 222

Since Leon revealed the price that Raven demanded from Queenie to the other hackers, they had been calling Raven as "God Raven". She was even more ruthless than her master, Mr. S.

Who knew that she was also so demanding in real life? She even committed a robbery!
(C) content.

"Just drive properly." Hera gave him the address to a manor on the outskirts of the city. Then, she leaned back on the headrest and shut her eyes, reflecting on what happened just now.

Just now, Samson was about to take off her mask. She wasn't sure whether this was his own doing or instructions from the Grandmaster of Astral Nova. However, she heard that the rules in Astral Nova were very strict. The subordinates could never have gone against the Grandmaster's will.

If he really was instructed by the Grandmaster to take off her mask, then did that mean that he did not know her true identity? Did the deal also happen purely because he liked Bernard's sexy photos?

Besides that, he even thought of her as a cross-dressing woman.

She suddenly recalled Roman calling Bernard gay. She slowly opened her eyes and looked at Leon who was driving.

"Piglet, I have a question."

Leon was focused on the road. "Ask away."

"What does it feel like for people like you to like the same sex?" Hera asked.

Leon thought about it for a while. "I suppose you are either born with it or it developed later in life. For example, I was born like this. I was never interested in women. The feeling of liking men is probably the same as a heterosexual person liking the opposite sex.

"As for those whose sexuality developed later in life, it feels like they are just in it for the excitement. I'm not very sure as well. Why are you asking this all of a sudden?"

Hera did not answer but asked him again, "Would you keep sexy photos of men?"

Leon choked on his own saliva. He didn't expect Hera to be so bold and straightforward, asking him such a question without even a hint of a blush.

"If it's quite attractive, I would." After saying that, he quickly added, "You must not tell Damian."

Hera was pensive. If that were true, then that would explain the Grandmaster of Astral Nova's kinks.

"Then what do you feel toward girls? Would you say very intimate things and even live together?" She continued to ask.

"If we are very close, then yes.

Previously, I lived with another girl for about five years. She saved my life. When she saved me, she was even pregnant. Later, when she gave birth, took care of her. Now, her son calls me 'dad'. But of course, I'm not his biological father. We stayed together just like a real family, and I treated her like a younger sister."

Content belongs

When Leon said that, his tone seemed to become brighter. It was obvious that those moments were happy memories for him.

Leon had a youthful face and looked to be in his early twenties. But actually, he was already thirty years old.

Hera couldn't help but match Bernard's actions to Leon's story. Her eyelashes fluttered as she looked down at the velvet box beside her. She felt a jumble of emotions.

She didn't quite understand

romantic love, no one ever taught

her anything about it. The only person who spoke about romantic relationships with her was her mentor, whom she had never met. He said that all men were pigs and warned her to stay away from romance. Content belongs

She didn't think much about it at the time because she felt that romance was a distant, unfathomable thing.

However, she felt confused on her feelings now. Whenever she thought of Bernard viewing her as his niece, her chest felt as if it was blocked by something. It was uncomfortable.

Leon noticed that she stopped

speaking. He glanced in the rearview mirror and saw her odd expression. Combining all the questions about homosexuality, he realized with a shock. "Boss, did you meet some bastard fuckboy?" Content belongs

There was no way! Was she talking about Bernard?

As a gay man, Leon was quite sure that Bernard was definitely straight.

The way he looked at Hera was full of doting love. Also, his possessiveness was obvious. If he wasn't interested in Hera, even pigs could fly!

"Let's stop here." Hera snapped out of her thoughts. She saw that they already reached their destination.

It was an area in the outskirts of the city with villas, clearly meant for relaxation and recreation. There were few people around. Leon stopped the car, and Hera put on her mask and stepped out of the car.

"Boss..." Leon still wanted to be nosy, but she already left.

Chapter 223

Hera held the velvet box and entered one of the villas.

The last time she came here was when she went to Astral Nova for the auction. That was quite some time ago, but she hired someone to tidy up the place regularly so that she could stay here anytime.

She took off her mask and the cloak. Then, she picked up a pillow and slumped on the couch, staring blankly at the crystal chandelier hanging from the ceiling.

Hera began recalling her recent memories with Bernard. At some point in time, she started to get used to how well he was treating her. She almost forgot that he was from the Killian family. It was hard to say that he was completely uninvolved in what happened in the past.

Even if it was eventually proven that Bernard had nothing to do with her adoptive mother's death and her adoptive father's imprisonment, she should not be involved with Bernard. Because in the end, he was still from the Killian family.

So, why was she so sad? Wasn't it better this way?

From the beginning, wasn't their reunion just a transactional deal? When she cured him of his sickness and when she came of age the next year, she would head off to Jedburgh. They would no longer need to interact with each other.

Whether Bernard was gay or straight, it was none of her business.

As she came to terms with that, she let out a long sigh of relief. Still, she felt as if her chest was blocked by something, and it felt uncomfortable. Somehow, it was already evening.

Hera got up and turned on the lights before taking out her phone. It was then she realized that Bernard had called her several times. Because she had put her phone on silent, she didn't notice his calls. He also sent a few WhatsApp messages asking her where she was and why she wasn't picking up his calls.

She replied coldly: "I'm busy."

It was better to let things die down slowly.

Bernard immediately called her. Hera didn't feel like taking the call, so she declined.

He called again, so she declined again.

When her phone lit up the third time with his incoming call, Hera became annoyed. After declining, she noticed that it was an unknown number. She didn't think much about it, but the unknown number called in again.

This time, when Hera picked up the call, she shouted into the phone, "You're so annoying! Do you know that?"

The other person seemed taken

aback before she said, "Ms. Youngworth, good day. I'm a

et

salesperson from Jacob & Co. The cufflinks that you ordered are here. Will you come to the store to collect them, or should we deliver them to your doorstep?" Content belongs

Hera remembered that when she went to buy cufflinks for Gideon, she saw a poster promoting a pair of canary diamond square cufflinks.

They were made of white gold.

There was a diamond in the center, circled with white diamonds on the outer ring, cut in a trapezoid shape. They were dazzling, handsome, and luxurious. At the time, she felt that they suited Bernard, so she ordered a pair. Content belongs

"I don't want them anymore," Hera was still frustrated, so she blurted that out.

The salesperson immediately got a

fright upon hearing that, and her

blood pressure soared. When Hera bought the cufflinks, the

salesperson confirmed the pu

e

with her again and again. This pair of cufflinks was their most famous product. It was worth 8.4 million dollars! Content belongs

The deposit was around 20 percent of the price. After the purchase was made, there was no refunding it!

She even signed the purchasing form. If Hera decided to refund, she still needed to pay the balance or she would be sued.

"Ms. Youngworth, at that time—"

"I'll transfer the balance." Hera knew what the salesperson was about to say, so she interrupted her.

It was exactly because she ordered these cufflinks that she was tight on money right now and asked Leon to get missions for her. Content is © by .

Now that she was determined not to get too close to Bernard, she didn't feel the need to give them to him anymore.

When the salesperson heard that Hera would still pay up, she breathed a sigh of relief. "Alright, since you'll pay the balance, I'll deliver the cufflinks to you anyway."

"No need," Hera said before hanging up.

The salesperson wondered about Hera's cold tone. Did she fight with her partner, which was why she didn't want the cufflinks anymore?

Chapter 224

Were the wealthy all so capricious with their money? These cufflinks were worth 8.4 million dollars!

...

On the other end, at Shuttle Ventures' CEO's office, Bernard was feeling irritated. She declined his call twice, and the third time he called her, she was on another call. Not long after, Frederick came to make trouble for him again.

Since the afternoon, Frederick kept nitpicking with small issues in their accounts, questioning Bernard aggressively.

Bernard knew that he was doing this on purpose. Frederick was also going all out to trouble him. It was the weekend, but he was willing to work overtime to squabble with him in the office.

As Frederick was also from the Killians, Bernard was willing to duke it out with him.

If Frederick wanted him to work overtime, then he would let Frederick work overnight. If one night was not enough, he would be prepared to let him work overnight for a whole week.

By the third day, Roman was ready to throw in the towel.

"Frederick, I can't do this anymore. I'm so tired."

Bernard was out, and only Roman and Frederick were left in the office. Roman took this chance to slump on the table while he whined.

Frederick was not doing any better. He had drunk countless cups of coffee, and the empty cups were still on the table. Even so, he was still tired. He kept yawning, and his eyelids were heavy.

He couldn't win against Bernard by brute force, so he wanted to find little mistakes in the company accounts to make trouble for Bernard. This was to knock Bernard's confidence down a peg.

Instead, Frederick also shot himself in the foot.

That night, he asked Bernard to provide all the information on an investment transaction. He thought that this would keep Bernard busy until dawn.

However, just as he reached his hotel and was about to find some nightlife entertainment, he received a call from Shuttle Ventures' vice president, Harold. Harold told him that the information was ready, but he wanted to check some things with him in person.

Of course, Frederick did not want to go to the office. "Let's talk tomorrow. I'd like to rest first."

"Mr. Bernard is waiting for you at the office," Harold said.

Frederick was speechless. His instinct told him that Bernard was doing this on purpose!

"It's so late. Please tell Bernard to rest early. We can talk about it tomorrow," he said tactfully.

"Mr. Bernard is surprised that you actually know that this is the weekend, which is a time for rest."

Harold then conveyed Bernard's

words, "You're in such a hurry to audit our accounts. Isn't it because this is an urgent matter? Since it's so urgent, we should all cooperate willingly, even if it means having to sacrifice our rest." Content belongs

Frederick could not come up with a reply. He couldn't possibly say that this was just a normal, yearly audit procedure, so it wasn't urgent at all. He was just messing with Bernard by making him work overtime! That would be disastrous. Content

belongs

Hence, to prevent Bernard from using this to speak badly about him in the future, Frederick could only return to the office.

Ever since then, he had been in the office for three days and three nights!

All this while, people continuously

came up to him with thick bundles of documents in their arms, just so they could check some things. Some of those issues were so inconsequential that he had the urge to smack the documents on their heads and call them out for doing this on purpose. Content belongs

However, Bernard, who was also sitting in the office, would pipe up nonchalantly, "They're newbies. Please show them some understanding for the good of the company."

Bernard was much better than Frederick at using his power to avenge his private grudges.

"Let's stop here for now and go back to rest!" Frederick clenched his fist as he stood up abruptly.

They had been working overnight for three days. He was so tired that he was starting to hallucinate, but Bernard still looked fine! He could even go out and take calls.

As the two of them were about to leave the meeting room, the door opened. Harold was holding a bunch of documents.

Seeing that the two men were on their way out, Harold asked, "Mr. Frederick, Mr. Roman, are you leaving? I still have something to check with you..."

Frederick could feel the vein on his forehead throbbing. He was taught proper manners since he was young, so he only said, "Roman isn't feeling well, so I'm sending him back to rest. We'll continue tomorrow."

Then, the two of them left the company with their tails between their legs.

Chapter 225

In the CEO's office, Bernard sat back in his office chair and closed his eyes to rest.

Harold reported to Bernard, "Mr. Bernard, they're gone." After messing with them like this, surely Frederick would not dare to trouble Bernard easily the next time, right?

"You should go home and rest too. You deserve it." Bernard pinched his nose bridge.

Previously, because of his illness, insomnia was a frequent occurrence. It was nothing to have insomnia for a whole week. However, since Hera started treating him, he found long-lost bliss in sleeping soundly until the morning. He was unused to staying up all night again.

"I'm just doing my job. Please rest early and take care." Harold left after saying that.

When the door closed, Douglas, who was scrolling on his phone, tucked it away. "Bernard, now that you've done this, I'm sure Mr. Frederick will complain about you to Chad.

"Let him be." Bernard couldn't care less. After all, Frederick had complained about Bernard plenty of times to Chad.

He glanced at his phone. When he saw that Hera hadn't replied to the message he sent this morning, his heart sank.

Since she got the century-old gurdyroot, she had been acting distant. He would send a few messages, only for her to reply in one message. He would also call multiple times, but she would only take one call. She would say just a few sentences before hanging up.

She was so busy that she didn't even return to Skyview Heights. He let Douglas go over regularly to feed and clean up after Tiramisu.

"Look into what Hera is up to." His fingers tapped on the desk restlessly.

"Yes," Douglas replied and immediately made a call.

In ten minutes, he got a reply and told Bernard, "Ms. Youngworth has been in the laboratory of Cavenridge International Academy the past few days. She might be producing medicine."

Bernard remembered that Hera mentioned that the gurdyroot was an ingredient to make the medicine that would save him. NôveID(ram)a.ôrg owns this content.

He stood up abruptly and took his suit. He walked out and was about to ask Douglas to prepare the car to drive to Cavenridge when Johnson called him.

"Bernard, I got the person you asked me to find."

"Alright, give the address to Douglas." Bernard glanced at Douglas. "Go make the arrangements."

"Yes." Douglas quickly called the driver.

...

At the receptionist's desk on the first floor, the receptionist was trying to stop Terence. "Mr. Gaskell, I'm sorry, but you can't meet the CEO without an appointment..."

Before she could finish her words, she saw Bernard and Douglas walk past the desk. Terence immediately went after them.

"Bernard, we finally meet. Can we speak for a moment?" Terence asked meekly.

Two days ago, he was told that the investment funds Shuttle Ventures should have provided to Gaskell Corporation next year were canceled.

If it were one month ago, he

wouldn't have cared if the funds were canceled. This was because Gaskell Corporation's profits were doing very well. If the investment were canceled, he would profit even more. Content belongs to

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However, after Queenie was imprisoned, the company's eligibility to bid for an international project was retracted. Instead, XS

Corporation got the project. After et

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that, two of the company's big clients suddenly stopped their partnership. The company's stocks fell, and other clients started to waver. Content belongs

At this crucial time, Shuttle Ventures also canceled next year's investment plans.

Although Shuttle Ventures was just a smaller subsidiary under Killian Corporation, they still depended on the Killian family. It was because of Queenie that Shuttle Ventures and Gaskell Corporation's partnership went along smoothly. This was

public information. Content belongs

If word got out that Shuttle Ventures canceled their investment plans, that was equivalent to announcing that Gaskell Corporation was doomed!

The wavering clients would ditch Gaskell Corporation immediately. By then, the company would really fall apart!

Hence, he had to retain Shuttle Venture's investment. However, he couldn't meet Bernard even once although he had tried many times to arrange an appointment.

He even tried to meet Frederick and Roman, who came from the headquarters to audit the company, but he failed to do that too. He could only come to the company physically and try his luck.

Who knew that he really got to see Bernard!

Chapter 226

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"Who are you?" Bernard glared at him icily.

Douglas promptly intercepted Terence and called for security.

Seeing that, Terence's expression became awkward.

In fact, they had met before. Although Queenie was only from a collateral branch of the Killian family, she was of the same generation as Bernard. Terence had called Bernard by his first name in an attempt to be friendly. However, his efforts fell flat, and he was almost thrown out by security. Hence, he quickly corrected himself, "Mr. Killian, I'm the CEO of Gaskell Corporation and would like to discuss the Shuttle Ventures investment with you..."

The ground floor lobby was bustling with people. They were either there to seek investment or discuss collaborations. The people coming and going were all prominent figures from major companies. Seeing this scene left them all greatly surprised.

No one expected that Terence, the renowned CEO of Gaskell Corporation, would display such a submissive side.

After all, the Gaskell family was ranked among the top ten prestigious families in Norburgh. Usually, others looked up to them, but now, Terence was acting so humbly toward Bernard.

It appeared that the rumors about the Gaskell family's downfall were true.

"I'm busy," Bernard said coldly and walked away.

A large, black Audi was parked outside the building. Douglas opened the back door for Bernard and then got into the front passenger seat.

Just as the door closed, Bernard asked in a chilly tone, "Why hasn't Gaskell Corporation gone bankrupt yet?"

"It needs more time," Douglas replied with a wry smile. He thought Bernard must have been reading too many novels.

In fact, a corporation didn't just go bankrupt overnight. It would take time to exert pressure and break it down gradually.

"The time wasted will be deducted from your bonus," Bernard blurted out.

Hearing that, Douglas was rendered speechless. He immediately sent the same message thrice to the management chat: "Make Gaskell Corporation go bankrupt as soon as possible!"

Since the day she made up her mind, Hera had been forcing herself not to think about Bernard anymore. She dedicated herself entirely to her pharmaceutical work, moved out of Skyview Heights, and went back to live at the Everett residence. Content belongs

She stayed there for a whole week. Lilith and Gino were very happy, but at the same time, they sensed something unusual about Hera.

Ever since Hera moved out, she had

never stayed home for this long. Her daily routine was just between school and home. Once home, she would eat and then head straight to her room, locking herself in and avoiding all activities. Content belongs

"Gideon, have you been cutting Hera's pocket money?" Gino asked as he watched Hera go upstairs after dinner.

Since the Everett family's bankruptcy, Gideon had been supporting the family financially. Now that Hera wasn't living on her own anymore, Gino wondered if it was because she couldn't afford the rent.

"No way! I wouldn't cut Hera's pocket money even if I were to cut yours!" Gideon replied.

Gino was left speechless.

"Could Hera be having issues with her friends? She has been back for over a week and seems quite unhappy," Lilith said worriedly.

"Stop worrying so much. Isn't it normal for Hera to come back and stay here? This is her home!" Gideon responded.

Hera returning home likely meant

she had a fight with Bernard, that old man. Gideon thought it was good if they had broken up. That meant she wouldn't be stuck with that old man all the time, unable to come home! Content belongs

"Is it that obvious?" A cold voice suddenly came from behind them.

Chapter 227

The three of them suddenly felt a chill down their spines. When they turned around, they saw Hera, who had come downstairs at some point, staring at them emotionlessly.

"Do I really look that unhappy?" Hera asked.

Lilith and Gino nodded repeatedly. "No." Then, they realized what was wrong and shook their heads vigorously. "Yes."

Both Gideon and Hera were rendered speechless.

Hera smiled slightly. "You guys are overthinking it. I'm alright." After saying that, she poured herself a glass of water and went back upstairs.

Gideon and Gino didn't know how to respond for a moment.

Lilith said, "It looks like things are pretty serious, right?"

...

Upstairs, Hera went back to her room and looked at her WhatsApp message list. Bernard's profile picture was at the top, and the red dot in the corner indicated that she had muted him.

She tapped on it, and the latest message was from three days ago.

"Sweetie, your new profile picture looks good, but it would be perfect if you changed it to this one."

The message included a photo of the two of them. She was squatting on the beach, looking up at Bernard, and they were staring into each other's eyes. Douglas was the one who took that photo of them.

After sending that photo, Bernard didn't send any more messages. He also hadn't called her in the past two days.

Hera thought Bernard must have sensed that she was deliberately distancing herself from him, so he stopped reaching out to her.

She tapped on the photo of the two of them and gazed at it for a while before quietly saving it to her phone's gallery. After locking her phone screen, she opened her data records from that week's pharmaceutical work and started to summarize them.

Not long after, Hera suddenly holds text © rights.

recalled that the last time Bernard vanished without a word and didn't respond to her messages, he had gotten into trouble by the time she heard from him. Content belongs

She wondered if the same thing was happening again.

Recalling the last time she saw Bernard lying in the operating room, pale and lifeless, her heart suddenly ached.

Hera couldn't hold back and picked up her phone, intending to call him directly. However, she was worried it might be too abrupt. In the end, she clicked into their WhatsApp O conversation. Content belongs

She typed and deleted multiple times, unable to decide what to send that would simply come across as a normal greeting. After pondering for over ten minutes, she finally sent three words: "Are you asleep?" Content belongs

To her surprise, Bernard replied instantly: "Working overtime. What's up? Miss me?"

Seeing his reply, Hera was speechless. She immediately tossed her phone aside. It appeared she had been mistaken. Bernard just didn't want to initiate contact with her anymore!

...

The next day, Hera arrived at Cavenridge's laboratory and spent another day experimenting. Eventually, she managed to concoct the medication for Bernard.

With the leftover medicinal ingredients, she also researched some special remedies and brought them back to the Everett family to distribute among her relatives for trials.

That night happened to be Christmas Eve.

Lilith hadn't expected Hera to prepare Christmas gifts for everyone. It appeared she had been mistaken yesterday. She said, "Hera, thank you. I'll make sure to take it."

Holding the small bottle under the chandelier, Gideon admired the tiny black pills inside. "This is the most special Christmas gift I've ever received. Thank you, Hera!"

Mildred remarked, "I don't know if these pills are poisonous or not." Yet, she turned and placed the velvet box containing the pills into the safe in her room.

James put a pill straight into his mouth, swallowed it, and then said, "I feel a warm sensation in my stomach."

Judy, the housekeeper, held the velvet box in her hands and felt pleasantly surprised. "Do I also have a share? Thank you, Ms. Hera."

Chapter 228

Gino watched eagerly as Hera distributed gifts to everyone, even the maid Judy. He thought to himself that it must be his turn now! He walked up to Hera confidently and was ready to receive his grand gift. However, to his surprise, Hera's hands were empty.

"What about my gift?" he asked with hopeful eyes.

Hera glanced at him and said, "There's none."© - All rights reserved.

"Why aren't I getting one?" Gino exclaimed in frustration. "It's Christmas Eve, and you gave everyone else a gift except me? Am I not your brother anymore?"

Hera was at a loss for words.

In fact, those weren't Christmas gifts at all!

"Haha, looks like you have no place in Hera's heart. Even Judy is more important than you," Gideon laughed and said mockingly.

Gino was outraged. He turned to Hera and said, "I don't care. You need to give me a share right now!"

Hera declined. "No way. You're still growing, so it's not suitable for you to test the medicine."

Hearing that, Gino was puzzled.

Gideon suddenly stopped laughing. "T-Test the medicine?"

James was shocked.

Mildred questioned, "Are you using us as test subjects?"

"I developed these special pills to target some of the minor issues you have. I adjusted the data to reduce the side effects of the medication. Make sure to give me feedback on your condition after taking them," Hera explained.

Catherine had cardiovascular and cerebrovascular problems; Lilith's issue was mainly due to poor circulation; Gideon's concern lay in gastrointestinal health; James suffered from stomach problems and hypertension; Judy had rheumatic joint issues.

All these conditions were quite common. While acupuncture could provide temporary relief from symptoms, a cure would require medication as well. However, every medicine had its side effects. Therefore, she optimized the side effects of those medicines based on everyone's physical conditions to enhance absorption and metabolism.

James and the others breathed a sigh of relief once they grasped the situation.

Especially Mildred, who had seen Oscar praise Hera endlessly. He even offered her a million-dollar salary.

Unfortunately, Hera wasn't interested.

"Oh, this is a really thoughtful gift. Hera, you've put so much heart into it!" Gideon exclaimed.

"Regardless, you didn't prepare a gift for me!" Gino looked at Hera with a face full of resentment.

Hera was somewhat speechless. She couldn't understand why Gino still thought it was a gift after she explained it so clearly.

She rummaged through her bag and pulled out a delicately wrapped pink gift. Unable to recall who gave it to her, she handed it to Gino casually.

Gino's eyes sparkled as he muttered, "See, I knew there was one." He then excitedly unwrapped the gift.

Inside, he found a note that read, "Hera, Merry Christmas! From Christopher."

Gino was rendered speechless.

"You personally made Christmas gifts for them, yet you're giving me a gift someone else gave you! Are you trying to humiliate me?" he grumbled as he angrily tore up the note.
Content belongs

It made him feel much better.

Seeing that, Hera was speechless.

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The next morning, Hera woke up to discover a pile of gift boxes on the table, not knowing when they had been set out. She hesitated for a moment before she walked over and picked up one of the gifts with a note attached. Content belongs

It read, "Hera, Merry Christmas!"

The remaining five gifts didn't have notes, but Hera knew everyone had quietly placed them while she was asleep. She suddenly remembered a fairy tale Daphne used to tell her on Christmas Eve, "Santa Claus sneaks in while you're asleep and leaves gifts at your bedside. When you wake up the next day, you'll find exactly what you wished for..." Content belongs

Thinking of that, she felt warmth in her heart.

Chapter 229

After Hera finished washing up and came downstairs, she noticed a lively atmosphere outside the door, indicating that someone had visited them. She paid it little mind and joined Gideon at the dining table.

Just as she was about to have breakfast, she heard James' ingratiating voice from the living room. "I didn't know you would come, Mr. Killian. We're honored by your presence."

"Judy, hurry and brew some coffee," Mildred's voice rang out.

Hera turned around and saw Mildred and James respectfully leading Bernard toward the living room, with Douglas and Lilith following behind.

She hadn't imagined Bernard would actually show up!

Gideon caught wind of the voice as well. A brief hint of annoyance flashed across his face as he pondered why the old man was here and if Bernard was trying to take Hera away once more.

Meanwhile, in the living room, Bernard spoke up as he glanced toward the dining area, "It's fine. I'm here to pick up Hera." As soon as he entered the residence, he caught sight of Hera heading toward the dining room.

Hera promptly turned around, deciding to fill her stomach first before anything else.

Hearing that, Mildred was somewhat shocked.

James and Lilith had already seen Bernard visit the Everett residence before. Though they were not as shocked as Mildred, they were still quite surprised.

In fact, no one had expected Bernard to stoop so low as to come and pick up Hera himself! At the same time, they didn't understand why Bernard would do that. They couldn't help but wonder if Bernard had taken an interest in Hera. To them, he was like a super-rich son-in-law who was hard to find!

James quickly said, "Please wait a moment. Lilith, could you go and get Hera?"

"There's no rush. Let her finish breakfast first." Bernard raised his hand to stop them and waited on the couch.

He despised sycophants like James and disliked everyone in the Everett residence. He knew full well everything they had done to Hera. If it weren't for Hera stopping him from intervening, the Everett residence would have been long gone.

Since Hera was willing to stay at the holds text © rights.

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Everett residence for over a week, it meant the place wasn't too unbearable. Moreover, no matter how much he disliked it, James and Lilith were still his future in-laws, so he instinctively humbled himself and answered whatever they asked. Content belongs

In the dining room, Gideon noticed Hera calmly eating her breakfast, clearly uninterested in dealing with the people outside. He somehow grasped her feelings. "I'll take care of him for you." With that, he put down his cutlery, wiped his mouth with a napkin, and stood up to head out. Content belongs

Hera was at a loss for words.

Gideon walked to the living room and extended his right hand out of courtesy. "Bernard, no, I should call you Mr. Killian."

After Albert passed away, the new

family head and his brothers were all

elevated to the title "Mr." However, Bernard was just over ten years old at the time, so calling him that

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seemed overly mature. As a result,

many

outsiders continued to call

him by his first name. Content

belongs

However, at that moment, Gideon deliberately said so to emphasize Bernard's age and status. It irritated him that the old man was interested in younger women and particularly aimed his attention at Hera.

"Mr. Gideon." Bernard glanced up at him and reached out for a handshake. After all, Gideon was going to be his brother-in-law, so he had to show some respect.

Gideon unintentionally caught sight of Bernard's cufflink when he reached out his hand.

It was a delicate canary diamond square cufflink, a signature piece from Jacob & Co. Each cufflink was priced at 4.2 million Terranian dollars, totaling 8.4 million Terranian dollars for the pair!

Bernard truly lived up to his status as the heir of the Killian family, with even his smallest accessories being the most expensive in the world.

"Nice cufflinks," Gideon said admiringly.

Bernard lightly rubbed the cufflink with his thumb as he smiled. He looked up and saw the sapphire cufflink on Gideon's shirt cuff. Although it was less impressive than his, it was still tasteful.

"Yours aren't bad either," he replied casually, feeling quite pleased.

Chapter 230

Gideon answered casually, "I think so too. They were a gift from my sister." The price wasn't important. What mattered was that Hera had given them to him.

"Interestingly, mine are from her as well," Bernard replied.

Gideon was taken aback. There was no way Hera could afford to buy such an expensive gift! He refused to believe what Bernard had said!

"Well, Mr. Killian, you've come at an inconvenient time. Our family is about to head to a hot spring resort, so we might not have time to entertain you." Gideon got straight to the point.

The hot spring trip was Lilith's idea from last night. They were worried Hera might be feeling down and wanted to take her out to relax and have fun. "It's fine. I..." James was about to suggest he could stay behind but then caught Gideon's warning glance, signaling him to be quiet. He promptly shut his mouth.

Anyone would recognize from the host's words that that was a courteous way of dismissing a guest.

However, Bernard seemed not to catch the implied message. He leisurely lifted his cup, took a sip of the coffee, and asked, "Is Hera going too?" Gideon replied, "Of course."

"Alright, I'll join you, then," Bernard said as he nodded in response.

"Sorry, but that might not be convenient. We've already made our plans-" Gideon tried to decline.

"It's perfectly fine. I won't go with you, then. Let Bernard join instead. You young people should have fun," Mildred interrupted Gideon hastily.

She finally snapped out of her shock. The man before her was the head of the four major families, the seventh son of the Killian family! He held shares in Killian Corporation and was second only to the family head. In other words, if the head of the Killian family stepped down, he would be the next in line! (C) content.

If Hera could really marry him, she would become the madam of the Killian family.

That was a position Mildred wouldn't dare to imagine even in her dreams!

By then, the Everett family would be able to rise to the top again and be listed among the prestigious families of Norburgh!

Mildred was determined to make this marriage happen at all costs.

After Hera finished breakfast and came out, she saw Mildred directing Judy to load their equipment into the car. Bernard was still sitting on the couch, sipping coffee and chatting casually with James. Content belongs

Later, they were seated in the car, on their way to the hot spring resort.

Hera was seated in the passenger seat, and she looked through the rearview mirror to see Bernard in the back seat, typing a message. She then cast a skeptical glance at Gideon, who was driving. Content belongs

Gideon sensed her eyes on him and glanced at her.

Her exquisite countenance seemed to convey: "Didn't you say you'd help get rid of him? Why is he here now?" Gideon whispered, "I didn't expect this guy to be so shameless. I bet even bullets would bounce off him."

Hera was at a loss for words.

"Bullets fired will all rebound, but the

force of the rebound varies with the material's resilience." Just then a deep voice came from the back seat. Content belongs

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Both Gideon and Hera were rendered speechless.

Throughout the journey, no one spoke again.

Bernard seemed busy, constantly texting on his phone with his head down and occasionally taking calls. Meanwhile, Hera rested with her eyes closed.

"Mr. Killian, you seem occupied. Maybe it's best if you reconsider joining us," Gideon quipped. Bernard put away his phone and looked at Gideon. "You seem to dislike me being around Hera." Being a man himself, Gideon definitely knew what Bernard was up to.

"Sweetie, haven't you told them about our relationship yet?" Bernard unexpectedly added.