

Under the Heiress' Facade #Chapter 371 - Read Under the Heiress' Facade Chapter 371

Chapter 371

Camille had tried looking for Bernard, but he was avoiding her completely.

He blocked her number and ignored her on WhatsApp. She even pretended to have urgent matters and to look for him at the Killian residence, but he refused to meet her.

"Oh, by the way, Camille, where's your Eclipse Stone? When are you going to show it to me?" Priscilla asked.

Camille hadn't expected Priscilla to bring up the Eclipse Stone suddenly.

She hesitated, "I..."

"It's also our family's treasure now. The Killian family is curious, too. Why not bring it out and show everyone to showcase the pinnacle of our family's medical skills?"

Camille suddenly had an idea.

"Grandma, I want to show you, but I've already used it."

"To make a special medicine?" Priscilla asked.

"I've seen manyizens discussing your published papers. They speculate that your special medication is formulated using the Eclipse Stone, hence its miraculous effects."

Camille went along.

"That's right."

Wilson arrived with the first batch of the newly produced special medication just then.

Priscilla looked at the pills in delicate transparent glass bottles and praised, "Excellent, excellent! Send these for testing quickly and get them on the market soon. We can't let Youngworth Miracle Clinic steal our limelight in Jedburgh!"

Wilson nodded.

"Yes, ma'am."

Night fell.

Hera returned to the Youngworth Miracle Clinic after seeing off all the guests.

In the study of the west wing, she tested the function of the clinic's new online application. Just then, a WhatsApp message came through.

Grandmaster of Astral Nova: "The Chimes' first batch of special medication is out. Have you confirmed the auction time?"

Hera had been busy during the day

with the clinic and practicing her alternate account in the evenings. She had little time to deal with Camille's affairs.

She glanced at her calendar. There would be an auction at Astral Nova the following night.

Shadow: "Are you up for something thrilling?"

Grandmaster of Astral Nova: "What do you mean?"

Shadow: "Aren't you tired of seeing my photos? I'll show you my true self tomorrow night at Astral Nova."

Bernard stepped into the courtyard house and smiled as he glanced at the conversation on his phone.

He wondered if Hera would finally reveal her true identity to him.

Grandmaster of Astral Nova: "Okay."

In the study, after Hera received the reply, she heard a noise in the courtyard. She immediately exited WhatsApp and headed out to inspect the noise, only to see Bernard.

"Bernard, are you free tomorrow night?"

She approached him.

Bernard pocketed his phone.

"Why?"

"There's something I need to tell you."

After saying that, Hera cleared her throat awkwardly.

"Remember those photos I asked from you before?"

Bernard suddenly had a bad feeling.

"What about them?"

"I used those photos to exchange for some precious medicinal

ingredients for you. Now that person wants to meet you in person. Will you come with me tomorrow night to meet him?" Hera asked.

Bernard was rendered speechless.

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Bernard had no idea what Hera was up to this time but figured that if she wanted to play, he'd play along.

The next day, Bernard left early, stating he had business in Norburgh. He arranged to meet Hera that night at the Astral Nova Auction.

At 7:00 pm, Hera saw her last patient and sent Catherine and Everly back home. Then she asked Wayne to drive her to Astral Nova. When they were almost approaching Astral Nova, Wayne saw that the area was jammed with luxury cars, and the parking lot was some distance from the auction entrance.

He told Hera in the back seat, "I'll wait for you in the parking lot. Call me when the auction ends, and I'll bring the car around."

At the sight of the cars moving slowly around the roundabout ahead, Hera said, "Just drop me off here. No need to wait for me. You can head back."

"Alright. Call me if you need anything."

Wayne parked the car.

Hera acknowledged him and got out. She walked toward the entrance.

As usual, a security guard checked her invitation card at the door, and then a female staff member in a Jadonish dress escorted Hera inside.

While waiting for the elevator, a familiar female voice sounded behind her.

"Ms. Youngworth? It really is you. Why are you alone? Isn't Bernie with you?"

Hera recognized the voice. When she turned around, she saw another staff member leading Camille over, followed by an assistant.

"Are we that well-acquainted?"

Hera's expression was cool, and her tone was indifferent.

"Who wants to be well-acquainted with you? Camille was simply asking how you can be here if Mr. Killian isn't with you. The Everetts don't qualify to attend the Astral Nova Auction," Camille's assistant remarked sharply.

Then, with a hint of accusation, she added, "Did you sneak in with Mr. Killian's invitation card? Even if you did, can you afford anything here? Last I heard, the Everett family went bankrupt."

"Julia, don't speak nonsense," Camille chided.

Smiling at Hera, she said, "Ms. Youngworth, I'm sorry. My assistant spoke out of turn. She was just curious about the reason you're here."

Hera's public identity didn't qualify her for an Astral Nova Auction invitation, so she borrowed Samantha's. She inwardly questioned how it was relevant to Camille.

"You actually hired an idiot as an assistant? Those who know you might think you're kind-hearted, but those who don't could assume you have ulterior motives."

Camille was stunned by her words but maintained her smile.

"You-"

Julia wanted to retort, but Camille held her back. She didn't think causing a scene here among the wealthy would be good.

Just then, the elevator doors opened. As Hera stepped inside, she glanced at Camille and smirked.

"Why aren't you dressed as Dr. Shadow today, Ms. Chime?"

Camille froze at her words and stared at Hera with wide eyes.

Hera's cool, teasing gaze seemed to pierce right through her. Even when Camille was still in a daze. Content belongs

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"Camille, you're too kind. You let women like that walk all over you," Julia said indignantly.

When Camille didn't respond, Julia turned back and saw Camille looking distracted, so she nudged her.

"Camille, what's wrong?"

Only then did Camille snap out of her daze.

"Nothing."

She entered another elevator absentmindedly.

Julia was puzzled. She sensed something off about Camille but was unable to pinpoint it.

Hera's sudden remark might seem ordinary to others, but to Camille, with her guilty conscience, it was a lightning strike. "Why aren't you dressed as Dr. Shadow?"

Hera used the word "dressed". Camille wondered if Hera knew something.

However, she quickly dismissed the thought. She had impersonated Dr. Shadow for so long without being exposed. How could Hera know? She convinced herself that she must be overthinking.

After calming herself, she reached the sixth floor.

As she passed Room 666-the Killian family's private room-she didn't see either Bernard or Hera.

She told the staff member, "The

Astral Nova Auction has strict rules.

Please ensure you thoroughly verify

guests' identities to avoid any troublemakers."

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When warning the Astral Nova Auction staff member about "troublemakers", Camille naturally referred to Hera.

"Understood."

With Samantha's invitation card, Hera could only access the fourth-floor balcony. Once the staff left, she sent a WhatsApp message to the Grandmaster of Astral Nova.

"I'll come to the seventh floor at 8:30 pm."

Then she called Bernard.

"Bernard, are you here yet?"

At that moment, Bernard was sitting in the grandmaster's office. He held his phone and looked at the WhatsApp conversation with Shadow on his computer screen.

"Where are you? I'll come find you," he said.

"In auction room 404," Hera replied.

Ten minutes later, there was a knock on the door of room 404. When she opened the door, Hera saw Bernard and quickly let him in.

"What's with all the secrecy? Who are we meeting?" Bernard asked despite already knowing the answer.

"Someone on the seventh floor."

Hera pointed upward.

Bernard feigned surprise.

"The grandmaster? How do you know him?"

"We met by chance," Hera answered vaguely.

"He's quite interested in you. You should have a good chat with him. Astral Nova has considerable influence. You can use this opportunity to make friends with him."

Bernard was rendered speechless. He wondered if he was meant to hang out with himself.

Still, he replied, "Alright."

Just then, the auction officially began.

Hera glanced toward the seventh floor but saw no movement. It seemed the Grandmaster of Astral Nova hadn't arrived yet.

She checked her WhatsApp behind Bernard's back and saw his reply.

"Come to my office."

Hera recalled Skyscraper from her last visit. She felt that he was indeed a peculiar person.

After pocketing her phone, she

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turned around and sized up Bernard's physique. She contemplated if Bernard could handle it if the grandmaster acted out of line.

"Thanks for this, Bernard."

Bernard was confused by her sudden gratitude.

"Let's go. We need to meet him now."

Hera handed Bernard a mask and put one on herself.

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They left the auction and headed toward Skyscraper. They didn't encounter any staff on their way, most likely because of the ongoing

auction.

They walked through the corridor and reached Skyscraper. The main door was closed, but lights were on inside. No one was around.

Hera suddenly stopped, clutching her stomach.

Bernard asked, "What's wrong?"

"My stomach hurts. You go on in

first. Jus

tell them that we arranget

this meeting on WhatsApp. I'll be right back after using the restroom."

Before Bernard could refuse, she ran off in the other direction.

She trusted that he could handle whatever came next and would explain her identity to him later.

Hera couldn't care less about how the Grandmaster of Astral Nova might react to her changed gender and physique since their last encounter.

Her goal was to have Bernard stall the Grandmaster to buy her some time. She had something important to take care of.

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Hera rushed toward the restroom in the administrative block, following Astral Nova's floor plan she had investigated.

She then called Leon's mobile.

"How's it going on your end?"

On the other end of the line came the clacking of a mechanical keyboard and Leon's anxious voice.

"The surveillance in the administrative block has been shut down, but they've also spotted me. I can't hold out much longer. Hurry."

Given his abilities, breaking through Astral Nova's firewall was out of the question. Hera had sent him the code and instructions on a USB earlier that morning.

"Got it."

Hera emerged from the restroom and glanced around. When she didn't see anyone, she casually approached the door of a dark office. The door was secured with an electronic lock. Hera pulled out her phone, quickly pulled up a coding page, and applied it to the electronic lock. The door opened with a click.

The office was pitch black, momentarily disorienting Hera. She quickly turned on her phone's flashlight.

It seemed to be a standard data room. Fortunately, there was a computer.

Hera didn't turn on the lights. After closing the office door, she powered up the computer and pulled over a chair to sit.

The computer powered on and asked for a password. Hera extracted a USB stick from her pocket and plugged it into the mainframe. Soon, the password was cracked.

Her fingers danced across the keyboard. Having breached Astral Nova's firewall before and now infiltrating through their internal computer, her access to the financial system was as swift as ever.

Astral Nova's financial data was extensive and heavily guarded with additional firewalls. It was double-secured and meticulously safe. Cracking it now would take some time.

But giving up wasn't an option for Hera after having come this far and risking so much.

Hera picked up her phone and sent Bernard a WhatsApp message. She rubbed her fingers, hoping Bernard could buy her more time, and then got down to business.

Meanwhile, Bernard sat in the executive chair in Skyscraper, reading Hera's message.

"I have diarrhea."

She ended her text with a tearful emoji.

Samson sat across from Bernard, wearing a demon mask and looking restless.

He glanced at his watch several times and couldn't help but ask, "Bernard, where's Dr. Shadow?"

"In the restroom."

Samson didn't know what to say.

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He couldn't understand the game Bernard was playing. He inwardly questioned if Bernard realized the consequences of him wearing that demon mask.

If Astral Nova members found out he was impersonating the grandmaster, he'd surely be denounced.

At that moment, there was a knock on the door.

"Who is it?" Samson immediately asked warily.

From outside came Scorpio's voice.

"Samson, Code Red."

The last Code Red was when Raven breached the firewall.

It seemed that worrying about things that might happen increased their chances of happening.

Samson looked straight at Bernard, silently asking what they should do now.

Bernard suddenly stood up and walked behind the screen.

Samson quickly removed the mask and said, "Come in."

Scorpio entered and noticed Samson dressed entirely in black, mirroring the Grandmaster's attire. His slightly disheveled hair

suggested that he had just removed a mask. This raised Scorpio's suspicion.

The grandmaster's identity was shrouded in mystery. Even the 12 zodiac signs of Astral Nova had never seen the grandmaster in person. Most of the time, Samson would manage them.

Scorpio wondered if Samson was the grandmaster.

"What happened?" Samson asked.

Scorpio snapped out of it and reported, "Raven seems to be back."

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"What do you mean 'seems'?" Samson asked.

"The firewall was just breached. The intrusion method and location match Raven's, but it was quickly intercepted this time. Raven was much smarter, so I'm not sure," Scorpio explained.

All 12 of Astral Nova's zodiac signs couldn't stop Raven the last time, and their computers even turned into blue screens. It was only when the grandmaster personally intervened that they managed to intercept it.

Scorpio continued, "But there's something strange. This time, they only breached the surveillance system. They shut down the administrative block and perimeter surveillance. I suspect there might be two groups—one distracting us with surface attacks while the other sneaks inside."

Bernard, behind the screen, frowned lightly. Since escaping the last time, there had been no sign of Raven for a while.

Two months later, he reappeared on auction day, where crowds mingled. It would be quite possible for them to infiltrate.

Coincidentally, Samson had also received feedback from the Guest Services Department's manager, saying Camille had advised verifying guests' information. Her hint suggested that someone might be up to no good.

The study's alarm abruptly sounded, indicating a system breach.

Alerts from Astral Nova's financial system firewall were directly transmitted to the grandmaster's computer. The sudden alarm confirmed Scorpio's suspicions.

"Tell them to investigate suspicious individuals now!" Samson ordered promptly.

"Roger that," Scorpio replied.

Bernard immediately emerged from behind the screen as the door closed. He entered the study.

Meanwhile, Hera swiftly scanned through the newly extracted billing data. Leon's voice sounded from her phone on the desk.

"Boss, I've been intercepted. They've pinpointed my location. If I continue, my information will be exposed. I'm pulling out. Be careful."

"Okay. Stay safe," Hera whispered.

The call ended abruptly.

Hera finally pulled up the financial records from the Eclipse Stone auction based on the dates. She quickly scanned through them three times but couldn't find any traces of Queenie's payment record.

She found it strange.

If the payment hadn't been received at that time, she wouldn't have been able to walk away with the Eclipse Stone.

Hera pulled up another batch of code. Suddenly, she paused and stared at the screen in disbelief.

That transaction record had been deleted!

She wondered who could have done that.

Just then, a red dialogue box popped up on the screen, snapping Hera back to reality.

Alas, she'd been discovered.

She immediately unplugged the USB stick and shut down the computer. She was about to get up when she heard footsteps outside.

Several flashlight beams swept through the window, prompting Hera to crouch under the computer desk.

"Search each room thoroughly. Don't let any suspicious person slip through!"

A man's commanding voice came from outside.

"Yes, sir."

Immediately after, the electronic lock of the office sounded when someone entered the password.

The door opened with a click, and the office lights flickered on as someone entered the room.

Under the desk, Hera's heart raced as she listened to the approaching footsteps.

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The footsteps suddenly stopped near the desk. As Hera cautiously watched the shadow on the floor, she moved her finger and revealed a silver needle.

At that moment, the shadow receded with the fading sound of footsteps. The lights clicked off as well.

Just as Hera was about to breathe a sigh of relief, her phone buzzed with a sudden vibration.

It was Bernard calling.

Hera immediately rejected the call.

The footsteps outside, which were

about

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leave, suddenly halted. A

strong beam of flashlight shone

Sough the doorway. Conte

"Who's there?"

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"Quick! Stop that person!"

A sudden commotion erupted outside. Hera held her breath and listened as the office door slammed shut with a bang.

She immediately breathed a sigh of relief. It was now dark all around. She pinched the webbing between her thumb and index finger, using the pain to stay alert.

The footsteps outside grew fainter, eventually becoming silent as everyone left.

Hera immediately turned on the flashlight on her phone, crawled from under the table, and moved to the window behind the desk. She lifted the curtain and saw the trees outside, budding with fresh leaves.

It was the backyard, and no one was around.

She opened the window and climbed out while cautiously looking around. She sighed with relief when she saw that there were no cameras.

She emerged from the bushes and brushed off the dirt on her clothes before walking along a pebbled path. Suddenly, a figure appeared ahead of her. That person, dressed in a champagne-colored suit, leaned lazily against a lamppost.

He looked up, revealing a pretty face under slightly curly short hair. He had fair skin, and his lips had curled into a wicked smile. A deep brown mole under the right side of his eyes made him look especially alluring under the lamplight.

"What were you doing hiding in there?"

The man's maic voice carried a hint of teasing as if he had been waiting for her there.

Hera frowned. It seemed he had deliberately led the others away.

Uncertain if he was friend or foe, she feigned ignorance and said, "I don't know what you're talking about."

When Hera played dumb, the man gazed at her with his enchanting eyes and said, "Your body is quite flexible. That window frame is about one foot wide, but you managed to crawl through it. You must have practiced a lot.

"But crawling out like a dog at the end wasn't graceful. You might want to try a different pose next time."

Hera held her breath, watching him warily.

This meant he had been observing her the whole time as she struggled to climb out.

"So, what exactly were you doing in there?"

The man stared into Hera's eyes.

Since she had been caught, she dropped the pretense and replied indifferently, "It's none of your business."

The man raised an eyebrow and clicked his tongue.

"Why are you so cold? I did help you just now, you know. Is this how you treat your savior?"

Hera thought she could have gotten out even without his help. It would only be slightly more troublesome.

But still, she owed him a favor.

Moreover,

the sounds of continued searching made her worry

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attracting unwanted att about

So, she softened her tone and asked, "What do you want?"

Seeing that, the man introduced himself with interest, "I'm Tyler Presgrave. What's your name?"

His name meant he was from the Presgraves, the number one family in Jedburgh's top ten prestigious families.

The top ten families under the four

influential families of Jedburgh were all high society figures. It

not to make them enemitent

"Hera Youngworth."

Tyler softly repeated her name twice before giving her a devilish smile.

"I saved you. How do you plan to repay me?"

Hera asked, "How do you want me to repay you?"

Tyler stepped forward and playfully lifted her delicate chin.

"Why don't you repay me with your body? I happen to like your appearance. So, be my girlfriend."

Hera was dumbfounded.

She slapped his hand away and said, "I refuse."

As if he had anticipated here

Tyler showed no sign of

disappointment. Instead, he

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remained unreasonable.

"Then, you'll have to tell me what you were doing there just now if you refuse."

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Tyler had asked Hera three times what she was doing in the office. He was clearly extraordinarily curious and determined to find out. Her phone vibrated in her pocket again. She figured it was probably Bernard.

She had been out for quite a while now. Hera didn't want to waste time with him, so she gave a random excuse.

"I was looking for some information."

"What information?" Tyler pressed.

"What are you doing here?" Hera dodged the question and asked in return.

Astral Nova's staff always wore uniforms with the winged dragon emblem, which was their logo. But Tyler didn't have one.

Moreover, this was Astral Nova's administration building. Most paparazzi were at the auction, not here.

"I'm here to save you, of course."

"How do I know you're not the suspicious person they're searching for?" Hera eyed him.

Tyler tried a different approach when he sensed she wasn't as easy to fool as he had thought.

"Since you're disobedient, I'll just have to turn you over to them."

Tyler grabbed Hera's hand as he spoke and started dragging her toward the administration building.

Hera was startled and tried to break free, but he was too strong for her.

Suddenly, a stone flew toward them. Tyler quickly released Hera to avoid it. The stone flew past them and hit a wooden bench with a bang, leaving a dent.

In that brief moment when he let go, Hera noticed an amethyst ring on his left thumb, though she couldn't make out the patterns on the ring.

She paused and recalled the last time she saw Astral Nova's grandmaster. He was also wearing a ring then.

"Catch him!"

A stern shout came from behind.

Hera turned to see several men in Astral Nova's security uniforms rushing toward them. Bernard was walking steadily behind them.

Hera's eyelashes fluttered as she obediently stayed where she was, ready to adapt to the situation.

However, the security guards sprint past her. She realized that Tyler had somehow managed to slip away.

Only one guard stayed behind,

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perhaps it was because they noticed

that Hera was a woman. He had a stun baton in his hand as he conducted a routine check Content

"Which floor are you from? What are you doing here? Show me your invitation card."

"Fourth floor. I came out to use the restroom and got lost."

Hera lowered her gaze and handed over her invitation card.

After verifying the card, the guard

returned it to her and then asked et Sard, who was walking

the one you're look

she the one you're looking for?"

"Yes," Bernard replied before he shifted his gaze to Hera.

"Are you alright?"

Hera glanced between Bernard and the guard. Then she shook her head like a frightened young girl before approaching Bernard. He found her clever act somewhat endearing.

"Don't wander around. Please return to the auction hall," the security guard warned her before joining the others in pursuit.

Once they were gone, Hera breathed a sigh of relief and looked up.

"Bernard, why are you here?"

"I waited for you for a long time, and you didn't answer my calls. So, I got worried and came to check."

He glanced in the direction where the guards had gone and asked, "Why were you with him?"

Hera started walking in the direction Bernard had come from.

"I left the restroom and got lost.

When I heard a commotion over et

here, I came to take a look. That's when I bumped into him. I was just asking him for directions."

Bernard followed behind her.

"Oh? Why was he pulling you?"

Hera only kept quiet.

Seeing her like that, Bernard suddenly stopped and looked at her.

"Sweetie, are you hiding something from me?"

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Hera stopped in her tracks, feeling the intense gaze of the man behind her. As she had just done something shady behind his back, she could only straighten her back guiltily.

Bernard stared at her back while wearing a complex expression.

He had just found the person who hacked into the financial system's firewall to the data room on the first floor of the administration building.

On his way there, he coincidentally encountered the security guards when they found someone suspicious. When he reached them, he saw Tyler and Hera pulling at each other.

The data room on the first floor of the administration room wasn't far from there.

Given Scorpio's analysis of the intrusion, Hera's presence there seemed too coincidental. Moreover, she was with that crazy Tyler.

Tyler, like Bernard, was also an illegitimate child. However, unlike Bernard, who found out that his father had a family and his mother was the mistress when he was eight years old, Tyler had been raised outside by the head of the Presgraves from a young age.

When the Presgraves' only son had a car accident at 15 and became disabled, the Presgraves were left without a legitimate heir. It was then that Tyler was brought back to be groomed as the successor.

However, Tyler had picked up many bad habits after living as an illegitimate child outside. The head of the Presgraves, Victor, was displeased with Tyler. When he saw Chad sending Bernard to the military for training, he decided to do the same.

Thus, Bernard and Tyler ended up as recruits in the same batch and became rivals.

Tyler competed with Bernard in everything, from who could do more push-ups to who led more successful missions. When Bernard was selected by the technology department to teach hacking, Tyler insisted on learning as well.

However, not long after mastering it, the Presgraves called him back. Bernard rarely saw him after that.

Hera had no idea who deleted the transaction information. Nevertheless, she was confident it wouldn't be traced back to her anytime soon as long as she covered her tracks well. So, she turned around, suppressing her guilt.

"Why are you jealous of everyone?"

Bernard narrowed his eyes slightly.

"Could there be something going on between the two of you?"

Hera pouted as she faced his gaze.

"What kind of boyfriend are you? I was just harassed by a pervert, and you're accusing me of having an affair with him! I'm mad, and I'm not forgiving you!"

After that, she pretended to be angry and turned to leave.

Bernard was speechless.

Looking at Hera's angry back, he started to doubt himself. He wondered if he was overthinking things.

He took out his phone and sent a message to Samson.

"Keep an eye on Tyler Presgrave."

Then, he walked up to Hera.

She pretended to be angry all the way to Astra Nova's parking lot, feeling slightly regretful at her earlier outburst. After all, she was the guilty party, and it wasn't Bernard's fault. She was the one who dragged him into this.

Hera's gaze darkened at the thought of Tyler's pretty face and the ring on his hand. She wondered if Bernard had met with Astal Nova's grandmaster before.

She wanted to ask, but she was still

pretending to be angry. She

contemplated her next steps on how she could ease the tension. She considered pretending to sprain her ankle.

But they were on flat ground, and she was wearing flat shoes. Spraining her ankle would be too fake.

Bernard had been following behind Hera. He was thinking about putting the matter aside and comforting her first.

Hera seldom got angry, but when she did, her temper was not something anyone could withstand. He had to keep her happy after finally winning her

over.

He wondered how he could get her to stop walking. He played with the idea of pretending to sprain his ankle to get her attention.

He was still pondering when he saw Hera stop walking suddenly.

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"I'm tired. Give me a piggyback ride!"

Hera turned around with an air of haughtiness.

Bernard's lips curved slightly as he stepped forward and bent down. Hera jumped onto his back, wrapped her arms around his neck, and buried her face into his back.

The auction was still ongoing, so the parking lot was mostly empty. Bernard walked toward his car with Hera on his back.

Neither of them spoke, but the mood seemed to ease up naturally.

Listening to his steady footsteps, Hera hesitated momentarily before speaking softly, "Actually, I've been hiding something from you."

Bernard responded gently, "I'm sorry for doubting you earlier. You don't have to say anything if you don't want to. I trust that you'll tell me when you're ready."

Hera felt that there was more to his words, but she was unsure if he was referring to the suspicious person in Astral Nova or the Grandmaster of Astral Nova.

"Actually, I..."

She was gathering her thoughts on how to explain.

They had reached the car. Bernard put her down and opened the passenger door for her as he casually dropped a bombshell.

"Are you trying to tell me that you're Dr. Shadow?"

Hera was just about to sit in the passenger seat when she heard that and jolted up.

Fortunately, Bernard's hand protected her head from hitting the car roof.

"How did you know!"

She suddenly thought of something.

"Have you met the Grandmaster of Astral Nova?"

He guided her into the passenger seat and answered, "No. Astral Nova's staff seems to be looking for a suspicious person."

His deep eyes bore into her as if he was searching her face for clues.

Hera thought again about Tyler and the ring. If he was the Grandmaster of Astral Nova, it made sense that Bernard hadn't met him.

She then asked, "How did you know I was Dr. Shadow?"

She hadn't even told the Everetts about this. In addition to that, Camille was impersonating her identity as Dr. Shadow. She wondered how Bernard knew.

He didn't respond but instead took her left hand in his.

Hera was slightly confused until she saw the bracelet on her wrist. The pink pearls and white diamonds shone brightly under the car light, highlighting her fair skin.

She suddenly realized something.

"You were at the auction that day, too?"

"Yes."

"But you said you were at home."

"And you hung up my call after telling me you were at the Everetts, taking a bath."

Thinking back, Hera felt it made sense for him to be at the auction since the Eclipse Stone could save his life. But on that day, she had disguised herself. Those who had been near her were the grandmaster and his bodyguards. Content

She pondered how Bernard noticed her bracelet and remembered it so clearly. She only wore this bracelet that day and the last time she was at Astral Nova.

"Camille is moving around under the name of Dr. Shadow. You concluded I'm the real one just because of this bracelet?"

The disguise she had worked so hard to maintain was discovered so easily!

"Yes, because this bracelet is unique."

Bernard fastened her seatbelt before walking to the driver's side. Soon, he started the car.

Hera nodded in agreement.

"Indeed, the pink conches are rare.

This is my lucky bracelet left by my foster mother. I found it while sorting through her belongings. It should have been a gift for my fourth birthday."

Bernard watched as she lovingly stroked the bracelet on her wrist. He swallowed the words he was about to say.

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It was inexplicably silent in the car on their way back.

When Hera and Bernard reached the entrance of the courtyard house, they seemed to have reached an unspoken agreement. Hera didn't ask Bernard to stay. He said he had some matters to attend to back at the Killians.

Ten minutes later, Hera went inside, changed her clothes, and called Samantha.

"Are you done with work? Want to go out for a drink?"

"Yeah, I'm done. Weren't you at the auction with your dear Bernard? Back so soon?"

"Let's find a place to talk."

"Alright. Let's meet at Nightless Haven."

Hera hung up and headed to Nightless Haven in a taxi.

Meanwhile, Bernard took a different turn at the junction that was in the direction of the Killians before calling Shaun.

"Come out for a drink at the old place."

Nightless Haven was the largest bar in Jedburgh. All sorts of people frequented the bar.

When Hera arrived, she was stopped by a security guard at the door.

"Missy, no minors are allowed in here."

Hera was speechless.

She was about to show her ID when she heard Samantha's voice from behind her.

"Hera..."

The security guard saw Samantha, who was wearing a mask, and immediately smiled.

"Ms. Samantha, long time no see."

Samantha casually tossed her car keys to him before hooking her arm around Hera's shoulder and leading her inside.

Samantha was a regular, so the manager promptly arranged a private room for them on the second floor.

Then, he had drinks sent over and asked cheerfully, "Ms. Samantha, is this your friend? We just got some newbies in. Do you want me to call a few of them to join you?"

She was tempted by the mention of newbies, but Hera's cold gaze made her refuse immediately.

"No."

After the manager left, the room finally quieted down.

"What's wrong? Did you have a fight with your dear Bernard?"

Samantha poured Hera a glass of red wine even though she knew Hera wasn't much of a drinker despite asking her out for drinks.

"No."

Hera took a sip of the wine.

"I feel like he's hiding something from me."

She had noticed Bernard's intention in the parking lot but pretended to be unaware.

"What? Is he cheating on you, or is he terminally ill?"

Samantha looked shocked.

Hera was taken aback.

"Can't you think of anything positive?"

Samantha poured herself a glass of brandy to calm her nerves.

"What could it be if it's not cheating or an illness?"

Hera briefly recounted the events at Astral Nova and Bernard's probing questions.

He often complained about his

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struggles with the Killians, but his actions suggested otherwise. Hera saw through it but chose not to expose him.

Since she also kept many things from him, they were evenly matched in keeping secrets.

But now, they were dating. She wondered if it was really okay for them to keep hiding things from each other.

"Oh, that's no big deal."

Samantha set down her glass and

said, "If you're just playing with him, it doesn't matter if you tell him or

not. But you want to spend the et

rest of your life with him, I suggest not hiding anything. Be completely honest and let him see how amazing you are."

"No way."

Her identity as Raven was still on the wanted list, so she couldn't reveal that.

"Are you afraid of scaring him?"

Samantha misinterpreted her meaning.

Then, she continued, "On second thought, maybe it's better not to tell him. Your dear Bernard has been in the military for ten years. He hasn't seen much of the world and might get frightened."

"That won't do either."

Hera realized that keeping secrets long-term was not a solution.